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# EXCAVATIONS AT BIGGIN STREET, DOVER

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with contributions by

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In January 1999 the Oxford Archaeological Unit (now Oxford Archaeology) undertook an excavation in advance of the construction of a new retail store on the site of a former Post Office at Biggin Street, Dover (NGR TR 3172 4162: **Fig. 1**). A desk-based assessment had been produced and the site had already been evaluated. The excavation identified archaeological deposits from various phases of occupation. These include the location of Roman boundary ditches/gullies, a possible Saxon cultivation soil, several late medieval/post-medieval wells, a post-medieval cultivation soil and post-medieval structural features (wall remnants). Artefacts recovered from the site ranged in date through all of these periods, and some residual flint artefacts were also found. Excavations were limited to the locations of the foundation piles, allowing a proportion of the archaeological deposits to be preserved *in situ*. The excavation strategy was designed by Paul Chadwick of CgMs Consulting, acting as Archaeological Consultant to the developers, Chartwell Land Development Limited, who funded the archaeological fieldwork and publication.

The site lies on the corner of Biggin Street and Priory Street in the town centre of Dover (**Fig. 2**). The site geology consists of brickearth overlying a buff chalky clay with shattered flint known as Coombe Rock. The base geology is Middle and Lower Chalk. The site lies on the approximate edge of an inner basin on the west side of Dover and at the mouth of a west-east dry valley (**Fig. 1**). Both of these topographical features have dictated the nature of the site drift geology which formed during the Devensian and mid Holocene. *In situ* alluvial deposits relating to the inner basin were identified during an archaeological evaluation (OAU, June 1994) approximately 20m to the north of the present Biggin Street frontage.

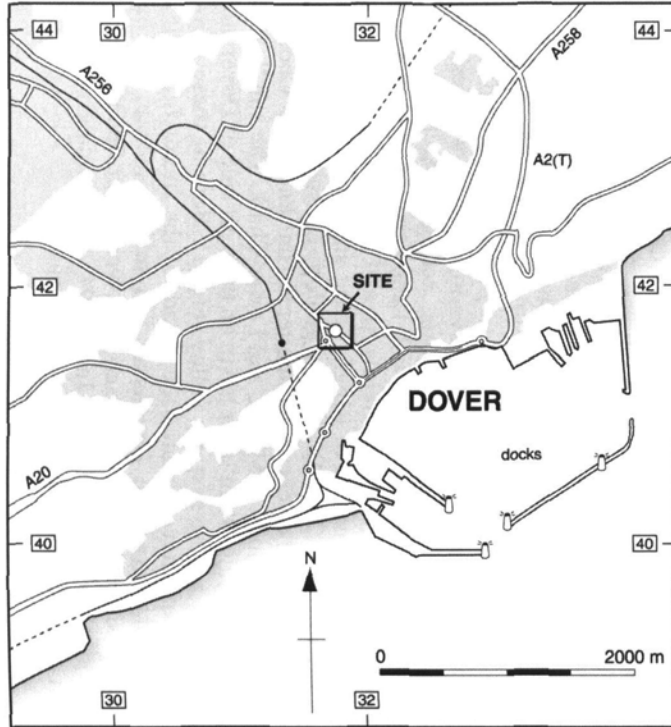


Fig. 1 Site Location in Dover.

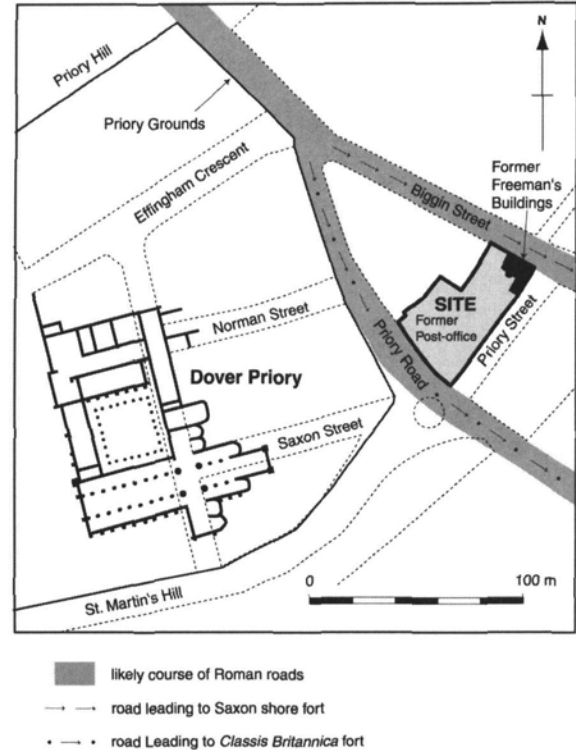


Fig. 2 Site Location in Biggin Street.

## Archaeological background

Archaeological excavations in Dover town centre suggest that a Neolithic settlement occupied an area centred around York Street, about 100m south of the study site (Philp 1972, 237). In the Bronze Age, the presence of settlement in the Dour Valley and on the Downs is suggested by the presence of barrows, but not otherwise attested. However, the importance of the Dour estuary as a node of international exchange in this period is evident from the finds of bronze implements at Langdon Bay (Muckelroy 1981) and of a Bronze Age boat excavated from below Town Wall Street, Dover (CAT 1993). Iron Age settlement is known from the town centre in the same area as the Neolithic settlement mentioned above (Philp 1972, 237; 1981, 80), and occupation deposits also exist on Castle Hill (Biddle 1969) where the presence of a hill fort has been suggested (Colvin 1959).

It is well attested that the extra-mural settlement at Dover grew during the Roman period following the establishment of the headquarters fort of the *Classis Britannica*. The fort was abandoned early in the third century (Philp 1981), although the effect of this extra-mural settlement of the Saxon Shore fort construction in the late third century is less well understood. In general terms, the Post Office site is located on the periphery of the Roman settlement of Dover, and lies between two possible Roman roads (Fig. 2). The first is aligned along the modern Priory Road/York Street and served the second-century *Classis Britannica* fort. The second is aligned on Biggin Street and served the later Saxon Shore fort. A third possible road may have run westwards along the coast, on the line of the present A20 to Folkestone (Wilkinson 1990, 16). Observations during the construction of the Post Office in 1913 (Rigold 1969, 87) record the presence of Roman remains on the site and an excavation at 72-5 Biggin Street recovered a Roman cremation (Parfitt, pers. comm.). This would accord with the Roman custom, enforced by law, of burying the dead outside the inhabited area, often near the roads. Cemetery sites have also been identified at Buckland and Charlton and a third site seems to have been situated in the area of Priory Hill (less than 500m from the site).

The discovery of Roman pottery during the 1913 foundation excavations for the construction of the Post Office, along with similar evidence from nearby sites in Biggin Street and the results of the field evaluation, suggest that the PO site lies immediately off the shoreline of the Roman Lagoon (which is now thought to lie directly beneath Biggin Street). Archaeological work previously carried out in the immediate vicinity of the site had revealed substantial evidence for both Roman and medieval activity (OAU 1994) and for tidal/

waterborne deposition from the original Roman coastline. It was therefore hoped that a greater definition of the area's coastal development from the Roman period would be realised and the location of the so-called 'lagoon' could be confirmed.

Evidence of Anglo-Saxon activity in the area was discovered within the walls of the Saxon Shore fort c. 350 m to the south-east. This consisted of sunken-floored buildings, a multi-phase timber hall, huts and a multi-phase timber church with associated burials. Occupation of the immediate locality was evident through to the Saxo-Norman period, perhaps with a short interlude (Wilkinson 1990, 17-19). A cemetery, probably of fifth- to sixth-century date, lies on Priory Hill, about 300m north-west of the PO site and may be the cemetery for the settlement inside the Saxon Shore fort. A number of other cemeteries are known from the Dour Valley (*ibid.*; Evison 1987, 168-78).

In 1994, the OAU evaluated the CRS site opposite to the former PO site and observed a well preserved sequence of medieval deposits of cobbled and chalk surfaces dated to the thirteenth century, and overlain by later garden loams (OAU 1994). This shows that ribbon development certainly existed along Biggin Street by this time, but it is likely to have begun earlier – Dover's medieval hospital, the Maison Dieu, lies on High Street, 200m north-west of the site under discussion here. Immediately west of the site is the eastern boundary of the precinct of Dover Priory (Benedictine), founded in 1130 (Haines 1930), while 80m to the north is the Chapel of St Edmund, dedicated in 1253, and overlying a twelfth-century structure (Philp 1970).

