

UNION RAILWAYS LIMITED

BEECHBROOK WOOD

ARC BBW 98

An Archaeological Evaluation

Contract No. 194/870P4



Museum of London Archaeology Service
October 1998

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BEECHBROOK WOOD (ARC BBW 98) EVALUATION REPORT

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UNION RAILWAYS LIMITED

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ARC BBW 98

An Archaeological Evaluation

Final Report

Volume 1 of 1

Contract No. 194/870P4

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Museum of London Archaeology Service
October 1998

**BEECHBROOK WOOD, NEAR ASHFORD
KENT**

ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION

SUMMARY

The Museum of London Archaeology Service undertook an archaeological evaluation on the site of Beechbrook Wood, to the south-east of Charing and to the north-west of Ashford, between the 12th and the 28th of August 1998. The evaluation explored the area north-west of a site excavated in 1997, ARC BWD 97, and forms part of a larger programme of archaeological investigations along the future Channel Tunnel Rail Link, the aim of which is to assess the effect of construction upon the cultural heritage.

Fourteen of the thirty nine trenches revealed archaeological features, The majority of features were linear field drains and ditches dating predominantly to the late Iron Age to early Romano-British period. Several tree boles and two possible firepits were also identified. Several late Prehistoric sherds and medieval building material was found residually.

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SECTION 1: FACTUAL STATEMENT**1 BACKGROUND****1.1 Introduction**

1.1.1 The Museum of London Archaeology Service (MoLAS) was commissioned by Union Railways Limited (URL) to carry out an archaeological evaluation at Beechbrook Wood (Fig 1), about 4 kilometres north-west of the centre of Ashford, in the parish of Hothfield, Kent (URL Grid 78500E /25500N). The evaluation was undertaken between the 12th and the 28th of August 1998. It was one of a number of archaeological investigations along the route of the Channel Tunnel Rail Link and was designed to assess the effect of the construction of the new railway upon the cultural heritage. An Environmental Assessment has also been prepared (URL 1994). This evaluation is within route window 30.

1.1.2 The work was carried out according to the ‘Specification for Archaeological Investigations’ prepared by URL, which details the scope and methodology of the evaluation including this report. The evaluated area is shown on Fig. 2.

1.2 Geology, landscape and landuse

1.2.1 The site was located opposite and slightly north-west of last year’s evaluation at ARC BWD 97, adjacent to the Ashford - Maidstone mainline railway at Beechbrook Farm.

1.2.2 The evaluated area consisted of arable land under a wheat crop situated between 56m and 71m above Ordnance Datum (OD) sloping gently from north-west to south-east. The southernmost trenches 3467TT, 3470TT, 3471TT and 3480TT lay in a different field divided by a hedge of hawthorn and a ditch in the lowest part of the site.

1.2.3 In the north-western part of the site, the uppermost geological deposit [8] consisted of yellow-orange sand with moderate puddingstone cobbles, over Sandgate Beds of firm sandy clay (identified in trenches 3442TT-3454TT, 3458TT, 3459TT-3461TT).

1.2.4 In the lower lying north-eastern part of the site, the uppermost geological deposit [39] consisted of compacted mottled orange and brown clayey brickearth with occasional subangular flints up to 120mm in size (identified in trenches 3462TT, 3466TT, 3468TT, 3469TT, 3475TT-3479TT).

1.2.5 In the entire southern part of the site, the uppermost geological deposit [50] consisted of very compacted mid orange brickearth with grey clayey lenses and very occasional iron panning (identified in trenches 3455TT-3457TT, 3464TT, 3465TT, 3467TT, 3470TT, 3471TT, 3473TT, 3474TT, 3480TT).

1.2.6 In trenches 3443TT and 3460T the uppermost geological deposit [8] was disturbed by natural fluvial or glacial channels and cracks [21], filled with pale greyish brown and yellow brown fine to medium sand, slightly silty in the upper part, with occasional

large pebbles and stones [20]. The channels in both trenches were recorded under the same context 'type' numbers.

- 1.2.7 In trench 3444TT a similar natural channel [29] filled with heavy pale slightly red brown very fine to medium sand [28] was identified.
- 1.2.8 In trench 3452TT a natural channel or glacial crack [35] was filled with mid to grey-brown fine to medium silty sand [34].
- 1.2.9 Several channels in trenches 3452TT and 3453TT (feature type [33]) were possibly of fluvio-glacial origin. They were filled with moderately compacted mid greenish brown silty fine sand, the basal part contained mid orange to yellow-brown silt [32].
- 1.2.10 In trenches 3458TT and 3459TT, eight natural cracks and fluvio-glacial channels were identified (feature type [38a-h]) filled with the same pale blue grey fine sandy silt with occasional large subangular flint pebbles, grey mottles and a basal grey band [37].
- 1.2.11 Six tree boles were located and sketched in trenches 3448TT, 3450TT, 3464TT and 3465TT.

1.3 Archaeological context of the site

- 1.3.1 Aerial photographs of the area around Beechbrook showed cropmarks of an enclosure which was evaluated in 1997 by URL at South of Beechbrook Wood (ARC BWD 97). The field ditches encountered represented both single and multi phase features of the 1st to 3rd century Roman period.

2 SPECIFICATIONS

2.1 Aims

2.1.1 The 'Specification for Archaeological Investigations' described the general aims of the archaeological works. The evaluation aimed to provide information to determine:

- the presence / absence, extent, condition, character, quality and date of any archaeological remains within the area of the evaluation.
- the presence and potential of environmental and economic indicators preserved in any archaeological features or deposits.
- the local, regional, national and international importance of such remains, and the potential for further archaeological fieldwork to fulfil local, regional and national research objectives.

3 METHODS

3.1 General

3.1.1 A detailed Written Scheme of Investigation for the evaluation was prepared by URL and agreed with the County Archaeologist and English Heritage. The following summarises the archaeological aspects of the methodology and notes any deviation from the original specification.

3.2 Survey

3.2.1 The trench locations (Fig 2), were surveyed in by MoLAS Surveyors, based on a trench location plan supplied by URL (drawing number 430-DGH-08550-62045-AA).

3.2.2 After machine excavation, trenches were positioned precisely using total stations and a datalogger, traversing off the URL survey control. One trench, 3469TT, was not surveyed, is was paced and measured in.

