

# **The medieval pottery from Crossrail works at Charterhouse (XTE12)**

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## **1.1 The medieval cemetery, period 2 (OA2)**

### ***Cemetery, phase 1 (OA2)***

This first phase of burials (group 3) consisted of eleven supine inhumations within individual vertically-sided graves, all sharing the same north-east–south-west alignment; with heads approximately to the west. One sherd of Roman pottery and 53 sherds of medieval pottery, assumed to derive from an existing land surface, and one intrusive post-medieval sherd were recovered from nine of the burials, as summarised below and in Table 1. Only 10 different fabric types are present, with the latest fabrics being coarse Surrey-Hampshire border ware (CBW, dating 1270–1500), Mill Green ware (MG, dating 1270/1290–1350) and Mill Green coarse ware (MG COAR, dating 1270–1400). Five contexts are dated by one or both of these to *c* 1270–1350/1400, and one to after 1290.

Grave [164] (sg 3) contained 10 sherds (66g) from nine vessels, of which one is of early Surry ware and clearly residual. The others comprise two sherds of South Herts-type greyware, three from London-type ware baluster jugs, three are of Kingston-type ware dating to after 1240; the final sherd is probably from London-type ware baluster jug, but the fabric is very fine and could be Mill Green ware; either way, it is dated to the later 13th to 14th century.

Grave [171] (sg 4) contained three sherds, two of South Herts-type greyware, the other possibly from a crucible.

Grave [177] (sg 6) contained one small sherd of Kingston-type ware dating to *c* 1240–1400.

Grave [180] (sg 7) contained one sherd of Roman pottery, and single sherds of Limpsfield greyware, London-type ware, Kingston-type ware and Saintonge ware, the latter dating to after 1250. A sherd of tin-glazed ware is considered intrusive.

Grave [183] (sg 8) contained seven sherds (27g), including one from a London-type ware jug in the North French style, South Herts-type greyware, Kingston-type ware, Earlswood type ware and one sherd of Mill Green coarse ware dating to after 1270.

Grave [186] (sg 9) contained two sherds of London-type ware, one of Kingston-type ware and one of Mill Green ware, the latter dating to after 1270.

Grave [189] (sg 10) contained nine sherds of London-type ware and two of Mill Green ware, including a squat jug dating to after 1290.

A total of 10 sherds of pottery were recovered from Grave 192 (sg 11), including South Herts-type greyware, London-type and one sherd of Mill Green ware dating to after 1270.

Only two small sherds of pottery were found in grave [195] (sg 12), one of south Herts-type greyware, the other from a London-type ware highly decorated jug dating to after 1240.

The one sherd of pottery from grave [198] is from a green-glazed London-type ware baluster jug.

This first phase of cemetery was covered by a single dump layer of compacted clay-silt 0.3–0.4 m thick (sgp 14). The four sherds of pottery recovered from this dump include CBW and with a deposition date after 1270 (two post-medieval sherds are considered intrusive), showing that they are roughly contemporary with the burials that this layer sealed.

#### 1.1.1 Cemetery, phase 2 (OA2)

This second phase of burials (sgp 15, 16) (Fig 4) consisted of two adult supine inhumations cut into the dumps which sealed the first phase of burials. The fill of the northernmost burial [159] (sgp 15) contained a corrugated jug handle, probably of north French origin, dated to 1170–1300. The fill of the other burial [156] (sgp 16) yielded six sherds of pottery dating to 1290–1350.

#### 1.1.2 Cemetery phase 3 (OA2)

This final phase of activity consisted of 12 adult inhumations, orientated differently from phase 1 and 2 cemeteries on an east–west axis. Together these produced a total of 73 sherds of pottery (679g).

The 11 sherds of pottery from the double grave of adults [152] and [153] (sgp 18) differ from the earlier groups in that they contain more Mill Green and Mill Green coarse ware and also a bifid rim from a coarse Surrey-Hampshire border cooking pot dating to after 1380; it is, however, not impossible that the grave was dug before 1400.

The fill of grave [150] (sg 20) contained only one handle sherd of Mill Green ware, either from a conical jug or a miniature jug, dating to 1270–1350.

Eleven sherds of pottery were recovered from burial [146] (sgp 21), of which six are of Mill Green ware, while the others comprise London and Kingston-type ware with one residual sherd of early medieval pottery. A date of 1270–1330/50 seems possible for this group.

Only four sherds of London-type and Kingston-type ware were found in grave [141] (sg 22), giving a date range of 1240–1350.

