Between February and March 2005 Pre-Construct Archaeology conducted an archaeological excavation at the former Tonbridge Stock and Cattle Market along Bank Street in Tonbridge (TQ 5900 4674, Figs 1 and 2) for CgMS Consulting on behalf of Crest Nicholson.

Tonbridge is situated at the confluence of four tributaries to the River Medway that once delineated the southern boundary of the town centre, the settlement being positioned on the higher ground to the north, surrounded by lower-lying marshland. The site lies towards the northern end of the centre of town, to the west of Bank Street and north of The Slade. The geology underlying it comprises Tunbridge Wells Sand of Lower Cretaceous Age (British Geological Survey, 1971).

Archaeological background

Few archaeological investigations have been undertaken within Tonbridge and most have been concentrated in and around the castle itself (Fig. 3):

(i) The Ministry of Works excavated across the top of the castle motte and elsewhere between 1911 and 1915, uncovering a well and the foundations of an inner ring wall. In 1938 excavation of the floor of the west tower of the gatehouse exposed the unfaced foundations of the southern wall, whilst during preservation and consolidation work to the curtain wall in the period 1955 to 1965 further sections were revealed. More recently in 1999 and 2000, several small watching briefs and evaluation projects have been completed in and around the castle (Pastscape, 2007).

(ii) The Kent Archaeological Society investigated the town’s medieval enclosure ditch and rampart at Landsdowne Road in 1976 (Streeten 1976).
(iii) An evaluation was completed as part of a construction project of a pool complex in 1994, across the Hilden Brook from the castle. Here a waterlogged timber horizon possibly of medieval date was exposed and recorded.

(iv) At 165 High Street the structural remains of a post-medieval building were recorded during the course of redevelopment in 1998.
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Fig. 2 Location of Evaluation Trenches and Excavation Areas.

Phase 1 Evaluation
To the south of this site, on the south side of Castle Street, an evaluation in 2000 recorded a linear feature that may be of prehistoric date (Rady 2000).

A programme of evaluation trenching was completed at Lyons, East Street in 2000 (Pine and Saunders, 2000). In 2001, Pre-Construct Archaeology followed up the latter work with an open area excavation (LYT 01) that produced redeposited artefacts suggesting prehistoric and Roman activity in the area as well as...
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structural elements and features relating to the medieval and post-medieval periods (Wragg et al. 2005).

(vii) In 2002, an archaeological impact assessment (Bowsher 2002) was compiled for the Bank Street site, followed by two phases of archaeological evaluation. The first consisted of trenches located on the west side of the site, away from the High Street. Here, evidence for backfills activity was revealed in the form of small pits from which sherds of medieval pottery were recovered, together with evidence for metalworking (Corran and Watson 2003, p. i). The trenches of the second phase of evaluation were positioned closer to Bank Street and The Slade, producing a wealth of evidence for medieval activity and prompting the programme of excavation, which followed. Two areas of excavation were opened up, Area A running from The Slade towards the centre of the site and Area B pitted near Bank Street to The Slade and The Corn Exchange.

(viii) Running concurrently with the excavation (vii), evaluation by trial trench was taking place immediately to the north, on the site of the former Capitol Cinema complex, which also proceeded to excavation (KT-TBR 03) (Swift and Blackmore, 2010).

As only a few excavations have been undertaken to date in the medieval core of Tonbridge, there is a paucity of published literature on the ceramics from the town. To complicate the situation further, the study of medieval ceramics in Kent is limited primarily because of a relatively small number of excavated and published pottery kilns in the county, particularly in the north and west. As pottery was the principal tool for dating the medieval features found at Bank Street, a preliminary ceramic phasing (CP) was compiled to aid and further define the chronology of the site. This has been a solution for many cities and towns in the South East, notably at St Albans (Turner-Rugg 1995, pp. 57-58) and London (Vince and Jenner 1991, pp. 24-25). As typologies have become more refined for the late-Saxon and early-medieval London wares, the use of ceramic phasing there is now largely redundant. However, the ceramic profile of early-medieval and medieval Tonbridge has only recently begun to be studied using modern terminology and quantification methods, so a preliminary ceramic phasing is used here to discuss the dating and distribution of pottery groups on the Bank Street site. Each ceramic phase contains one specific type or a combination of contemporary pottery types, and a new CP is introduced with the appearance of another major fabric type. The distribution of the pottery types for each phase is shown below:

| CP 1 | c.1050-1125; North or West Kent shell-filled ware (EM35) |
| CP 2 | c.1125-1150; North or West Kent shell-filled ware (EM35) with less common North or West Kent sandy and shell-tempered |
ware (EM36). West Kent fine sandy ware (EM4) and North or West Kent fine sandy ware with sparse shell and sparse grits (EM22) may be present from c.1125, but these fabrics are relatively rare on the Bank Street site.

CP 3: c.1150-1250; North or West Kent sandy and shell-tempered ware (EM36) with North or West Kent sandy ware (M38A) and London-type ware (M5).

CP 4: c.1225-1400 [sic]; North or West Kent sandy ware (M38A), North or West Kent fine-moderate sandy, rilled wares (M38B) and London-type ware (M5).

CP 5: c.1325-1400; North or West Kent sandy ware (M38A) and North or West Kent fine-moderate sandy, rilled wares (M38B) and North or West Kent hard-fired fine sandy ware (M38C).

The Findings at Bank Street

Pre-Norman Tonbridge

Although in situ evidence for prehistoric activity is limited in the Tonbridge region, there have been occasional finds of various periods suggesting activity in the area. An assemblage of Mesolithic microliths was discovered at Martin’s Field, to the southeast of the town (Wymer and Bos 1977, p. 160) with further Mesolithic blades and a trancheet axe (Thames Pick) being found at Old Hadlow Road, to the northeast (ibid., p. 150). Three microliths were recovered at the Lyons Site on East Street (Wragg et al. 2005, p. 122). These finds suggest that although not heavily exploited, there was at least some movement across the landscape during this period. No Neolithic material has been found nearby and there is little evidence for Bronze Age activity. A barbed and tanged arrowhead was found at the Old Hadlow Road site which is close to the line of a suspected prehistoric trackway that traverses the landscape from Rottingdean to Tonbridge and beyond.