3.2.3 The standard error of the trench positioning was set to normal engineering standards, a traverse accuracy of +/- 15mm over 1km. The trench locations have been plotted (Fig 2) from digital information derived from the survey and supplied by URL, using Auto Cad Release 14.

3.2.4 The central site coordinate, according to the given URL grid, was 78500E/25500N.

3.3 Excavation

3.3.1 Individual trench numbers were allocated by URL. Thirty nine trenches were located and excavated, each measuring 30 x 1.50m, to a maximum depth of 1.20m.

3.3.2 The trenches were excavated using a 360° tracked mechanical excavator fitted with a ditching bucket. Topsoil and overburden was excavated down to deposits of archaeological significance or superficial geology. In some cases the trenches were deepened to confirm the nature of the superficial geology. Archaeological features were sample excavated by hand to assess the nature of individual features, to obtain dating material and to allow an assessment of environmental survival.

3.4 Recording

3.4.1 Recording was by the standard MoLAS single context recording system but incorporating modifications to adapt the system to the large area under evaluation. Recording procedures outlined in the Museum of London Archaeological Site Manual (1994) were adopted. Normally each archaeological deposit and cut feature are given individual context numbers and descriptions are recorded on context sheets. In rural areas topsoil [1] and subsoil [2] are given the same context numbers in several trenches if their description does not change. At this site, where the aim was to record

archaeological features, several geological features of the same kind were given the same context number.

- 3.4.2 Trench recording sheets were prepared for each trench. These record the nature and depth of the trench stratigraphy and the presence and nature of archaeological features.
- 3.4.3 Scale plans and sections were drawn of features and all heights indicated on the field drawings were related to Ordnance Datum heights above sea level.
- 3.4.4 Site staff are issued with a Nikon FM2 camera with Nikor 35-70mm zoom lenses / Kodak Ektachrome E6 Slide film and Ilford Delta monochrome film, for photography of relevant significant features, where merited. A routine record of trenches before and after excavation is also taken using a single-use 350mm camera and a Kodak Gold 800-2 colour film.
- 3.4.5 Artefacts were collected for dating and identification.
- 3.4.6 Two environmental samples were taken to evaluate the quality, abundance and diversity of biological and artefactual remains of a ditch and a pit fill.
- 3.4.7 A site code ARC BBW 98 was provided by URL; all records can be referenced from this code.

4 RESULTS

4.1 General

- 4.1.1 The main components of the trenches are described below. The trench descriptions are divided into two sections. Trenches with archaeological features are described first followed by those with no archaeological activity or geological and modern features present.
- 4.1.2 A summary of the archaeological contexts and associated finds are listed in the Archaeological Context Inventory (Section 6, Table 2). Detailed reports on the pottery, building material, flint and environmental remains are contained in Appendices 1-4. The site archive has been prepared and includes electronic inventories for the Fieldwork Event, Contexts, Bulk Finds, Environmental Samples and Graphical datasets.
- 4.1.3 Archaeological features were located in 14 trenches: 3442TT, 3443TT, 3444TT, 3446TT, 3455TT, 3457TT, 3460TT, 3461TT, 3463TT, 3466TT, 3467TT, 3472TT, 3473TT and 3479TT. Natural fluvio-glacial features were identified in trenches 3445TT, 3449TT, 3452TT, 3453TT, 3458TT and 3459TT.
- 4.1.4 Topsoil [1] consisted of mid brown grey medium sand and silt with moderate large flint and pebbles, and occasional small chalk flecks. Topsoil was on average 0.27m thick.
- 4.1.5 In trench 3443TT lay above the uppermost geological deposit [8], and sealing ditch [16], firm pale grey-brown fine silty sand [3]. This brickearth contained seven sherds of late Iron Age to Early Romano-British (LIA-ERB) pottery classifying the deposit as the lowest subsoil which was reworked by ploughing.
- 4.1.6 Subsoil consisted of fairly heavy mid to pale grey-brown sand and silt with frequent fragments and rounded cobbles up to 80mm long, and pebbles up to 10mm across [2]. This ploughsoil was on average 0.32m thick.
- 4.1.7 In the following trench descriptions levels were taken at the trench sides providing readings for the top of topsoil, subsoil and the uppermost geological deposit. A reference such as 'Top north-west' relates to measurements taken on topsoil at the north-west corner of the trench. The 'Depth' refers to the depth of the trench. Soil thickness refers to an average measurement.

5 TRENCH DESCRIPTIONS

5.1 Trenches containing archaeological features

5.1.1 *Trench 3442TT* (Fig 3)

5.1.1.1 Top north-west: 70.06m OD; south-east: 70.64m OD. Depth 0.65m. Topsoil [1] was on average 0.20m thick and overlay 0.30m thick ploughsoil [2]. This deposit contained one worked flint and five fragments of residual late Iron Age to early Romano-British (LIA-ERB) pottery. The top of the uppermost geological deposit, yellow orange sand [8], was located at 69.53m OD. It was cut by natural channel [29] with fill [28].

5.1.1.2 Three archaeological features were located, abutting substantial linear ditches [23] with fill [22], [25] with fill [24] and [27] with fill [26]. All cut into superficial geology [8] and their fills were sealed by ploughsoil [2].

5.1.1.3 Ditches [23] and [25] aligned east to west, they had gradually sloping, slightly concave sides, and a flat base. Ditch [23] was filled with soft mid greyish yellow-brown silt containing a few pebbles, two worked flint flakes and two fragments of LIA-ERB pottery [22]. The fill was probably a backfill.

5.1.1.4 Ditch [25] had a V-shaped profile and was filled with a closely comparable context as [22], called [24], which also contained three fragments of LIA-ERB pottery.

5.1.2 *Trench 3443TT* (Fig 4)

5.1.2.1 Top north-west: 67.10m OD; south-east: 66.74m OD. Depth 0.74m. Topsoil [1] was 0.24m thick and overlay 0.38m thick ploughsoil [2] and brickearth [3], which contained worked flint, seven fragments of LIA-ERB pottery and ceramic building material. Two natural channels [21] filled with [20] cut into the uppermost geological deposit of yellow orange sand [8], the top of it was located at 66.48m OD.