Slightly more pottery was present in the fill of grave [138] (g 23), with 11 sherds, of which two are of 11th- or 12th-century date and six are of Mill Green ware, date this feature firmly to 1270–1350; the other sherds are of London-type and Kingston-type ware.

Burial [135] (sg 24) contained five sherds of south Herts-type greyware, London-type ware, Mill Green ware and Mill Green coarseware with a date range of 1270–1350.

Twelve small sherds (33g) of pottery were recovered from grave [132] (sg 25), of which the latest is a sherd of Cheam ware dating to after 1350. The others comprise south Herts-type greyware, London-type and Kingston-type ware, which suggest that the grave was dug between 1350 and 1400.

External deposit [127] (sg 26) contained 11 sherds (71g) of pottery dating to 1270–1350, with a mix of south Herts-type greyware, London-type wares, Kingston-type ware and one of coarse Surrey-Hampshire border ware.

Sealing the final phase of cemetery was a silty clay deposit [126] (sg 27) which is dated to 1340–1450 by a sherd of late medieval Hertfordshire glazed ware. The three other sherds comprise London-type ware, Mill Green ware and a one of probable French origin.

The burials assigned to phase 1 all contain pottery with a date range of 1240/70–1350 or earlier, presumably derived from the existing land surface or earlier ones, and so are likely to be part of the documented Black Death cemetery, and the same applies to the two phase 2 burials. The dating, and hence historical context of the phase 3 burials is less clear, as most contain pottery similar to that from the two earlier phases, ie dating to 1270–1350, which might suggest they were part of the documented Black Death cemetery. There are, however, subtle differences between the composition of this ceramic group and that from phase 1. Firstly, there is more pottery, and secondly, although the amount of Kingston-type ware is much the same, Mill Green ware (1270–1350) and Mill Green coarseware (1270–1400), are more abundant, totalling 16 sherds (189g) from six burials, compared to six sherds in phase 1; thirdly, two wares are later types, comprising a sherd of Cheam ware, which dates to 1350–1500, from grave [132] (sg 25), and a bifid-rimmed cooking pot in coarse Surrey-Hampshire border ware (dated to 1380–1500) from grave [154] in the double burial (sg 18). As there are no pottery types that are definitely later than *c* 1400, it is quite possible that this phase of burials dates to the second half of the 14th century. They could, therefore, represent the second plague, or the earliest use of the public burial ground of the London Charterhouse, which was founded in 1370/71.

## **The pottery (specialist report)**

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### ***Introduction***

A total of 143 sherds (132 ENV, 1.126kg) of post-Roman pottery was recovered from the site, of which 137 sherds are from period 2. The assemblage was initially recorded by Nigel Jeffries (2013) and the data entered onto the MOLA Oracle database, noting fabric, form, sherd count, estimated number of vessels, weight and other attributes. The finds were re-examined by the present writer for the purpose of this report and the updated data was converted to an Excel spreadsheet to aid interpretation.

### ***The ware and form types***

Only three residual sherds of pottery definitely dating to before *c* 1150 were found, comprising one sherd of early Surrey ware (ESUR: 1050–1150) from grave [164] in the first phase of the cemetery, and two sherds of early medieval sand-and-shell-tempered ware (EMSS: 1000–1150) from graves [157] and [138] (phases 2 and 3).

London-type wares (LOND) have a broad date range of 1080–1350, but can be more precisely dated by form type (Vince 1985; Pearce et al 1985; Blackmore and Pearce 2010, 18–21). Here they account for *c* 36% of the total sherd count and 33% of the total weight. However, although sherd numbers are more or less the same in phases 1 and 3 of the cemetery (24 and 26 sherds respectively), the amounts are quite different when viewed as percentages: 42% of the total sherds in phase 1 (44% by weight), but only 32% in phase 3 (29% by weight), and these include two 11th-/12th-century sherds of coarse London-type ware (LCOAR) and calcareous London-type ware (LCALC). Form types are much the same in both phases, mainly comprising jug sherds, including North-French-style, highly decorated and baluster styles; other forms comprise a cauldron/pipkin base from phase 1, and a jar and a dripping dish rim from phase 3.