At the Bank Street site, three narrow ditches of late-prehistoric or early-Roman date have been identified running on a roughly east to west orientation (Fig. 4). From within the fill of Ditch 1, sixteen sherds of pottery from a jar with an upright rim were recovered. The fabric was soft, orange in colour, with inclusions of grog and of sand dating to the late Iron Age. A further two sherds of a hard vessel imitating Patchgrove ware (mid-1st to late-2nd century AD) were also identified from this feature.

The Capitol Cinema site to the north of the Former Stock and Cattle Market excavations produced a single extremely abraded sherd of possible Patchgrove ware from within a posthole (Swift and Blackmore 2010). Several sherds of other fabrics were found residually in later contexts.

An evaluation at Castle Street, to the east of Bank Street, identified a
possible prehistoric linear feature almost 2m wide beneath nineteenth-century deposits (Rady 2000). With the exception of two undiagnostic flint flakes, the fills were sterile whilst the deposition sequence leads to the interpretation of it being a former watercourse. The only other evidence for Iron Age activity in the area is that two gold staters have been found in Tonbridge and Bidborough.

There is no indication that Tonbridge was occupied in Roman times although there is some evidence for activity in the area. Romano-British burials, cinerary urns and pottery were found in 1919 to the north-east of the town and a coin of Constantine has been recovered from the medieval castle mound (Wadmore 1886, p. 12). A single fragment of Roman pottery was found in excavations at the Landsdowne Road site (Streeten, 1976), whilst excavations at Lyons, East Street, recovered five residual Roman sherds, considerably increasing the assemblage for the town (Wragg 2002). With the exception of the two sherds of Romano-British (imitation) Patchgrove ware, there was no Roman pottery from the excavations at Bank Street. As Roman fabrics tend to be harder and therefore survive better, the lack of material implies that there was little Roman activity on or near the site.
To date there is no archaeological evidence for any *Saxon* activity anywhere within the defended part of the town. However, the etymology of the name Tonbridge is thought to derive from the Saxon *tun*-town or enclosure and *burgh*-fort suggesting that a Saxon stronghold preceded the Norman castle. No documentary evidence exists to support this.

**Norman Tonbridge**

Documentary sources suggest that the town came into being shortly after the Norman Conquest of 1066 as part of the estates of Richard Fitzgilbert (b. 1030-35 in Normandy), a loyal servant and intimate of William the Conqueror. Richard was among those consulted about the proposed invasion of England early in 1066 but there is no direct evidence of his personal participation at Hastings or in the campaign. Shortly after the Conquest Richard was granted estates in Kent and Surrey, centred on Tonbridge, and, perhaps a little later, in Suffolk/Essex around Clare. This made him the eight wealthiest layman in England at the time of Domesday Book (1086). Possibly by 1070, Richard annexed dens around Tonbridge which eventually became known as the lowy, a baronial franchise. Some of the dens belonged to the archbishop of Canterbury, others to the bishop of Rochester. The lowy had a clear defensive purpose akin to the estates of Hugh de Montfort around Saltwood Castle and a motte and bailey castle was erected at Tonbridge. Richard died shortly after Domesday Book was compiled and his son Gilbert was involved in Odo’s uprising of 1088 against William II. The castle which Gilbert and his brother were holding was besieged by William, and the town was stormed, but Gilbert surrendered on the second day, and was later pardoned.\(^1\) The wooden castle was later replaced by a stone one (see below).

Tonbridge does not have medieval urban (civic) records because it was in essence a settlement which developed around the castle of a magnate family, and was without formal chartered rights. However there is a roll of late fourteenth-century accounts concerning Tonbridge borough (or borgh) and castle, including a *valor* (valuation) of Tonbridge with its members, i.e. the other borghs or tithings of Southborough and Hildenborough. There are also a bailiff’s account of William Hore for Tonbridge borough/borgh from Michaelmas 1384 to Michaelmas 1385, and an account of William Hore, larderer of Tonbridge castle, for the same period. There is a bedel’s account of Simon Honte for Hildenborough for this year, too, and another of Thomas Rolf for Southborough for 1385 to 1386. These probably survived and found their way into the Canterbury Cathedral Archives because the castle was under royal guardianship when the earl of Stafford’s heir was a minor under a tri-partite agreement with the archbishop of Canterbury and Christ Church Priory, Canterbury. A few accounts of the bailiff, rent-collector and larderer of Tonbridge
castle from 1402-12 have similarly survived.² Beyond this, there are only a small number of deeds prior to the sixteenth century concerning Tonbridge or its inhabitants held in archives in Kent and elsewhere. This is unsurprising as there was no urban body or religious house with rights of lordship in the town which might have kept or enrolled such deeds.

The stronghold at Tonbridge was sited to command a crossing of the River Medway on the route, *inter alia*, between London and Hastings/Rye. Although the layout of the original castle is not known, it is likely that the later stone-built edifice that survives in part today (*Plate I*) mirrors that of its predecessor. The first castle probably consisted of a timber fort

![Tonbridge Castle](image)

*Plate I*

Tonbridge Castle

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built on top of the artificially created motte with a defended enclosure, the bailey, occupying the space immediately to the east. Excavations within the gatehouse and across the top of the mound revealed no trace of these earlier structures. It is generally thought that Tonbridge had a large second outer bailey that spread to the north-west of the main complex, with the present route of The Slade following the course of the former ditch. The outer bailey is now known as ‘Castle Fields’ and primarily used for car parking, housing and disused electricity works (formerly the Milne Museum). Haslam refers to a defended enclosure in front of the thirteenth-century castle (Wragg et al. 2005, p. 122), and one of the earliest references to a barbican in front of the castle gatehouse is made in 1384-85. It is later recorded that during the Civil War the barbican was destroyed, implying that it occupied the area in front of the castle for at least 250 years. The outline of this defended space has not been satisfactorily defined in documentary evidence or archaeological excavation, but it is possible that the alignment of Castle Street demarcates its limit.