A substantial medieval/post-medieval building, possibly a farmhouse, occupied the Biggin Street frontage (Haines 1930, 150). A building is visible on the site on a map of 1581 (Macdonald 1937, plate 2), but little detail can be made out and in any case the cartography may be symbolic of the presence of a structure, rather than an exact representation. In 1728 this building was demolished and replaced by a house and cottages known as Freeman's Buildings, to the north of which was a substantial east-west boundary wall, apparently constructed of material from the demolished Priory (Haines 1930, 150-1). During the nineteenth century a series of workshops and dwellings was constructed around Freeman's Buildings, surviving until the whole site was cleared in 1912-1913 for the construction of the Post Office.

#### ARCHAEOLOGICAL DESCRIPTION

The following section is not a detailed, context-by-context descript-

ion of the archaeology. Instead, key contexts or groups of contexts are discussed in relation to the six important phases of the site's development (Fig. 3).

## Roman

The Roman archaeology consisted of several shallow ditches and gullies, a number of pits and two postholes. The identification of stratigraphic relationships was limited due to the restrictive nature of the trenches, therefore only projected associations can be suggested across the site. However, several similarly-aligned linear features were visible and may represent a system of field boundaries.

*Phase I* The earliest dated activity in the excavation came from the first and second centuries. In Trench 22 a ditch [2208] aligned NE-SW, together with the terminus of a curvi-linear ditch [2206] aligned approximately E-W, cut the natural at 5.24m OD. Both features were c. 0.3m deep and filled with greyish-brown clay silts [2207 and 2209]. Ditch 2206 appeared to be on a similar alignment with ditch 2027 in Trench 20. The clay silt fills and shape of cut are comparable. No datable material was recovered from the fill of 2027.

*Phase II* Ditch 2027 was cut by a NNW-SSE aligned ditch [2029]. The ditch had a rounded base profile and measured 0.8 m wide by 0.31 m deep and was filled by a brown clay silt containing second to third-century wares. Ditch 2029 continued beyond the limit of trench 20 but was identified in Trench 16 [1606], located 1.6m to the north-west. The fills [1613 and 1605] both contained second to third-century ceramic assemblages, with 1605 providing 111 sherds. Running the length of the trench the ditch narrowed from 1.0m to 0.50m and became shallower from 0.38m to 0.23m. Trench 15 identified two parallel linear features cutting the natural at 5.51m OD. The ditch [1516] and gully [1528] west of the ditch were 0.1m apart and ran parallel to ditch 2029 which lay 8m to the east. The gully was 0.50m wide by 0.20m deep and continued to the south-east. The ditch also extended beyond the trench to the south-east, and was 0.80m wide with a maximum depth of 0.30m.

Trench 17 identified a ditch terminus [1730] cutting the natural at 5.34m OD. At 1.0m wide, 0.32m deep, and more than 4 m in length, it extended beyond the trench to the north-west. It was similar to ditch 2029 in Trench 28 and contained a greyish-brown clay silt [1731] which produced an interesting array of finds. These included fine

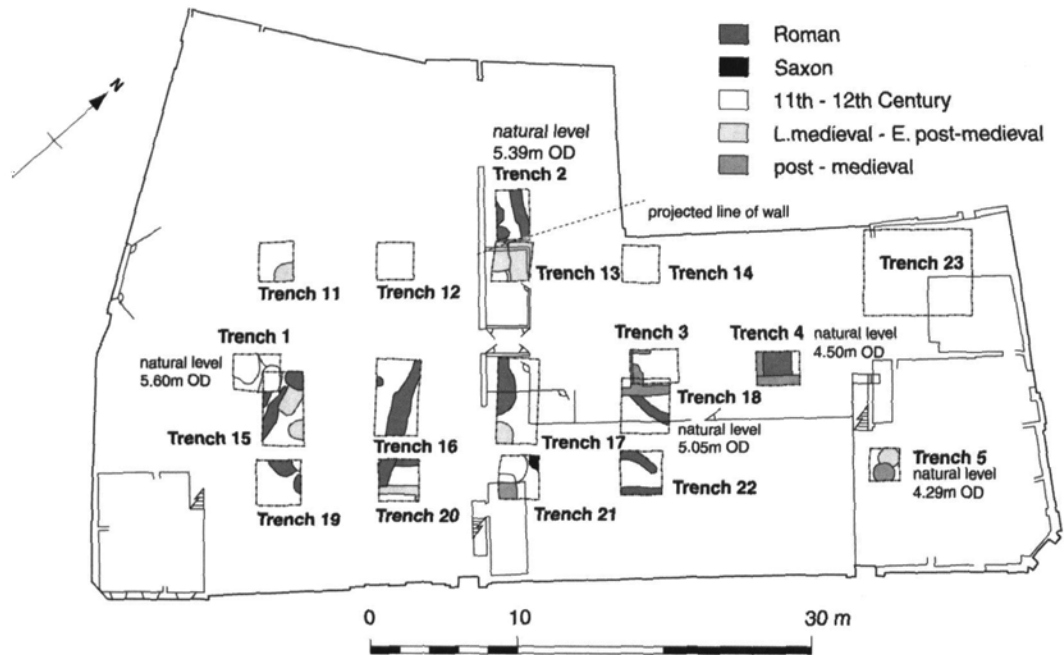


Fig. 3 Biggin Street site: plan of trenches and archaeological features by phase.

'Upchurch-type' grey wares and black burnished wares, both of which probably originated from north Kent. Roman hob-nails (SF134) and nails were also recovered.

In Trench 2 (Fig. 4) there were three archaeological features with similar fills of clay silt. These cut the natural at approximately 5.40m OD. A shallow, slightly irregular ditch [223] ran the length of the trench; it was approximately 1.10m wide and had a maximum depth of 0.60m. Ditch 223 may have continued into Trench 18, 12m to the east (Fig. 4). Here the ditch [1816] was again quite shallow, but was more curvilinear in plan, and narrower. The two remaining features in Trench 2 [225, 227] have been interpreted as pits. Only [227] was investigated, and this feature extended beyond the trench being greater than 1.00m E-W and 0.80m N-S. It contained a single clay silt fill [226], which was very similar to ditch fill 221, but was devoid of finds. In Trench 4 the natural at 5.11m OD was overlain by a

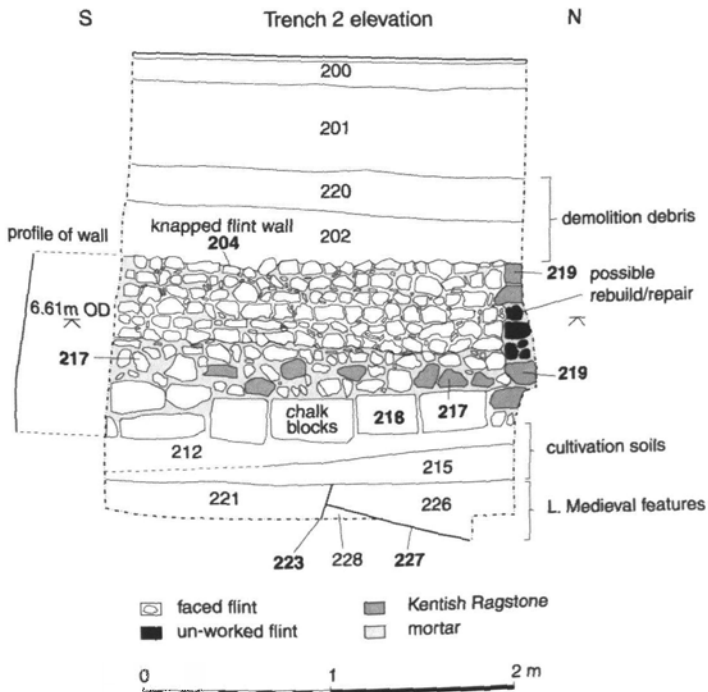


Fig. 4 Trench 2 section.



yellowish-brown silty clay [421]. This layer was cut by a NW-SE cut running across the north-east end of the trench [422]. This feature had a maximum width of 0.70m and was 0.55m deep. It was filled with a greyish-brown silty clay [423] containing lumps of mortar and eleven sherds of Roman pottery.

