

Early Anglo-Saxon pottery in south-east England

Recent work and a research framework for the future

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Recent work on early Anglo-Saxon pottery from Kent, Surrey and Sussex (including south London) is reviewed. Some conclusions regarding the character of pottery across the region are drawn together and suggestions are made for further research, focussing on themes of dating, production and imports.

Introduction

Anna Slowikowski was a champion of the Medieval Pottery Research Group's network of regional groups. This paper is derived from a meeting held by the South-Central and London area regional groups in the autumn of 2013, which included the late Phil Jones. We hope that it will not only provide a useful resource for researchers in our area, but will also stand as a tribute to Anna's dedication to the regional group network and inspire other groups to undertake similar work.

Following a number of developer-funded and university-led research projects, our understanding of early Anglo-Saxon pottery in south-east England has developed greatly over the last ten years. The most significant of these projects have taken place in Kent, where large infrastructure developments (the Channel Tunnel Rail Link and East Kent Access Road), as well as the University of Reading's ongoing research project at Lyminge, have all led to the recovery and analysis

of sizeable assemblages of material. Smaller projects have taken place in Surrey and Sussex and material from south London has recently been synthesised (Cowie and Blackmore 2008). The aims of this paper are twofold; firstly to provide a summary of the results of these projects and present the current state of understanding and, secondly, to propose a framework for future research.

Recent work: a review

In this section the findings from projects in Kent, Sussex and Surrey/Greater London (Fig. 1) will be reviewed, with key developments and emerging trends in our understanding of early Anglo-Saxon pottery being highlighted.

Kent

The three largest projects have taken place in Kent. As part of works undertaken ahead of the

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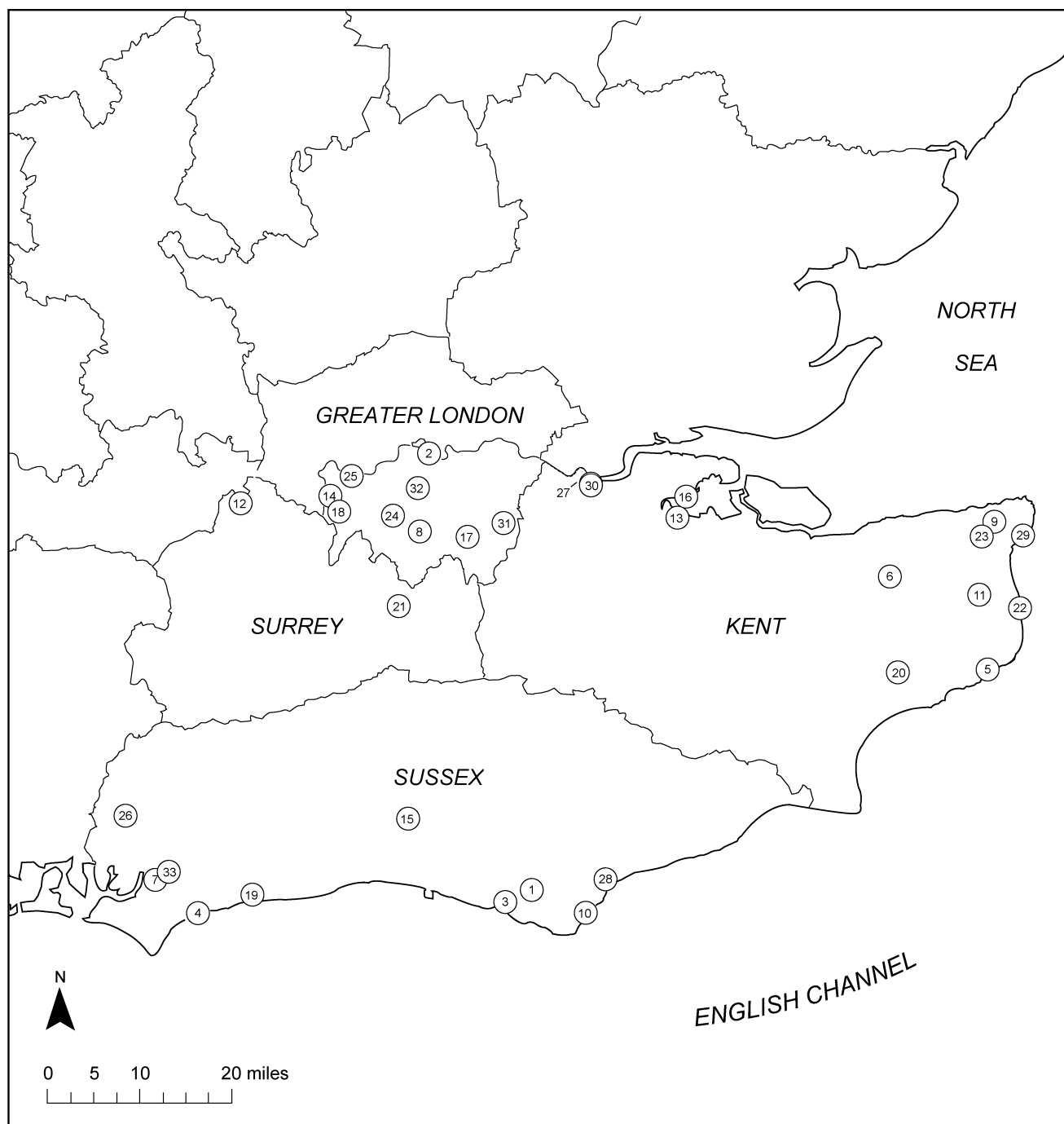


