

UNION RAILWAYS LIMITED

WEST OF BLIND LANE

ARC BLN 97

An Archaeological Evaluation

Contract No. 194/870



Museum of London Archaeology Service
January 1998

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WEST OF BLIND LANE (ARC BLN 97) EVALUATION REPORT

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ARC BLN 97

An Archaeological Evaluation

Final Report

Volume 1 of 1

Contract No. 194/870

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Museum of London Archaeology Service
January 1998

WEST OF BLIND LANE

ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION

SUMMARY

As part of a programme of archaeological investigations along the route of the Channel Tunnel Rail Link, Union Railways Limited (URL) commissioned the Museum of London Archaeology Service (MoLAS) to undertake an evaluation comprising thirteen trial trenches situated in 2.7 ha. of land between the villages of Sevington and Mersham, 3.7km south-east of the centre of Ashford, Kent. The area of investigation was bounded by the London to Folkestone main railway line to the south and by farmland to the west, north and east.

Archaeological features were located in 8 of the 13 trenches. Curvilinear ditches and slots were concentrated towards the eastern end of the evaluation area and may represent two prehistoric enclosures. Linear ditches were spread more evenly across the site and may indicate the survival of one or more field systems.

Pottery was recorded in seven of the twenty cut features. One largely complete bucket urn may be related to the Deverel Rimbury tradition of the mid 2nd millennium BC. Other sherds may be early 1st millennium BC in date. Occupation therefore appears to cover the Middle and Late Bronze Ages.

The Middle Bronze Age coincided with the climatic optimum of the mid 2nd millennium BC when the climate of Britain was favourable for the expansion of settlement onto poorer soils and into upland areas. The poorly drained soils of the Ashford area may therefore have been farmed at this time. Climatic deterioration in the late 2nd millennium meant that settlement in these areas was no longer practical and there was therefore a contraction of settlement in the early 1st millennium BC.

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SECTION 1: FACTUAL STATEMENT

1 BACKGROUND

1.1 Introduction

- 1.1.1 The Museum of London Archaeology Service (MoLAS) was commissioned by Union Railways Limited (URL) to carry out an archaeological evaluation on farmland between the villages of Sevington and Mersham, approximately 3.7 kilometres south-east of the centre of Ashford, Kent. The evaluated area consisted of set-aside farmland north of the London to Folkestone main railway (URL Grid 83970/20160) (Fig 1 and 2). The work was undertaken between the 14 and 20 October 1997. The evaluation forms part of a larger programme of archaeological investigation along the line of the Channel Tunnel Rail Link, the aim of which was to assess the affect of the construction of the new railway upon cultural heritage. An Environmental Assessment has been prepared (URL 1994). This evaluation was within route window 33.
- 1.1.2 The work was carried out according to the ‘Specification for Archaeological Investigations’ prepared by URL, which details the scope and methodology of the evaluation. The preparation of this report is included within that specification. The evaluated area is shown on Fig 2.
- 1.1.3 Archaeological potential was indicated in the Environmental Assessment by a scatter of prehistoric worked flints, Iron Age pottery and some Roman and medieval pottery (OAU No. 1353). A further dense scatter of Iron Age and Roman pottery was located immediately to the north-east; a scatter of prehistoric flintwork was located to the north and may have been associated with an extensive cropmark complex of ring ditches, enclosures and field boundaries (OAU No. 1321).

1.2 Geology, landscape and landuse

- 1.2.1 The site was located on the Lower Greensand. Atherfield Clay at the base of the Lower Greensand sequence grades upwards into the sandier Hythe Beds, composed chiefly of glauconitic or ferruginous sands and rubbly sandy limestone (Kentish Rag). Prehistoric features located in many of the trenches may have been protected by the accumulation of deposits derived from higher up the slope.
- 1.2.2 The site was situated in the parish of Sevington and is approximately 3.5km south-east of the centre of Ashford. The East Stour River is approximately 1km to the south.
- 1.2.3 The site was positioned on the north side of the present railway line, at the base of a shallow, dry valley. At the western end of the site the ground surface was at 50.50m OD, dropping very gradually towards the east so that at the very east end of the site the ground surface was at 49.00m OD. The ground rose up to the north to a maximum height of about 60m OD.

- 1.2.4 Most of the upper part of the field was used for growing wheat while the lower part of the field was set-aside. The lower area will be affected by the proposed route of the CTRL and was therefore selected for archaeological evaluation.

2 SPECIFICATIONS

2.1 Aims

2.1.1 The 'Specification for Archaeological Investigations' described the general aims of the archaeological works, that all the evaluations shall aim to provide information to determine:

- the presence / absence, extent, condition, character, quality and date of any archaeological remains within the area of the evaluation;
- the presence and potential of environmental and economic indicators preserved in any archaeological features or deposits;
- the local, regional, national and international importance of such remains, and the potential for further archaeological fieldwork to fulfil local, regional and national research objectives.