#### Anglo-Saxon (*Phase III*)

Whilst no securely datable Anglo-Saxon features were located during the excavation, the top fill of a Roman ditch in Trench 16 produced four intrusive sherds of middle to late Saxon Coarse Chalk-tempered ware sherds datable to the eighth century. In addition four sherds of Saxon Sparse Chalk-tempered ware were also present within a cultivation soil [2113] in Trench 21. No other datable material was recovered from deposit 2213.

#### Medieval (11th-12th century) (*Phase IV*)

The earliest medieval features were identified in Trenches 1, 19 and 21. In Trench 1 three pits truncated the natural at 5.25m OD. Two were shallow and devoid of finds, whilst the third [125], extended beneath the 1.40m excavated. This pit was roughly circular measuring 1.35m in diameter and had been deliberately back-filled with a series of light coloured silt clays [from earliest: 136, 135, 134, 133, 132, 131, 130 and 126]. Fills 126 and 131 contained pottery assemblages, comprising sandy ware dating to the eleventh and twelfth centuries. Although most likely to have been a rubbish pit, it is possible that this feature may have been a well. In Trench 19 a small pit [1911] which was 0.23m deep, cut both the natural and a Roman pit [1913] at 5.67m OD. Located in the north-west corner of the trench and with a visible radius of 0.50m, it contained a silt clay fill [1912] devoid of finds.

The final feature, dated by eleventh to twelfth-century pottery, occurred in Trench 21. A probable rubbish pit [2108] was 0.40m deep with an approximate radius of 1m. It was filled by a dark brown silt clay [2109] which contained four sherds of eleventh- and twelfth-century pot as well as animal bone and intrusive flints. The feature cut through the possible Saxon cultivation soil [2113].

#### Medieval (13th-mid 16th century) (*Phase V*)

Two wells were found in Trenches 5 and 11, both attributed to the late

medieval period. In Trench 5 a circular well [502] cut the natural at 4.29m OD. The construction consisted of weathered flint pieces in a clay matrix [508] internally faced with cut chalk blocks [507] bonded in a grey brown silt clay. The well was filled by a dark grey silt clay [505] containing organic debris, flint pieces, and ten sherds of thirteenth-century sandy ware with three sherds of fifteenth-century reduced ware. This feature was cut by a later well [501] immediately to the south and was excavated to the water table at a maximum depth of 0.6m. In the eastern corner of Trench 11 a chalk-lined well [1102] cut the natural at 5.24m OD and showed extensive signs of robbing activity. Only a quarter of the structure was visible; it had an approximate radius of 2.0m and was excavated to a similar depth. The chalk blocks were bonded with a whitish shell-flecked mortar [1104] and contained two fills [1103 and 1106]; the lower fill was composed of sand and clay and included sherds of thirteenth-century pot, while the upper fill was essentially rubble and devoid of finds.

#### Post-Medieval (*Phase VI*)

Trench 13 identified a pit [1305] lined with lime mortar which produced a wide range of sixteenth-century pottery including cauldrons, a frying pan and red earthenware cooking vessels. This large assemblage is typical of the period and is likely to have been utilised in the farmhouse shown on the 1581 map. The pit was truncated by two later post-medieval features one of which contained a poorly preserved timber box [1311]. Of particular interest was the relationship of the early post-medieval archaeology to the cultivation and garden soils (**Fig. 5**) which were present in the majority of the trenches. These two soils are both clay loams and contain similar inclusions, predominately flint and charcoal. The lower soil was consistently darker with the overlying soil being slightly lighter and more friable. Although the garden soil produced evidence of pollen, these soils were frustratingly lacking in finds. In terms of dating they clearly overlay the medieval archaeology but were cut by the post-medieval features, suggesting a period of cultivation in the late medieval period.

There is probable activity associated with the former Freeman's Buildings which originally fronted onto Biggin Street. In Trench 2 (**Fig. 4**) was a substantial flint wall [217, 204] on chalk block foundations [218]. The chalk foundation blocks [218] varied in size between 0.24m long by 0.14m wide and 0.44m long by 0.24m wide and were laid in both single and double courses. The blocks were

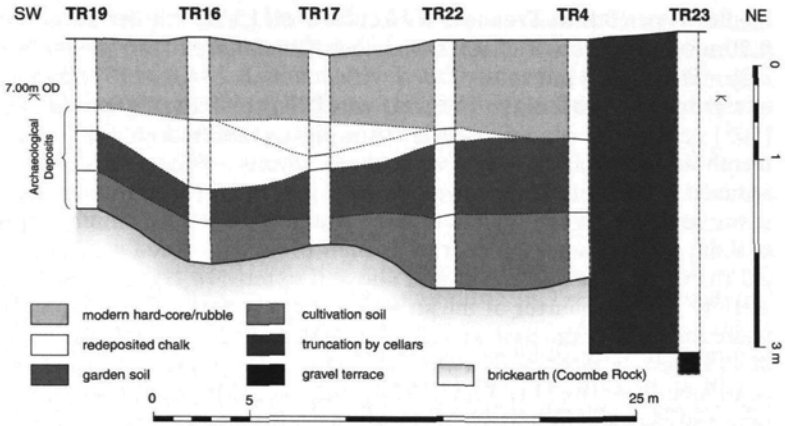


Fig. 5 Composite section showing underlying geology and worked soil horizons.

loosely bonded in a light brown clay silt. Overlying the chalk was an additional foundation [217] of uncoursed knapped and unknapped flint together with roughly hewn Kentish ragstone, bonded in a light grey sandy mortar. The wall itself [204] consisted of six uneven courses of knapped flint bonded with greyish white mortar. The wall was battered slightly to the NW and had an overall depth of 0.70m. A possible single rebuild or repair of the wall [219] and foundation [217] was apparent at the south western end of the section. Other examples of post-medieval features include the well [501] in Trench 5 constructed from roughly hewn Kentish Ragstone and bonded with a dark, grey blue mortar. The chalk and brick wall [1801] in Trench 18 and the chalk floor [1714] which overlies the garden soil [1715] in Trench 17 are examples of features associated with domestic and workshop areas, as are the wall structures 2032 and 2021 which were associated with possible chalk floors.

#### THE FINDS

The Roman Pottery by *P. Booth and K. Brown*

The 1998-9 excavation produced a total of 338 sherds, weighing 4249g, plus

two residual Iron Age fragments (12g), one flint-tempered and one sand-tempered. In addition there were 15 fragments of so-called 'chaff-tempered' ware, probably associated with the transport of salt. The pottery is generally in good condition, though the sherds are not particularly large (average weight 12.5g). Some 39 per cent of sherds occurred in contexts assigned on ceramic criteria to the Anglo-Saxon or later periods, leaving 207 sherds (2818g) from 13 contexts which contained no later material, though some of these contexts could have been of post-Roman date. The average weight of the 207 sherds was only slightly higher (13.6g) than the overall site average.

The material was assigned to ware (or generalised ware group) and vessel type where appropriate, and quantified by context in terms of sherd count, weight, rim count and rim equivalents using the standard OAU Roman pottery recording system (see Table 1, p. 162). It should be noted that not all the ware codes employed here are the same as those used in the analysis of the pottery from the White Cliffs Experience sites (Booth 1994). OAU ware codes are followed (where applicable) by their corresponding code in the National Roman Fabric Reference Collection (Tomber and Dore 1998).

The range of wares is comparable with material previously recorded from Dover. Fine (colour-coated, etc.) wares were particularly poorly represented, for reasons which are not clear. The representation of other 'fine and specialist' wares (samian, amphorae, mortaria, white and white-slipped wares) was at a reasonable level, forming 26% by count (38% by weight) of the assemblage. However, within this figure, the samian ware totalled 10.6% of sherds, of which 8.3% were from the Central Gaulish industries. Amongst these ware groups the most notable occurrence is of a vessel in 'Mayen' ware (W51). Overall the assemblage was dominated by reduced wares, which amounted to just over 50% of sherds (44% by weight) and were supplemented by oxidised and black-burnished wares. Both oxidised and reduced Canterbury products (O52 and R25) were recognised, but many of the reduced wares cannot be assigned to a specific source. Fine 'Upchurch type' grey wares (fabric R16) were present, and were particularly common in a ditch fill context 1731, which also produced the majority of BB2 (B20) sherds from the site. Both fabrics most probably derived from north Kent, which is also likely to have been the source of two small shell-tempered sherds. BB1 was relatively scarce, and at least six of the nine sherds present were from a single flagon, an unusual form in this fabric.

