

SUMMARY REPORT

As part of an extensive programme of archaeological investigation carried out in advance of the construction of the Channel Tunnel Rail Link (CTRL), the Oxford Archaeological Unit was commissioned by Union Railway (South) Limited to maintain a watching brief during soil stripping of land West of Leda Cottages (Chainage 83+200) within CTRL Project Area 430 between July and September 2001. Investigations prior to the construction programme had revealed no significant archaeology, thus the site was designated a Watching Brief. The size of the construction site totalled 2.88 ha.

The watching brief revealed a sequence of activity dating from the Late Iron Age to *c.* AD 270. The preliminary phasing can be summarised as follows:

- Phase 0: Late Mesolithic/Early Neolithic/Bronze Age. A mixed assemblage of worked flint comprising material of Late Mesolithic/Early Neolithic and possible Bronze Age date, all redeposited in later contexts.
- Phase 1: Late Iron Age-Early Romano-British (150 BC-100 AD). Construction of a substantial rectilinear enclosure with two well-defined entrances; two four-post structures, three pits, three postholes and two tree-throw holes. Evidence of iron smelting and secondary smithing, in the form of a collapsed iron smelting hearth. Four lengths of ditches were located to the north-west of the enclosure. A second concentration of features at the base of the slope, close to the present-day stream comprised three furnaces, a pit filled with slag and charcoal, and a shallow cut feature with evidence of *in situ* burning.
- Phase 2: Late 1st-Late 2nd century. Continued use of the primary enclosure with probable backfilling of its ditches at some point during this phase. Construction of a second enclosure immediately to the north-west of the earlier one. A number of pits, some of them substantial, a flint-lined structure (possible kiln), a possible six-post structure, two parallel ditch segments at the north-west end of the second enclosure, and a furnace adjacent to the present-day stream.
- Phase 3: Late 2nd-Mid 3rd century. Continued use of the second enclosure, a clay and stone structure (possible kiln), several possible rubbish pits, a probable work area and a large waterhole.

A further four -post structure is undated. The site appears to have been abandoned *c.* AD 270.

There is extensive evidence to suggest that at least some of the pottery was being produced on site. At least two probable kilns have been identified and a number of pottery wasters were recovered. The evidence of on-site iron working is also of considerable significance and can be paralleled with a number of other CTRL sites such as Beechbrook Wood.

The key themes and ideas that have emerged as a result of the Fieldwork Events and the post-excavation assessment suggest that there is excellent potential to address most areas of research interest that were identified in the Fieldwork Event Aims and the Landscape Zone Priorities.