2.1.2 The site specific aims described in the specification were to:

- determine the presence/absence etc. of any subsoil features or deposits of archaeological interest which may be associated with, or in close proximity to, surface concentrations of Iron Age to medieval pottery recorded during the Environmental Assessment of the CTRL.

3 METHODS

3.1 General

3.1.1 A detailed project design for the evaluation was agreed by URL with the County Archaeologist and English Heritage. The following summarises the archaeological aspects of the methodology and notes any deviation from the original specification.

3.2 Survey

3.2.1 The trench locations (Fig 2), specified by URL were established using a total station EDM from URL permanent ground markers.

3.2.2 The standard error of the trench positioning was set to normal engineering standards, a traverse accuracy of +/- 15mm over 1km. The trench location plan is based on this information. Drawn plans have been digitised using an AutoCAD graphics program.

3.2.3 Individual features in trenches were planned at 1:20 and occasionally 1:50, taking as a grid the line between the two survey pegs used to mark out the trench. Sections, drawn at 1:10, 1:20 and 1:50 were also positioned using these lines. These survey pegs were accurately positioned and marked out the western side of a north/south trench or the southern side of an east/west trench.

3.2.4 The central site coordinate, according to the given URL grid, was 83970/20160.

3.3 Excavation

3.3.1 Thirteen trenches were located and excavated. Each trench measured 30 x 1.5 metres, representing 2% of the total site area of 2.7 ha. (Fig 2).

3.3.2 Trench numbers were allocated by URL. The trenches were excavated using a 360° tracked mechanical excavator fitted with a ditching bucket; topsoil and any overburden were excavated to deposits of archaeological significance and in some cases deepened to test the natural geology. Archaeological deposits were partially excavated by hand to assess the nature of individual features, to obtain dating material and to allow an assessment of environmental survival.

3.4 Recording

3.4.1 Recording procedures followed the MoLAS Archaeological Site Manual (1995). Each archaeological deposit and cut feature was given a context number and descriptions recorded on context sheets. Scale plans and sections were drawn of features and all heights indicated on the field drawings were related to Ordnance Datum heights above sea level. Individual sheets were prepared for each trench, recording the nature and

depth of each observed deposit and recording the archaeological features contained within each trench.

- 3.4.2 A photographic record of the site was kept.
- 3.4.3 Artefacts and samples were collected for dating and identification.
- 3.4.4 A site code was provided by URL, all records can be referenced from this code.

4 RESULTS

4.1 General

- 4.1.1 The main components of the trenches are described below. A summary of all the archaeological contexts and associated finds are listed in the Archaeological Context Inventory (Table 2). Detailed reports on the pottery, flint, animal bones and plant remains are contained in Appendices 1-4. The site archive has been prepared and includes URL datasets for the Fieldwork Event, Contexts and Bulk Finds. The environmental samples were sterile and no dataset had been produced.

5 TRENCH DESCRIPTIONS

5.1 General

- 5.1.1 All trenches will be described in order from west to east.
- 5.1.2 The majority of archaeological features were recorded cutting natural sandy clay deposits.

5.2 Trench descriptions

5.2.1 *Trench 1716TT* (Fig 3)

- 5.2.1.1 Base West: 49.96m OD: East: 50.49m OD. Depth 0.48m. Topsoil over orange yellow sandy clay over grey clay.
- 5.2.1.2 At the very western end of the trench a linear cut [38], aligned approximately north-south, was 1.2m wide and excavated to a depth of 0.40m. Only the very eastern side of the cut was located, but the side was steeply inclined, suggesting a feature of some depth. It was filled with light grey sandy silt [37].

5.2.2 *Trench 1717TT* (Fig 2)

- 5.2.2.1 Base North: 51.66m OD: South: 50.32m OD. Depth 0.60m. Topsoil over yellow brown sandy clay over grey clay. No archaeology was noted.

5.2.3 *Trench 1718TT* (Fig 3)

- 5.2.3.1 Base West: 50.86m OD: east: 51.34m OD. Depth 0.50m. Topsoil over orange yellow sandy clay over grey clay.
- 5.2.3.2 A narrow ditch or slot [22] 0.60m wide and 0.14m deep crossed the trench on a north-south alignment. The cut was filled with a light grey sandy silt [21] with occasional charcoal flecks, but no finds were recovered.
- 5.2.3.3 Cut [24] was 5m wide and at least 0.5m deep (although it is likely to have been much deeper). The narrow limits of the trench made it difficult to assess the true nature of this feature. The large width of [24] suggests that it may have been a pond as opposed to a linear cut. It was filled with a possibly waterlain light grey sandy silt [23] with occasional charcoal flecks and some hand made pottery. The feature was not bottomed.
- 5.2.3.4 Two narrow east-west aligned linear features [34] and [36] were recorded at the eastern end of the trench. Although originally thought to be possible structural slots excavation of [34] revealed no cut edges. The most likely interpretation is of slight variations in the natural geology.