Only 46 vessels were represented by rim sherds, twelve of which were cups (2) and bowls (10) in samian ware. Samian forms included 18/31, 31, 33, 37 and Curle 11 and a mortarium body sherd was also present. The remaining numbers of rims do not permit detailed analysis of the breakdown of vessel types, or of correlation between these types and ware groups, except at the crudest level. Table 2 shows the types that were present (see p. 163).

TABLE 1. ROMAN POTTERY FABRIC QUANTIFICATION

Ware Code	Summary Description	Source	No.	%	Wt. (g)	%
S20	Samian ware	S. Gaul	5	1.5	51	1.2
S30	Samian ware	C. Gaul	28	8.3	551	13.0
S40	Samian ware	E. Gaul?	3	0.9	96	2.3
A	Amphora (general)	?	2	0.6	72	1.7
A11	Amphora (Dressel 20 etc)	S. Spain	3	0.9	190	4.5
A13	Amphora (Gauloise types)	S. France	2	0.6	57	1.3
F50	Oxidised brown col.-coated ware	?	1	0.3	1	0.0
F55	Oxidised brown col.-coated ware	?Colch'r	2	0.6	9	0.2
M27	Sandy white mort., quartz grits	?	1	0.3	42	1.0
M28	Buff sandy mort., flint/quartz grits	SE Eng.	1	0.3	52	1.2
M55	Oxidised sandy mortarium	C'bury	2	0.6	44	1.0
W20	Sandy white wares (general)	?	2	0.6	60	1.4
W32	Very fine white ware	?Import	4	1.2	23	0.5
W40	Fine pink-white wares (general)	?Local	2	0.6	10	0.2
W41	Fine pink-white ware	?Local	8	2.4	117	2.8
W51	Coarse white 'Maven' ware	Eifel	1	0.3	59	1.4
Q52	Fine oxidised, white slip	?Local	4	1.2	27	0.6
Q54	Sandy oxidised, white slip	?C'bury	18	5.3	162	3.8
	<i>Fine &amp; Specialist wares sub-total</i>		89	26.3	1623	38.2
O	Oxidised coarse wares (general)	?	1	0.3	3	0.1
O10	Fine oxidised wares (general)	?Var. local	6	1.8	44	1.0
O20	Sandy oxidised wares (general)	?	1	0.3	40	0.9
O30	Moderately sandy oxid. wares (gen.)	?	1	0.3	13	0.3
O50	Fine sandy oxidised wares (general)	?Local	2	0.6	3	0.1
O52	Sandy oxidised ware	?C'bury	10	3.0	65	1.5
O53	As O52 but finer	?Local	4	1.2	16	0.4
O80	Coarse grog-temp. oxid. wares (gen.)	Regional	9	2.7	181	4.3
R10	Fine reduced wares (general)	?Regional	5	1.5	14	0.3
R16	Fine reduced 'Upchurch type' ware	N. Kent	36	10.7	234	5.5
R20	Sandy reduced wares (general)	?Local	63	18.6	394	9.3
R25	Sandy reduced ware	C'bury	17	5.0	135	3.2
R30	Medium sandy reduced wares (gen.)	?Local	29	8.6	510	12.0
R90	Coarse grog-temp. red. wares (gen.)	Regional	18	5.3	504	11.9
R96	'Native Coarse Ware'	Regional	5	1.5	81	1.9
B11	Black-burnished ware (BB1)	?Dorset	9	2.7	56	1.3
B20	Black-burnished ware (BB2)	N. Kent	31	9.2	325	7.6
C10	Shell-tempered ware	?N. Kent	2	0.6	8	0.2
	<i>Coarse ware sub total</i>		249	73.7	2626	61.8
	Grand total		338	100	4249	100

## EXCAVATIONS AT BIGGIN STREET, DOVER

TABLE 2. ROMAN POTTERY BY FORM

Type Code	Description	Rim count
B	Flagons/Jugs	
BA	Small flagons (up to 6 cm rim diameter) (Pollard type 161)	1
BB	Larger flagons	2
C	Jars (usually closed types); ratio of ht to rim dia. is more than 1:1	3
CC	Narrow mouthed jars (ie rim dia. less than 2/3 girth)	1
CD	Medium mouthed jars	3
CJ	Lid seated jars	2
CK	'Cooking pot type' jars	2
CN	Storage jars	1
D	Indet. jar/bowl; insufficient survives to allow est. of ht/dia ratio.	3
E	Beakers	2
EG	'Carinated' beaker	
FC	Conical cup (includes drag. 33)	3
H	Bowl, open vessels, rim dia./ht ratio between 1:1 and 3:1	2
HB	Straight sided bowls	1
HC	Curving sided bowls (includes drag. 33, 37 and Curle 11)	7
I	Indeterminate bowl/dish	
IA	Straight sided bowl/dish (including Mon 5D5.2)	3
JA	Straight sided dish (includes drag. 18/31, Mon 5F3)	6
K	Mortaria	
KA	Hook rimmed/bead and flange mortaria	2
L	Lids	1
Z	Uncertain/Unknown types	1
	TOTAL	46

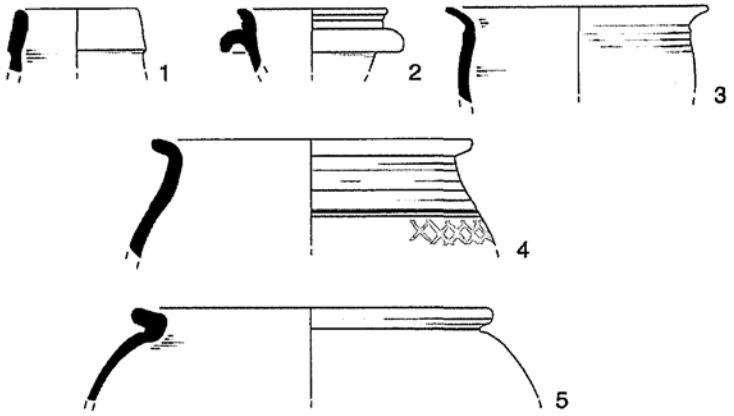
## Illustrated sherds: (Fig. 6)

Due to the small number of stratified groups, the vessels illustrated have been chosen to reflect the general nature of the assemblage. They are, therefore, arranged by vessel type and listed by fabric, vessel type and context:

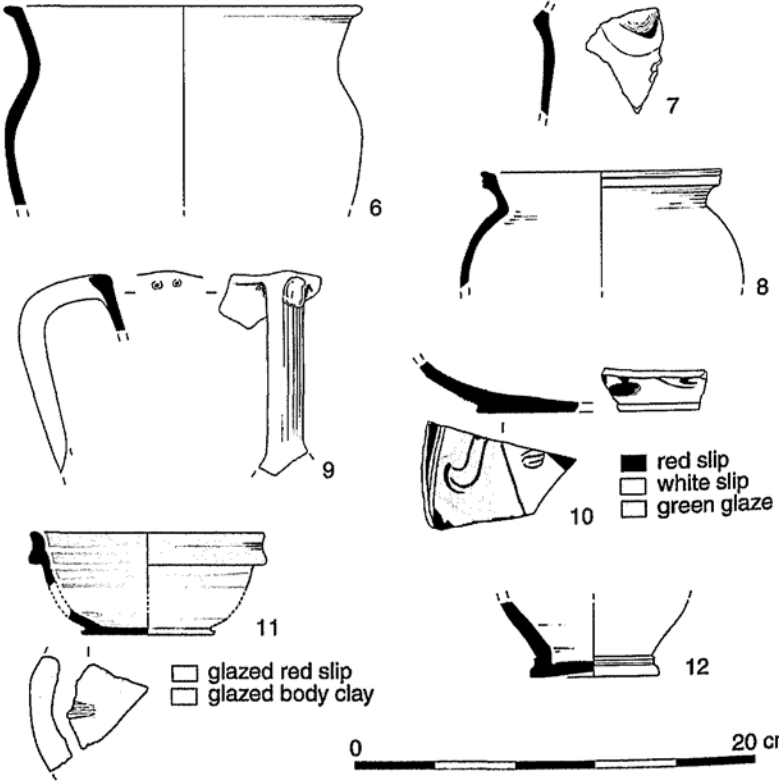
1. Fabric O30, type BB (Monaghan IE3.1). Context 1731
2. Fabric Q54, type BB. Context 2209
3. Fabric R30, type CD. Context 1731
4. Fabric R30, type CD. Context 1517
5. Fabric R20, type CJ. Context 1605