5.1.2.2 Four ditches, three of them aligned N-S and one E-W, were identified across the entire trench: ditch [10] with fill [9]; ditch [12] with fill [11]; ditch [14] with fill [13]; and ditch [16] with fill [15]. All of them cut into the uppermost geological deposit [8]. Fill [15] was sealed by brickearth [3], the other fills [9], [11] and [13] were sealed by ploughsoil [2].

5.1.2.3 The easternmost ditch [10] was 0.85m to 1m wide and 0.35m deep, and it had gradual to steeply sloping sides with a flat base. The single fill [9] of this feature was composed of silty medium to fine sand varying in colour between greyish brown at the top and pale grey and mid brown further down, moderate charcoal, one fragment of LIA-ERB pottery and one worked flint. The nature of the fill suggests gradual silting through water action. One environmental sample was taken (Appendix 4).

5.1.2.4 The shape of ditch [12] was recognisable on the surface by the different colour of its fill but when excavating it the base of the cut was very disturbed by root holes; therefore it

was not illustrated in profile. The ditch was 0.80m wide and 0.15m deep, with vertical sides and disturbed base. It was filled with mid grey brown silty sharp sand [11], an extension of subsoil.

- 5.1.2.5 Ditch [14] was V-shaped with a flat base, 0.50m wide and 0.32m deep. It was filled with pale grey-brown fine to medium sand, very occasional pebbles [13].
- 5.1.2.6 The final ditch [16] had gently sloping sides and a flat base, it was 0.50m wide and 0.27m deep. It was filled with pale grey-brown silt and fine sand with moderate large flint nodules and angular fragments including also one worked flint blade or flake [15].
- 5.1.3 *Trench 3444TT* (Fig 5)
- 5.1.3.1 Top south-west: 70.76m OD; north-east: 71.02m OD. Depth 0.52m. Topsoil [1] was 0.24m thick and overlay 0.29m thick ploughsoil [2]. The top of the uppermost geological deposit, yellow orange sand [8], was located at 70.24m OD.
- 5.1.3.2 Two features were recorded in this trench, linear ditch [29] with fill [28], and pit [31] with fill [30]. Both features cut into the uppermost geological deposit [8], and they were sealed by ploughsoil [2].
- 5.1.3.3 Ditch or channel [29] was 0.83m-0.90m wide and 0.70m deep with steep sides. It was filled with heavily compacted pale grey yellow and red brown sand with a few inclusions of manganese panning.
- 5.1.3.4 Pit [31] was oval in shape, 1.90m long and max. 0.30m deep. It was filled with mid grey to yellow-brown mixed soft and sharp sand with moderate ?fired flint pebbles, and containing also one Mesolithic/Neolithic type worked flint and one fragment of LIA-ERB pottery [30]. According to the specialist report, these flints divide into two really burnt ones and five naturally shattered, bleached and pot-lidded fragments (Appendix 3). One environmental sample was taken (Appendix 4).
- 5.1.4 *Trench 3446TT* (Fig 5)
- 5.1.4.1 Top north-west: 67.64m OD; south-east: 67.33m OD. Depth 0.65m. Topsoil [1] was 0.23m thick and overlay 0.24m thick ploughsoil [2]. The top of the uppermost geological deposit, yellow orange sand [8], was located at 67.17m OD.
- 5.1.4.2 Two features were recorded in this trench, linear ditch [5] with fill [4] and post pit [7] with fill [6]. Both features cut into the uppermost geological deposit [8] and they were sealed by ploughsoil [2].
- 5.1.4.3 Ditch [5] was 0.40m wide and 0.18m deep with steep sides and flat base. It was filled with loose pale grey yellow sand [4].

- 5.1.4.4 Post pit [7] was subrectangular with rounded corners, 0.50m by 0.60m. It was filled with stone packing of a former post [6].
- 5.1.5 *Trench 3447TT* (Fig 2)
- 5.1.5.1 Top north-east: 68.09m OD; south-west: 68.38m OD. Depth 0.64m. Topsoil [1] was 0.31m thick and overlay 0.33m thick ploughsoil [2] which contained seven fragments of residual LIA-ERB pottery. The top of the uppermost geological deposit, yellow orange sand [8], was located at 67.45m OD in the north-east.
- 5.1.6 *Trench 3455TT* (Fig 6)
- 5.1.6.1 Top north-east: 57.32m OD; south-west: 58.02m OD. Depth 0.48m. Topsoil [1] was 0.22m thick and overlay 0.26m thick ploughsoil [2]. The top of the uppermost geological deposit, mid orange grey brickearth [50], was located at 56.84m OD.
- 5.1.6.2 This trench contained one feature, a linear ditch [52] with fill [51]. The ditch cut into the uppermost geological deposit [50] and its fill was sealed by ploughsoil [2].
- 5.1.6.3 Ditch [52] was 1.23m wide and 0.12m deep with steep sides and flat base. It was filled with grey orange clayey brickearth [51], a backfill of a weathered natural deposit similar to underlying [50].
- 5.1.7 *Trench 3457TT* (Fig 6)
- 5.1.7.1 Top north-west: 60.93m OD; south-east: 61.66m OD. Depth 0.47m. Topsoil [1] was 0.30m thick and overlay 0.17m thick ploughsoil [2]. The top of the uppermost geological deposit, mid orange grey brickearth [50], was located at 60.46m OD in the north-west. Two tree boles [85] and [86] were also located.
- 5.1.7.2 This trench contained six archaeological features, five linear [69] with fill [68], [75] with fill [70], [77] with fill [76], [81] with fill [79], [83] with fill [82] and a deposit [84]. This deposit was very truncated and it was uncertain whether it lay within a cut. All features cut into the uppermost geological deposit [50] except [83] which cut into [84] and all fills were sealed by ploughsoil [2].
- 5.1.7.3 Linear slot or drainage gully [69], 0.45m wide and 0.16m deep with regular steep sides and flat base. It was filled with mottled light grey and mid orange fine sandy brickearth with frequent iron panning flecks and occasional fine to medium pebbles, containing also one sherd of LIA-ERB pottery [68], a backfill of a weathered natural deposit, similar to the underlying [50].
- 5.1.7.4 Linear slot or drainage gully [75], 0.54m wide and 0.14m deep with regular steep sides and an irregular horizontal base. It was filled with mottled light grey and mid orange fine sandy brickearth with frequent iron panning flecks and occasional fine to medium pebbles, containing 11 sherds of LIA-ERB pottery [70], a backfill of a weathered

natural deposit, similar to underlying [50].