5.2.4 *Trench 1719TT* (Fig 2)

5.2.4.1 Base North: 52.63m OD: South: 52.38m OD. Depth 0.50m at south end, 1m at north end (machined further into the natural deposits to test the natural geology). Topsoil over orange yellow sandy clay over grey clay. No archaeology was noted.

5.2.5 *Trench 1720TT* (Fig 4)

5.2.5.1 Base West: 58.89m OD: East: 52.38m OD. Depth 0.80m. Topsoil over orange brown sandy clay over grey clay.

5.2.5.2 A linear feature [20] aligned N-S was up to 2.20m wide and 0.50m deep (the upper part was machine truncated) and filled with mid grey clayey sand [19]. Some pot and struck flint was recovered from the fill.

5.2.6 *Trench 1721TT* (Fig 2)

5.2.6.1 Base North: 52.42m OD: South: 51.31m OD. Depth 0.80m. Topsoil over mottled orange grey sandy clay over grey clay. No archaeology was noted.

5.2.7 *Trench 1722TT* (Fig 2)

5.2.7.1 Base North: 52.51m OD: South: 52.31m OD. Depth 0.70m. Topsoil over orange brown sandy clay over grey clay. No archaeology was noted.

5.2.8 *Trench 1723TT* (Fig 2)

5.2.8.1 Base West: 51.18m OD: East: 50.61m OD. Depth 0.90m. Topsoil over orange grey sandy clay over grey clay. No archaeology was noted.

5.2.9 *Trench 1724TT* (Fig 4)

5.2.9.1 Base West: 51.66m OD: East: 50.75m OD. Depth 0.90m. Topsoil over grey brown sandy clay over grey clay.

5.2.9.2 Towards the eastern end of the trench a linear cut [14] 1.4m wide and 0.80m deep crossed the trench on a N-S alignment. It was filled with mid brown humic clay [13] with humic dark grey silt at the base containing flecks of charcoal, struck flint and burnt stone.

- 5.2.9.3 Further to the west a narrower linear cut [16], on the same alignment as [14], was recorded. It was 1.10m wide and 0.40m deep and was filled with a mid grey sandy clay [15] with occasional charcoal flecks and a single abraded pot sherd.
- 5.2.9.4 Between [14] and [16] a small pit or posthole was excavated [18] which contained mid grey sandy clay [17] with occasional charcoal flecks.
- 5.2.10 *Trench 1725TT* (Fig 5)
- 5.2.10.1 Base North: 52.43m OD: South: 50.92m OD. Depth 1.00m. Topsoil over orange sandy clay over grey clay.
- 5.2.10.2 At the north end of the trench a curvilinear feature [8], 1.50m wide and at least 0.50m deep, was aligned approximately E-W (although curving round to the south). The sides of the cut were slightly concave, forming a wide U-shape. It was filled by light grey clay [7] with mid brown humic lenses. The feature was not bottomed due to the depth of the trench at this point.
- 5.2.10.3 Immediately to the south of [8] was a narrow, curvilinear slot [10], 0.50m wide and 0.60m deep, with a marked step down against the southern edge. Possible stake impressions were noted along the base of the lower step. It was filled with a light grey clay [9] with occasional small fragments of charcoal. No finds were recovered but similarities in fill composition may suggest that [8] and [10] were broadly contemporary.
- 5.2.10.4 Feature [12] was a wide shallow hollow 1.80m wide and 0.20m deep immediately to the south of [10]. The base of the cut was flat, with shallow but steep sides. It was filled with mid grey clay and occasional sand lenses [11] and one flint flake. [12] may be associated with [8] and [10].
- 5.2.11 *Trench 1726TT* (Fig 5)
- 5.2.11.1 Base North: 49.95m OD: South: 48.92m OD. Depth 1.00m. Topsoil over light grey clayey sand over orange clay over grey clay.
- 5.2.11.2 A single large linear or curvilinear feature [26] was located at the southern end of the trench. It was 3.20m wide and of unknown depth. Only partial excavation was possible because of the depth of the trench at this point. It was filled with light grey sandy silt [25] with iron staining. No finds were recovered.
- 5.2.12 *Trench 1727TT* (Fig 6)
- 5.2.12.1 Base West: 49.05m OD: East: 48.96m OD. Depth 0.90m. Topsoil over light brown sandy clay over light grey clay over orange sandy clay over grey clay.