The pottery covers a wide date range, from the Flavian period to the fourth century. However, characteristic first-century material, such as the South

# Roman Pottery



# Post-Roman Pottery



Gaulish samian and a flagon neck in fabric O30, the latter possibly pre-Flavian (*cf.* Monaghan (1987) type 1E3.1) all occurs in later contexts and need not indicate first-century activity on this site. The only certain fourth-century piece, the Mayen ware jar, is from an intrusive (post-Roman) context. It is possible that some of the coarse grog-tempered (O80 and R90) sherds were of late Roman grog-tempered ware, dated by Pollard to the late third to fourth centuries (Pollard 1988, 129), but in the complete absence of diagnostic forms this is far from certain. Other characteristic late Roman material, such as the Oxfordshire and Nene Valley colour-coated wares and the late BB1 forms seen in Saxon Shore Fort deposits, are conspicuous by their absence. The range of fabrics and forms present is consistent with a primarily second to third-century date range, with the likelihood that late third-century as well as fourth-century material is absent. It may be significant that the two Roman context groups in Trench 22 are both dated late first to mid second century, perhaps indicating the earliest datable activity revealed in the excavation. In fact relatively few of the context groups were large enough to provide reliable dating, but those that were (and particularly the ditch group 1731) were generally dated mid/late second to mid third century. This date range also applied to the large group (111 sherds) from context 1605, which contained Anglo-Saxon pottery. Late Roman deposits thus appear to be absent.

The small assemblage from Biggin Street adds little to the understanding of Roman pottery from Dover, but can be compared to larger published assemblages from other sites in building up a picture of the development of Dover in the Roman Period. It is similar in nature to the assemblage from the *Classis Britannica* fort (Philp 1981) which spans the early second to third centuries AD, in the range of coarse wares and lack of material from the characteristically later Roman colour-coated industries. Although the large assemblage at the White Cliffs Experience site (DHC) has a wider date range (early second into fourth centuries) the early component of this assemblage also displays similarities with that recovered at Biggin Street.

### Post-Roman Pottery by *Paul Blinkhorn*

The assemblage comprised 168 sherds with a total weight of 3,797g. Where possible, fabric codes have been equated with those for the pottery from the Dover White Cliffs Experience site (Underwood-Keevill 1994, 114-26). Such fabrics are prefixed 'WCF' in this report. A number of post-Roman fabrics were noted, ranging from the eighth to nineteenth centuries, as follows:

- MS1: *Middle-late Saxon Coarse Chalk-tempered wares.* Crude, hand-made vessels with dense angular white chalk up to 5mm, rare flint up to 2mm. Associated with bossed middle Saxon vessel (below), and stratigraphically post-Roman. No diagnostic sherds except for a crude, flat basesherd. [6 sherds, 130g.]
- MS2: *Middle-late Saxon Sparse Chalk-tempered wares.* Very similar to MS1, but much sparser inclusions. Assemblage includes a single



- sherd from a high-necked vessel with an applied boss (Fig. 6.7). Such vessels occur in Canterbury from the later eighth to tenth centuries. Similar to WCF26. [3 sherds, 74g.]
- MED1: *Medieval Gritty ware*. Hard, light grey fabric. Moderate to dense orange-red, white and black sub-rounded quartz up to 2mm, sparse to moderate flint, ironstone and calcareous material of the same size. Similar late twelfth- early thirteenth-century material is known from Dover Castle (Cook *et al.* 1969). Generic type found in several places in Kent, such as Ashford (McCarthy and Brooks 1988, 317). Some similarities with WCF23, although this fabric has much larger inclusions. [2 sherds, 74g.]
- MED 2: *Early Medieval Sandy Ware* (WCF1). Very similar to Canterbury fabric EM1. Hard, dark grey to orange-red fabric with dense, clear sub-angular quartz up to 1mm. Jar forms often have distinctive, high, flaring everted rims, such as the vessel illustrated in Fig. 6.6 (*cf.* McCarthy and Brooks 1988, 183, no. 353). Eleventh-twelfth century. [11 sherds, 238g.]
- MED 3: *?Tyler Hill-type wares* (WCF11). Medieval sandy wares, glazed and unglazed, probably made at the eponymous production centre to the west of Canterbury, although in the case of Dover, other, more localized sources may exist (McCarthy and Brooks 1988, 318). Finer version of EM1, dirty olive green glaze. Produced from the late twelfth century, with highly-decorated glazed wares dating to around the second half of the thirteenth century (*ibid.*, 314). [24 sherds, 271g.]
- MED4: *Medieval Glazed Ware*. Fine, sandy orange fabric with glossy green glaze. Very fine white, grey and orange sub-angular quartz up to 0.2mm, and sparse red ironstone of the same size and shape. Rare rounded calcareous material up to 2mm. [1 sherd, 12g.]
- ?Scarborough Ware*: Medieval glazed ware manufactured from the twelfth century onwards in Scarborough, although it was not exported in quantity until the second half of the thirteenth century (Farmer and Farmer 1983, 101). Very wide distribution along the east coast of Britain from Scotland to Kent, and around the North Sea. Main exported products were highly-decorated green-glazed jugs in a fine, buff, sandy fabric (Williams and Tomber 1982, 111). However, similar wares are known from a kiln at Marchants Farm, Plumpton and at Lewes, Sussex (*ibid.* 116), and the sherd from Dover, although similar to Scarborough ware does not appear typical of the products of that industry (C. Cumberpatch, *pers comm*). [1 sherd, 12g.]
- Aardenburg Ware* (WCF114): Sandy orange glazed Low Countries imported ware, usually with a glossy green glaze over a white slip. Generally thirteenth-fourteenth century (Verhaeghe 1983, 70-1). [1 sherd, 1g.]
- Normandy Sandy Ware*: Similar to Normandy Gritty ware (WCF 113), but containing fewer, smaller inclusions. Smooth, orange-brown fabric with moderate fine, subrounded white quartz < 0.5 mm, rare, rounded red ironstone up to 1mm. Probably fifteenth-century. Two

feature sherds (Figs 6.8-9), a jar rim and the handle and rim from a jug (cf. Barton *et al.* 1992, fig. 73). [4 sherds, 96g.]

*Martincamp type II Ware*: Stoneware, probably manufactured in the Pays de Bray region of northern France (Ickowicz 1993, 58). Mainly exported from Dieppe. The best known form is the flask, although other vessel types were made. Two sherds (40g) from the same mammiform flask, hard, pale grey fabric with orange-brown outer surface (cf. *ibid.* fig. 3 no. 1).

*Late Medieval Reduced Ware*: Hard dark grey fabric with red core. Splashes of external green glaze. Dense sub-rounded clear quartz up to 1mm, sparse rounded black ironstone and calcareous material of the same size. Common fifteenth-century south coast type from many possible sources (D. Brown, pers. comm.). [5 sherds, 24g.]

*Beauvais Sgraffito Ware*. Hard, buff fabric. Two types, 'single-slip' and 'double slip' (Fig. 6.10-11). Vessels of the former type have surfaces covered in a red slip and overlain with a clear glaze. The design is cut through the slip to the body clay. Glaze appears orange-red over the slip, yellow over the body clay. The latter type has surfaces covered in two layers of slip, the lower red and the upper white. The design is cut through the white slip to reveal the red (e.g. Platt and Coleman-Smith 1975, fig. 191 no. 1095). The vessels from this site are probably sixteenth-century (D. Brown, pers. comm.). [3 sherds, 66g.]

*German Stonewares. AD 1480+*: A range of hard, grey, salt-glazed fabrics produced at numerous sites in the Rhineland and beyond (cf. Gaimster 1997). Includes beer-mug base (Fig. 6.12). [7 sherds, 172g.]

*Border Wares*. Generic term for the late fifteenth/early sixteenth-century pottery industries of the Hampshire/Surrey border area (Pearce 1992). The range of fabrics comprised fine, sandy whitewares with an off-white to buff fabric and with yellow, green, olive or brown glaze, and fine redwares with clear green to olive or brown glaze (*ibid.* 1). The manufacture of whitewares ceased during the eighteenth century. Produced a wide range of late medieval and early post-medieval vessel types. [2 sherds, 27g.]

