

Lenham Archaeological Society

SITE 14 : REPORT on Late Iron Age pots rescued from the CTRL site near Snarkhurst , Hollingbourne , April 1999 .



As Viewed from the Pilgrims Way

Snarkhurst Multiphase Prehistoric and Roman site at TQ 8225.5400

This site was principally an Iron Age overlapping Bronze Age and with a few Roman structures after the invasion in 43 AD.

When the M20 was made in the 1960's somehow they missed the site almost completely.

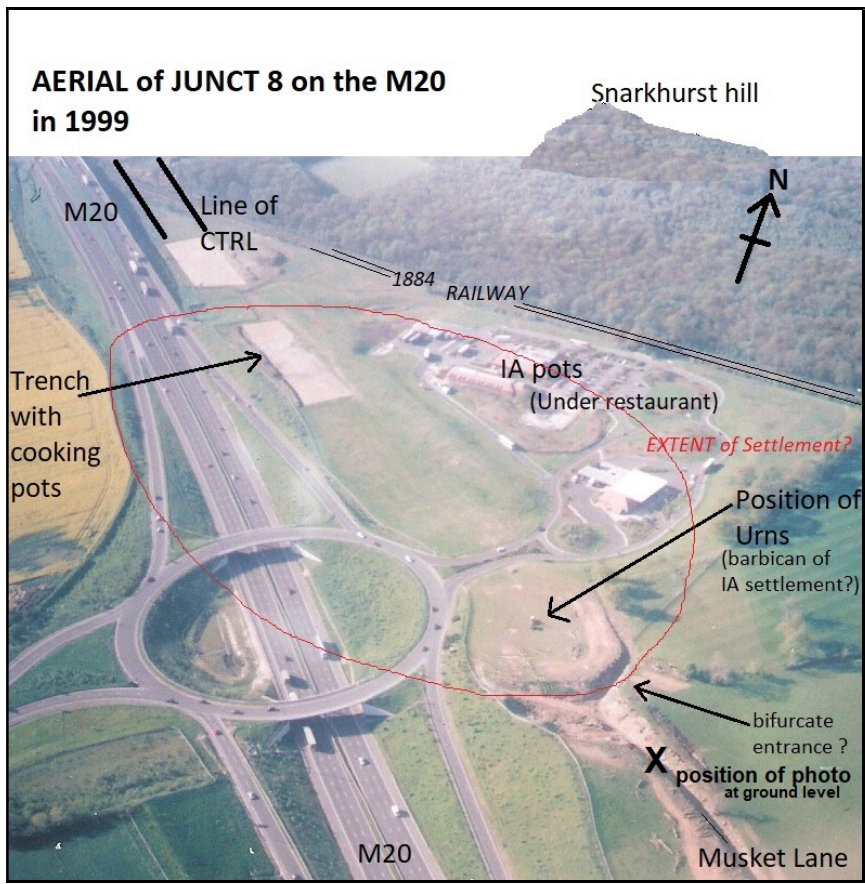
Iron Age pottery was found when they constructed the service station at Junct 8 M20 in 1999.

See the report by Oxford Unit in *Archaeologia Cantiana* 1999

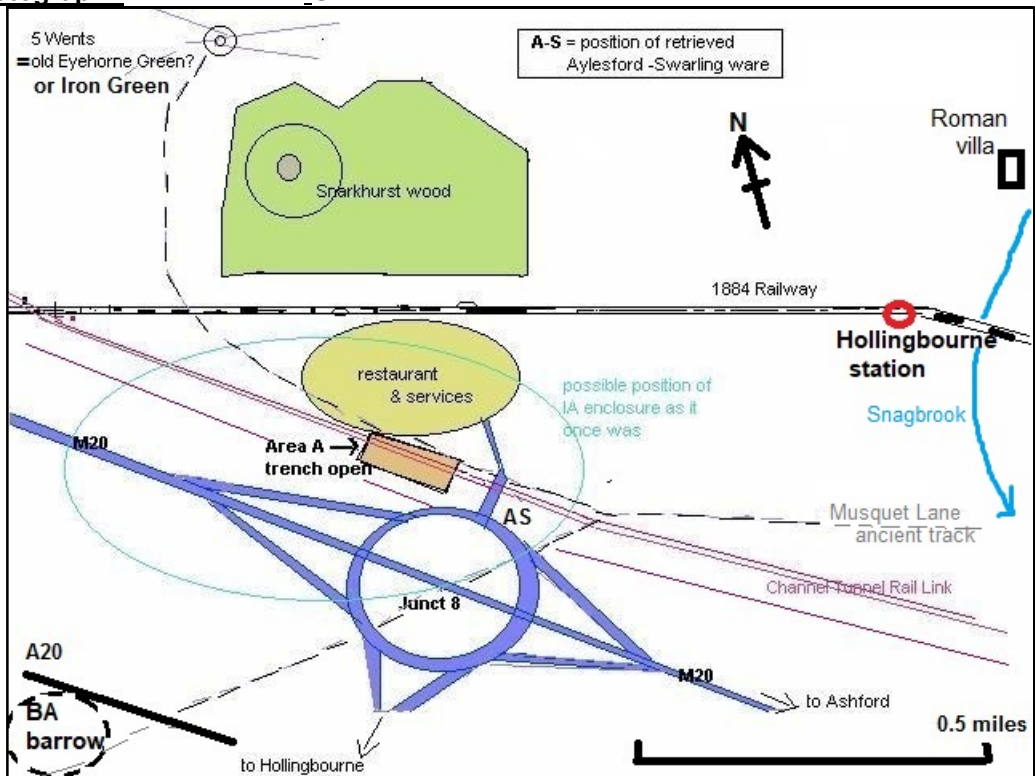
When the new high speed railway was constructed early this century only two trenches were requested and only one appeared to be on the main settlement. We were told that we could glean any sherds for local reference after the excavation were completed . One Sunday afternoon with just lightly trowelling back. it was immediately evident that there was a lot more pottery (almost complete) upside down in a cooking trench with masses of charcoal. I informed several people :- Canterbury Archaeological Trust , KCC Archaeologist , President of KAS , Peter Kendall of EH and of course Union Rail . Only one was concerned about the need of rescuing it , although it was evident these were possibly unique Late Iron Age pots. But we had to leave them there .