Figure 1. Map showing the location of sites mentioned in the text. Key: 1. Alfriston; 2. Bermondsey; 3. Bishopstone; 4. Bognor Regis; 5. Buckland, Dover; 6. Canterbury; 7. Chichester; 8. Croydon; 9. East Kent Access Road; 10. Eastbourne; 11. Eastry; 12. Egham; 13. Gillingham; 14. Ham; 15. Hassocks; 16. Hoo St Werburgh; 17. Keston; 18. Kingston; 19. Littlehampton; 20. Lyminge; 21. Merstham; 22. Mill Hill, Deal; 23. Minster-in-Thamet; 24. Mitcham; 25. Mortlake; 26. North Marden; 27. Northfleet; 28. Pevensey; 29. Ramsgate; 30. Springhead; 31. St Mary Cray; 32. Tulse Hill; 33. Westhampnett (graphic: Ben Jervis).

construction of the Channel Tunnel Rail Link, two significant early Anglo-Saxon sites were excavated, at Northfleet and at Springhead (Mepham 2011). This work, undertaken by Oxford Wessex Archaeology, recovered 287 sherds from Springhead and 1092 from Northfleet, principally from sunken featured buildings (SFBs). Taken as a whole, the assemblages provide valuable insights into Kentish pottery at the

start of the Anglo-Saxon period. A total of 28 fabrics are present. Whilst much of the pottery appears to be of local provenance (principally sandy and organic-tempered wares), fabrics are also present containing non-local volcanic rock fragments (Fig. 2). Some of these non-local fragments may represent ground up quern stone added to locally produced pottery, whilst others are clearly of non-local origin. Throughout