*Dutch Red Earthenware*. Such pottery first came into production during the second half of the twelfth century, although it was not exported to England in quantity until the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, with production continuing to the later seventeenth century in some centres (Baart 1994, 19-23). Fine, brick-red slightly sandy fabric with few visible inclusions. Two sherds (61g) from the same chafing dish.

*English Red Earthenware*: Late and early post-medieval utilitarian wares made at a multitude of production centres. The vessels from this site are all in a slightly sandy brick-red fabric with very rare angular white flint up to 2mm. The tradition generally started during the sixteenth century, although earlier industries are known from major centres such as London. Similar material from Dover Castle

(Mynard 1969, 42-5) and the White Cliffs Experience site (Underwood-Keevill 1994, 125) was provenanced to the Wrotham potteries of north Kent, and dated to the seventeenth century. [69 sherds, 1216g.]

*Iberian Olive Jars:* Generic term for the pottery of the Mediterranean region imported into England during the later medieval period (fifteenth century), often as containers for olive oil, but also other luxury foodstuffs such as treacle, marmalade, raisins, ginger and sugar (Childs 1993; Pleguezuelo-Hernández 1993). Fine, pale orange brown fabric with few visible inclusions except for a few flecks of silver mica. Two plain bodysherds sherds (54g) from the same large vessel.

*Metropolitan Slipware. c AD 1612-1800:* Fine, uniform, brick-red sandy fabric. Sparse quartz and ironstone inclusions up to 0.5mm. Generally flatwares such as dishes, bowls and plates, with an internal orange or green glaze over painted slip decoration. Produced at numerous centres throughout England. (cf. Orton 1988, 298). [1 sherd, 23g.]

*Tin-Glazed Earthenware. c. AD 1550-1700:* Fine white earthenware, occasionally pinkish or yellowish core. Thick white tin glaze, with painted cobalt blue decoration, occasionally manganese purple and ochre. Rare inscriptions. Glaze tends to flake away from surface of body clay. Vessels usually ointment pots, albarellos and plates. [1 sherd, 16g.]

*Chinese Porcelain:* Hard, slightly translucent white fabric with a clear glaze, often with hand-painted polychrome decoration. Known in Europe from the thirteenth century, but did not become common until the sixteenth century (Whitehouse 1972, 63). [1 sherd, 8g.]

*Staffordshire Slipware. AD1680-1750:* Fine cream fabric with white slip and pale yellow lead glaze, commonest decoration is feathered dark brown trailed slip. Chiefly press-moulded flat wares, although small bowls and mugs etc are known. [1 sherd, 17g.]

The small size of this assemblage, the early post-medieval material apart, makes it difficult to draw any conclusions other than in the broadest terms. The middle Saxon wares are certainly worthy of comment, and are a useful addition to the corpus of finds of such material from Dover. The excavations at the White Cliffs Experience site produced a small number of sherds of middle Saxon Ipswich ware and local wares, and also Frankish blackwares of broadly the same date (Underwood-Keevill 1994, 117-23). Ipswich ware and imported blackwares were also noted at the Dover Yewden's Court excavation (Dunning 1957, fig. 14). The chronology of Ipswich ware has now been revised, and the material is thought to have first been made around AD 720, and exported widely soon afterwards (Blinkhorn forthcoming). Thus, the middle Saxon pottery from this site, being datable to the eighth century in Canterbury (N. Macpherson-Grant, pers. comm.) is broadly contemporary with that from the White Cliffs Experience and Yewden's Court excavations. The earlier medieval pottery appears typical of the region, although the as-

semblage is sparse and fragmentary. However, the presence of a fairly large sherd of a medieval jar with thick sooting on the outer surface (Fig. 6.6) hints at occupation in the immediate vicinity of this site.

The range of late and early post-medieval imported wares at this site is typical of those found at east and south coast ports of the period. The wares originate mainly from France, although Low Countries wares and pottery from Iberia is also present. More exotic wares, such as lustrewares (e.g. Hurst 1977, 76-95), are absent from this assemblage and also from those from Dover Castle and the White Cliffs Experience site. Such pottery is known from London (*cf.* Blackmore 1994) and Southampton (*cf.* Brown 1993, 78). The lack of such pottery may be a reflection of the nature of trade through Dover in the later medieval period, and suggests that it was largely in materials of a utilitarian nature.

Context 1305, a pit truncated by post-medieval cellaring, produced a relatively large assemblage of sixteenth-century pottery. It comprised virtually the full range of early post-medieval domestic pottery: red earthenware cooking vessels including at least four cauldrons and a frying-pan, all of which were sooted on the outer surface; preparation vessels, such as pancheons and large bowls; table wares, such as chafing dishes, mugs and dishes; and storage/transportation pottery, such as a fragment of a Martincamp-type flask. An assemblage such as this is typical of the period, and is highly likely to have been used in the medieval/post-medieval building shown on the map of 1581 (see above). The material bears comparison with the slightly later group of post-medieval pottery from a garderobe shaft at Dover Castle (Mynard 1969). It was dated to the second quarter of the seventeenth century, but chronological variations apart, shows many similarities to this assemblage. The castle group comprised Tin-Glazed Earthenwares, Stonewares and Earthenwares from Dutch, French and English sources, with the only major difference being the presence of a single North Italian Marble ware dish, although such vessels were common in southern England at that time (*ibid.* 42). The only major difference is in the vessel forms. The majority of the castle assemblage comprised tablewares and transportation vessels such as dishes, porringers, chargers, jugs, pancheons, beer-mugs, flagons, bottles, *albarelli* and flasks, whereas cooking vessels were absent apart from a few skillets and pipkins, none of which were sooted or burnt, and thus may have been used for serving or even consumption. This difference is almost certainly a functional one, specifically, one of scale. A castle, with a garrison and large numbers of domestic staff, would have been provisioned from a great kitchen, with large metal pans being necessary for the amount of food required. A farmhouse kitchen would have not needed to have produced the same quantities of food for most of the year, and so pottery cooking vessels, which on the whole were smaller than the largest contemporary metal vessels, would have sufficed, despite the fact that the household is likely to have had access to metal vessels, which appear to have been reasonably common in lower status households before the sixteenth century. For example, the kitchen inventory of a fourteenth-century London fishmonger lists over 20 bronze vessels, and other contemporary accounts indicate that this was not exceptional (Moorhouse 1987, vii). It is also worthy of note how little dif-

ference there is in terms of the status and origins of the two assemblages. Both groups, in the main, comprise purely utilitarian pottery from the same general sources, with 'luxury' items absent, but foreign pottery appears equally well-represented in both cases. This compares well with assemblages from other centres, and offers support to the notion that there is no reason to suspect that imported pottery was held in higher regard or was more expensive than local wares (Brown 1997).

#### Illustrations (Fig. 6)

6. Context 1510. Fabric MED2. Jar rim. Hard, uniform dark grey fabric. Outer surface is thickly sooted.
7. Context 2112. Fabric MS2. Grey fabric with smoothed outer surface. Context 1305:
8. Normandy sandy ware jar rim. Smooth, slightly soft, brick-red fabric.
9. Normandy sandy ware jug rim and handle. Smooth, slightly soft, orange-buff fabric with a darker core.
10. Beauvais Sgraffito bowl, 'double slip' type. Clear glaze on inner surface, appears variegated pale yellow and apple-green over the white slip, red over the red slip.
11. Beauvais Sgraffito bowl, 'single slip' type. Hard, pale buff fabric. Inner surface and outer rim are covered in a red slip, overlain with a clear glaze. The design is cut through the slip to the body clay. Glaze appears orange-red over the slip, yellow over the body clay.
12. German Stoneware beer-mug base, Frechen type. Hard grey fabric with slightly dull exterior brown salt-glaze.

#### The Objects of Copper Alloy and Iron by *Kate Atherton*

The archaeological investigations produced an assemblage of 68 metal objects, comprising five copper alloy items and 52 iron objects. Following assessment, the objects have been x-rayed and a full catalogue entry for each item has been recorded on an Access database, which forms part of the project archive. The preservation and condition of the assemblage as a whole was generally very poor but wherever possible each object was identified and classified by function. In addition to the coin, four categories were identified: six personal objects, ten structural items, forty-six nails and five miscellaneous sheet and strip fragments (the latter are not discussed here).

