

**Channel Tunnel Rail Link  
London and Continental Railways  
Oxford Wessex Archaeology Joint Venture**

**Human remains from Chapel Mill, Westwell Leacon  
and Leda Cottages, Westwell, Kent**

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## 1 INTRODUCTION

Cremated human bone from eight contexts was received for analysis. Two deposits (2 and 6) were from East of Newlands watching brief and dated to the mid-late Bronze Age. One deposit (30) was recovered from the Westwell Leacon and Leda cottages WBG, dated to the early Romano-British period. A further five deposits (203, 204, 210, 211 and 212), from two late Iron Age pits (205 and 213), was recovered from the Chapel Mill. All the deposits were from pits. The deposits appear to represent two possibly urned burials (2 and 6); one redeposited cremated bone deposit (30) and two unurned deposits (205 and 213).

## 2 METHODS

The general methodology followed that set-out in ‘Specialist Study Package 6’ of the *CTRL Section 1 Project Design* (RLE 2003). The cremated bone was analysed according with the standard procedures used for the examination of cremated bone set out in McKinley 1994a, 5-6. Sex was ascertained from the sexually diagnostic features of the cranium (Workshop 1980; Buikstra and Ubelaker 1994).

## 3 RESULTS

A summary of the results is presented in Table 1, details are held in the archive.

*Table 1: Summary of results from analysis of human bone*

context	cut	deposit type	quantification	age/sex
<i>East of Newlands</i>				
2	3	urned cremation?	107 g	adult >18yr. female?
6	7	urned cremation?	31 g	adult >18yr. unknown
<i>Westwell Leacon and Leda cottages WBG</i>				
30	-	redeposited	5 g	unknown, unknown
<i>Chapel Mill</i>				
203	205	unurned cremation	168 g	adult >18yr. unknown
204	205		6 g	adult > 18yr. unknown
210	213	unurned cremation	1 g	unknown, unknown
211	213		70 g	unknown, unknown
212	213		256 g	adult <18yr. unknown

### *Disturbance and condition*

The cremated bone from context 30 was clearly redeposited. Cremation burial 2 and 6 represented the remains of *in situ* deposits. The burials may have been urned but due to severe

disturbance it is unknown since the pottery may have been accompanying grave goods. The remains from Chapel Mill was spread throughout the fills of two pits (205 and 213).

All bone was chalky (eroded) and very little trabecular bone was recovered; both largely reflective of the acidic burial environment.

#### *Demographic data*

A minimum number of five individuals – adults, one probable female - were represented by the cremated remains.

#### *Pyre technology and cremation ritual*

The cremated bone was white in colour indicative of full oxidation (Holden *et al* 1995a and b; McKinley 2000, 40). The low weight in deposits 2 and 6 may largely be due to bone loss from the burial as a result of disturbance and the potential loss of trabecular bone in the acid soil condition. Whereas the relatively low weight in the deposits from context 205 and 213 is due to the acidic soil conditions. Similar low weights have also been recorded from Westhampnett, West Sussex (McKinley 1997, 59-62). The highest proportion of bone (average 57%) from the mid-late Bronze Age burials was recovered from the 5mm sieve fraction and the maximum surviving bone fragment was on average relatively small at *c.*32.6 mm. The highest proportion of bone from the late Iron Age cremation burials was also recovered from the 5 mm sieve fraction (50%) and the average maximum fragment size was 29.48 mm. A number of factors may affect the level of fragmentation to cremation bone (McKinley 1994b), in this instance the soil acidity and the disturbance are likely to have been major factors resulting in small fragment size. Elements from all skeletal areas were represented in the burials; the small quantity of fragments from the axial skeleton is more representative of the loss of bone due to soil acidity than to their deliberate exclusion (see above) and the relatively high proportion of cranial fragments is due to the ease of identification. There was no apparent preference in skeletal elements included in the burial.

Burnt animal bone (23 g) was present in deposit 203. This is likely to represent the remains of pyre goods.

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