- 5.2.12.2 A linear or curvilinear feature [2] crossed the trench on a N-S alignment. [2] was 2.40m wide and 0.50m deep, with concave sides and a wide, flat base. It was filled with mid grey sandy clay [1] with occasional charcoal flecks, struck flint, burnt and cracked stone and sherds of handmade pottery.
- 5.2.12.3 Immediately to the west of [1] a narrow curvilinear slot [4] was recorded. It was 0.30m wide and 0.20m deep with a curving U-shaped profile. It was filled with mid grey sandy clay [3] with occasional charcoal flecks. Slot [4] may have had a structural function and was associated with a small posthole [40].
- 5.2.12.4 A small gap separated [4] from another curvilinear feature [6] which was 1m wide and 0.30m deep. It was filled with grey sandy clay [3] with occasional charcoal flecks and sherds of handmade pottery.
- 5.2.13 *Trench 1728TT* (Fig 6)
- 5.2.13.1 Base West: 49.39m OD: East: 48.55m OD. Depth 0.80m. Topsoil over light brown sandy clay over orange sandy clay over grey clay.
- 5.2.13.2 Towards the western end of the trench a N-S aligned linear cut [28] was 1.20m wide and 0.20m deep with a shallow, gently curving profile. [28] was filled with light grey sandy clay [27]. No finds were recovered.
- 5.2.13.3 A narrow slot [30] was aligned N-S and was 0.60m wide and 0.35m deep with a steep U-shaped profile. Slot [30] was filled with light grey sandy clay. No finds were recovered.
- 5.2.13.4 A linear cut [32] aligned N-S was 1.70m wide and filled with light grey sandy clay [31]. The depth of the trench at this point did not allow for excavation.

6 ARCHAEOLOGICAL DATASETS

6.1 Table 1: Events dataset

EVENT_NAME: West of Blind Lane
EVENT_CODE: ARC BLN 97
EVENT_TYPE: Evaluation
CONTRACTOR: Museum of London Archaeology Service
DATE: 14/10/97-20/10/97
GRID: 83970/20160 (URL Grid)
PROJECT: CTRL
COUNTY: Kent
DISTRICT: Ashford
PARISH: Sevington CP
SMR:
SITE_TYPE: Cultivated Land 3 - Operation to a depth >0.25m
PERIOD: Middle to Late Bronze Age
METHOD: Mechanical removal of topsoil; hand excavation and recording of archaeological features.
PHASING: Bronze Age
ENVIRON: Apart from fragmented charcoal, the five samples failed to produce plant remains.
FINDS: A fragmented Middle Bronze Age urn and several possibly Late Bronze Age sherds; one convex Bronze Age flint scraper and several blades; and a pig and cattle tooth fragment.
GEOLOGY: Atherfield Clay under Lower Green Sand, grades upwards into the sandier Hythe Beds composed of glauconic or ferruginous sandy limestone.
CONTEXT_NUM: 40 (+ 13 trench sheets)
THREAT: CTRL
SAMPLE: 2%
SUMMARY: Eight trenches revealed MBA ditches, a possible well, and curvilinear slots, probably part of an enclosure and field system.
ARCHIVE:
ACC_NUM:

6.2 Table 2: Archaeological context inventory

TRENCH	CONTEXT	TYPE	PERIOD	ASSOCIATION	COMMENTS
1727TT	1	deposit		2	fill
1727TT	2	cut		1	linear feature
1727TT	3	deposit		4	fill
1727TT	4	cut		3	linear feature
1727TT	5	deposit		6	fill
1727TT	6	cut		5	linear feature
1725TT	7	deposit		8	fill
1725TT	8	cut		7	linear feature
1725TT	9	deposit		10	fill
1725TT	10	cut		9	feature
1725TT	11	deposit		12	fill
1725TT	12	cut		11	feature or hollow
1724TT	13	deposit		14	linear feature
1724TT	14	cut		13	linear feature
1724TT	15	deposit		16	fill
1724TT	16	cut		15	linear feature
1724TT	17	deposit		18	fill
1724TT	18	cut		17	?posthole
1720TT	19	deposit		20	fill
1720TT	20	cut		19	linear feature
1718TT	21	deposit		22	fill
1718TT	22	cut		21	feature
1718TT	23	deposit		24	fill
1718TT	24	cut		23	feature
1726TT	25	deposit		26	fill
1726TT	26	cut		25	feature
1728TT	27	deposit		28	fill
1728TT	28	cut		27	feature
1728TT	29	deposit		30	fill
1728TT	30	cut		29	feature
1728TT	31	deposit		32	fill
1728TT	32	cut		31	feature
1728TT	33	deposit		34	fill
1728TT	34	cut		33	feature
1728TT	35	deposit		36	fill
1728TT	36	cut		35	feature
1716TT	37	deposit		38	fill
1716TT	38	cut		37	feature
1727TT	39	deposit		40	fill
1727TT	40	cut		39	feature