The construction of the castle complex would have required many hands and a plentiful supply of materials. The workforce could be mustered from the surrounding lands, whilst the dense and extensive Wealden woodland provided ample timber. A large quantity and variety of goods would have been necessary to fit out the castle and its occupants. It is likely that Richard Fitzgilbert brought many items across with him from France, but with lands spread over England, more would be required, and it would clearly be more economical to source bulk supplies of staples locally. Specialist needs such as the use of iron in the construction of houses, buildings and of bridges, the shoeing of horses and production of tools and equipment could also be most efficiently met locally and would have all provided the resident smith(s) with custom (Crossley 1981, p. 29). As Tonbridge was situated within the Weald, where ironworking has been undertaken since prehistoric times, it was well placed to provide these articles. However, there is only one record of iron in the Weald noted in the Domesday Survey (Straker 1931, p. 30) and there is little mention of the industry in Kent until references in documents of the fourteenth century (Hewitt 1974, p. 384). The extensive use of iron to make agricultural tools during the early medieval period is clear from an eleventh-century tract on estate matters detailing tools needed to run a farm that included axes, adzes, awls, axes, saws, mattocks and scythes (Addyman 1976, p. 318-319). Items that were highly sought after included axes, to clear trees, and ploughs hares, to break up the newly claimed lands (Crossley, 1981, p. 29). Expansion of agriculture into the woodland around Tonbridge would have been necessary to support the growing population, whilst also providing ample timber for construction and brushwood for fuel.

An insight into the management of the woodland surrounding Tonbridge
during the early medieval period is provided by the timber-lined well excavated on the Bank Street site, set back some 55m to the west of Bank Street (Fig. 5). Although somewhat distorted, the diameter of the well could be estimated at approximately 1.3m. The lining was formed of two or possibly three sections of split log from different parts of the same or more than one large oak. These logs were hollowed out and assembled within the well cut to create a vertical tube (Plate II). The timbers were dated by dendrochronology and were felled in the summer of 1116 (Tyers 2005). With the diameter of the well found at Bank Street being more than twice that of the earlier example found at No.1 Poultry, London (Rowsome 2000, p. 53), and being larger than that of the middle Anglo-Saxon example found at Coppergate, in York (Hall 1984, p. 32), it appears that the Bank Street well lining is the largest of its kind excavated in Britain to date. Its size implies that the well was built and used by a community, rather than an individual household.

Although the internal faces of the lining showed considerable wear from use, some tool marks remained showing faint axe or adze stop marks that would have been made with a blade not much wider than 80mm. The bases of the timbers had been cut with axes of a general purpose type, typically used in the late Saxon and Norman periods for the initial stages of such timber constructions.

The parent tree(s) from which the logs originated would have had a
Fig. 5 Phase 3: early medieval (1:400).
diameter(s) of approximately 1.4m at chest height. The narrow tree rings signify that at least for the last 100 years of life the parent tree(s) was slow growing and that it was at least 300 years old, typical of tall dark wildwood, rather than faster grown trees from managed woodland. Notably, Hasted (V, 196) observed that the very large parish of Tonbridge ‘from the nature of its soil … is extremely kindly for oak timber, of which there are numbers of large sized tree throughout it’. It is unlikely that the well lining was made of re-used timber, the pieces being exceptionally specialised, which implies that it was constructed shortly after the trees were felled in 1116. The well lining could represent part of the infrastructure associated with the rebuilding of Tonbridge castle after the fires reported for the late eleventh century (Wadmore 1886, p. 17).

There is a lease of fourteenth-century date (1378) for Tonbridge and the surrounding area which deals with timber rights and indicates that timber was being taken by its lessee to Frindsbury and Strood on the Lower Medway from Tonbridge and nearby places with good timber supplies. These were the parishes of Tonbridge, Leigh, Shipbourne, and East Peckham in the Weald; Ightham and Seal in Holmesdale; Sevenoaks on the Greensand ridge north of Tonbridge; Stansted, Kemsing and Otford on the North Downs, and Wrotham straddling Holmesdale and the North Downs. All these places were well wooded. It can be assumed that timber, and probably also brushwood for fuel, were major products of the property leased in these places, given that these were not important arable or pastoral areas. The lease was for 20 years at £40 a year, indicating that this was a significant operation. The lessee lived in Wrotham, which was ideally situated for overseeing the exploitation of the property he leased. The timber and brushwood from these places was probably transported upriver in barges. The timber may have been used for buildings vessels in the Strood area, and the brushwood transported up the Thames to London for domestic fuel. The brushwood may also have been used locally in the iron industry. The lessee was a member of the rising landholding and political elite of Kent, James de Pekham of Wrotham. Pekam referred to (East) Peckham manor, which lay in the Medway valley east of Tonbridge, with East Peckham being one of the parishes in the locality to which Tonbridge and its market was central. (Drapier 2006, pp. 10-11, 15, 20, 28-29; Draper 2010, pp. 59-61; Webster 1984, pp. 222-23, 226).

Evidence for ironworking, in the form of waste material, was found in the Bank Street excavations with 116kg of slag recovered from all contexts at the site. Within the assemblage were six smithing hearth bottoms, a low number relative to the total amount of waste. As these are a by-product of smithing rather than smelting (obtaining iron from the ore), it suggests that secondary working of iron was not a significant activity on the site, although additional evidence, in the form of micro slags such as hammer-
scale, was also present, indicating that this activity was undertaken on or near the site, albeit on a small scale. As more waste material produced during the smelting stage of manufacture, such as tap slag, was present, this suggests that primary working was prevalent in the area.

Pit [706] in the centre of Area B was 3m in diameter and 1.75m in depth (Fig. 5) and contained within the lower fills over 4kg of slag comprising both smelting slags and smithing micro-slags (spheroid hammer-scale and hammer-scale). Of the diagnostic material the majority was produced during the smelting process. Smelting furnaces of the late eleventh/early twelfth century period excavated elsewhere in the country, such as at Stamford, Lincs., and West Runton, Norfolk, measured 0.40-0.50m in diameter—considerably smaller than pit [706] suggesting this was not its purpose. The lower fills were rich in charcoal and one also contained quite sizeable fragments of burnt clay. It may therefore be that the remains of a smelting furnace and its associated debris were disposed of here.

