

Version 1

THE CHANNEL TUNNEL RAIL LINK
Archaeological Research Strategy



Prepared for RAIL LINK ENGINEERING

by

**Dr. Peter L. Drewett,
Reader in Prehistoric Archaeology,
Institute of Archaeology, University College London**

November, 1997

THE CHANNEL TUNNEL RAIL LINK

Archaeological Research Strategy

1. Research Strategy

- 1.1 The aim of this research design is to suggest ways to define types of landscape organization crossed by the CTRL corridor and how such organization changed through time. By defining surviving residues of past human activity, the aim is to understand how people lived in the past, how they interacted with, and changed, their environment.
- 1.2 An understanding of past landscapes requires knowledge of political, social, economic and ritual activity and the systems generating such activity. Although a single linear transect is not ideal for undertaking landscape studies, it can provide insights into landscapes either already partly known or to be studied in the future. Sites and landscapes buried under alluvial or colluvial deposits are particularly important in this context.
- 1.3 The research objectives outlined below (section 2) should be considered in the context of the landscape zones crossed by the CTRL. These zones should be defined as having a distinctive historical character, landscape and natural history. Such zones have been defined on the *Character of England Map* by the Countryside Commission and English Nature in conjunction with English Heritage, and are utilized as follows:
 - a) Northern Thames Basin.
 - b) Greater Thames Eastuary (Thames crossing)¹.
 - c) North Kent Plain (A.2 corridor).
 - d) North Downs (A.2 corridor).
 - e) Wealden Greensand: with some Low Weald (the Greensand Vale).
- 1.4 Past landscapes can be studied using five lines of enquiry:
 - a) The natural landscape, its geomorphology, vegetation and climate
 - b) The changes of the landscape into humanly-occupied spaces
 - c) The manipulation and consumption by humans of natural resources

¹ Text in parenthesis indicates equivalent zones identified by KCC

- d) The organization of the landscape into social and political units
 - e) Ritual and ceremonial use of landscapes
- 1.5 Existing knowledge suggests broad periods defined by different political, social, economic and ritual activity. Five broad time periods can be defined in south-east England which can be used to divide research activity:
- a) Hunter-foragers (400,000-4,500 B.C.)
 - b) Early agriculturalists (4,500-2,000 B.C.)
 - c) Farming communities (2,000-100 B.C.)
 - d) Towns and their rural landscapes (100 B.C.-1700 A.D.)
This period should be considered in three sub-periods:
 - (i) c. 100 B.C.-410 A.D.
 - (ii) c. 410-1100 A.D.
 - (iii) c. 1100-1700 A.D.
 - (e) The recent landscape (1700-1945 A.D.)
- 1.6 By considering the zone of the CTRL by broad periods one can determine the history of the landscape through which the route passes and what gives the area its specific characteristics today.
- 1.7 The topics defined in 1.4 can be investigated within the five time-periods and within five landscape zones. In an archaeological context they are studied through the examination of remains left in the landscape. This can be done at two levels:
- a) **The Region.** Understanding of humanly-organized landscapes requires a knowledge of the distribution of archaeological remains within the landscapes. This necessitates the location, mapping and dating of archaeological remains within their environmental context.
 - b) **Activity Areas.** An understanding of what took place, when and where in the landscape, is fundamental to the understanding of humanly-modified landscapes and how people lived in the past. The study of activity involves the excavation of structures, residues, deliberate deposits and their spatial organization.

2. Research Objectives

2.1 Hunter-foragers (400,000-4,500 B.C.)

- a) Define the nature of contemporary geomorphology and environment and its natural changes through time.
- b) Define range of human activity and where it took place, particularly through the study of palaeoeconomy.
- c) What was the effect of climatic and environmental changes on human lifeways and adaptive strategies?

KEY areas for study: Stratford Box, Lea Valley, Purfleet, Thames Crossing, Ebbsfleet, Harrietsham.

2.2 Early agriculturalists (4,500-2,000 B.C.)

- a) Define nature of contemporary environment.
- b) Determine nature and effect of clearance for agricultural activity.
- c) Define ritual and economic landscapes and their relationships.
- d) Determine nature of and changes in economic lifeways, e.g. relative importance of hunting-foraging and agriculture, studied especially through recovery of faunal and charred plant remains.

KEY areas for study: Lea Valley, Mar Dyke, Rainham, Ebbsfleet, Whitehorse Stone.

2.3 Farming Communities (2,000-100 B.C.)

- a) Determine spatial organization of the landscape in terms of settlement location in relation to fields, pasture, woodland, enclosed areas and ways of moving between these.
- b) Consider environmental change resulting from landscape organization and re-organization.
- c) Determine how settlements were arranged and functioned over time.

KEY areas for study: Rainham, Dagenham, A.2 line, Whitehorse Stone, Nashenden Valley.

2.4 Towns and their rural landscapes (100 B.C. - 1700 A.D.)

- a) What was the effect of the development of towns (e.g. London, Springhead) on the organization of the landscape?
- b) Did population increase and concentration effect natural resource exploitation and accelerate environmental change?
- c) How were settlements and rural landscapes organized and how did they function?
- d) How did the organization of the landscape change through time?
- e) Consider the effect on the landscape of known historical events, e.g. the arrival of Roman administration.

KEY areas for study: St. Pancras Old Church, Springhead, Ebbsfleet and Thurnham Villas, Medway Saxon Cemetery.

2.5 The recent landscape (1700-1945 A.D.)

- a) In what ways was local rural economy affected by Enclosure and agricultural intensification?
- b) Consider the environmental effects of industrialisation.
- c) Consider changes in land use and organization following construction of the railways.
- d) Consider the defence of the Thames estuary and north Kent during periods of threat, e.g. Napoleonic Wars and World Wars.
- e) Consider the effects of river(side) exploitation and trading locations.

KEY areas for study: Rainham Wharf, Chilston Park, The Weald, vernacular buildings, Saltwood tunnel.

3. Acknowledgements

Few of the ideas above are my own so I fully acknowledge the ideas and/or written works of David Buckley, John Williams, Christopher Place, John Barrett, Timothy Champion, Roger Thomas, Paul Gilman, and all who have written on the archaeology of Kent and Essex, or on research designs, together with environmental comments from Peter Murphy, Dale Serjeantson and V. Straker.