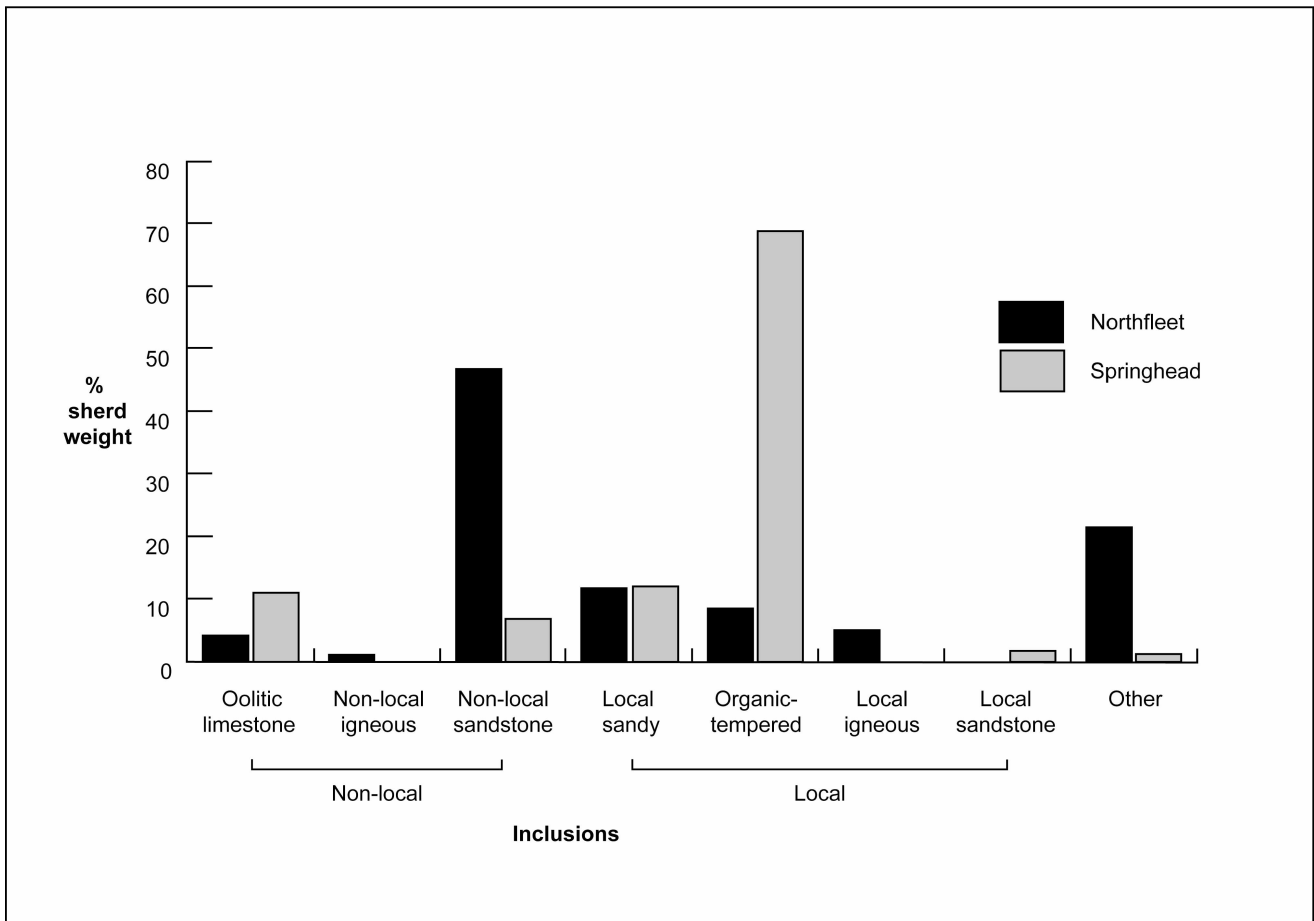


Figure 2. Quantification of the assemblages from Northfleet and Springhead by broad fabric group (after Mephram 2011).



Figure 3. Oolitic limestone-tempered ware and Visigothic brooch from Springhead (image: Wessex Archaeology).

this paper the term ‘organic-tempered wares’ is used to define wares tempered with vegetal material. These are known variously throughout the study area as organic- or chaff-tempered wares. Alan Vince (2011) concluded that a small group of wares are of non-local manufacture, being characterised by the presence of inclusions such as oolitic limestone (Fig. 3), sandstone and granite. These non-local fabrics account for 52% of the pottery from Northfleet by weight, but only 18% of the smaller assemblage from Springhead. There may be some chronological significance to this, as the site at Northfleet appears to be earlier than that at Springhead (based on radiocarbon dates), although the small size of the Springhead assemblage should be taken into account. A variety of vessel forms occurred at these sites, including jars and bowls with a range of profiles. The most common are rounded and carinated jar forms, present in both the local and non-local fabrics. Two vessels with pedestal or ‘splayed’ bases are also diagnostically early. Only a small number of sherds are decorated, principally with incised lines. The pottery does not lend itself to close dating, although much of the material is characteristic of the 5th to 7th centuries. Parallels for the wares present appear to match most closely with those from the London and Essex areas (see for example Cowie and Blackmore 2008), rather than further south in Kent.

At Lyminge, near Folkestone, excavations by Reading University have revealed a nationally significant high status early Anglo-Saxon residence, consisting of several large halls and associated SFBs,

which preceded the monastery founded on the site in the middle-Saxon period (Thomas 2013; Jervis 2011). The site is important from a ceramic perspective as it provides the first unbroken early Anglo-Saxon to later medieval ceramic sequence in south-east Kent outside of Canterbury. The early Anglo-Saxon material, probably of 6th to 7th-century date, principally consists of local sandy wares, around 5% of which by sherd count are decorated (Table 1). The material is still at the assessment stage (currently the subject of doctoral research by Lisa Backhouse, Reading/Cardiff Universities), but it can be noted that, as at Springhead, the range of fabrics and forms is limited. There is a small quantity of organic-tempered wares, but these do not appear to be a major type, fitting with the evidence from Canterbury, where they were only used for a short period of time in the later 6th century

Table 1. Quantification of the early Anglo-Saxon pottery from Lyminge by sherd count (SC) and sherd weight (SW) (sherd weight in grams).

Pottery type	SC	SW
Shelly ware	4	22
Sandy ware	1264	7575
Organic-tempered ware	60	619
Rock-tempered wares	30	155
Iron-rich ware	55	369



Figure 4. North French/Flemish Merovingian imports from the East Kent Access Road project (Isle of Thanet), date c. 575–750 (images: Oxford Archaeology).

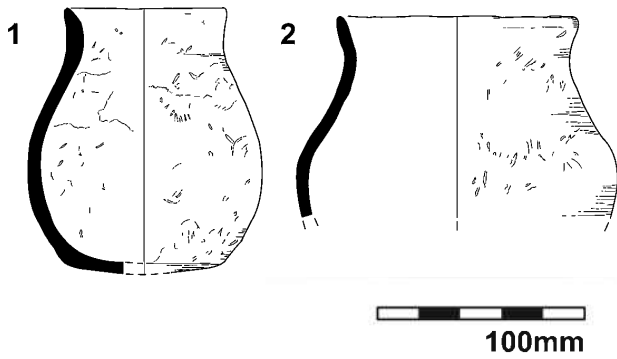


Figure 5. Organic-tempered wares from the East Kent Access Road project (images: Oxford Archaeology).