SECTION 2: STATEMENT OF IMPORTANCE

7 CONCLUSIONS

7.1 Extent of archaeological deposits

- 7.1.1 Archaeological features were located in 8 of the 13 trenches. Curvilinear ditches and slots were concentrated towards the eastern end of the evaluation area and may represent two prehistoric enclosures. Linear ditches were spread more evenly across the site and may indicate the survival of one or more field systems.
- 7.1.2 Pottery was recorded in seven of the twenty cut features. One largely complete bucket urn from the curvilinear feature [8] may be related to the Deverel Rimbury tradition of the mid 2nd millennium BC. Other sherds may be early 1st millennium BC in date, suggesting that the site was occupied during the Middle and Late Bronze Ages.
- 7.1.3 The remaining trenches contained no archaeological deposits.

7.2 Nature of archaeological deposits

- 7.2.1 All deposits of archaeological significance were located within cut features. These varied from possible structural slots and linear and curvilinear ditches to postholes.
- 7.2.2 Two possible enclosures were identified. In trench *1727TT* a narrow curving ditch [6] was associated with a posthole [40] and a curving slot [4]. Prehistoric pottery was recovered from the fill of [6], and struck flint flakes from the fill of [2]. All features appeared to curve around to the east. Slot [4] and the associated posthole were probably structural and could have supported a fence or wall. The similar arrangement of a slot and a ditch in trench *1725TT* supports the view that [4], [40] and [6] may represent associated features.
- 7.2.3 In trench *1725TT* a ditch [8] was associated with a slot [10]. Both [8] and [10] curved around to the south, with [10] on the inside of [8]. The southern side of the slot was deeper, with stake impressions in the base of the cut; another fenceline may therefore be suggested. Sherds from a bucket urn of Deverel Rimbury type were recovered from the fill of [8], indicating a Middle Bronze Age date. A wide ditch [12] was located immediately to the south, on the inside of the possible enclosure. The similar arrangement of a slot and a ditch in trench *1727TT* supports the view that [8] and [10] were associated features.
- 7.2.4 In trench *1718TT* a wide ditch or pond [24], was associated with a narrow ditch or slot [22]. The pottery from the fill of [22] was finer than that recovered from features towards the east end of the site and is possibly Late Bronze Age in date.
- 7.2.5 Ditches were located in trenches *1716TT*, *1720TT*, *1724TT* and *1728TT*. Prehistoric pottery and struck flints were found in some of the ditches, and it is likely that most, if not all of the features were Bronze Age in date. The relative high density of linear

ditches may point to a series of enclosed fields, perhaps with connecting droveways, a pattern which is compatible with known MBA and LBA farming practices in southern Britain. Most of the ditches were aligned north-south, presumably to facilitate downhill drainage of the site.

7.3 Character of the site

- 7.3.1 Features were located on the lower south facing slope and in the base of a small dry valley. The valley may originally have supported a tributary of the East Stour River, which is just over 1km to the south-west.
- 7.3.2 The natural slope levelled out onto a plateau 150m to the north of the site. Preliminary fieldwalking by the Oxford Archaeological Unit recovered prehistoric worked flints (OAU No. 1820). An extensive area of cropmarks (OAU No.1321), including ring ditches and a possible field system partly coincided with this fieldwalked area. Features located in this evaluation (ARC BLN 97) may therefore form part of a much wider, surviving prehistoric landscape.
- 7.3.3 The site was located on natural clay (Atherfield). Many ceramic land drains were uncovered during the evaluation, a symptom of bad drainage, and trenches flooded after a minimal amount of rain. Colluvium in the base of the valley reached a depth of between 0.8m and 1m suggesting that, in this low lying area, any subsurface features were unlikely to be seen as cropmarks. If prehistoric features are masked by colluvium then more extensive field systems may continue into adjacent fields. One possible area lies between ARC BLN 97 and Blind Lane to the east.

7.4 Date of occupation

- 7.4.1 Occupation was of Middle and Late Bronze Age date. Iron Age, Roman and medieval pottery was also found during the initial fieldwalking exercise (OAU No. 1353), but no features of that date were identified during the evaluation.

8 IMPORTANCE OF THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL REMAINS

8.1 Survival and conditions

- 8.1.1 Archaeology was located in the base of a small, dry valley. Features were therefore generally covered by deep colluvial deposits. Pottery and flint was recovered in moderate quantities from several features.
- 8.1.2 The small quantity of bone recovered was in a good condition which may suggest that this area was rather sparingly used for the deposition of animal food waste.
- 8.1.3 The survival of organic remains was poor.