- 5.1.7.5 Linear slot or drainage gully [77], 0.50m-0.35m wide and 0.16m deep with near vertical sides and a flat irregular base. It was filled with mid ash grey fine sandy brickearth with patches of orange brickearth [76].
- 5.1.7.6 Irregular linear cut [81], 0.40m wide and 0.08m deep with near vertical sides and very irregular base. It was filled with loosely compacted light yellow-brown fine sandy brickearth with frequent flecks and fragments of semi-decayed wood and roots, occasional pebbles and charcoal flecks [78]. According to the high root and wood content within the cut, this feature may represent the robbing of a hedgerow.
- 5.1.7.7 Slightly curved linear slot [83], 0.53m wide and 0.13m deep with regular steep sloping sides and flat base. It was filled with light ash grey fine sandy silt with moderate patches of orange brickearth and iron pan, containing also six sherds of late Prehistoric pottery and one worked flint [82].
- 5.1.7.8 Loose light to mid grey sandy silt with orange brickearth and frequent charcoal flecks concentrated on the surface [84]. This deposit or fill lay at the edge of cut [83] and it was uncertain whether it represented an occupation layer of a very truncated pit.
- 5.1.8 *Trench 3460TT* (Fig 7)
- 5.1.8.1 Top north-east: 62.30m OD; south-west: 62.24m OD. Depth 0.66m. Topsoil [1] was 0.31m thick and overlay 0.22m thick ploughsoil [2]. The top of the uppermost geological deposit yellow orange sand [8], was located at 61.71m OD in the north-east. The surface contained two natural erosion channels [21].
- 5.1.8.2 This trench contained three archaeological features, the large ditch [45] with fill [44] was superseded by ditch [43] with fill [42], and one pit [54]. Ditch [45] and pit [54] cut into the uppermost geological deposit yellow orange sand [8]. The fills [53] and [42] were sealed by ploughsoil [2].
- 5.1.8.3 Linear ditch [43], 2.0m wide and 0.65m deep with irregular sloping sides and sloping base. The ditch was filled with light brown-grey and pale grey medium sand with sharp sand and charcoal flecks at the base and it contained also one fragment of daub [42].
- 5.1.8.4 Linear ditch [45], 0.80m wide and 0.80m deep with regular sloping sides and a rounded base. The ditch was filled with mid brown-grey and pale grey medium sand with sharp sand and charcoal flecks at the base [44].
- 5.1.9 Pit [54], only partly seen in trench, 0.42m wide and 0.30m deep with steep sloping sides and rounded base. The pit was filled with light grey yellow silty sand with naturally shattered flint (see Appendix 3) and occasional charcoal flecks [53]. Possibly a backfilled fire pit.

Trench 3461TT (Fig 7)

- 5.1.9.1 Top north-west: 61.99m OD; south-east: 61.65m OD. Depth 0.73m. Topsoil [1] was 0.35m thick and overlay 0.39m thick ploughsoil [2]. The top of the uppermost geological deposit yellow orange sand [8], was located at 61.48m OD in the north-west.
- 5.1.9.2 This trench contained one archaeological feature, a large shallow pit [87]. The pit cut into the uppermost geological deposit [8]. Fill [88] was sealed by ploughsoil [2].
- 5.1.9.3 Pit [87] had an irregular oval shape, particularly at the south-eastern side, about 1.0m wide and max. 0.28m deep with irregular sloping sides and an undulating base. The pit was filled with pale to mid grey medium sand and silt with frequent medium to large charcoal fragments [88]. Because of its irregular shape, it is possible that this hole was originally a tree bole, burnt out or reused as a pit.

5.1.10 *Trench 3463TT* (Fig 8)

- 5.1.10.1 Top north-east: 61.58m OD; south-west: 61.50m OD. Depth 0.77m. Topsoil [1] was 0.46m thick and overlay 0.26m thick ploughsoil [2]. The top of the uppermost geological deposit, orange brown brickearth [39], was located at 60.78m OD in the south-west.
- 5.1.10.2 This trench contained two archaeological linear features, [72] with fill [71] and [74] with fill [73]. Both ditches cut into the uppermost geological deposit [39]. The fills were sealed by ploughsoil [2].
- 5.1.10.3 Ditch [72], 0.70m wide and 0.13m deep with a moderate break of slope gently sloping to a concave base. The ditch was filled with firm reddish brown silty sandy brickearth [71] which contained two sherds of late Prehistoric pottery.
- 5.1.10.4 Ditch [74], 0.38m wide and 0.20m deep sloping to a concave base. The ditch was filled with firm reddish brown silty sandy brickearth [73].

5.1.11 *Trench 3466TT* (Fig 8)

- 5.1.11.1 Top north-west: 60.88m OD; south-east: 60.97m OD. Depth 0.68m. Topsoil [1] was 0.39m thick and overlay 0.29m thick ploughsoil [2]. The top of the uppermost geological deposit, orange brown brickearth [39], was located at 60.20m OD in the north-west.
- 5.1.11.2 This trench contained one archaeological linear feature [80] with fill [79], which was only partially exposed at the south-western side, in the centre of the trench. Feature [80] cut into the uppermost geological deposit [8]. Fill [79] was sealed by ploughsoil [39].