(Mainman and Macpherson-Grant 1995, 822). A few non-local types, including fabrics with sandstone temper, are present, and these require further analysis. Decoration appears to be limited to incised designs/motifs, particularly the chevron style, thought by Myres (1969; 1977) to be ‘Jutish’ but since found at a number of sites in eastern England (Macpherson-Grant 1993, 167).

The final large site is the East Kent Access Road, where excavations undertaken by Oxford Wessex Archaeology recovered around 400 sherds of early to middle Saxon pottery, mostly from SFBs (Cotter 2015). One pot is very early and appears to be an Anglo-Saxon imitation of a Roman form. A particular feature of this assemblage is the presence of continental imported wares, with at least thirteen vessels of recognised Merovingian type, having a core date range of *c.* 575–750 AD, being present (Fig. 4). It is unclear whether the plainer imported wares are of Roman or Anglo-Saxon date. The local wares are of the expected fabric types, consisting of sandy wares with flint-, chalk- and organic-tempered variants (Table 2; Fig. 5, nos 1–2). The most common fabric is organic-tempered ware, typically dated to the later 6th century, suggesting that the assemblage here

principally dates to the transition from the early to middle Saxon periods.

A number of other smaller sites in Kent have yielded early Anglo-Saxon pottery. At Ramsgate an important assemblage of local and continental imported pottery was recovered by Wessex Archaeology (Mephram 2009). At Gravesend, Pre-Construct Archaeology (PCA) recovered a 6th to 7th-century assemblage, principally consisting of local organic-tempered wares (Jarrett 2014). At Grange Farm, Gillingham, excavations, also by PCA, recovered early Anglo-Saxon pottery, from the site of a Roman temple or shrine, including a sherd with *Schlickung* surface treatment and non-local sandstone-tempered wares (Jarrett forthcoming), similar to those from the Channel Tunnel Rail Link sites (Mephram 2011).

A key trend in early Anglo-Saxon archaeology in Kent has been a shift from the excavation of rich cemeteries, particularly around the Isle of Thanet, which have yielded small ceramic assemblages, including important continental imports, to the excavation of settlement sites. Comparison of these cemetery assemblages (for example that from Buckland, Dover: Evison 1987, 92–4) with those from settlements might prove a rewarding undertaking. This is giving a better understanding of domestic pottery, which has previously been reliant upon the extensive material from excavations in Canterbury (Blockley *et al.* 1995). Until recently, settlements outside Canterbury had yielded only small assemblages, some limited to single vessels, such as at Eastry (Parfitt 1999; Parfitt and Sweetinburgh 2009), Minster-in-Thalet (Martin *et al.* 2012), Minster-in-Sheppey (Diack 2004) and Hoo St Werburgh, where three sherds of imported pottery were present (Moore 2002). On the whole these sites in eastern Kent have revealed further evidence of a local sandy ware tradition. Our understanding of pottery in north Kent has also been improved through the publication of assemblages from St Mary Cray and Keston (Cowie and Blackmore 2008). At St Mary Cray the diversity of

Table 2. Quantification of the early Anglo-Saxon pottery from the East Kent Access Road project by sherd count (SC), sherd weight (SW) and Estimated Vessel Equivalent (EVE) (sherd weight in grams) (Cotter 2015)

Fabric	Description	Date	SC	SW	EVEs
EMS1F	Sandy ware with flint	<i>c.</i> 450–650	1	21	0
EMS1D	Fine sandy ware	<i>c.</i> 450–700	1	11	0
EMS1.4	Coarse sandy ware with organic temper	<i>c.</i> 450–700	7	126	0.07
EMS3	Fine sandy ware with chalk temper	<i>c.</i> 450–650	2	15	0
EMS4	Organic-tempered ware	<i>c.</i> 450–800	212	2080	1.29
EMS4A	Organic-tempered ware with chalk	<i>c.</i> 450–650	1	8	0
EMS8	North French blackware	<i>c.</i> 630–700	91	364	0.39
EMS9	North French (Pas-de-Calais) grey sandy ware	<i>c.</i> 575–750	30	1022	1.57

wares, characteristic of the early assemblages from the Channel Tunnel Rail Link project, is also in evidence with sandstone-, Greensand- and bone-tempered fabrics being present; sandstone-tempered wares are also present at Keston. Whilst the Greensand may be local, the source of the sandstone-tempered wares is currently unknown, although they seem to occur at various sites along both sides of the Thames Estuary (Cowie and Blackmore 2008, 177–8; 2012, 241–2). Chemical analysis and further geological investigation is required to better understand the provenance of these wares. When taken with the material from excavations elsewhere in the London area and the Channel Tunnel Rail Link project, it is becoming increasingly evident that 5th- and 6th-century assemblages in this area are characterised by a variety of non-local fabrics, reflecting the mobile nature of early Anglo-Saxon society.