8.2 Period

- 8.2.1 Cut features of Middle and Late Bronze Age date were located during the evaluation, possibly representing both settlement activity and associated field systems.
- 8.2.2 The MBA coincided with the climatic optimum of the mid 2nd millennium BC when the climate of Britain was favourable for the expansion of settlement onto poorer soils and into upland areas. The poorly drained soils of the Ashford area may therefore have been farmed at this time. Climatic deterioration in the late 2nd millennium meant that settlement in these areas was no longer practical and there was therefore a contraction of settlement in the early 1st millennium BC.

8.3 Rarity

- 8.3.1 Champion (1980, 1982) indicates that few settlements of MBA date are known from Kent. One site is known from Ramsgate (Hawkes 1942) and another at Hayes Common (Philp 1973). However, if the distribution of MBA bronze work can be taken as an indication of settlement distribution it is interesting to note a concentration of five finds spots in the Ashford area (Champion, T., 1980). The location of an MBA settlement to the east of Ashford is therefore important in understanding the nature of mid 2nd millennium activity in east Kent. Late Bronze activity is less common for the Ashford region.
- 8.3.2 Two Late Bronze Age-Early Iron Age sites were found at Waterbrook Farm, Sevington. The first was represented by fairly intense occupation, including pits, postholes, ditches and possibly the remains of an eaves-drip gully associated with a circular building. The second site had both Late Bronze Age and Late Iron Age 'Belgic' occupation evidence (Arch.Cant. CX, 1992).

8.4 Fragility and vulnerability

- 8.4.1 Evaluation work has confirmed that archaeological features survive cut into natural geology overlain by topsoil. Any intrusive work undertaken in connection with the CTRL is likely to damage features and deposits of archaeological interest.

8.5 Diversity

- 8.5.1 The evaluation produced evidence for Prehistoric activity only, probably of Middle and Late Bronze Age date.

8.6 Documentation

- 8.6.1 Two Late Bronze Age-Early Iron Age sites were found at Waterbrook Farm, Sevington by the Canterbury Archaeological Trust in 1992 (Arch. Cant. CX, 1992).
- 8.6.2 Fieldwork carried out 400m to the west of ARC BLN 97 by the Canterbury Archaeological Trust in 1987 located two Late Iron Age ‘Belgic’ settlements (Arch. Cant CVI, 1988). The work was undertaken for Eurotunnel in advance of the building of the Ashford inland freight clearance depot.
- 8.6.3 Several Late Iron Age (LIA) and Early Romano-British (ERB) sites were located immediately to the west of the above sites. Field walking and trial trenching by the Kent Archaeological Rescue Unit (KARU) in 1990 and the Oxford Archaeological Unit (OAU) in 1993 located at least three sites of LIA-ERB date.
- 8.6.4 An evaluation at Boys Hall Road (ARC BHR 97) for the CTRL located further LIA-ERB features 1km to the west of this evaluation (ARC BLN 97).

8.7 Group value

- 8.7.1 The presence of Bronze Age settlement activity, possibly associated with a field system, may be compared with cropmarks located by aerial photographs in fields immediately to the north (OAU No. 1321).
- 8.7.2 Few settlement sites of Bronze Age date have been excavated in the locality, although a number of Middle Bronze Age bronzes have been found in the Ashford area. Excavations carried out on the site of the Channel Tunnel Terminal located Early Bronze Age burial mounds and a settlement at Holywell Coombe, Folkestone (Arch. Cant. CVI, 1988).

8.8 Potential

- 8.8.1 Evaluation has shown that the area is likely to contain Bronze Age features at its eastern end, possibly representing part of a settlement. Part of a field system may also survive across most of the site and may extend into adjacent fields.

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APPENDIX 1

POTTERY

By Jon Cotton, with Louise Rayner

Introduction

The evaluation produced a total of 126 sherds (1185g) dating to the mid 2nd millennium and 1st millennium BC. The sherds are in moderate condition; some have abraded edges. The average sherd weight is just under 10g. The pottery was examined using a x20 binocular microscope and recorded using standard MoLAS codes on pro-forma sheets. Quantification of the material was by sherd count and weight. Pottery was recorded from seven contexts.

Fabrics

The fabrics have been defined on the basis of their main inclusions. The dominant fabric is flint-tempered, although sherds of glauconite-rich and finer silty fabrics are also present. There is some variation amongst the flint-tempered fabrics with the flint ranging in size and frequency. These have been separated into three broad categories: Flint 1 has abundant, coarse flint-temper; Flint 2 has sparse, medium to coarse flint-temper; Flint 3 has sparse, fine flint-temper.

Flint 1: The vessel in context [7] is abundantly tempered with crushed burnt flint, ranging in size up to 8mm. Rounded red iron-rich pellets are also present, probably naturally occurring in the clay body. The fabric is dark grey - black and the exterior surface is oxidized a pale orange colour.