Pottery recovered from the fills of this feature pertained exclusively to Ceramic Phase 1 (CP1) dating to c.1050-1125. Some of it showed clear evidence for use as cooking pots (Fig. 6.1: sand and shell tempered ware (EM36)) with one having a probable food residue on its inside. Butchery waste of sheep/goat and cattle comprised the faunal remains from these fills. The mixed industrial-domestic waste present indicates that there were multiple activities in the vicinity. The size of the feature and the presence of smelting waste imply that it was not cut for a domestic purpose and certainly not in the first instance for the purpose of waste disposal, but that it was reused for this at the end of its life.

The domestic waste found within pit [706] illustrates the castle’s attraction to people to settle alongside it from the time of its construction. No evidence was observed at Bank Street for any destruction of the town when the castle was briefly besieged and the town stormed in 1088. Although many of the fills of the features were rich in charcoal, its presence is more likely to be related to the industrial processes occurring on and around the site. The town therefore appears to have re-established itself immediately as demonstrated in the continuous archaeological record at Bank Street.

Haslam’s model for the early development of Tonbridge (Wragg et al. 2005, p. 125) suggests that the castle gate was linked to a main thoroughfare with a road heading directly north out of the gates then running north-east along Bank Street (previously known as Back Lane, a common designation for lanes or alleys behind the main ‘high streets’). The Bank Street site is in the centre of the line-of-sight through the later gatehouse gate, and it would therefore be impossible for the activities taking place right in front of the entrance to escape the notice of any person entering or leaving the castle. This position in front of the castle gate would clearly
be a prime location for commercial activity as all the traffic going in and out had not just to pass by but had to slow down as it did so.

In order to prosper from his estate the lord of the manor would have been involved in the administration and setting out of plots of land, known as burgages that were awarded to citizens or burgesses in return for a yearly rent. Based largely on the Tithe Award of the early nineteenth century, Haslam’s model for the layout of the town shows burgages with
frontages onto the west side of Bank Street and onto the High Street, with the market area developed between Bank Street and the High Street. The excavation site was located on the area identified by Haslam as burgage plots (block a) and part of the open area (block ii) between ‘block a’ and the town defences to their north-west. The ‘original market place’ identified by Haslam lay immediately to the south-east of the Stock and Cattle market site, on the other side of Back Lane (Bank Street). (Wragg *et al.* 2005, p. 130) (Fig. 7).

Running on a north-west/south-east orientation and positioned to the north-east of pit [706], Ditch 4 was traced for 20m and measured 0.78m to 1.14m in width and 0.27m to 0.47m in depth. Further linear features were present to the west, to the rear of Bank House. Running roughly parallel to Ditch 4 but separated by approximately 20m, Ditch 5 was similar in width and depth implying the two may be related (Fig. 5). The fills of each of these contained CP1 pottery and pieces of slag. The orientation suggests that the ditches may have acted as a boundary between properties facing onto Bank Street.

Ditch 6 ran north-north-east/south-south-west, intersecting with Ditch
5 at its northern end. A later pit had removed the stratigraphic relationship between the two. This linear feature was smaller than those previously mentioned, measuring c.0.50m in width and up to 0.25m in depth and containing within its fill fragments of a horse skull of an animal which was aged 8-10 years old at death. The position of the cut suggests that it perhaps delineated the rear of the burgage plots although the orientation is slightly askew in comparison to those running perpendicular to Bank Street.

Tonbridge’s layout is comparable to Butler’s Period 1 Market-based plan model (Butler 1976, p. 39) where the town’s development is based on a seigneurial focus, in this case the castle. These types of towns would have been founded prior to 1140 and commonly have a main street running from the gates of the focus point and have either a triangular market at the gates (such as proposed for Tonbridge) or a cigar-shaped swelling in the main street. The towns are market-based but not market-focused, with the military or ecclesiastical sponsor influencing their siting and dictating their development. At Tonbridge the town and market came into being as a result of the castle being constructed and during the early development these were entirely dependent on the castle.

To the east of the point where Bank Street joins the main road, the parish church of St Peter and St Paul was founded, possibly in the late eleventh or early-twelfth century, as is reflected in some of its architectural features. The foundation of the church shows that although probably still fairly small, the settlement at Tonbridge was well established. The chancel was extended to the west in the twelfth century (Tatton-Brown, 1994), signifying a need for greater space for worship and therefore a growing population in Tonbridge. A school is known at Tonbridge by 1323 and this was probably held either at the parish church or at Tonbridge Priory. The Priory, for Premonstratensian canons, which lies under the present railway station and 0.5 km south of the castle, was founded by Richard de Clare, son of Gilbert of Tonbridge, before his death in 1136 (Johnson 1948, pp. 190-1).

On the Bank Street site, to the west of Ditch 6, a linear feature, Ditch 7, ran south-west/north-east, which produced six sherds of EM35 pottery and which included a single sherd of North or West Kent fine sandy ware with sparse shell and sparse grits (EM22) allocated to CP2 and dated to c.1125-1150. Along the feature’s length numerous stakeholes were identified, with more of these present to the south-east. It is possible that these formed an animal enclosure; the faunal remains recovered from the site imply that sheep, goat, pig and cattle were all butchered in the vicinity. The remaining features, containing CP2 pottery, were dominated by pits, with only one located close to Bank Street, the others being set back c.50m from the frontage. These features revealed little evidence of their function and their original excavation may have been related to
construction activity, for example to obtain brick earth used in the making of wattle and daub panels. Pit [430] contained the upper left forelimb of a horse and a high number of pottery (35 sherds) and its end use may therefore have been for rubbish disposal.

Barley suggested that during the twelfth century some settlements that had formed outside castles, including Tonbridge and Clare, were enclosed by the construction of earthen defences, i.e. a bank and ditch, or fosse (Barley 1976, p. 59). Such a feature exists to the northern and eastern sides of Tonbridge, marked by Bordyke, along the road into Tonbridge from Hadlow, and clearly visible on the inside of the boundary wall of the parish church graveyard. The alignment of the fosse also once crossed the north-western corner of the Bank Street site and while the Phase 1 evaluation aimed to investigate this feature it was demonstrated that construction of the Stock and Cattle Market had removed any trace of it (Corcoran and Watson 2005, p. 45). Henry III granted a licence to enclose the town with a crenellated wall in 1259; however, archaeological evidence indicates that such a wall was never constructed (Streeten 1976, p. 108; Wragg et al. 2005, p. 122). The results of the excavations at the Lyons site allowed Haslam to argue that the construction of the ditch did not take place until around 1265. Further excavation of the fosse would greatly aid in understanding this aspect of the early development of Tonbridge.

