

## **SUMMARY REPORT**

### **Hurst Wood, Charing Heath, Kent. (NGR TQ 92955 48461).**

The Oxford Archaeological Unit (OAU) was commissioned by Union Railways (South) Limited (URS) to carry out a strip, map and sample excavation on a site to the south of Charing Heath (centred on URL grid 72960 28460; NGR grid TQ 92955 48461). The work was conducted between 14th September 1998 and 1<sup>st</sup> October 1998, as part of a programme of archaeological investigation along the line of the Channel Tunnel Rail Link.

Twenty-seven pits, 17 postholes, 4 tree-throw holes and 2 furrows were excavated. Of those features 2 pits contained Bronze Age pottery, one tree-throw hole produced Iron Age pottery and a further pit contained a single Romano-British sherd. Six pits and two postholes contained flint. It is likely that the postholes and the furrows are associated with a post-medieval hop garden. Many of the pits contained evidence of burning and may have been associated with charcoal production, woodland clearance or some other form of woodland management.

The pits were all fairly similar, they had flat bases and short, steep, concave sides. Many contained evidence of burning '*in situ*', including fire hardened and reddened bases and ashy, charcoal-rich fills. It proposed that radiocarbon dates will be obtained from the fills to ascertain whether the pits are broadly contemporary (possibly relating to the prehistoric flint found in the topsoil) or if the activity was spread over a longer time period.