Glauconite: Three sherds in context [21] have a glauconite-rich fabric with moderate, medium to coarse flint-temper. These glauconite-rich fabrics may be locally produced as the site is located on a lower greensand outcrop, which is a source of glauconite.

Finer silty fabrics: A fine silty matrix with sparse, medium quartz and sparse red rounded iron-rich pellets. These pellets are similar to those identified in Flint 1 and may suggest the same clay body was used for both fine and coarse fabrics.

Fabric groups & Quantities

- Flint-tempered fabric 1 (FLIN1) 113 sherds, 1121g
- Flint-tempered fabric 2 (FLIN2) 2 sherds, 15g
- Flint-tempered fabric 3 (FLIN3) 3 sherds, 7g
- Fine silty fabrics (FINE/SAND) 5 sherds, 22g
- Glauconite-rich fabric (GLAUC) 3 sherds, 20g.

Forms

Only one form could confidently be identified from this assemblage. The 113 sherds recovered from context [7] all belong to one vessel which is a large bucket urn with a single, applied and finger-tip decorated cordon. The cordon survives on four sherds, three of which join. There are no rim sherds present. The urn is part of the Deverel Rimbury tradition comprising globular and bucket urns. The only other feature sherd in the assemblage is a rim, but not enough is present to identify the form further.

Chronology

The Deverel Rimbury bucket urn is dated to the mid 2nd millennium BC (Middle Bronze Age). The other sherds are not closely datable but probably represent later phases of activity dating to the 1st millennium BC.

General Comments

The Middle Bronze Age urn was recovered from the fill [7] of a linear cut [8]. The condition and number of the sherds relating to the urn suggest it was fairly complete when deposited. Only the rim is not represented at all and this may be because of damage to the vessel caused by ploughing, particularly if the vessel was interred upright. The rest of the assemblage is not diagnostic but probably dates to the 1st millennium BC and may represent several phases of activity. The presence of similar inclusions in both the flint-tempered and fine silty fabrics suggests that the fabrics were manufactured using the same clay source, probably local to the site. The glauconite-rich fabrics are probably also locally produced.

Deverel Rimbury urns are commonly deposited as cremation vessels; the absence of any human remains associated with the urn suggests it has either been disturbed from its original context and redeposited or it is contemporary with the features excavated and relates to settlement activity.

Assessment of potential and further work

The recovery of a Middle Bronze Age urn is of interest, but more extensive excavation of the site is required in order to refine our understanding of the features and their chronology. If the urn is contemporary with some of the features relating to settlement activity, then this site is of regional importance. Middle Bronze Age settlement evidence is nowhere well represented in Kent, and Champion (1980) notes only two sites at opposite ends of the county. The Ashford Deverel Rimbury material is of particular interest in view of the finds of contemporary Middle Bronze Age metalwork in the area.

The assemblage suggests activity spanning from the mid 2nd millennium into the 1st millennium, but more evidence is required in order to closely date the later phases and characterise the type of activity.

The assemblage warrants further work and should be compared to other assemblages from this area and/or the fabric type series for the region. Petrological analysis in the form of thin sectioning would greatly aid the sourcing and fabric characterisation of the assemblage. The bucket urn should be illustrated and published in an appropriate academic journal.

Table 3: Bulk dataset, pottery

Key: MBA - middle Bronze Age; LBA - Late Bronze Age

TRENCH	CONTEXT	MATERIAL	COUNT	WEIGHT	COMMENTS
1727TT	1	POT	1	10	LBA
1727TT	5	POT	3	8	LBA
1725TT	7	POT	113	1090	urn, MBA
1724TT	15	POT	2	5	LBA
1720TT	19	POT	1	5	LBA
1718TT	21	POT	5	30	glauconite, flint tempered, LBA
1726TT	25	POT	2	15	LBA

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APPENDIX 2**FLINT***By Jonathan Cotton***Discussion**

Twelve pieces of worked flint were recovered from five different contexts as well as one piece of burnt unworked flint.

One small Bronze Age convex scraper came from an unstratified context. The rest of this small assemblage is “blade dominated”.

Some patination is present. The main group is probably Mesolithic to Early Neolithic. No further work is necessary on these flints.

Table 4: Bulk dataset, flint

TRENCH	CONTEXT	MATERIAL	COUNT	WEIGHT	COMMENTS
-	0	FLINT	1	5	convex scraper, BA
1727TT	1	FLINT	2	8	blade
1725TT	11	FLINT	1	2	blade
1724TT	13	FLINT	4	40	blade
1720TT	19	FLINT	2	10	blade
1718TT	21	FLINT	2	5	blade
1726TT	25	FLINT	1	2	Burnt Flint

APPENDIX 3**ANIMAL BONES**

By Kevin Rielly

Introduction and Results

This report discusses the animal bones from West of Blind Lane (ARC BLN97).