Even when the bulldozers had moved in an intrepid ,member of the public handed me pieces of pot from the circle of the motorway exit . (Pots 35--36)

The site overview ...Musquet Lane (perhaps Musquetstone Lane ?) was a well known footpath that divided at the eastern entrance of the IA site . One has to appreciate that the footpaths were far older than any musket practice and the extraction of sand could have first been started in the IA . Possibly the many sand caves were dug in the IA to follow seams of iron ore .These sand caves have never been accurately dated historically as far as I know .



Photograph: taken when the UR excavations started show the structure of the site .



Map of the Junction 8 area of the M20 (Leeds Castle exit)not to accurate scale .

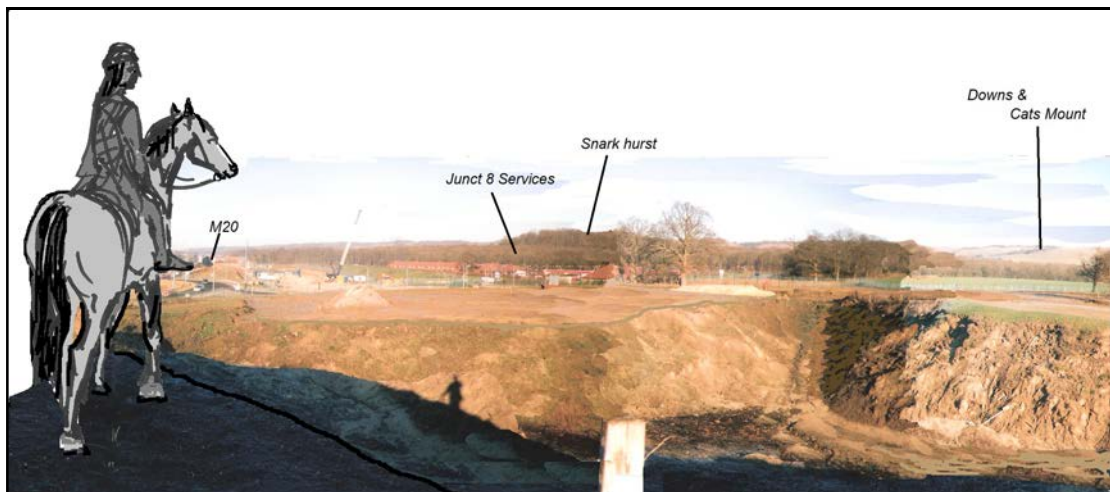
Photographs taken before bulldozers had destroyed the entrance. It was a well known footpath ,. Here it is when the trees had been removed but the structure is more or less intact (note the destroyed footpath sign):-



Imagine that with a wooden battlement and it becomes quite impressive, especially as the banks were possibly a meter or so higher !



Site with imagined stockade



VIEW looking NW . Channel tunnel Rail link runs from the crane through to the marker post in the foreground. The right hand side cleft used to be a footpath that ran to Iron Green village in Medieval times.

Pot fabrics, over view:-

There are 135 sherds and 38 are drawn in this account . I have not studied in detail type assignments of other Kent sites but I am assuming that some of these pots were made on site locally and with local clay therefore they should have a type description that is all their own. There may even be new types not noted in Kent before. Some may have been imported from elsewhere and some certainly have similarities with Atrebatas pots from Sussex . Granted , the potters will have been influenced by others in Kent but a kiln was found on site by OAU and maybe these Snark pots should have claim to their own pot types. ('Hurst' just means wood, the Snark was the pointy 'eye' within it , pronounced by locals as Snag .)