The *personal objects* comprised two pins, one lace tag, one button and a fragment from a possible bracelet (all made from copper alloy), and three strips of iron hobnails from the same context (recorded as one object for the quantification). The drawn wire dress pins (SFs 123 and 136A), constructed from slender strips wrapped around a shaft, are common finds from medieval and post-medieval sites and can date from the medieval period onwards (Margeson 1993, 13). However, such fine and slender pins are more likely to date from the sixteenth century through to the early nineteenth century which

is supported by their provenance. They were found in deposits dating to the sixteenth century [1305] and the nineteenth century [1314]. One pin (SF136 from context 1305) is broken but both would have measured approximately 30mm long. The lace tag (SF 136B) was found in the same context as the broken pin [1305] and is in a similar fragmentary condition. Lace tags were made from folded copper alloy sheet and were used to prevent the ends of laces fraying and to ease threading. Their initial use corresponds with the fashion for doublets and hose in the sixteenth century (Margeson 1993, 22).

The discoidal button (SF 137) was found in a Romano-British context [2209] but such objects were not made before the sixteenth century and it is therefore intrusive. The button is in poor condition but it appears to be decorated with a series of concentric circles on its upper surface. Although the shank has broken off the Dover button it corresponds most closely to a livery button dating from the seventeenth century (Biddle and Cook 1990, 575, fig. 155, no. 1752). A fragmentary curved piece of decorated copper alloy strip (SF 138) was recovered from a possible twelfth-century context [1510]. Its condition is very degraded and its shape is distorted. Therefore, no pattern can be determined but it is possibly a fragment from a bracelet formed from twisted copper alloy. A group of 13 hobnails (SF 134) were found in a Romano-British deposit [1731]. The nails were in three strips which had become concreted together and would have probably originated from the same shoe. The nails were in poor condition and few shanks survived but they would have measured c. 13mm long and had domed heads with a diameter of c. 9mm.

Ten objects have been classified either as *structural ironwork or furniture fittings*. Two objects from nineteenth-century deposits have been identified as a lock plate (SF 109 from context 1314) and a holdfast (SF 102 from context 1400) and both would probably have been found on the exterior of a building. The lock plate is formed from a hollow rectangular box with a grill of strips inside it and with wood still attached to its exterior. A late post-medieval date is likely. The holdfast comprises a spike that would have been driven into a wall and a flat rectangular plate with a hole in the centre which would have protruded from the wall and would have been used to tie something, such as an animal, still. The holdfast is heavy, with a high lead content, and has considerable amounts of mortar attached. Such items can date from the Roman period but this example is more likely to date from the late medieval period at the earliest.

Four objects are probably fittings from furniture or from a structure. One large strip (possible sixteenth-century context 1800) is comparatively substantial, with a length of 160mm, and is possibly a structural bracket. One end formed a right angle before being broken. A smaller L-shaped strip (SF 106 from medieval context 1312) is possibly a hinge pivot or a wedge-shaped nail. Two small heavily encrusted objects (SFs 110 and 125) were found in the same medieval context [1311] and are similar in appearance. Both are surrounded in wood remains but both appear roughly D-shaped, but square, with the edges continuing beyond the bar. The objects are in too poor a condition for identification to be certain but they are possibly square U-shaped staples or small hinges from a wooden object. They are both approximately 50mm long.

The remaining four items are perforated strips that were probably furniture fittings or bindings. Three were found in the same deposit (sixteenth-century context 1305) and are probably from the same object. Two of the strips have punched regular circular holes and the longest, 74mm, has at least two non-ferrous rivets 27mm apart. All three have irregular circular holes punched in clusters, usually towards the corners. Wood survives on the underside of the strips. The fourth strip is a heavily corroded fragment from a fifteenth-century deposit [1103] and has nail holes or rivet holes down the centre. This strip similarly has large amounts of wood surviving.

The greater part of the assemblage is represented by the group of 46 nails, none of which are horseshoe nails. Similarly to the rest of the assemblage, the nails have survived in poor condition and only one (SF 122 from medieval context 1311) is complete. The condition does not allow a typology for the nails. The nails are all heavily encrusted but the condition of the six nails from Romano-British deposits 1731 and 2030 is significantly more degraded, supporting an earlier date. None of the Roman nails are complete. Five of the nails are from the same deposit [1731] but otherwise no relationship between the Roman nails can be determined. The remaining eleven nails are from assorted medieval and nineteenth century contexts.

The assemblage of metal has survived in poor condition and few items are complete. The majority of the objects probably originated from a medieval or post-medieval building, possibly sixteenth-century in date, and would have been associated with the external structure of the building or from its internal fixtures and fittings. The personal items are too few in number to be informative, though some may have been used in the post-medieval farmhouse. The metalwork that can be positively identified as Romano-British is not a useful indicator about the nature of the site during that period. With the exception of one encrusted fragment of sheet, the objects are distorted and encrusted nails, and a group of hobnails.

TABLE 3. QUANTIFICATION OF NAILS

Context	No. of nails	No. with wood	Context date
1304	3		16th century
1305	2		16th century
1306	3		16th century?
1310	9	4	19th century
1311	15	17	Medieval
1312	5	4	Medieval
1314	1		19th century?
1316	2		19th century
1731	5		RB
2030	1		RB
Total	46		

The Building Materials by *Kate Atherton*

The archaeological investigations produced a total of 149 pieces of Roman and post-Roman ceramic building material which had a combined weight of 14,587g. Ten fragments (1,882g) were dated as Roman, 111 fragments (16,604g) as post-Roman and the remaining 36 fragments (764g) were miscellaneous and could not be dated. Additional materials comprised one fragment of painted wall plaster, two samples of mortar, three slate fragments and a piece of architectural stone.

The fragments of Roman building material were assigned to one of several tile type categories. *Tegulae* were distinguished by the presence of a flange or, if the flange itself was absent, by a groove along the base of the flange. *Imbrices*, roof tiles that linked the *tegulae* tile, were identified by their curved profile. *Tubuli* or box-flue tiles were recognised by the existence of a key for plaster or the remains of a perforated side panel through which the hot air could flow. Flat tile fragments had none of the above characteristics but had a thickness less than 39mm. Tiles thicker than this were identified as bricks. Roman building material accounts for only 16% of the total number of fragments, although it is possible that at least 12 of the miscellaneous fragments, found in Roman contexts or with similar looking fabrics, are also Roman, but this can not be proven. One example each was found of *tegula*, *imbrex*, box-flue and brick and the remaining six pieces were flat tile. The fragments of *tegula*, *imbrex* and flue tile were found in Trench 2 of the evaluation and two of the tiles, the *imbrex* and flue tile, were found in the same deposit [221]. Fabrics were only assessed but it appeared that the fragments of and flue tile and a flat tile fragment, also possibly flue tile, were made from the same fabric and were therefore from the same source and may be contemporary. The flue tile exhibited combing for the plaster key and there were traces of burning on the underside.

The assemblage of ceramic building material is small and generally in poor condition and it is clear that pieces have been greatly disturbed by subsequent activity on the heavily stratified site. Therefore, the stratigraphic sequence cannot be used safely to date the individual pieces of tile or brick. The amount of Romano-British material is extremely slight but it is representative with examples found from all parts of a building, including at least one fragment of hypercaust flue tile. This would indicate a Roman building of some pretension, but there was no other evidence for such a building on the site and the small amount of tile could have been derived elsewhere.

The ceramic building material that originated from the second major development on the site, in the late medieval to early post-medieval period, is generally undiagnostic. The ridge tiles are plain which would support a date in the sixteenth or seventeenth century but the flat roof tiles could have been removed from a building of this date or of one from the nineteenth century. The brick fragments are similarly undiagnostic and the majority are nineteenth-century.



*The Flint by Hugo Lamdin-Whymark*

A total of 77 worked flints and one piece of burnt unworked flint was recovered from the excavation; in addition during evaluation 44 flints were recovered from a fifteenth-century flint-lined well, which probably represent construction debris. The assemblage contains a significant number of platform-abraded soft hammer blades, many of which are up to 100mm in length. These technological traits suggest the flintwork belongs to a blade-based industry of Mesolithic or early Neolithic date. The close proximity of the site to an excavated, but as yet unpublished, Neolithic 'farmstead' on York Street suggest an early Neolithic date is most probable (Philp 1972, 237). The assemblage was entirely residual, contained in Roman and later contexts.