Of the Surrey whitewares ([Pearce and Vince 1988](#); [Pearce 2007](#)), Kingston-type ware (KING), dated from 1240–1400, is the most common, with 28 sherds, including one of the slipped variant (c 20% of the total sherd count, c 29% of the total weight). The ware is more or less equally represented in cemetery phases 1 and 3 than in phase 1 (c 19% by sherd count, 16% by weight). Only four sherds are from cooking pots and jugs are the main form type, with some in the north French, highly decorated, rounded styles; the latest is the small rounded jug, dated to after c 1310, represented in cemetery phase 3. Coarse Surrey-Hampshire border ware (CBW), dated from 1270–1500, is present in both phases but rare, with only six sherds, of which the most diagnostic is a bifid-rimmed cooking pot dating to after c 1380 from cemetery phase 3. In addition there are single sherds of Earlswood ware (EARL: 1200–1400) in both phases, a sherd of probable Cheam whiteware (CHEA: 1350–1500) from cemetery phase 3 and one of Tudor Green ware (TUDG: 1350–1500) from period 3.

Mill Green ware (MG: 1270–1350) and the equivalent coarse ware (MG COAR: 1270–1400) were made near Ingatestone, Essex ([Pearce et al 1982](#); [Meddens 1992](#); [Meddens et al 2002–3](#)). These wares are usually among the five most common fabrics on sites in the city of London; here they comprise c 20% of the total sherd count (c 21% by weight). In cemetery phase 1 the ware is in fourth place (12% by sherd count, 8% by weight), but in phase 3 it is, surprisingly, the second most common type, accounting for 23% of the sherd count (28% by weight). Jugs are the main form type but one sherd is from a cooking pot and two are from jars.

Other wheelthrown wares include one sherd of shelly-sandy ware (SSW: 1140–1220), one of possible Limpsfield ware (LIMP: 1150–1350) and 17 of south Herts-type greywares (SHER: 1170–1350; [Blackmore and Pearce 2012](#)). The latter two form the third most common category in cemetery phase 1 (18% by sherd count, 22% by weight) but are in fourth place in phase 3 (10–11%). With the exception of a possible crucible, all are from jars/cooking pots. Of interest, is a sherd with a kiln scar and green glaze on the rim, a rare but not unknown feature of the south Herts-type greywares ([Blackmore and Pearce 2010](#), 103, 131, 188). Other wares comprise late medieval Hertfordshire glazed (ware dated to c 1340–1450 from cemetery phase 3 (LMHG; [Jenner and Vince 1983](#)), single sherds of possible Normandy glazed ware (NORG: 1050–1250) with an atypical olive-coloured glaze, one of Saintonge ware (SAIN/SAIM: 1250–1500 and one corrugated rod handle in the Scarborough style. Here the fabric is atypical of Scarborough ware and so this could be a North French monochrome ware (NFM: 1170–1300).

## ***Discussion***

The finds from phase 1 of the cemetery must reflect activity that took place prior to the foundation of the monastery. As the area of excavation is so limited it is impossible to say whether this was merely random rubbish distribution as part of manuring fields or whether there was occupation on the site, but work on a small site in Charterhouse Square (CSQ98) identified a large quarry, the fill of which contained 75 sherds that are identical in character to those from the present site and point to some activity on the site of Charterhouse prior to its foundation. Although including one sherd of early medieval shell-tempered ware, most sherds are of London-type ware, Kingston-type ware and coarse Surrey-Hampshire border ware, with a few sherds of Mill Green ware, south Herts-type and Limpsfield greyware. The forms include a mix of kitchen and tablewares, with the rim of a small crucible with copper alloy residues and a sherd from a CBW cooking pot with a thick cuprous deposit inside ([Stephenson 1998](#); [Blackmore 2001](#)). The quarry was overlain by a soil horizon that contained 32 sherds of pottery, including four of Cheam ware dating to 1350–1400 or later

(Barber and Thomas 2002, 12). A single grave was also found, containing pottery datable to 1240–1400 (*ibid*, 15), although it cannot be definitely related to the Black Death cemetery. A further 21 sherds of medieval pottery from a garden soil, including a sherd of Saintonge ware, may be from the monastic period.