The majority of these pots were manufactured from a sandy ware clay (as at Royton/Mount castle) and the sand had particles of glauconite that is quite dark brown and seems to add to their dark grey colour . This 'brown sand' can be found if one walks the beach at Pett Level in Sussex where it washes out in swathes . Eroded from the cliffs in much the same way as it formed here on the greensand ridge . I have used Pett Level brown sand and added to clay to mock up similar potsit fires very much the same .

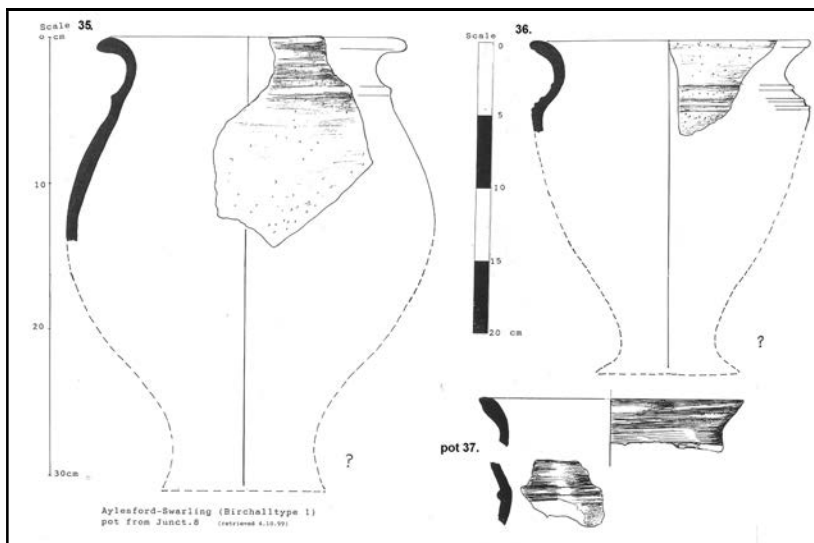
Pots descriptons /drawings/photographs

The slope to the south behind the post is where sand was dug out in modern times . As far as I know no great amount of sand was removed and pieces of Iron Age pot were found on the banks in walk- overs before any CTRL construction was done. Here is a piece I retrieved form near that post on Musquet Lane :-

Pot 1' . Grog tempered , hand built, IA sherd from bank of Musquet Lane



The main bank of the site, in the 'barbican' between the split entrance way, had three pieces of IA urn retrieved by a young lad from beneath a parked bulldozer a few months later . My drawing of these particular pots (labelled :-35.36.37 because they were found last .)



These sherds had a smooth feel to them and were wheel thrown , high fired and seemed to resemble Aylesford –Swarling type funerary urns . If so they should have all been extracted a they indicated cremation burials . The fact that they were near the gate , in the barbican area, I would assume was important could they have been high status individuals ?
Pot 37 had two sherds one was a rim and the other a piece of the burnished shoulder with a cordon .



The Three different funerary urns from the 'barbican' of Junct 8 site (as in previous diagram)

Pots from the context of the Cooking trench

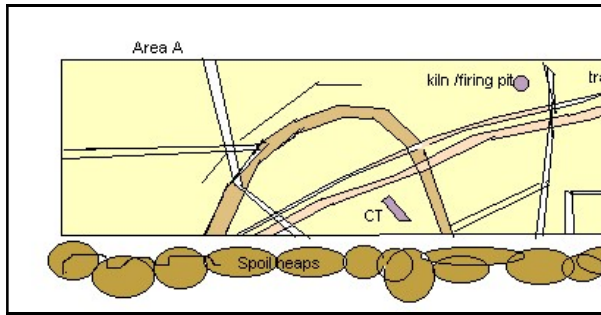
Six weeks earlier than these urns were found, locals were told they could retrieve any pieces of pottery for local information . After just a few hours of investigation it was obvious there were many more unique Late Iron Age pots that needed rescuing!

I then contacted everyone whom *should* have been concerned. Union Rail, KCC, the Co. Archaeologist KAS , English Heritage and local archaeology unitsbut few responded at all positively . Here is my report on some of those pots that we rescued . Others were lost forever yet there was time (at least 4 weeks) to have rescued them !

The trench had been dug, surveyed , then left and appeared to have many features across it . Most of these had been investigated one could see, but a cooking trench (plenty of charcoal) lay within a curved structure (round house ?) On trowelling back several pots were found .