- 5.1.11.3 Linear feature [80], with very diffuse edges was at least 0.31m wide, had a steep concave side and a gradual break of slope at the base. The feature was filled with mottled grey-brown with yellow brown patches silty clay and frequent black unspecified flecks, could be manganese or humic, containing also two worked flint flakes, 30 sherds of ERB pottery and one fragment of daub [79].
- 5.1.12 *Trench 3467TT* (Fig 9)
- 5.1.12.1 Top north-west: 59.98m OD; south-east: 60.07m OD. Depth 0.41m. Topsoil [1] was 0.29m thick and overlay 0.12m thick ploughsoil [2]. The top of the uppermost geological deposit, mid orange grey brickearth [50], was located at 59.57m OD in the north-west.
- 5.1.12.2 This trench contained two archaeological linear features, [59] with fill [58] and [61] with fill [60]. Both features cut into the uppermost geological deposit [50]. The fills were sealed by ploughsoil [2].
- 5.1.12.3 Linear slot/gully [59], 0.50m wide and 0.12m deep with regular sides and sharp break of slope at the base. The slot/gully was filled with mid orange grey fine sandy brickearth with iron pan flecks [58].
- 5.1.12.4 Linear slot/gully [61], 0.30m wide and 0.23m deep with regular sides slightly undulating cutting inwards at the south side, base slightly irregular, sloping to west. The slot/gully was filled with light grey fine sandy brickearth with frequent iron pan flecks and occasional small to medium pebbles [60].
- 5.1.13 *Trench 3472TT* (Fig 9)
- 5.1.13.1 Top north-west: 60.24m OD; south-east: 59.98m OD. Depth 0.45m. Topsoil [1] was 0.21m thick and overlay 0.24m thick ploughsoil ploughsoil [2]. The top of the uppermost geological deposit, mid orange grey brickearth [50], was located at 59.83m OD in the north-west.
- 5.1.13.2 This trench contained one archaeological linear feature, [63] with fill [62]. It cut into the uppermost geological deposit [50] and the fill was sealed by ploughsoil [2].
- 5.1.13.3 Linear gully [63], 0.55m wide and 0.18m deep with regular sides sloping inwards with a sharp break of slope at the slightly irregular base. The gully was filled with light to mid greyish brown fine sandy brickearth with occasional charcoal flecks and four fragments of LIA-ERB pottery [62].
- 5.1.14 *Trench 3473TT* (Fig 10)
- 5.1.14.1 Top north-west: 59.41m OD; south-east: 58.80m OD. Depth 0.52m. Topsoil [1] was 0.26m thick and overlay 0.26m thick ploughsoil [2]. The top of the uppermost geological deposit, mid orange grey brickearth [50], was located at 58.89m OD in the

north-west.

- 5.1.14.2 This trench contained one archaeological linear feature, [67] with fill [66]. It cut into the uppermost geological deposit [50] and the fill was sealed by ploughsoil [2].
- 5.1.14.3 Linear large possible ditch [67], only partially defined, at least 1.20m wide and 0.65m deep with regular concave eastern side, base not exposed. The ditch was filled with mid greyish orange fine sandy brickearth with frequent grey decayed rootlet flecks [66].
- 5.1.15 *Trench 3479TT* (Fig 10)
- 5.1.15.1 Top north-east: 56.52m OD; south-west: 56.25m OD. Depth 0.46m. Topsoil [1] was 0.24m thick and overlay 0.22m thick ploughsoil [2]. The top of the uppermost geological deposit, orange brown brickearth [39], was located at 55.79m OD in the south-west.
- 5.1.15.2 This trench contained one archaeological linear feature [65] with fill [64]. It cut into the uppermost geological deposit [39] and the fill was sealed by ploughsoil [2].
- 5.1.15.3 Linear feature [65], 0.90m wide and 0.32m deep with a concave base was aligned NW-SE. The feature was filled with extremely compacted white grey silt with no visible inclusions [64].

5.2 Trenches with no, or very uncertain, archaeological features

- 5.2.1 *Trench 3445TT* (Fig 2)
- 5.2.1.1 Top north-west: 68.99m OD; south-west: 68.72m OD. Depth 0.42m. Topsoil [1] was 0.17m thick and overlay 0.11m thick ploughsoil [2]. Uppermost geological deposit, yellow orange sand [8], was located at a depth 68.71m OD in the north-west.
- 5.2.1.2 Several fluvio-glacial channels, aligned at different angles east-west, were identified but neither described or drawn in detail. They cut into [8] and were sealed by ploughsoil [2].
- 5.2.2 *Trench 3448TT* (Fig 2)
- 5.2.2.1 Top north-west: 67.18m OD; south-east: 67.03m OD. Depth 0.69m. Topsoil [1] was 0.32m thick and overlay 0.37m thick ploughsoil [2] which contained two fragments of late Prehistoric, late Iron Age to early Romano-British pottery. The top of the uppermost geological deposit, yellow orange sand [8], was located at 66.49m OD in the north-west. At the northern edge in the centre of the trench, and to the south-east, two possible tree boles cut into [8]. They were sealed by ploughsoil [2].

5.2.3 *Trench 3449TT* (Fig 2)

5.2.3.1 Top north: 65.90m OD; south: 64.89m OD. Depth 0.87m. Topsoil [1] was 0.24m thick and overlay 0.63m thick ploughsoil [2]. The top of the uppermost geological deposit, yellow orange sand [8], was located at 65.03m OD in the north. The southern part of the trench was taken up by natural channel [19] filled with compact mid brown sandy clay, brickearth [18].

5.2.4 *Trench 3450TT* (Fig 2)

5.2.4.1 Top north-east: 66.21m OD; south-west: 65.71m OD. Depth 0.69m. Topsoil [1] was 0.25m thick and overlay 0.42m thick ploughsoil [2] which contained two fragments of late Prehistoric, late Iron Age to early Romano-British pottery. The top of the uppermost geological deposit, yellow orange sand [8], was located at 65.04m OD in the south-west.

5.2.4.2 One tree bole cut into [8] at the south-western side of the trench.

5.2.5 *Trench 3451TT* (Fig 2)

5.2.5.1 Top north-west: 64.31m OD; south-east: 64.39m OD. Depth 0.60m. Topsoil [1] was 0.32m thick and overlay 0.38m thick ploughsoil [2]. The top of the uppermost geological deposit, yellow orange sand [8], was located at 63.71m OD in the north-west.

5.2.6 *Trench 3452TT* (Fig 2)

5.2.6.1 Top north-west: 65.39m OD; south-east: 64.95m OD. Depth 0.73m. Topsoil [1] was 0.38m thick and overlay 0.35m thick ploughsoil [2]. The top of the uppermost geological deposit, yellow orange sand [8], was located at 64.66m OD in the north-west.

5.2.6.2 Several cracks and channels [35a-c], and two uncertain natural/man made channels [33a-b] crossed the trench.

5.2.6.3 Feature [35a] had a V-shaped profile and was 0.75m wide and 0.38m deep; [35b-c] had a U-shaped profile and were 0.40m wide, [35c] crossed the line of [35b]. All cuts were filled with mid grey brown fine to medium sharp sand [34].