Medieval development (the Twelfth and Thirteenth centuries)

From within the lowest fills of the timber-lined well, dated to 1116 and described above, a total of 21 sherds of Ceramic Phase 3 pottery were recovered, representing some eight vessels, including complete vessels. This assemblage consisted mostly of grey sandy ware in the form of jugs with strap handles dating them to between c.1170-1225. The two intact examples of these greyware jugs (Fig. 6.2; Fig. 8.3), and the less complete forms, suggest that these were almost certainly lost whilst collecting water. The dating of the pottery recovered suggests that the well was in use for perhaps 100 years before becoming superfluous. The remains of a piglet, represented by various skeletal elements and aged around 3-6 months at age of death, were also recovered.

In the period 1150-1250, as defined by CP3, there was increased activity on the Bank Street site (Fig. 9). Set back between 15-30m from the street frontage, a series of inter-cutting pits were excavated. Of these, a few contained significant quantities of ironworking waste within their fills, in particular pit [422], which produced 7kg of predominantly smelting slag, although some hammerscale was present. Pit [581] was cut on its south-western side by [577], the two features containing 1.7kg of waste between them. Around the area of these pits was a layer through which
Fig. 8 Pottery (Scale 1:4).
Fig. 9 Phase 4: medieval (1:400).
some of the pits were cut and some were sealed by, representing ‘trample’ created by the intense activity that took place while they were in use.

Positioned to the north-west of the intercutting features of this phase, pit [475] measuring 2.60-2.80m in plan and 1.45m in depth, produced mostly CP3 pottery. The earliest fill with pottery [473] comprised a single sherd of sand and shell tempered ware (EM36). The rilling on its external surface suggests a thirteenth-century date and this was seen on two other sherds of this pottery type from the same pit, possibly also from the same vessel. This fabric was the most common in pit [475], with eighteen sherds and only sooted jar-shaped vessels recognised, some of probable composite manufacture with developed rims. Grey sandy ware (M38A) was the other principal fabric with eight sherds, including jar fragments, whilst one sherd of a London-type ware (M5) jug is present with a white-slip rib and green-glaze. The pottery types indicate the pit was infilled during the early thirteenth century, perhaps after c.1225 by virtue of the fine rilling evidence on the sand and shell tempered ware. In total, 4.8kg of slag was also recovered from these fills, although much was undiagnostic (2.8kg).

In addition to the ironworking slag recovered from the features on the site, the quantities of other debris associated with high temperature activities, including domestic fires, such as fired clay, vitrified hearth lining, cinder, fuel ash slag and charcoal, was not particularly large. This may indicate that these activities were not undertaken on a large scale or for prolonged periods of time in this vicinity. The fluctuations in quantities of ironworking waste over time may reflect changes in demand. At times of heightened demand additional furnaces may have been established within the settlement to boost the supply and capitalise on the market trends. It is possible that the surge of activity intimated by the features containing CP3 pottery is related to the rebuilding of the castle in stone during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, which probably began with the keep and culminated in the grandiose gatehouse of the later part of the thirteenth century. In addition to the works on the castle, there is evidence for consolidation of the town from the mid thirteenth century. Tonbridge is mentioned as a borough and vill by its own jury at the eyre (travelling royal court of justice) in 1241. By 1259 licence was granted for a market to be held in the church grounds (the same year as the licence to enclose the town with a crenellated wall was approved). The issue of the licence does not mean that there was not already an established market, but rather it reflects recognition by the king of the urbanisation process that peaked during the reigns of Henry III and Edward I (Platt 1976, p. 25).

Tonbridge’s prosperity by the thirteenth century can be seen in the rich bequests given to the parish church and the Priory. In 1248 John, Prior of Tonbridge, received gifts of grants of land from men and women supporting the priory, suggesting the donors were wealthy townsfolk or
minor elite. Lands bequeathed were in Yalding and Goudhurst as well as messuages in the developing urban core of Tonbridge. At this time the church was enlarged, the west wall demolished and the nave extended whilst an arcade was incorporated in the north wall (History Touch 2000).

In Area A, a large pit [547] produced a substantial quantity of medieval pottery, comprising 395 sherds in total from four fills. The primary fill [568] contained 129 sherds of CP 4 pottery, dated c.1225-1400. This was dominated by North or West Kent sandy and shell-tempered ware (EM36) (59 sherds, 45.7%) mostly in the form of jars with narrow flat-topped rims and short necks and bowls (Fig. 8.4) and by West Kent sandy ware (M38A) (57 sherds, 44.2%) with jug and jars with flat top triangular profile rims. Also present in the assemblage were North or West Kent fine-moderate sandy, rilled wares (M38B) (8 sherds, 6.2%) identified in rounded jug shapes, one with a combed wavy line design and another with a rod handle and point stabbing. These wares together indicate deposition between c.1225-50. Smaller amounts of EM22 and shelly ware (EM35), including a rounded collared jar rim were noted, whilst three sherds of glazed pottery occurred with two sherds from a London-type ware (M5) jug with scale decoration and Earlswood ware (M44B). The remaining pottery found in the fills of this feature was of Ceramic Phase 5, dated c.1325-1400 (discussed below).

The Fourteenth and Fifteenth Centuries

Tonbridge passed through the hands of the twelve de Clare lords over almost 250 years before the last, 23-year old Gilbert de Clare, the Red Earl’s son, was killed in action at Bannockburn in 1314. Following the death of Gilbert de Clare, Hugh Despenser the younger, the favourite of Edward II, who was married to Eleanor of Clare, elder sister of Gilbert de Clare and granddaughter of Edward I, temporarily seized Tonbridge castle.

In 1317 Sir Hugh d’Audley become lord of Tonbridge, as husband of Margaret de Clare, Eleanor’s sister and co-heiress, and was later buried at Tonbridge Priory. The daughter of Margaret de Clare and Hugh Audley, another Margaret, was reputedly abducted by Ralph, first Earl of Stafford, who married her as his second wife, and Tonbridge castle passed into the hands of the earls of Stafford until the early sixteenth century.