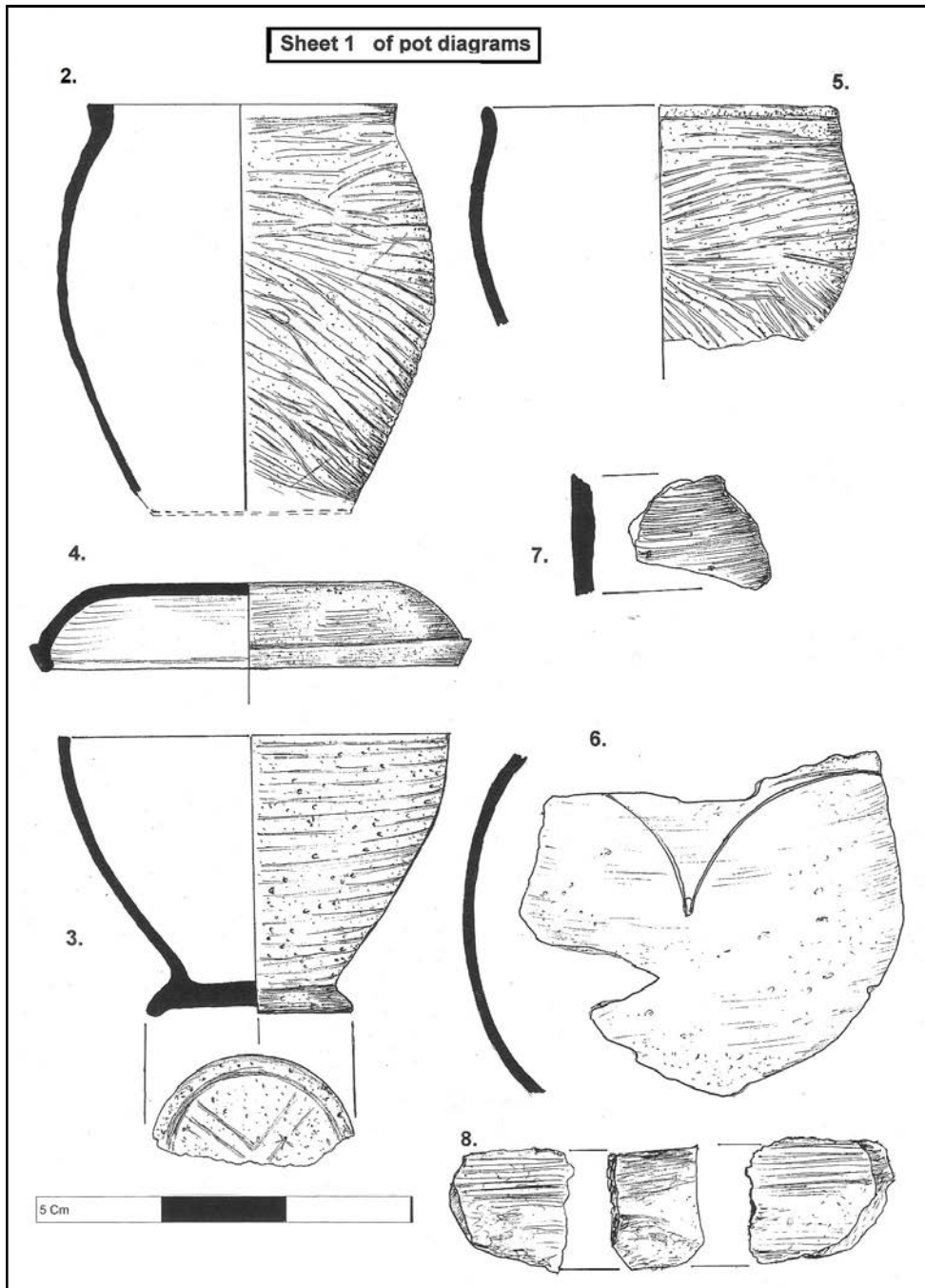
These pots were upside down in the apparent cooking trench and the mechanical digger had sliced off their bases. We found parts on the spoil heaps that fitted . Two of the pots had pot boilers , fairly large square pieces of ragstone and there were traces of cooked food . For them to be abandoned like that in the Late Iron Age *suggests* that the owners were disturbed by the Roman Invasion . So the probable importance of these pots cannot be denied .

I am describing here what we found. It is a pity the UR have never supplied Kent with a museum so that people interested could have access to the findsas was once promised!



Approx plan of the open trench with the marks noticedwhere our pots were found was within an apparent circular structure in a short cooking trench of charcoal. Marked CT .

Pot sherds 2—5 from the trench area:-



2. Was ¾ complete, found upside down but unfortunately the bottom had been cut off by the JCB bucket . Even so some of the food content and potboilers were retrievable . It has grey sandy ware body with grog added , blackened reduction fired with bead rim , hand built pot with rough irregular beating lines produce with a sharp edge of wood done with a piece of wood .