5.2.6.4 Feature [33a] was 0.52m to 0.59m wide and 0.21m deep. Feature [33b] was 1.15m to 1.20m wide and 0.20m deep. The sides of both features sloped at varying angles to a flat base. Both features were filled with mid greyish yellow brown silty fine sand, the basal 50mm changing to mid orange brown fine to medium sand [32].

- 5.2.6.5 All features had been identified on site as water channels, more likely the result of natural fluvio-glacial than human activity.
- 5.2.7 *Trench 3453TT* (Fig 2)
- 5.2.7.1 Top north: 62.04m OD; south: 62.81m OD. Depth 0.67m. Topsoil [1] was 0.28m thick and overlay 0.39m thick ploughsoil [2]. The top of the uppermost geological deposit, yellow orange sand [8], was located at 61.37m OD in the north. Several fluvio-glacial cracks or man made channels [33] crossed the trench aligned NE-SW. Two tree boles and two areas of greenish discoloration.
- 5.2.8 *Trench 3454TT* (Fig 2)
- 5.2.8.1 Top south-west: 62.55m OD; north-east: 62.96m OD. Depth 0.63m. Topsoil [1] was 0.32m thick and overlay 0.31m thick ploughsoil [2]. The top of the uppermost geological deposit, orange brown brickearth [39], over yellow orange sand [8], was located at 61.92m OD in the south-west.
- 5.2.8.2 One land drain of a ceramic 20th century type crossed N-S in the east.
- 5.2.9 *Trench 3456TT* (Fig 2)
- 5.2.9.1 Top north-west: 58.19m OD; south-east: 58.16m OD. Depth 0.47m. Topsoil [1] was 0.30m thick and overlay 0.17m thick ploughsoil [2]. The top of the uppermost geological deposit, mid orange grey brickearth [50], was located at 57.72m OD in the north-west.
- 5.2.9.2 In the centre a cut through all deposits contained a burnt tree stump. This robbing cut was of recent date and has not been recorded any further.
- 5.2.10 *Trench 3458TT* (Fig 2)
- 5.2.10.1 Top south-west: 61.21mOD; north-east: 61.30m OD. Depth 0.54m. Topsoil [1] was 0.27m thick and overlay 0.27m thick ploughsoil [2]. The top of the uppermost geological deposit, yellow orange sand [8], was located at 60.67m OD in the south-west.
- 5.2.11 Four features crossed the trench NE-SW. They were 0.20m to 0.40m wide and up to 0.30m deep [38a-d], very similar in type to channels in 3459TT. They were filled with pale blue grey fine silt and sand [37]. The features were interpreted on site as natural fluvio-glacial channels/cracks.

5.2.12 *Trench 3459TT* (Fig 2)

- 5.2.12.1 Top north-west: 61.65mOD; south-east: 62.26m OD. Depth 0.68m. Topsoil [1] was 0.35m thick and overlay 0.27m thick ploughsoil [2]. The top of the uppermost geological deposit yellow orange sand [8], was located at 61.64m OD in the south-east.
- 5.2.12.2 Four channels/cracks [38e-h] filled with pale blue-grey fine silt and sand [37] crossed the trench NE-SW. All cut into [8] and their fill [37] was sealed by ploughsoil [2]. The fill of feature [38e] was cut by pit [40]. The channels aligned roughly with the channels [38a-d] in trench 3458TT and were probably of natural fluvio-glacial origin.
- 5.2.12.3 Pit [41], filled with firm dark brown silty sand and frequent charcoal fragments [40], was located in the south-east corner of the trench, it cut into fill [37] of channel [38a]. Although it was sealed by ploughsoil [2], the dark organic nature of its fill had similarity with the topsoil and therefore ,according to site interpretation, this was a feature of recent times, created between periods of ploughing.

5.2.13 *Trench 3462TT* (Fig 2)

- 5.2.13.1 Top north-east: 61.94m OD; south-west: 61.74m OD. Depth 0.60m. Topsoil [1] was 0.30m thick and overlay 0.30m thick ploughsoil [2]. The top of the uppermost geological deposit, orange brown brickearth [39], was located at 61.34m OD in the south-east.

5.2.14 *Trench 3464TT* (Fig 2)

- 5.2.14.1 Top north-west: 58.67mOD; south-east: 58.60m OD. Depth 0.60m. Topsoil [1] was 0.30m thick and overlay 0.30m thick ploughsoil [2]. The top of the uppermost geological deposit, mid orange grey brickearth [50], was located at 58.07m OD in the north-west.
- 5.2.14.2 The occurrence of two tree boles was noted.

5.2.15 *Trench 3465TT* (Fig 2)

- 5.2.16 Top south-west: 59.53m OD; north-east: 59.40m OD. Depth 0.47m. Topsoil [1] was 0.17m thick and overlay 0.30m thick ploughsoil [2] which contained two fragments of late Prehistoric, late Iron Age to early Romano-British pottery. The top of the uppermost geological deposit, mid orange grey brickearth [50], was located at 59.06m OD in the south-west.
- 5.2.17 The occurrence of tree roots was noted in the south-west of the trench.

5.2.18 *Trench 3468TT* (Fig 2)

5.2.18.1 Top north-west: 61.38m OD; south-east: 61.15m OD. Depth 0.55m. Topsoil [1] was 0.25m thick and overlay 0.30m thick ploughsoil [2]. The top of the uppermost geological deposit, orange brown brickearth [39], was located at 60.83m OD in the north-west.

5.2.19 *Trench 3469TT* (Fig 2)

5.2.19.1 Top north-east: 60.20m OD*; south-east: 60.15m OD*. Depth 0.40m. Topsoil [1] was 0.25m thick and overlay 0.24m thick ploughsoil [2], over superficial geology, orange brown brickearth [39], The top of the uppermost geological deposit, orange brown brickearth [39], was located at a depth of 59.71m OD in the north-east.

* Ground level calculated from neighbouring trenches.

5.2.20 *Trench 3470TT* (Fig 2)

5.2.20.1 Top south-west: 58.69m OD; north-east: 59.22m OD. Depth 0.50m. Topsoil [1] was 0.22m thick and overlay 0.27m thick ploughsoil [2]. The top of the uppermost geological deposit, mid orange grey brickearth with a concentration of flint pebbles at the surface [50], was located at 58.20m OD in the south-west.