Sussex

Largely due to an absence of large projects such as those in Kent, our understanding of early Anglo-Saxon pottery in Sussex remains limited. Until the last decade understanding had not advanced much beyond a review of the material published by Dudley (1980). This focussed on material from cemeteries, with the largest quantities of early material from settlement contexts coming from Bishopstone (Bell 1977) and Chichester (Dunning and Wilson 1953; Jervis 2009). Additional settlement material came from excavations at North Marden (Drewett *et al.* 1986), consisting of sandy and organic-tempered wares of 6th to 7th century date and more recent work at Hassocks (Lyne 2000) where sand-, organic- and flint-tempered wares were recovered, providing useful information about the transition between early and middle/late Saxon types in the county. A long sequence, containing similar wares, from excavations between 1936–64 at Pevensey Castle, has also recently been published (Lyne 2009).

Recent development-driven work has added to our

corpus of material, highlighting potential regional differences and possible differences between cemetery and settlement assemblages, which require further analysis. It has long been established that Anglo-Saxon settlement in Sussex was concentrated along the coastal zone, and this is reflected in the distribution of recently discovered sites (see Welch 1983 for a general discussion). One example is a 5th to 6th-century site at Littlehampton, where a range of sandy, organic-tempered and flint-tempered wares were recovered (Barber 2009) (Table 3). The dating of the transitions between these wares is a key research question (see below), but at Bognor Regis, a small assemblage of flint-tempered wares is dated to the later part of this period (Barber 2006). A further example is a small assemblage from Westhampnett near Chichester, not well dated but possibly 5th/6th century, which includes sandy and organic-tempered wares, but also some sherds containing inclusions of granitic origin (Mephram 2008). In order to understand the chronological implications of these wares, further assemblages of earlier date are required from across the county.

Further east, interesting patterns have started to emerge from the study of small assemblages from the Ouse Valley and Eastbourne area. An early Anglo-Saxon assemblage from Bishopstone is characterised by sandy wares, which become increasingly coarse during the 6th to 7th centuries, with stamping being present on some sherds (Barber 2014). A different kind of assemblage, associated with a mixed-rite cemetery, was recovered during excavations at the Eastbourne College of Arts and Technology (ECAT) (Barber 2016). Here the assemblage is dominated by flint-tempered and sandy wares, with flint-tempered wares being considerably better represented than on contemporary settlement sites in the same geological area. The distinction between these wares is typically seen as a chronological one, but at the ECAT site it seems an element of technological choice might be apparent, with poorly fired flint-tempered wares, which would not have lasted well in settlement contexts, being

Table 3. Quantification of early Anglo-Saxon pottery from recently excavated sites in Sussex by sherd count (SC) and sherd weight (SW) (sherd weight in grams)

Site	Sandy ware		Organic-tempered		Flint-tempered		Granitic		Reference
	SC	SW	SC	SW	SC	SW	SC	SW	
The Poplars, Littlehampton	12	197	53	1754	2	33			Barber 2009
Antony Close, Bishopstone	264	2070		61	12	61			Barber 2014
ECAT Cemetery, Eastbourne	547	8466	9	74	637	6053			Barber 2016
Westhampnett	59	680	15	146			29	411	Mephram 2008

produced specifically for use as accessory vessels, possibly to allow firing at a lower temperature, suggesting the production of vessels specifically for use in settlement or burial contexts. There does appear to be a functional difference, with the sandy wares being better made, more highly decorated and typically utilised as cremation vessels. However, this relationship between settlement and cemetery assemblages needs further research, including the re-analysis of material from old cemetery excavations such as those at Bishopstone and Alfriston. Recent re-analysis of the Bishopstone material by Luke Barber suggests that the potential of this assemblage has been limited by post-excavation mixing of material. As far as can be determined, however, the fabrics are similar to those from the settlement site.

Surrey and Greater London

Surrey is the most problematic area within the region. Early cemetery excavations, at Croydon and Mitcham (Bidder 1908; Bidder and Morris 1959), produced numerous urns which were studied by Shaw (1970) and Myres (1977), but fabric analysis has not been undertaken and this material is clearly deserving of re-assessment (see Blackmore 1993). Early Anglo-Saxon pottery has, however, been recovered from more recently excavated burials, for example at Croydon, where two biconical vessels with stamped decoration of 6th-century date were present (Mephram 2003, 89; figs 7, 34).

Few early Anglo-Saxon domestic sites have been excavated within the county, but a recently excavated assemblage from Merstham contains a mixture of poorly dated sandy and organic-tempered wares, principally recovered from pits and ditches (Lyne 2012). The problems of chronology in Surrey are well illustrated by a small assemblage of sandy and organic-tempered wares from Egham, which can only be dated to the 5th to 8th century, as the sandy and organic-tempered wares found there were produced over long periods of time (Leary *et al.* 2010). A few sherds of early Anglo-Saxon pottery in a 'brown-black fabric' were recovered at Laleham; however no further details are presented (Taylor-Wilson 2002).