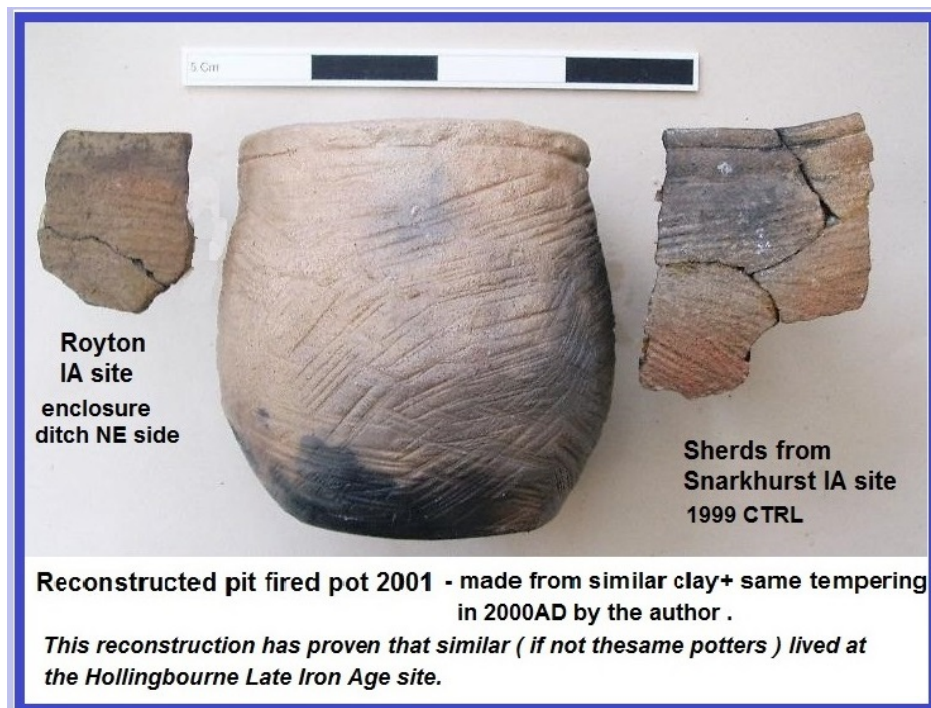
3 . With its lid no 4 . was wheel thrown and then tooled and turned on the wheel whilst leather hard to make sure that it fitted neatly under its lid . The snag holes can be clearly seen where the turning tool (most likely metal) has caught on pieces of grit/sand within the clay body and hooked them out .It too contained pot boilers and the remains of food .

It had an incised cross of its base like those found on the base of Late Iron Age pots from Dragonby site in Lincolnshire .



Pot boiler as found in pots 2& 3

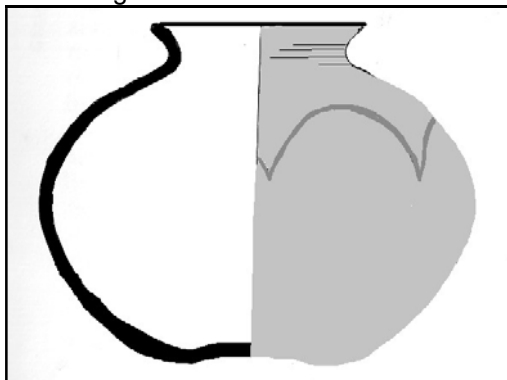
5. Buff sandy ware pot , hand built with striations again formed by beating with a stick. This pot I made an experimental copy using local clay and pit firing . This picture is featured in the Royton/Mount castle article (Site 6 in Lenham) because some few years later a pic eof matching pot was discovered in the enclosure ditch of that site . The volunteer archaeologist who found that sherd could not believe how similar it was !



Pot 6. was a typical 'Belgic Grog' ware pot with smooth slightly soapy feel and it had traces of an 'eye brow' pattern not unlike an Atrebatas pot .



Pot 6 typical grog ware pot with 'eyebrow' "V" . This would have been a globular shape , something like this :-

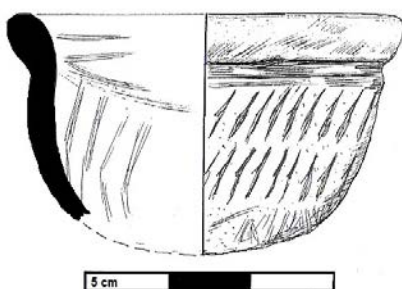


These are typically late Iron Age common in the SE of England

Pot 7. = a small piece of body sherd

8 = a pot boiler

9. were three pieces found on the spoil heap but fitted together to form a very thick pot that would appear to have had a rounded base . This resembles earlier pots from the Bronze Age but again pots shaped like this (Late Iron Age)have been found at Dragonby (see Sheila Elsdon, Shire publication.) This maybe a case where thermoluminescence might confirm its date of firing.