At and around Tonbridge the iron industry in the Weald grew in strength. Records of Tonbridge castle in 1323 describe 26 pieces of unworked iron being made into 423 bars of piece iron and sent to Portchester (Hants.), whilst two years later 7,000 iron nails and 7,000 clenches suitable for shipbuilding were also sent to Portchester. An itinerary of the castle in 1325 gives details of the forge and its contents, much of which is indicative of farriery (Hewitt 1932, p. 386). Importantly this
shows that the castle had the means for the upkeep of its horses, and presumably those of its guests. The Kent Lay Subsidy of 1334-35 gives a good indication of occupational activity where bynames can largely be taken as applicable to those who bore them (Draper 2006, p. 5). The name le ferour or ferour (farrier) is nationally frequently associated with medieval towns in the thirteenth to fifteenth centuries, and in particular those with market places, high streets and burgages and crafts/trades associated with those areas. The Lay Subsidy lists one Richard Ferour under the lowy of Tonbridge. Ferours were either attached to magnate households (such as identified within the castle above) or held ‘stallis on the strete’. The castle accounts of 1384-85 refer to ‘two [work]shops once Sampson de Middleton’s in the market of Tonbridge joined to (or alongside) the barbican’ clearly distinguishing workshops from market stalls. In the later account of 1404-05, the two shops had become ‘one Schopplace’ called Frennyngham’s stable, the description of its location next to the barbican and its rent make it clear it was one and the same. The later description of one of them as a ‘stable’ indicates that they had been used for farriery and/or blacksmithing. One John Neylere was also listed in the lowy, but there were no other nailers in the Kent Lay Subsidy, suggesting strongly that the trade at Tonbridge dealt principally with the shoeing of horses rather than their general care.

Throughout the fourteenth century it seems that the majority of iron produced in Kent was marketed locally and where large quantities were needed, they tended to be imported. Spanish iron was bought for building operations at Dover in 1340 and slightly earlier records show some purchases at Leeds with larger quantities bought in, in 1370 and 1375. During the reign of Edward III (1327-77), and probably from earlier on, the furnace at Tudeley to the south-east of Tonbridge operated, turning out 194 blooms in 1330, 224 the following year, and 231 in 1332 (Hewitt 1932, p. 385). The furnace (fabrica in Latin and forge in French) was held by Elizabeth de Clare, co-heir of Gilbert, as part of her manor and chase of Southfrith, Tonbridge, and its accounts are rare survivals which contain references to other ironworks at Newfrith next to Bournemill, to the south-west of Somerhill Park, Tonbridge, and others in the neighbourhood, including one making 300 blooms of iron in 1332-3 (Guiseppi 1912, 147, 151). The plague pandemic in the late-1340s caused fluctuations in the production of iron at Tudeley but it stabilised and regained business. The annual output has been estimated at between 1,520 and 3,160 kg of unconsolidated iron blooms, representing a small-scale operation (Crossley 1981, p. 33), possibly as the quantity of iron on the market was bolstered by unrecorded furnaces, such as may have been present in the immediate vicinity of the Bank Street site. Little is known of the furnace at Tudeley following the second outbreak of the plague in 1363 (Hewitt 1932, p. 386; Draper 2010, p. 76).
The continued success of Tonbridge can be seen in the actions of many of the populace following a fire at Tonbridge Priory in the summer of 1337, when most, if not all, of the buildings burnt to the ground. The canons appealed to both the Bishop and to the Pope for aid and the archbishop of Canterbury granted an indulgence for sins committed of forty days to anyone assisting in the Priory’s rebuilding; in total, the indulgences issued amounted to a total of 8 years, 230 days (Wadmore, 1882, pp. 336-7) indicating the respect in which the people held for the Priory and that the population included persons of sufficient wealth to donate money, supplies and manpower to the cause. The Priory also received a number of bequests from the minor landholding elite of Kent in the late fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries (Draper 2006, pp. 19-21). For example, John Chaundeler, rector of Brasted, left to the Prior of Tonbridge a maser (drinking bowl) with a cover of silver gilt in 1431, a bequest to be administered by his executors who included John Tenterden, ironmonger of London.\(^{16}\)

At the Bank Street site, the secondary and tertiary fills of pit [547] appear to date a century or more later than the primary ones as they contain Ceramic Phase 5 pottery, which dates these fills to between 1325 and 1400. Three pottery types dominate the assemblages. The first was North or West Kent hard-fired fine sandy ware (M38C), the only identified form being rounded jugs with rilled necks. One vessel has an applied strip, whilst an unidentified vessel form has complex comb decoration. The others were North or West Kent sandy and shell-tempered ware (EM36) in the form of jar sherds that should be residual by the fourteenth century and other North or West Kent grey wares, particularly sandy wares (M38A) and (M38), the latter in the form of both jars and jugs and also rilled wares (M38C) in the form of rounded jugs. Other pottery types include (EM36), (M38C) a Maidstone fine sandy ware (M4) jug with random point stabbing on a rod handle, glazed jugs of Ashford/Wealden or Rye sandy ware (M40BR), Earlswood ware (M44B), including a sgraffito decorated sherd and Kingston-type, and glazed London-type ware.

Cutting pit [547] was another large pit, [76]. Its primary fill produced greywares M38A and M38C, which date this to between 1325 and 1400. The latest fill produced mostly sandy greywares (M38A, M38B, M38C) in the form of bowls and jugs, whilst glazed wares are found in the form of jugs in London-type ware (M5) and Cheam-type wares (LM5), the latter fabric providing a date for the context of 1350-1400. Some intrusive early-post-medieval sherds, dated \(c.1450-1525/50\), were also present in the upper fill.

The assemblage of fifteenth-century pottery recovered from the site of the Bank Street excavation was small and little can be deduced from the medieval/
post-medieval transitional activities on the site. The paucity of pottery of this date is matched at the Capitol Cinema site to the north (Blackmore 2006, p. 28). It could be that the focus of the town's business was at an alternative location that had ceramics disposed of elsewhere.