The picture is slightly clearer in south London, where a number of sites have recently been published (Cowie and Blackmore 2008). At Clapham the assemblage is thought to be of late 6th-century date, being dominated by organic-tempered wares, with only a few sandy wares, sandstone-tempered wares and other fabrics present (Cowie and Blackmore 2008, 25–6). In contrast, an earlier date is suggested for a site at Tulse Hill, where a wider variety of wares is present; organic-tempered wares are still dominant but sandstone-tempered and sand-tempered wares are more abundant, with a few slag-tempered and calcareous wares also being present (Cowie and Blackmore 2008, 32–3). Further early material has

been recovered from excavations at Mortlake, Ham and Mitcham, the Mortlake assemblage being of interest due to the presence of a possible Jutish-style vessel and igneous rock-tempered ware (Cowie and Blackmore 2008, 53). A wide range of fabrics including calcareous, bone-tempered and sandstone-/greensand-tempered wares were recovered from excavations at Kingston (Jarrett 2002). The range of fabrics, the presence of *Schlickung* surface treatment and forms including a possible carinated bowl and a small bossed cup are all suggestive of a 5th-century date. Elsewhere, early Anglo-Saxon material has recently been found in southern Southwark (Jarrett 2013, 17) and early decorative types, such as rustication and *Schlickung* surface treatment, are present amongst material from Bermondsey Abbey, where Saxon pottery has been found in association with Roman buildings (Jarrett and Sudds forthcoming). Outside the area which is now Greater London, however, our understanding of early and middle Saxon pottery is generally limited. Sandy and organic-tempered wares are both long-lived and the transition between the two is poorly understood; a chronology is therefore difficult to establish in areas which received neither imported pottery nor Ipswich Ware.

A framework for the future

Over the past decade a number of early Anglo-Saxon assemblages from across the study area have been excavated and brought to publication, furthering our understanding of ceramic traditions at both regional and local scales. However, the early Anglo-Saxon period has been largely ignored in the research priorities for the region which were devised as part of the MPRG's research framework (Irving 2011). Drawing on this new evidence, the following highlights some key areas for future research.

Chronology

Chronology remains a fundamental issue, although recent syntheses of material from the London area (Cowie and Blackmore 2008), as well as the excavation of large assemblages in Kent, has allowed some refinement. For Kent, assemblages seem to fit into one of two sequences. The Lyminge assemblage, as well as that from the East Kent Access Road, appears to follow the chronological framework devised for Canterbury, where sandy wares were replaced briefly by organic-tempered wares in the later 6th century, before shelly wares and new types of sandy ware developed. This pattern would appear to apply to much of south-east Kent.

In coastal north Kent, however, the pattern is different. An important result of the recent work on Channel Tunnel Rail Link sites around the Thames estuary (at Springhead and Northfleet) is that there is a great deal of diversity in early Anglo-Saxon

assemblages along the Thames, with non-local wares being present in considerable quantities. These include sandstone-tempered wares, which are seen on sites at St Mary Cray and Keston in Kent, at Mitcham and Tulse Hill in Greater London (Cowie and Blackmore 2008, 12, 15, 32–3, 35) and in south Essex (Blackmore 2011, 88–91). This fits with the pattern observed in the London area and suggests that it generally applies to the Lower Thames valley. Throughout the 6th century a transition to organic-tempered wares can be seen, which seem to persist into the later Saxon period in parts of Surrey, but cease around the mid/late 8th century in *Lundenwic* and other areas receiving Ipswich wares (Blackmore and Vince 2008a; Cowie and Blackmore 2012, 233–4).

There remain, however, considerable chronological blind-spots. In Sussex, organic-tempered fabrics are a minority and the key transition is from the early Anglo-Saxon sandy wares to the middle/late Saxon flint-tempered wares. It seems that this transition begins around the late 6th or early 7th century. It can be seen across the county to the south of the Weald, for example at Hassocks (Lyne 2000), Pevensey (Lyne 2009), Bishopstone (Bell 1977; Jervis 2010) and Littlehampton (Barber 2009), but it is unclear whether it occurred at the same time across the county. The evidence from the ECAT cemetery emphasises that the significance of the flint-tempered wares might be more than chronological. In order to resolve this issue, the closer dating of assemblages, ideally through the use of scientific techniques, is required. The Weald, an area which was sparsely occupied in the Anglo-Saxon period, appears to provide a natural boundary between the Sussex and Surrey/Thames Valley sequences.

Across the region certain characteristics have been widely recognised as indicating pottery to be of an early Anglo-Saxon date; principally, carinated forms, decorative traditions and surface treatment, such as rustication and *Schlickung*, all appear to pre-date stamped decoration. Stamped decoration has been argued as most frequent during the 6th century (Myres 1977; Hamerow 1993, 52). However, a reappraisal of the pottery from Spong Hill, Suffolk has shown that stamping, particularly where associated with line decoration, was ubiquitous in phase B, dating to the mid to late 5th century (Hills and Lucy 2013, 243, figs 3.29–3.30). Stamping on early Anglo-Saxon pottery, therefore, should be considered as dating to the mid 5th to 6th century.