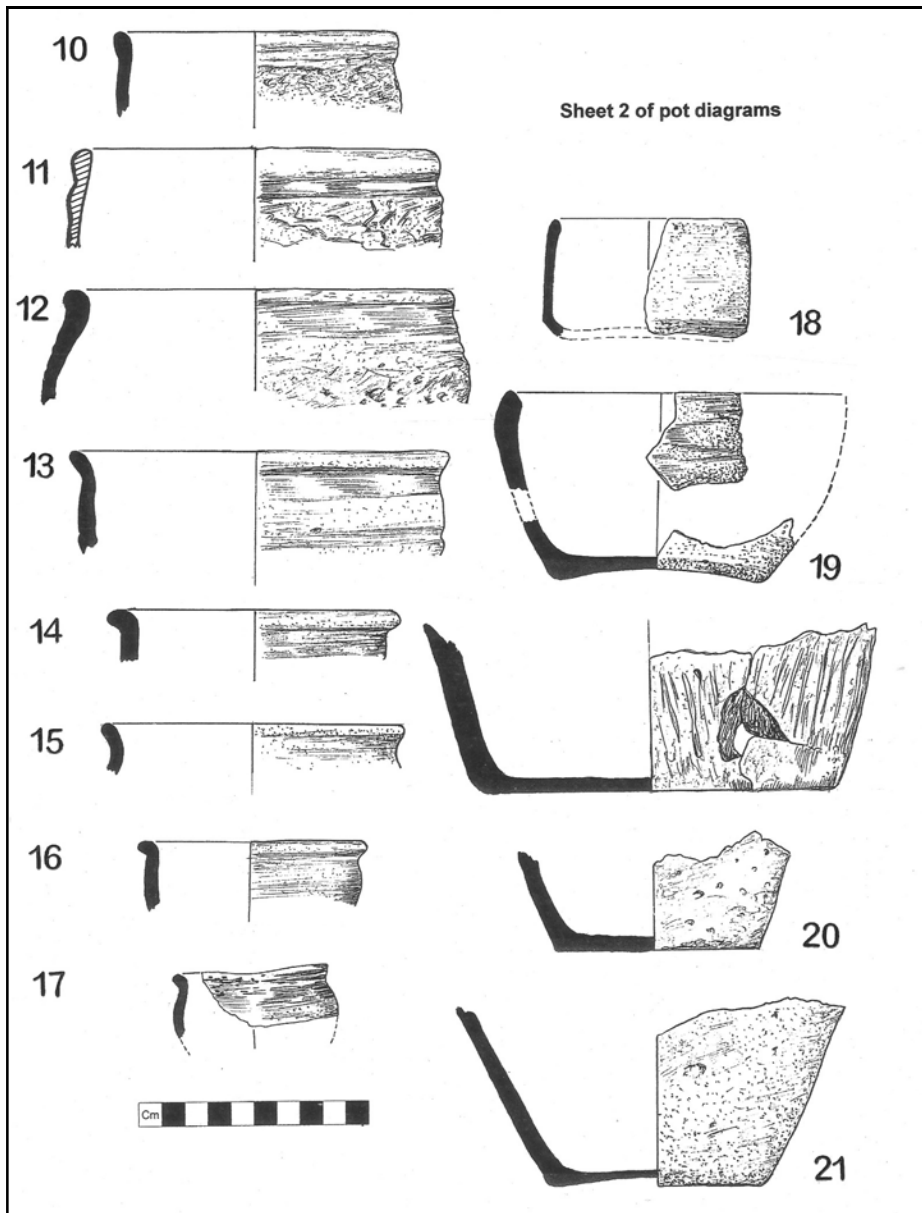
Pot 9 –diagram

Reconstructed pot

pieces found

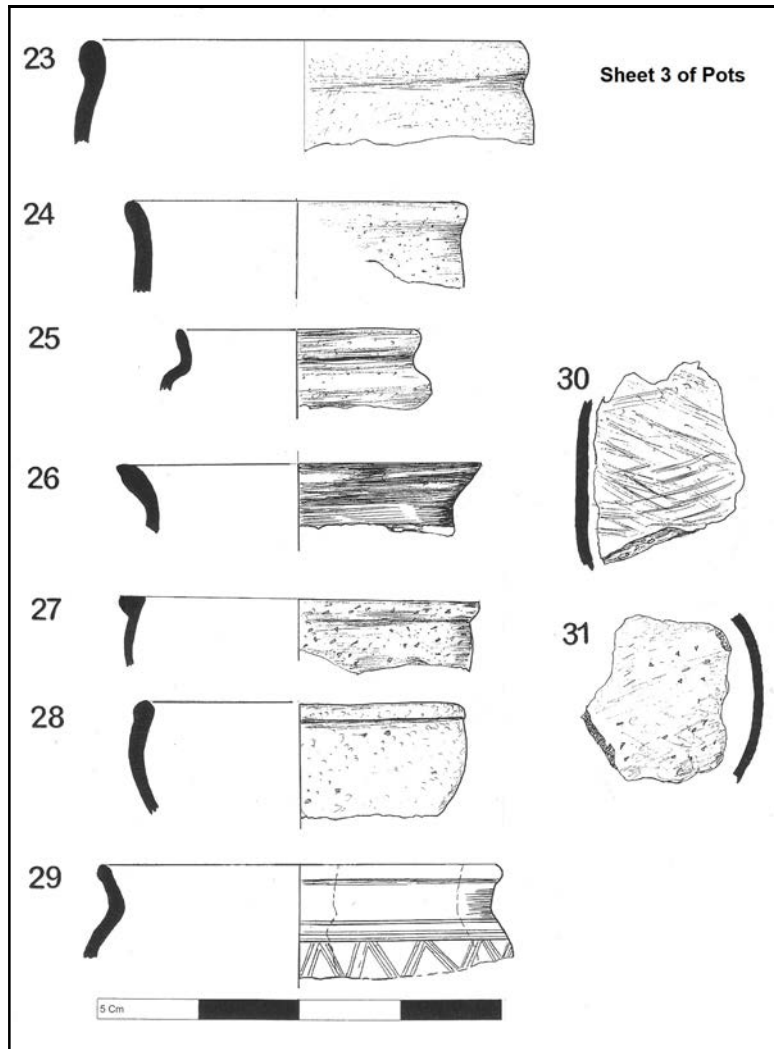
For the next pots refer to sheet 2 of diagrams :-

- 10. Grey sandy ware, glauconite c, rusticated with rusty coloured outside body surface. Blackened inside surface , slightly everted rim some burnishing .
- 11. Sandy ware (glauconite) grey with black coating and rusticated outside surface. Burnished, Simple rim with distinct smooth finger indent running beneath it .
- 12. grey sandy ware, glauconite , with black coating , rusticated outside surface , rim slightly thickened with simple bead , burnished under this rim .
- 13. Sandy ware buff brown , slightly burnished with finger ridges .
- 14. Sandy Ware
- 15. Sandy ware
- 16. Sandy ware , glauconite , grey /buff burnished , straight simple rim slightly incurved . 'Dog bowl' type .
- 19. Very similar to the above.
- 20. Base only . grey sandy ware yet slightly reddish, heavily grogged . Vertical lines On the outside. Inside very smooth .
- 21. Base only , grey core, reddish outside, sandy ware but with a lot of grog and soapy feel . Large holes from missing fill giving slightly corky affect (does not look like missing shell fill .)
- 22. Sandy ware base (glauconite c) grey core reddish fire clouds on outside, smoothed but not burnished .



Sheet 3 of Pot sherds .

- 23 . Grey sandy ware (glaucanite) with mica flecks . Simple rim. 'Dog Bowl' type .
- 24. Grey sandy ware biutheavily grogged . Smooth soapy feel black inside surface reddish outside .
- 25. Buff/redsandy ware (not grogged) more Roman in appearance .
- 26. Heavily grogged, burnished, black coated Aylesford –Swarling type rim , another Urn?
- 27. Rough grey flint tempered pot with flat rim . Could it havehad a lid ?
- 28. Grog ware , grey core, buff outside, burnished soapy feel (looks like 19 in UR report)
- 29. Orange sherd . Dark grey coating on outer surface, mushroom colour on inner . Small grits tempering+ mica dusting (drawn & described by David Cox .) Resembles some found in Sussex Atrebates ?
- 30. Bodysherd , grog ware , grey/red flecked core , outer surface with fire clouds red& grey. Lattice of beating patterns over the surface .
- 31. Body sherd. Grey core , buff/red outside , flint tempered .