5.2.20.2 In the western centre of the trench a 6.70m wide area of discoloration was investigated by machine excavation. No cut line could be identified; the deposits below [50] consisted of mid greenish grey brown silty clay and greenish yellow iron panned sand 1.10m below the trench surface. These deposits were part of the uppermost geological deposits, discoloured perhaps by natural fluvo-glacial causes.

5.2.20.3 At 17.10m from the north-western corner of the trench, and 16.50m from the southwest corner, the base of a flint-filled land drain was observed. It was 0,10m wide and its top was truncated. As no pipe was seen at the sides of the trench, this feature seems to have been a soak-away drain of probably the 19th-20th century. Although aligned at different angles, this drain may relate to the one observed in 3480TT.

5.2.21 *Trench 3471TT* (Fig 2)

5.2.22 Top south-west: 58.22m OD; north-east: 58.81m OD. Depth 0.50m. Topsoil [1] was 0.30m thick and overlay 0.20m thick ploughsoil [2]. The top of the uppermost geological deposit, mid orange grey brickearth [50], was located at 57.91m OD in the south-west.

5.2.23 *Trench 3474TT* (Fig 2)

5.2.24 Top south-west: 59.42m OD; north-east: 59.59m OD. Depth 0.51m. Topsoil [1] was 0.28m thick and overlay 0.21m thick ploughsoil [2]. The top of the uppermost geological deposit, mid orange grey brickearth [50], was located at 58.93m OD in the south-west.

5.2.25 *Trench 3475TT* (Fig 2)

5.2.26 Top north-west: 58.40m OD; south-east: 57.78m OD. Depth 0.53m. Topsoil [1] was 0.25m thick and overlay 0.28m thick ploughsoil [2]. The top of the uppermost geological deposit, orange brown brickearth [39], was located at 57.87m OD to the north-west.

5.2.27 *Trench 3476TT* (Fig 2)

5.2.28 Top south-west: 58.82m OD; north-east: 57.91m OD. Depth 0.77m. Topsoil [1] was 0.26m thick and overlay 0.51m thick ploughsoil [2]. The top of the uppermost geological deposit, orange brown brickearth [39], was located at 58.05m OD to the south-west.

5.2.29 *Trench 3477TT* (Fig 2)

5.2.30 Top north-west: 57.43m OD; south-east: 56.57m OD. Depth 0.61m. Topsoil [1] was 0.26m thick and overlay 0.31 thick ploughsoil [2]. The top of the uppermost geological deposit, orange brown brickearth [39], was located at 56.82m OD to the north-west.

5.2.31 *Trench 3478TT* (Fig 2)

5.2.32 Top north-west: 56.85m OD; south-east: 56.43m OD. Depth 0.51m. Topsoil [1] was 0.24m thick and overlay 0.27m thick ploughsoil [2]. The top of the uppermost geological deposit, orange brown brickearth [39], was located at 56.34m OD to the north-west.

5.2.33 *Trench 3480TT* (Fig 2)

5.2.33.1 Top north-west: 57.21m OD; north-east: 57.96m OD. Depth 0.28m. Topsoil [1] was 0.20m thick and overlay 0.08m thick ploughsoil [2]. The top of the uppermost geological deposit, mid orange grey brickearth [50], was located at 56.93m OD to the north-west.

5.2.33.2 At 11m north-west measured from the north-west corner of the trench, and 6m from the southwest corner, the base of a flint-filled land drain was observed. It was 0,10m wide, it intruded 0.50m into the uppermost geological deposit [50], and its top was truncated. As no pipe was seen at the sides of the trench, this feature seems to have been a soak-away drain of probably the 19th-20th century.

6 ARCHAEOLOGICAL DATASETS

6.1 Table 1: Events dataset

EVENT_NAME:BEECHBROOK WOOD
EVENT_CODE:ARC BBW 98
EVENT_TYPE:Evaluation
CONTRACTOR:Museum of London Archaeology Service
DATE:12/08/98-28/08/98
GRID: 78500/25500 (URL Grid)
PROJECT: CTRL
COUNTY:Kent
DISTRICT:Ashford
PARISH: Hothfield
SMR:
SITE_TYPE:Cultivated Land 3- Operations to a depth >0.25m
PERIOD:Late prehistoric; Late Iron Age to Early Romano-British; Medieval.
METHOD:Mechanical removal of topsoil; hand excavation and recording of archaeological features.
PHASING:1st-3rd century AD Roman; Post-medieval
ENVIRON:Charcoal and a few wild species of weeds from a ditch and a fire pit.
FINDS:Roman pottery, amphora, daub and worked stone
GEOLOGY:Silt, sand and brickearth underlain by Sandgate Beds
CONTEXT_NUM:79 + 39 trench sheets
THREAT:CTRL
SAMPLE:1%
SUMMARY:14 trenches contained a few prehistoric and mainly LIA-ERB ditches, drains and later hedgerows which concentrated in the north-west and south-eastern part of the site. Medieval pottery in ploughsoil.
ARCHIVE: Stored by URL at Aylesford
ACC_NUM:

6.2 Table 2 : Archaeological context inventory

Key: PH - prehistoric; LIA-ERB - Early Romano British (1st C); MED - Medieval

TRENCH	CONTEXT	TYPE	PERIOD	ASSOCIATION	COMMENTS
All trenches	1	deposit	MED-MOD		topsoil
All trenches	2	deposit	LIA-ERB, MED-MOD		ploughsoil
3446TT	3	deposit	LIA-ERB, MED	5	natural brickearth
3446TT	4	deposit		5	fill
3446TT	5	cut		4	ditch/channel
3446TT	6	deposit		7	fill
3446TT	7	cut		6	post pit
3442TT- 56TT, 3458TT- 61TT	8	deposit			uppermost geol. sand
3443TT	9	deposit	LIA-ERB	10	fill
3443TT	10	cut		9	ditch
3443TT	11	deposit		12	fill
3443TT	12	cut		11	hedgerow
3443TT	13	deposit		14	fill
3443TT	14	cut		13	ditch
3443TT	15	deposit		16	fill
3443TT	16	cut		15	ditch
unstratified	17		Roman		
3449TT	18	deposit		19	fill
3449TT	19	cut			nat. crack
3443TT	20	deposit		21	fill
3443TT	21	cut		20	natural channel
3442TT	22	deposit	LIA-ERB	23	fill