The Sixteenth and Seventeenth centuries

The Stafford family held Tonbridge castle for almost 200 years, their chief legacies being the Stafford and Great Water Towers. In 1519-20 Edward Stafford, Duke of Buckingham, prepared to join King Henry VIII and Cardinal Wolsey in a venture to France and visited his estates in Kent. Here he discovered that his bailiff, Charles Knevet, had been ineffectual at collecting his dues and he sacked him. In revenge, Knevet informed Wolsey of the Duke's intentions to overthrow the king resulting in his arrest in London and his sentencing to death for high treason (Wadmore 1886, pp. 47-8). The crown seized all his estates and retained most of them, including Tonbridge. A survey and valuation of the properties was compiled, describing 'The town of Tunbrigge' as 'a burgh, large and well inhabited with people, having plenty of water running through in sundry places' (Wadmore 1886, p. 49) indicating that Tonbridge operated independently of the castle and the affairs within the curtain wall bore little relation to those of the town. However, when in 1525 Cardinal Wolsey dissbved Tonbridge Prior in an attempt to found his colleges there – a grammar school for forty scholars – the townspeople showed little desire for this venture, instead voting to reinstate the priory. Instead, neither was undertaken and Tonbridge lost both the priory and a potential grammar school (Fowler 1974, p. 168; Draper 2008, p. 239).

John Dudley, Earl of Warwick and later Duke of Northumberland applied to Edward VI for a grant of Warwick or Tonbridge and was awarded the castle and manor of Tonbridge in 1551 (Wadmore 1886, p. 51). The manor and castle passed between the crown and various patrons and at the outbreak of the Civil War in 1643 was leased to Thomas Weller who supported the Parliamentary forces that installed a garrison there. Following a battle with the Royalists that lasted a mere three hours, Parliament retained the town. Apart from the human losses and casualties, the castle too was scarred by the event. In Weller's account of lost revenue while occupied, presented to the Committee for the county of Kent, there is mention of '… the barn, castle croft, and barbican … as the two latter are taken away…' which implies that the barbican was destroyed. That the barbican was probably destroyed during the fracas suggests that the area in front of the castle gatehouse was the site of much of the hostilities. As the site of the barbican is believed to have been close to the Bank Street site, any activities occurring there would certainly have been affected by the destruction of this structure. In 1646, following
the end of the First Civil War, the Committee charged Weller £140 for the timber used to repair and fortify the castle and ordered that he slight and dismantle the fortifications (Wadmore 1886, pp. 53-55).

The castle was purchased in 1739 by John Hooker, first Secretary of the Company of the Navigation of the Medway who sold off much stone from the castle walls to build various locks, wharves and bridges along the canalised river from Maidstone (Simmons 1996, p. 114). Stones from the castle can also be found re-used in buildings around the town.

Two lengths of stone wall were revealed on the Bank Street excavations which formed foundations of a building that fronted on to Bank Street itself (Fig. 10). In the south-east of Area B, wall [9] measured 1.68m in length running north-east/south-west, returning at its southern end towards the south-east for 1.10m. The wall was constructed using roughly hewn ragstone blocks and fragments of tile, bonded with a light brown sandy mortar with inclusions of shell. To the west of this, a short stretch constructed in a similar way to [9] was present, wall [885], but this had suffered greatly from truncation. The backfill around it contained eleven sherds of pottery, including a sherd of post-medieval red ware (PM1) that had an industrial base and dated to 1525-1600. Immediately north of this wall fragment a small pit [861] was excavated that contained the near complete remains of a small adult dog.

Adjacent to Bank Street, an oval pit [2] measuring 1.42m wide by over 2.80m in length and 1.15m deep was excavated, containing an abundance of wood shavings forming the primary fill from which also an off-cut of a radially-split section of a smallish oak log was recovered. This off-cut was very knotty which probably explains the reason for it being discarded. The proportions of this timber suggest it was from a traditional Wealden post-and-rail fence being constructed in the vicinity at the time the pit was being backfilled. The fills produced pottery dated to 1550-1725 and a clay tobacco pipe fragment dated 1660-1680. The presence of the wood shavings imply that the feature was a saw pit, perhaps used during the rebuilding of those parts of the town that suffered damage as a result of the effects of the Civil War.

Running north-west/south-east through the centre of Area B was a line of small oak pile tips, Pile Group [701] that formed a building foundation, the timbers tending to be set in pairs and occasionally threes. The posts measured 110-150mm by 45-75mm in cross section and were up to 1.20m in length. A mix of both reused and freshly cut timber was present and whilst all the tips and some edges were hewn with axes the faces often showed manual saw-marks. These saw marks followed the pattern left by the pit-sawing method typically found in post-medieval woodwork. The bulk of the examples also had sappy and often waney edges, showing that they came from the low value ‘outside slabs’ of sawn
Fig. 10  Phase 7: post-medieval (Scale 1:400).
baulks of oak 0.3-0.4m square. The waste slabs were of low value as they tend to decay quickly due to the high proportion of sapwood and one pile had been cut from a boxed heart timber with a rotted heart, also second or third quality timber, implying that the builders of these foundations were saving money by using low-grade material. The piles were driven in to provide a more stable foundation across softer ground created by the backfilling of a medieval pit. The two posts forming Pile Group [700], and three postholes forming Posthole Group 1 were all on approximately the same alignment as Pile Group 701 and may have been related.

A complete Frechen stoneware (PM5) drinking jug found in Ditch 8, Evaluation Trench 4 (Fig. 2), is of interest as it contains a deposit of copper pins and it may therefore represent a witch bottle (Fig. 8.5). It is of c.1650-75 date (Hurst et al. 1986, 220). Such items were commonly buried at the threshold of a house, as it was believed that evil spirits or witches entering a home would get caught on the pins, or more usually nails, inside the bottle; there are at least three previous instances known in Kent at Biddenden (Aldridge 2002), Gravesend (Tilley 1965) and Hoath (Gough 1959). As the ditch also contained later transfer-printed ware and contemporary red earthenwares, it is possible that the witch bottle was thrown into the ditch after the refurbishment or demolition of an adjacent house.

Posthole Groups 2 and 3 in Area A reflected the alignments of earlier Ditches 6 and 7 respectively indicating continuity of the boundary orientations from the early medieval inception of the town through to the nineteenth century.