Sheet 4 of pot diagrams

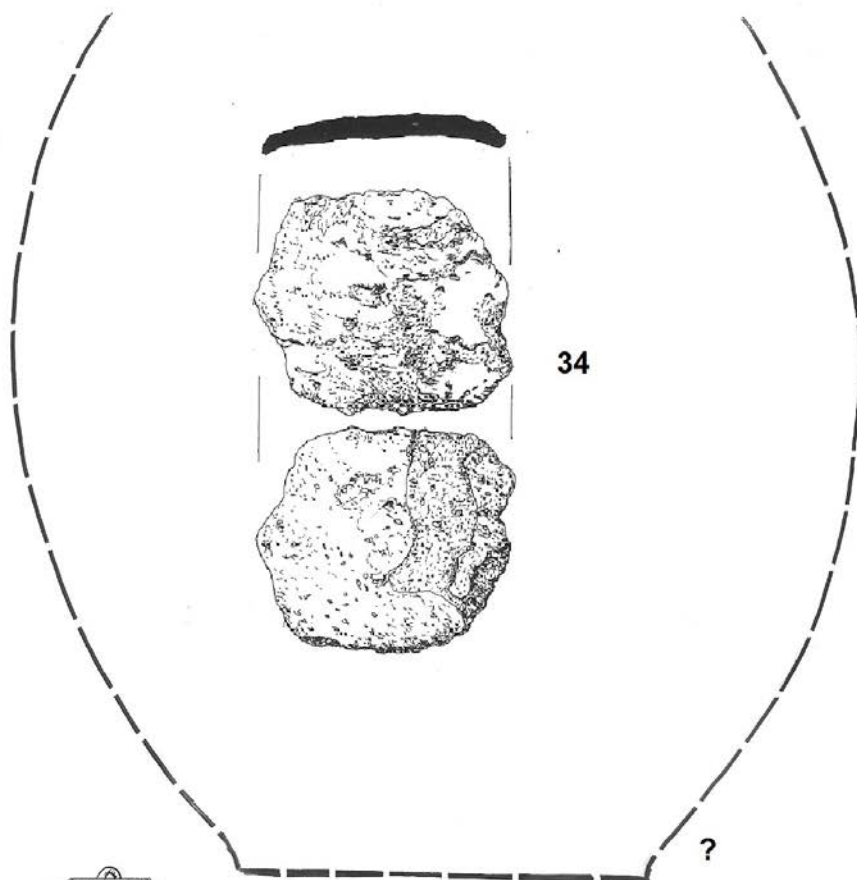
32



33

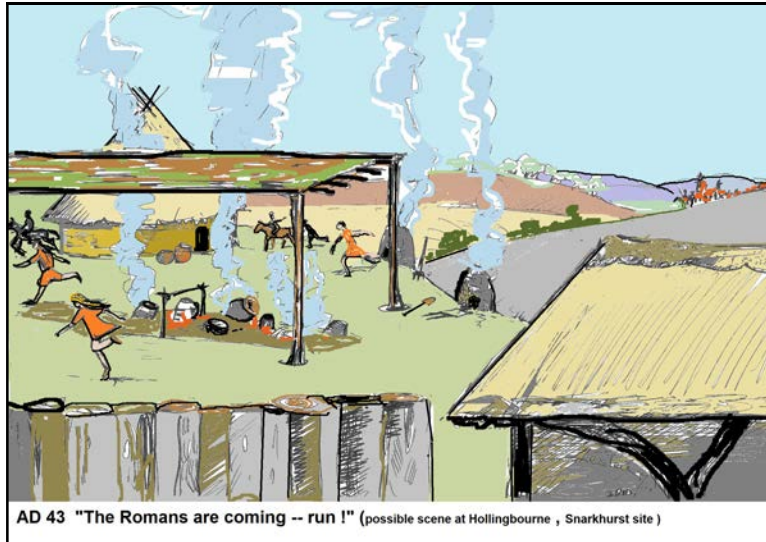


34



- how it may have been with a bung ?

- 32.** Sandy ware , grey burnished rim from a large storage jar . It has a smooth ledge on the inside as if it had a some kind of lid , wooden ? or sandy ware as these large pieces ?
33. Similar as 32 but without the inside ledge.(There was an even larger one excavated by a team of volunteers from Benenden.)



Discussion/Recap .

The importance of this site has perhaps been missed , as though the whole lot was not put together in its completeness.

(It possibly links to the **Site 13 at Snagbrook** . Snag , pronounced sn-ar-g, means a snail or was it the old name for the snag or horn of Eyehorne ?)

Now developers seem to think there is ' no important archaeology' they have been bidding for further development . Bearsted and the Joint Parishes won a reprieve against a huge development in 2009. But developers seem determined to overturn the Inspectors ruling and perhaps even destroy the barrows at White Heath in access roads to the M20 at Junct 8. in another bid that appears to have gone through

The IA village of Snark did not disappear it moved further west and as Iron Green (Eyehorne Green) was still there until 1700,s . Hasted drew it on his map but stupidly named it Broad Street not realising he had missed out the Pilgrim's Way ! It will show on Lidar (most likely) near Five Wents , accurately drawn on the Milgate maps of 18th Century .

These hastily abandoned pots , upside down in their cooking trench were possible proof that the 43 AD Invasion came largely through the Vale of Kent , not north of the Downs and Lidar will likely show all the ancient settlements in Bearsted → Charing .

Now Kent's Garden of England is due to be destroyed with so called "Garden Cities " and with more motor ways to make Kent a dormitory town for London .

I often wonder if people like Charles Dodgson saw mixed up visions of things in the future . Maybe "*The Hunting of the Snark* " was not all nonsense..... certainly some KAS members had shares in Union Rail ! One has to laugh !

*"They sought it with thimbles they sought it with care
They pursued it with forks and hope
They threatened its life with a railway-share ;
They charmed it with smiles and soap."*