

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

**Human remains from Snarkhurst Wood,  
Hollingbourne, Kent**  
by Annesofie Witkin

**CTRL Specialist Report Series  
2006**

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**TABLE OF CONTENTS**

<b>1</b>	<b>INTRODUCTION</b> .....	<b>3</b>
<b>2</b>	<b>METHODS</b> .....	<b>3</b>
<b>3</b>	<b>RESULTS</b> .....	<b>3</b>
3.1	Disturbance and condition .....	3
3.2	Demographic data.....	3
3.3	Pyre technology and cremation ritual .....	3
<b>4</b>	<b>BIBLIOGRAPHY</b> .....	<b>4</b>

**LIST OF TABLES**

Table 1:	Summary of results from analysis of human bone .....	3
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## 1 INTRODUCTION

Cremated human bone from an undated context (127) was received for analysis. The deposit appears to represent the remains of an unurned burial with redeposited pyre debris.

## 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 are 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
127	236	Unurned burial + redeposited pyre debris	180 g	adult >25yr. male??

### 3.1 Disturbance and condition

Although the grave (236) was relatively deep (0.40m), bone was visible at surface level and it had been disturbed by burrowing animals; consequently, some bone may have been lost from the deposit. All fragments were eroded, with little trabecular bone surviving especially in the 5 mm and 2 mm fraction sizes.

### 3.2 Demographic data

A minimum number of one individual – adult, possibly male - was represented by the cremated remains.

### 3.3 Pyre technology and cremation ritual

The cremated bone was generally white in colour indicative of full oxidation (Holden *et al* 1995a and b; McKinley 2000, 40) with some unidentified grey, as well as white with a black core, fragments. The relatively low weight of bone may largely be due to loss from the burial as a result of disturbance and the potential loss of trabecular bone in the acid soil condition. The highest proportion of bone (43%) was recovered from the 5mm sieve fraction and the

maximum surviving bone fragment was relatively small at *c.* 38mm. A number of factors may affect the level of fragmentation to cremation bone (McKinley 1994b), in this instance the soil acidity and the disturbance made by burrowing animals are likely to have been major factors resulting in small fragment size. Elements from all skeletal areas were represented in the burial; 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.

Pyre debris – comprising fine fraction fuel ash and burnt flint – was recovered from the grave fill, but the bone was present within a concentration in the north side of the deposit indicating it probably represents the remains of an unurned burial with pyre debris deposited around it rather than all the deposit representing redeposited pyre debris.

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