DISCUSSION

The excavations at Bank Street have greatly increased the knowledge of the development of the core area of Tonbridge providing an insight through archaeological evidence into the activities undertaken directly in front of the castle gates. Together with the work begun by A.D.F. Streeter and continued by Elliot Wragg and Jeremy Haslam, a further understanding of the origins and development of the settlement around the castle is being formed based on the archaeological evidence recovered from the sites at Lansdowne Road, East Street and Bank Street. The linear ditches probably forming property boundaries facing onto Bank Street appear to fit with Haslam’s proposed model for the layout of Tonbridge. However, until further work is undertaken in the area, much is still to be confirmed about the layout and expansion of the town, its defences and the castle itself.

The presence of the industrial waste shows that the significant phases for iron making/working activity at Bank Street were early-medieval and medieval periods. From the slag evidence, it appears that smelting, in
particular, was a significant activity somewhere in the area, if not actually on-site, during these periods. Although no in situ iron making/working activity was found in the excavated area, the assemblage does contribute to the dating of the iron industry within the town. The archaeological evidence supports a model where the main market at Tonbridge was of considerable significance and was located in front of the castle gates. This included shops, which can be distinguished from stalls and identified as workshops connected to metalworking. This included the stabling and care of horses (farriery), particularly travellers’ horses. Iron nails and clenches were produced at Tonbridge and probably also weaponry.

The medieval market or markets at Tonbridge served a wide area and this is of measure of significance. The nearest other market places were some distance away at Shipbourne to the north, Edenbridge to the west, Yalding to the north-east and Brenchley to the south-east. In contrast, markets were relatively evenly spread across the eastern half of Kent and tightly clustered in north-west Kent (Lawson 2004, 51). Tonbridge had good access by both road and river, which did not apply to Shipbourne or Brenchley, although Yalding and Edenbridge had access by water. Marketing at Tonbridge is also known a century earlier than at the smaller markets around. It should be noted too that the Clare (Gloucester) family had the market grants at Brasted and Yalding as well as Tonbridge and presumably controlled the nature of the markets there. Brasted in addition was one of their manors (Hasted V, 207). The castle, Tonbridge’s favourable location and its large hinterland ensured its medieval market/s were much larger and more specialised than those of other nearby settlements.

Perhaps the most significant development in the study is that a preliminary ceramic profile for Tonbridge has been established from the excavation at the Bank Street with complimentary evidence provided from other local excavations, both in the town and its environs. This sequence is generated from the dating of pottery types as defined by the Canterbury Archaeological Trust type series, form typology and the phasing and spot dating of contexts on the Bank Street site.

The earliest medieval stratigraphic sequence produced almost exclusively the shell-tempered ware (EM35). This pottery type has a production date of 1050-1225 and so was concurrent with the establishment of the castle and the town. Other types of non-local pottery reaching Tonbridge in the late eleventh and early-twelfth century might be found on higher status sites, such as the Castle itself. The shell-tempered ware probably persisted as the main or near exclusive pottery type in Tonbridge for the first quarter of the twelfth century; from the evidence of the forms and stratigraphy at Bank Street, it is possible to deduce that the sand and shell-tempered ware (EM36) appeared here as early as c.1100.

From c.1150 there is an increase in the range of fabrics at Bank Street
and between c.1150-1225, the main type of pottery recorded is the sandy greyware (M38A). Rounded jugs with strap handles are the main type between c.1170-1225, as found in the timber-lined well, and North or West Kent fine sandy ware with sparse shell and sparse grits (EM22) also increases in frequency during this period.

It has not been possible to define the period 1250-1325 by using a ceramic fabric classification, as there are no relevant pottery types, forms or decorative techniques present that can characterise it. This is not to say that the 1250-1350 period is not represented, only that current dating and knowledge do not allow us to isolate this period adequately in the data. From 1325 on the KBST05 site (or perhaps from c.1300 as defined by fabric M38A3 on the adjacent KT-TBR03 site: Blackmore forthcoming) the ceramic profile can be defined by the presence of the hard fired sandy greyware (M38C) in the form of jugs.

Two sherds of the Surrey whiteware from Cheam (LM6) indicate that this pottery appeared in Tonbridge in the late fourteenth or perhaps fifteenth century, but it is present in a feature with a wide date range of ceramics where it is not clear what is contemporary, intrusive or residual.

The fifteenth-century ceramic profile is difficult to distinguish, as the land use at the Bank Street excavation appears to have changed to a period of infrequent activity or disposal of ceramics. A sherd of Medway hard silty-sandy ware with chalk (LM34B), dated c.1450-1525/50 occurs in a probable late fifteenth-century context as a white-slip decorated jug, but this ware is much more common in sixteenth-century contexts.

The late sixteenth and early seventeenth century ceramic profile of the site appears to be characterised largely by glazed red earthenwares from a number of sources whilst calcareous ‘peppered’ smooth ware (PM64) is a notable component of the late sixteenth to early eighteenth-century deposits and probably also derived from a number of production centres.

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ENDNOTES


2 Canterbury Cathedral Archives (CCA) DCc FX 22-31. The lo dship of Tonbridge was held by the Archbishop of Canterbury until the heir became of age. The Priory claimed its rights se de v acant e, when a new archbishop was not yet installed, CCA DC c Charta Antiqua A28, cf. C 19.

3 CCA CCA FX 21, r2, recto.

4 Harvard law school English deed catalogue, deed 419, HOLLIS number BCA9121. There are also many leases of timber rights in late fourteenth-century Kent surviving in the archives of Canterbury Cathedral Priory. The human and economic connections with Frindsbury and with Kemington are confirmed by the tenants at Tonbridge named de Frindsbury and de Kemetsyng among the rents there in 1384-85. These bynames are likely to have been inherited rather than personally descriptive of the tenant’s place of origin by this period, and indicate that earlier links between Tonbridge and Frindsbury and Kemington, CCA DCce FX 21, r2, recto.

5 CCA DCc BR/Peckham.


11 Lay Subsidy, 116. A ferour is defined by the Middle English Dictionary as ‘an ironworker, a blacksmith and [presumably] by extension a veterinarian’, i.e., farrier.
12 Middle English Dictionary.
13 ‘ii shopp’ quondam Sampson de Middleton in foro de Tonebr’ annex’ ad barbecan’, CCA DCc FX 21, r2, recto.
14 CCA DCc FX 23, FX 25.
15 Lay Subsidy, 116.

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