There are areas of west Kent, northern Sussex and Surrey where the transitions into and out of the period are not well understood. Understanding the transition from the Roman to Anglo-Saxon period remains a national research objective (Irving 2011). There are sites in the region, for example at Ham, St Mary Cray, Keston (Cowie and Blackmore 2008), Southwark, Canterbury and Darenth (Philp 1984), where the 5th century can be targeted to better understand this transition.

Key to furthering our understanding of chronology is the application of scientific dating techniques, either to pottery itself (for example the radiocarbon dating of carbonised residues), or the features from which it is derived, and the ongoing analysis of large assemblages of early Anglo-Saxon material. Our understanding of the transition between the Roman to Anglo-Saxon periods requires a sustained programme of research, including the re-analysis of museum collections in collaboration with Roman pottery specialists.

Pottery production

No pottery production sites of this date are known within the study area. On the whole pottery appears to have been locally produced, but in accordance with wider traditions. Given the sandy nature of the pottery fabrics and the sedimentary geology of the region, petrological techniques are of limited use in provenancing the local wares. A programme of chemical analysis could prove instructive, but would need to take a regional approach in order to place results from individual sites into a wider context. Recent work, particularly on the Channel Tunnel Rail Link material and evaluations by Lyn Blackmore, Alan Vince and Patrick Quinn of material from the Thames basin (Blackmore and Vince 2008a; Vince 2002; 2006; Quinn 2011) emphasises that the complexity of pottery production in this period might be greater than first thought. There is clear evidence of the use of geological erratics for tempering material, but it remains to be determined whether these are natural components of the clay or whether the presence of igneous rock or lava temper reflects the crushing of quern stones, for example. Further unusual types that are poorly understood are bone- and slag-tempered wares and the distribution and date of these needs to be better understood to interpret their significance. There is, therefore, much scope for better understanding clay and temper procurement strategies and the processes of clay preparation, but this should be based on a wide sample of similar wares from across the region.

Organic-tempered wares mark the appearance of the transition from the early to middle Saxon periods (generally taken as AD 650) across the region, with the best chronological resolution coming from Canterbury (Mainman and Macpherson-Grant 1995), although they were adopted to different degrees. In the London area they were certainly in use in the 6th century, although more abundant in the 7th century, and were probably locally produced (Blackmore and Vince 2008b, 155–6; 2008a). The dynamics of this technology are not well understood. Based on the distribution of these wares in southern England, the Low Countries and Northern France, Jervis (2012), building on work by Helena Hamerow, Yann Hollevoet and Alan Vince (1994), has argued that they perhaps developed initially around coastal

and estuarine areas, before the technology moved inland. This suggestion needs to be tested through the refining of chronologies before its implications for the movement of people, goods and ideas in the period can be better understood.

As discussed above, the transition into the early Anglo-Saxon period also needs to be better understood from the production perspective and it is not only in regard to fabric that transfer of technologies and ideas is apparent. In some areas, it can be suggested that there is potential for Roman influences persisting for longer than elsewhere, and a few vessels, such as the 'Mitcham cup' (a carinated pedestal bowl) and the *Schalenurne*-type forms found at Croydon, Mitcham and St Mary Cray (Mepham 2003, 89; Cowie and Blackmore 2008, 185–6) are suggestive of the transition of elements of form and style between the late Roman and early Anglo-Saxon periods. It is also possible that some 5th-century imports were copied locally by the later 5th or 6th century, when new imported examples were no longer available or could not be obtained for other reasons. Techniques such as *Schlickung* surface treatment and rustication used on imported wares may also have been reproduced in local fabrics.

Clearly it is essential to better understand chronology in regard to changes in production, whilst a programme of chemical sourcing is required to clarify the relationships between fabrics, forms, decoration and the social dynamics of pottery production. For example, variation across the region could have profound implications for our understanding of the deterioration of Roman society. A better knowledge of fabrics and production technology, both of local and imported pottery, and of the co-occurrence of late Roman and 5th-century wares could elucidate further on the legacy of the former on the latter, and the way in which this may vary from place to place (for a recent discussion on re-defining our approach to the study of 5th-century ceramics see Fitzpatrick-Matthews and Fleming 2016). For the later 5th and 6th centuries, it needs to be established how much of the pottery exhibiting continental characteristics comprises genuine imports and what proportion are copies, whether locally made or from elsewhere in England.

Continental imports

The final area of discussion concerns imported wares, principally from Francia. There is a long history of the study of early Anglo Saxon imports in Kent, due to the presence of imported wares, particularly wheel-thrown bottles, in graves (Evison 1979). Nigel Macpherson-Grant's (1993) study remains the best overview of imported pottery in Anglo-Saxon Kent, but this work is focused on examples from Canterbury and needs updating with finds from over twenty years of excavations in the county. Macpherson-Grant's

study also concentrates on the presence of continental influences, particularly the Scandinavian parallels for Kentish types. A recent study by Jervis (2016) has taken a more interpretive approach, seeking to understand the implications of the coastal interactions which can be inferred from imported pottery for our understanding of coastal communities in the period, drawing in particular on the work of Loveluck and Tys (2006) on coastal interaction in the early medieval period.