Just one of the hand recovered and sampled contexts produced animal bones. This was context [7], a ditch fill, which would appear to be prehistoric (possibly Bronze Age) in date. The bone assemblage consists of two teeth fragments, a pig molar and a cattle premolar. Both are in relatively good condition.

Conclusions

The small number of bones either suggest that this area was rather sparingly used for the deposition of animal food waste or that they represent the redeposited remains of food waste dumped elsewhere. A further negative point is the poor quantity and quality of dating evidence from this site. It can be concluded that any further excavation in this area is likely to reveal similar bone-free deposits, obviously suggesting very limited returns regarding the study of animal usage.

Table 5: Bulk dataset, animal bone

TRENCH	CONTEXT	MATERIAL	COUNT	WEIGHT	COMMENTS
1725TT	7	ANIMAL BONE	3	3	Tooth

APPENDIX 4

PLANT REMAINS

By John Giorgi

Introduction

Five environmental soil samples were collected during the evaluation and assessed for the presence of charred plant remains. The samples were taken from the following features: a ?prehistoric ditch fill [19] (sample <1>); an undated slot fill [15] (sample <2>); a ?prehistoric (possibly bronze age) slot fill [9] (sample <3>); a ?prehistoric (possibly bronze age) ditch fill [7] (sample <4>); and a deposit [25] (sample <5>) of unknown date. The size of all the samples was ten litres.

The aim of the assessment was to evaluate the quality of preservation and the abundance and diversity of charred plant remains in the samples and present recommendations on the analysis of the material.

Methods

The samples were processed in a flotation machine using sieve sizes of 0.25mm and 1mm for the recovery of the flot and residue respectively. The residues were dried and sorted for biological and artefactual remains.

Results

A ?Prehistoric Ditch Fill [19] 1720TT (sample <1>): This sample failed to produce a flot and yielded only a small sized residue (0.2 litres); this consisted mainly of gravel plus occasional molluscs and small iron pan fragments.

An Undated Slot Fill [15] 1724TT (sample <2>): This sample was completely sterile producing neither a flot or residue.

A ?Prehistoric (possibly Bronze Age) Slot Fill [9] 1725TT (sample <3>): This sample was also completely sterile producing neither a flot or residue.

A ?Prehistoric (possibly Bronze Age) Ditch Fill [7] 1725TT (sample <4>): This sample failed to produce a flot and yielded only a small sized residue (0.1 litres), which consisted mainly of gravel plus occasional pottery fragments.

Undated Deposit [25] 1726TT (sample <5>): This sample failed to produce a flot and yielded a small sized residue (1.0 litre). This contained abundant gravel and iron pan fragments and very occasional charcoal fragments.

Statement of Potential

The virtual absence of biological remains means that these samples are unable to provide any information on either environmental or economic activities at the site.

Recommendations

On the basis of the assessment results, no further work is required on these samples.

No table was produced from the negative results.

Kent SMR Record Sheet

Site Name: West of Blind Lane			
Site code: ARC BLN 97			
Summary: An evaluation of 13 trenches, commissioned by Union Railways Limited, was carried out by the Museum of London Archaeology Service, in October 1997, south-east of Ashford, Kent. Archaeological features were present in 8 of the 13 evaluation trenches.			
District: Ashford		Parish: Sevington	
Period(s):			
1. Mesolithic			
2. Neolithic			
3. Bronze Age			
NGR Easting TQ 604000		NGR Northing TQ 140200	
Type of Recording:	Evaluation	Watching-Brief	Field-Walking
(Delete)	Excavation	Geophysical Survey	Measured Survey
Date of Recording: (From) 15/10/97		(To) 21/10/97	
Unit Undertaking Recording: MoLAS			
Museum of London Archaeology Service, Walker House, 87 Queen Victoria Street, London EC4V 4AB			
1.1.1 Summary of Field Results:			
The drift geology consisted of the natural sands and clays of the Lower Greensand (the Hythe Beds and the Atherfield clay). Surface level: highest at 50.26m OD, lowest at 48.80m OD.			
Curvilinear ditches and slots were concentrated towards the eastern end of the evaluation area and may represent two prehistoric enclosures. Linear ditches were spread more evenly across the site and may indicate the survival of one or more prehistoric field systems.			
1.1.2 Pottery was recorded in seven cut features. One largely complete bucket urn of Deverel Rimbury type (mid 2nd millennium BC) and sherds of early 1st millennium BC date were recovered, suggesting Middle and Late Bronze Age activity.			
Twelve prehistoric worked flints, mostly blades, were recovered. The main group is probably Mesolithic to Early Neolithic in date but a Bronze Age convex scraper was also found.			

Location of Archive/Finds:	URL archive at Aylesford	
Bibliography:	Evaluation Report.	
Summary Compiler: Phil Treveil	Date:	3/12/97