

## SUMMARY REPORT

### Church Lane and East of Station Road (NGR TR 07796 38400)

The Oxford Archaeological Unit was commissioned by Union Railways (South) Ltd (URS) to undertake detailed archaeological investigations at the adjacent sites of Church Lane and East of Station Road, in the parish of Smeeth, near Sellindge, Kent (centred on NGR TR 07796 38400). The stripped areas were 2.5 ha and 2.1 ha in extent respectively. The work formed part of an extensive programme of archaeological investigation carried out in advance of the construction of the CTRL. The two sites were separated by an unnamed stream (a tributary of the East Stour River).

#### *Church Lane*

Zone 4, which was *c.* 0.18 ha in extent, was intended to investigate a potential Mesolithic finds scatter on the margins of the stream. Only the western part of Zone 4 contained alluvial/colluvial deposits, which yielded over 160 flint flakes from an area of *c.* 200 m<sup>2</sup>. A further scatter of flint flakes was revealed on the eastern side of the hill to east of the stream, although here the accumulation of colluvium was more modest and the density of finds much lower. As in the evaluation, the indications are that this material represents a mixture of Mesolithic and later prehistoric material, which has accumulated at the foot of the hill as a result of slope erosion.

The topsoil stripping revealed two linear features which produced pottery of middle or late Bronze Age date (*c.* 1150 BC – 900 BC). The ditches extended down the western side of the hill towards the stream. Towards the top of the hill the features were heavily truncated by ploughing and slope erosion.

A thin scatter of unstratified Roman, medieval and post-medieval pottery, all showing signs of considerable abrasion, was recovered during the machining.

#### *East of Station Road*

A light distribution of struck flint from the site suggests earlier prehistoric activity in the area, although it is unlikely that any of features, even the stratigraphically early ones, are earlier in date than the late Iron Age.

A number of sparsely distributed ditches and gullies were revealed under layers of colluvium and alluvium. Finds were sparse and the pottery was mainly late Iron Age/ early Roman grog-tempered ware, suggesting that the site represents a series of field boundaries and drainage ditches dating to *c.* 100BC – AD100. A small concentration of pottery from the central part of the site, in association with some minor gullies and possible post-holes, suggests limited occupation of some kind here, although no structures could be identified. The baulks between trenches 12 and 14 were removed to expose an area of intercutting ditches.

A deep trench was machine-excavated in the lowest part of the site (Trench 17) in order to recover waterlogged environmental indicators. Samples were taken for macro-organic material, pollen, insects and snails. The stump of an oak tree was also recovered. Pottery recovered from the section indicates that the upper part of the alluvial sequence is of Late Iron Age date.

A number of post-medieval linear features were also present, principally including a large east-west aligned ditch. The other features were land-drains of several phases.