A key result of the increase in Anglo-Saxon settlement archaeology in Kent has been the identification of imported pottery in settlement contexts, for example at Ramsgate (Mepham 2009), Hoo St Werburgh (Moore 2002) and the East Kent Access Road (Cotter 2015). The vessels present in these assemblages are different to those from cemetery assemblages, including cooking vessels, for example, which exhibit evidence of use in the form of sooting. The quantities are small and the mechanisms through which these, and the cemetery finds, reached Kent remain to be elucidated. Whilst imports are appearing relatively commonly in Kent, they are largely absent from settlement contexts in Sussex, although one possible imported vessel is present amongst the assemblage from the ECAT cemetery and an early 5th-century Argonne Ware vessel has been identified from Ham in Surrey (Barber 2016; Jones 2008, 58–9). Whether this is due to a lack of excavation, or is a genuine pattern, is unclear, but the latter seems likely.

An important outcome of work undertaken by Mike Hughes (2015) on material from the East Kent Access Road was a demonstration of the ability to integrate the results of modern ICP analysis with the Atomic Absorption Spectroscopy analysis of pottery from graves undertaken as part of Evison's (1979) study. Whereas imported wheel-thrown vessels are, in many cases, relatively straightforward to identify as imports, even if their exact provenance is unknown, hand-built vessels are more ambiguous, and may only be identifiable through unusual form or decoration or chemical analysis of fabrics. Four vessels in the Museum of London collection, one a small dish (MOL Acc 10368; Blackmore 1993, 135–6, 144, fig.6, no.33), the others unpublished jars (MOL Acc nos 57.22, A9199, A26335) and a few finds from excavations in the London area fit into this group of material.

It is worth noting that 'Anglo-Saxon' organic-tempered pottery has also been recovered from sites in Northern France and the Low Countries (Hamerow *et al.* 1994; Soulat *et al.* 2012). Whilst in France such vessels are largely from cemetery sites, and occur alongside metalwork of Anglo-Saxon type, vessels in the Low Countries are more commonly from settlements. Petrological analysis demonstrates the majority of these vessels to be local products (Soulat *et al.* 2012). However, the relationship between coastal communities in England, the Low Countries and France needs further consideration (see Jervis 2016),

as there are similarities in ceramic developments on both sides of the channel, such as the development of organic tempering and shelly wares. Therefore, as discussed above, in relation to the importation of new Anglo-Saxon styles and technologies (as opposed to just the movement of vessels), the study of imports cannot be separated from the study of local production. Consequently, research aims for Continental imports therefore principally relate to the issue of provenancing and the development of links with continental scholars to better understand the range of products present, their provenance, date and, therefore, significance, and to help determine which vessels are true imports and which are local copies.

Conclusions

Across the region progress has been made in understanding early Anglo-Saxon pottery but there is still much to be done. The results of the three large projects in Kent show that significant strides forward can be made in relation to understanding chronology, pottery production and the importation of ceramics in this period. It is increasingly clear that, particularly in the Thames basin, the organisation of pottery manufacture and the movement of pottery was much more complex than formerly thought. The presence of non-local products, the potential use of geological erratics and other unusual tempering materials all offer great potential for better understanding Anglo-Saxon society. It is clear that there are regional differences in ceramic technology and use; in Kent a distinction between north and south can be seen and there are also clear distinctions between east and west Surrey and Sussex. Topography and settlement organisation probably played a role in these regional patterns of distinction, which again require further study. The increase in archaeological work since the early 1990s has greatly contributed to furthering our understanding of early Anglo-Saxon ceramics and society in southern England. However, it has resulted in the recovery of, generally, small assemblages, often analysed in isolation. An integrated regional study, focussing on chemical analysis of clays and scientific dating of ceramics, either of carbonised residues or associated organic materials, would lead to great steps forward being made.

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Résumé

Des travaux récents sur la poterie du début de la période anglo-saxonne du Kent, Surrey et Sussex (y compris le sud de Londres) sont examinés dans cet article. Certaines conclusions qui concernent le caractère de la poterie dans toute la région sont regroupées et des suggestions sont faites pour d'autres recherches, en se concentrant sur les thèmes de la datation, de la production et de l'importation

Zusammenfassung

In diesem Beitrag werden jüngste Arbeiten zur frühen angelsächsischen Keramik aus Kent, Surrey und Sussex (einschließlich Süd-London) besprochen. Es werden mehrere Schlussfolgerungen bezüglich der Wesensmerkmale der Keramik quer aus der Region zusammengeführt und Empfehlungen für die weitere Forschung gegeben. Der Schwerpunkt liegt auf den Themen Datierung, Produktion und Importe.