*Animal Bone based on a report by Bethan Charles (bird, fish and small mammals by Claire Ingrem)*

A total of 659 fragments of bone were retrieved from the site, of which 464 were recovered by hand and 195 from sieved samples. A further 332 fragments of bird, fish and small mammal remains were also recovered.

The small number of bones limits the meaningful information regarding the economy of the site. It is clear that cattle, sheep and pig were the most important food source through all phases with a possible increase in the numbers of sheep during the post-medieval period, most likely due to the greater importance of wool in the late medieval and post-medieval period (Maltby 1979, 91). Horse bones represent at least two individuals from the Roman phases, and one from a post-medieval context. Single dog bones were also recovered from the Roman and post-medieval deposits. The incidence of bird and fish in the assemblage indicates that there was slight variety in the diet, predominantly during the medieval period, although it reveals little information regarding the status of the site.

## GENERAL DISCUSSION

The restrictive nature of the excavation has limited the identification of stratigraphic relationships across the site. This factor led to conclusions being drawn on the basis of alignment and, where relevant, similarities in fill types rather than direct inter-feature associations.

However, it has been possible to make broad conclusions about the site's underlying geology (Fig. 5). The composite section illustrates that the natural Coombe Rock slopes down to the east where the underlying gravel is visible. Two phases of Roman activity cut the natural. These phases of activity were overlain by two worked soil horizons that have been tentatively classed as a late medieval cultivation and garden soil. The remaining deposits appeared to relate

to either the construction of the Post Office or the levelling of the site that preceded it.

### *Prehistoric*

The small assemblage of Mesolithic or early Neolithic flint, albeit residual in Roman contexts, is a useful indicator of prehistoric activity in the Dour Valley some distance from the known early Neolithic site which lies under the *Classis Britannica* fort (Philp 1972, 237). Hunting and fishing sites, and farmsteads, might all be reasonably predicted along the fertile valley.

### *Phase I*

The first phase of construction for the Roman base of the *Classis Britannica* at Dover has been dated to c. AD 117. A second phase of occupation began in 130-140 when a fort was constructed over an area of one hectare. The extra-mural settlement spread at least as far northwards as St Mary's Church and the site under discussion here therefore lies some 200m north-west of its known limit. A Roman cremation found just north of the site (Parfitt, pers. comm.) would certainly have been outside the main settlement, and it is therefore a reasonable interpretation that the Phase I ditches identified in the excavation of the PO site were used as field boundaries.

### *Phase II*

The second- and third-century growth of the Roman fort would have stimulated the expansion of the extra-mural settlement and of the associated agricultural activity. The series of ditches associated with Phase II activity on the site may well be indicative of a developing farm system. The NW-SE ditches respect the alignment of Priory Road, which is the assumed line of the Roman road serving the *Classis Britannica* fort. With regard to the proposed Roman Lagoon, enough of the site was excavated to demonstrate conclusively that there were no alluvial silts present. It can therefore be reasonably supposed that the lagoon area lies below or east of Biggin Street, and it is possible that the suggested Roman road under Biggin Street developed along the lagoon edge as well as serving the later Saxon Shore fort (Fig. 2).

Two classes of evidence were notable by their absence, namely, burials and late Roman activity. The former have certainly been found nearby on Biggin Street (see above) and might well have been expected on the PO site, although the Biggin Street end of the site was

the most badly damaged by later cellars. It is tempting to suggest that the lack of late Roman evidence points to a contraction of extra-mural activity during the Saxon shore period, but further and more extensive excavations would be required to confirm this.

### *Phase III*

No securely dated Saxon features were identified during the excavation but a total of eight sherds of pottery were recovered from two contexts. Four sherds of middle Saxon pottery (MS1) were recovered as intrusive finds in the top of a Roman ditch (Phase II). The remaining sherds were identified in a cultivation soil. Although the material may be residual it probably indicates some middle Saxon activity in the vicinity. Middle Saxon pottery in small quantities has also been found at 11-16 Biggin Street (directly across the road from the PO site) and to the north-west, at the Victoria Hospital site (Parfitt, pers. comm.). The possibility of a middle Saxon trading settlement, or *wic*, at Dover, was suggested to one of the authors (DW) some time ago by Martin Biddle. Extensive work along the seafront has found no trace of such a settlement, and it could be that the area under discussion here is a possible location, using the projected lagoon. However, the quantity and nature of the middle Saxon finds to date is insufficient to take this argument further, and the material from the Shore fort is not yet published.

### *Phases IV and V*

Three rubbish pits typified the early medieval activity on the site, suggesting nearby habitation. The two wells in Trenches 5 [502] and 11 [1102] appear to date from this period also. The wells did not contain large datable assemblages but wares dating from the thirteenth to the seventeenth centuries (upper fills only) were recovered; the wells may therefore have been used over a long period. Thus the archaeological evidence, although limited, suggests that the site was built on in the medieval period. This is in accord with the general ribbon development known along Biggin Street, and with the fact that a structure is already present on a map dating to the very early post-medieval period (Macdonald 1937, plate II; the map dates to 1581). The form of this structure is discussed below.

### *Phase VI*

The only securely dated post-medieval assemblage came from pit 1305 which is most likely to have served as a rubbish pit for the

building already mentioned under Phase V. The pit was lined with a lime mortar and contained a large assemblage of utilitarian sixteenth-century vessels. A full range of domestic vessels was present and is comparable with an assemblage recovered from an excavation of the garderobe at Dover Castle. No metal vessels were recovered although this is surely a question of scale; otherwise there is remarkably little difference in the two assemblages (see Blinkhorn, above). The concentration of early post-medieval roof tiles (73 of 88 fragments) and paucity of early post-medieval brickwork would suggest that the farmhouse had a tiled roof and was probably timber framed. This was supported by the lack of any noticeable foundations, which would have been necessary for a large brick structure. Faunal assemblages indicate that cattle and sheep were the predominant species and the main butchery waste was from fully mature individuals suggesting that the livestock was being bred for wool, milk and dung. Fish (cod and herring), mallard and wild plover all formed part of the diet, as might be expected given the coastal location.

The excavation did not achieve a satisfactory characterisation of the cultivation soils identified in the evaluation. The two soils interpreted here as a cultivation and garden soil are both clay loams and contain similar inclusions, predominately flint and charcoal. The deposits are shown to exist across the site except where truncated by modern cellars. Their respective levels present a reasonably coherent pattern although their higher elevation along a N-S axis through the centre of the site raises the possibility of ridge and furrow ploughing or a similar system. Both deposits had been worked but were frustratingly lacking in datable material. The soils contained small fragments of building materials but these were generally non-diagnostic. Stratigraphically, the two soil horizons overlay the later medieval deposits and are truncated by the later post-medieval structures and modern cellars. The cultivation soil may therefore be attributable to the building in its post-medieval phase, with the later garden soil being associated with the change of use associated with the construction of Freeman's Buildings in the eighteenth century. There is evidence of further activity which can probably be associated with Freeman's Buildings, such as the flint and Kentish Ragstone wall on chalk block foundations identified in Trench 2. Similarly, a Kentish Ragstone lined well in Trench 5 can be assigned to this phase.

The site was cleared in 1912-1913 to make way for the construction of the PO building. The site clearance appears to have removed all archaeologically sensitive material to a depth of c. 1.2m from existing ground surface (see Fig. 5). Cutting down through the site stratigraphy,

and into the natural, the foundations and cellars of the 1913 PO building are responsible for extensive removal of deposits across the site.

In general terms the excavation on the site of the former Post Office at Biggin Street recovered a relatively low level of information from the site, but it demonstrates the potential value of extra-mural sites. The excavation adds to the interesting debate on the extent and nature of the extra-mural settlement in the Roman to post-medieval period. The first phase of recording works on the site began in 1913. Only now, with the re-excavation of the site and the re-evaluation of evidence from the surrounding area can an accurate picture be constructed of the extra-mural development of Dover. Should further construction works be carried out on the site in the future, due consideration should be given to the surviving archaeological deposits between those pile locations investigated here, as there is clearly further information to be gained.

[Editor's Note. This article is an abridged version of the report prepared by the Oxford Archaeological Unit. A copy of the full report is held in the Society's Library; the archive has been deposited at Dover Museum.]

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