Evidence for medieval activity has also been found elsewhere in the area, with a small assemblage of 28 sherds from Glasshouse Yard (GLY01), a short distance to the north-east (Dakin *in prep*). To the west is the outer precinct of St John Clerkenwell, founded 1144, where much medieval pottery has been found (Blackmore 2004). On this site Mill Green ware was most common (*c* 16%) in late 14th-/15th-century deposits, ie after it had gone out of use (*ibid*, 345). To the south are Long Lane, one of the main routes into Smithfield and used for driving cattle from Essex to market and the precinct of Great St Bartholomew (founded in 1123). In many ways the site is similar to that of the only other Black Death cemetery in London, which was on the site of the Cistercian abbey of St Mary Grace's in East Smithfield. This was a much larger excavation and yielded 1840 sherds of medieval pottery (Blackmore and Goffin 2008). Most is from the quarries on the site and could derive from nearby institutions such as the hospital of St Katherine's by the Tower, founded in 1147 (Grainger *et al* 2008, 5–9), but some derives from the properties known to have occupied the site prior to the Black Death (*ibid*, fig 5).

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Table 1 Dating of burials in cemetery phases 1, 2 and 3

Period	Feature	Gp	Sgp	Feature	Fill	Date	Fabric/form
201	Grave Sk163	3	3	164	162	1270-1350	ESUR CP; KING JUG; LOND NFR JUG, LOND JUG; MG? JUG BAL; SHER JAR
201	Grave Sk170	3	4	171	169	1170-1350	SHER CRUC, SHER JAR
201	Grave Sk176	3	6	177	175	1240-1350	KING JUG
201	Grave Sk179	3	7	180	178	1250-1350	KING JUG; LIMP JAR; LOND BAL JUG; SAIN JUG
						1630-1680	TGW D CHAR
201	Grave Sk182	3	8	183	181	1270-1350	EARL JUG; KING CP?, KING JUG; LOND JUG, LOND NFR JUG; MG COAR JUG?; SHER JAR
201	Grave Sk185	3	9	186	184	1270-1350	KING CP?; LOND JUG; MG JAR
201	Grave Sk188	3	10	189	187	1290-1350	CBW JUG; LOND JUG, LOND BAL JUG; MG JUG, MG SQU JUG
201	Grave Sk192	3	11	192	190	1270-1350	KING JUG; LOND CAULPIP, LOND JUG; MG JUG; SHER? JAR
201	Grave Sk194	3	12	195	193	1240-1350	LOND HD JUG; SHER JAR
201	Grave Sk197	3	13	198	196	1180-1350	LOND BAL JUG

Period	Feature	Gp	Sgp	Feature	Fill	Date	Fabric/form
201	MU	4	14	161	161	1270-1350	CBW CP; MG COAR JAR; SHER JAR; SSW JAR
						1550-1700	BORDG DISH DEEP
202	Grave Sk159	5	15	160	158	1080-1350	NFM? JUG
202	Grave Sk156	5	16	157	155	1270-1350	EMSS JAR; LOND CP; KING? JUG; MG JUG, MG SQU JUG
203	Grave Sk143	6	17	144	142	1270-1350	LOND JUG; MG COAR?, JUG; SHER JAR
203	Grave Sk153	6	18	154	151	1380-1400	CBW CP BIF; LOND? JUG BAL, LOND JUG; MG JUG CON, MG COAR JUG BAL, MG COAR CP; SHER JAR
203	Grave Sk149	6	20	150	148	1270-1330	MG CON JUG
203	Grave Sk146	6	21	147	145	1310-1350	KING CP, KING JUG RND, KING JUG, KING SMR JUG SMR; KINGSL JUG BAL; LOND HD JUG BAL, LOND BAL JUG; MG JUG; SHER JAR
203	Grave Sk140	6	22	141	139	1240-1350	KING NFR JUG; KING? JUG; KING? JUG; LOND DISH DRIP, LOND JUG
203	Grave Sk137	6	23	138	136	1270-1330	EMSS JAR; KING CP; LCOAR? JAR?; LOND JUG RND; MG COAR JUG, MG JUG, MG CON JUG
203	Grave Sk134	6	24	135	133	1270-1350	LOND JUG, LOND JUG BAL; MG COAR JUG CON?; MG JUG BAL; SHER JAR
203	Grave Sk131	6	25	132	130	1350-1400	CHEA CP?; EARL JUG; KING HD JUG, KING JUG BAL; LOND HD JUG, LOND JUG; SHER? JAR, SHER JAR?

Period	Feature	Gp	Sgp	Feature	Fill	Date	Fabric/form
203	Grave Sk128	6	26	129	127	1270-1350	CBW JUG RND; KING JUG BAL; LCALLC? JUG; LOND JUG, LOND NFR JUG BAL; SHER JAR
203	ED	7	27	126	126	1270-1350	LMHG? JUG; LOND HD JUG BAL; MG JUG BAL; NORG? JUG