TRENCH	CONTEXT	TYPE	PERIOD	ASSOCIATION	COMMENTS
3442TT	23	cut		22	ditch
3442TT	24	deposit	LIA-ERB	25	fill
3442TT	25	cut		24	ditch
3442TT	26	deposit		27	fill
3442TT	27	cut		26	natural channel
3444TT	28	deposit		29	fill
3444TT	29	cut		28	natural channel
3444TT	30	deposit	LIA-ERB	31	fill
3444TT	31	cut		30	pit
3452TT	32	deposit		33	fill
3452TT	33	cut		32	channel
3452TT	34	deposit		35	fill
3452TT	35	cut		34	channel
not used	36				
3459TT	37	deposit		38	fill
3459TT	38	cut		37	channel
3462TT- 3463TT, 3466TT, 3469TT, 3475TT- 3479TT	39	deposit			uppermost geol. brickearth
3459TT	40	deposit		41	fill
3459TT	41	cut		40	modern pit
3460TT	42	deposit		43	fill
3460TT	43	cut		42	ditch
3460TT	44	deposit		45	fill

TRENCH	CONTEXT	TYPE	PERIOD	ASSOCIATION	COMMENTS
3460TT	45	cut		44	ditch
not used	46-49				
3455TT, 3457TT 3464TT- 3465TT, 3467TT, 3470TT- 3474TT, 3480TT	50	deposit			uppermost geol. brickearth
3456TT	51	deposit		52	fill
3456TT	52	cut		51	ditch
3460TT	53	deposit		54	fill
3460TT	54	cut		53	fire pit
not used	55-57				
3467TT	58	deposit		59	fill
3467TT	59	cut		58	slot/gully
3467TT	60	deposit		61	fill
3467TT	61	cut		60	slot/drainage
3472TT	62	deposit	LIA-ERB	63	fill
3472TT	63	cut		62	gully
3479TT	64	deposit		65	fill
3479TT	65	cut		64	ditch
3473TT	66	deposit		67	fill
3473TT	67	cut		66	ditch
3457TT	68	deposit	LIA-ERB	69	fill
3457TT	69	cut		68	slot/gully
3457TT	70	deposit	LIA-ERB	75	fill

TRENCH	CONTEXT	TYPE	PERIOD	ASSOCIATION	COMMENTS
3463TT	71	deposit	late PH	72	fill
3463TT	72	cut		71	ditch
3463TT	73	deposit		74	fill
3463TT	74	cut		73	ditch
3457TT	75	cut		70	slot/gully
3457TT	76	deposit		77	fill
3457TT	77	cut		76	drainage gully
3457TT	78	deposit		81	fill
3466TT	79	deposit	ERB	80	fill
3466TT	80	cut		79	ditch
3457TT	81	cut		78	hedgerow
3457TT	82	deposit	late PH	83	fill
3457TT	83	cut		82	linear feature
3457TT	84	deposit			?layer/fill
3457TT	85	cut/deposit		82	tree bole fill/cut
3457TT	86	cut/deposit			tree bole fill/cut
3461TT	87	cut		88	pit/treebole
3461TT	88	deposit		87	fill

SECTION 2: STATEMENT OF IMPORTANCE**7 CONCLUSIONS****7.1 Extent of archaeological deposits**

- 7.1.1 Archaeological features surviving at Beechbrook Wood were predominantly found to be truncated linear features. A large two phased boundary ditch was identified at two locations. The remaining linear features appeared to be field drains and gullies. At several locations peri-glacial channels were recorded. Defining those linear features that were clearly man made from the features that were of natural origin was generally possible through consideration of finds content and/or feature profiles. In some cases, however, the fill of each class of feature was closely similar.
- 7.1.2 There were three areas of feature concentration: to the very north-west in trenches 3442TT-3444TT, 3446TT; in the centre in 3452TT, 3455TT, 3457TT, 3460TT, 3461TT, 3463TT and 3467TT; and to the south-east in 3472TT and 3473TT.
- 7.1.3 In the north-western area eight ditches were identified varying in width between 1.50m and 0.40m: [23] and [25] in 3442TT; [10], [12], [14] and [16] in 3443TT; [29] in 3444TT; and [5] in 3446TT. Most of them followed the general slope and aligned broadly north-south with variations of angle from north-west to north-east. Only one ditch, [10] in 3443TT, aligned east-west. The general alignment along the slope suggests the ditches had been used drainage channels rather than as field boundaries.
- 7.1.4 The twelve ditches of the central area did not provide such an uniform picture; ditch [52] in 3455TT, [43] and [45] in 3460TT and [81] and [83] in 3457TT aligned east-west while [69], [75] and [77] in the same trench seemed to lead to a common point to the south-west beyond 3457TT. Further ditches [72] and [74] in 3463TT were on a different north-west to south-eastern line, whereas [59] and [61] in 3467TT led from east to west. The profiles varied also from U-shaped to angular or irregular. Their width varied between 2m and 0.30m. These ditches were probably part of field systems.
- 7.1.5 Four non-linear features were identified during the evaluation in trenches 3444TT, 3446TT, 3460TT and 3461TT. Pit [31] in 3444TT was shallow feature and probably truncated, it contained pottery. Feature [7] in 3446TT was a postpit which contained some stone packing. Pit [54] in 3460TT contained some shattered flint although it could not be confirmed that it was used for cooking. The pit [87] in 3461TT was either a disused tree bole or a man made pit. The fills of both pits [54] and [87] contained some charcoal, suggesting they may have been used as fire pits. The environmental sample of pit fill [30], however, contained apart from charcoal only wild seeds but no trace of cultivated grains or other food remains (Appendix 4).
- 7.1.6 In the south-eastern lowest part of the site only one shallow ditch base [63] was identified in 3472TT and one pit [67] in 3473TT.

7.2 Nature of archaeological deposits

- 7.2.1 All archaeological deposits were confined within cut features, although one deposit [84] in 3457TT may either have been a truncated fill or an occupation spread. The surfaces of most features were probably truncated by ploughsoil and/or machine excavation. Apart from the four pits, all other ancient features were interpreted as ditches or drains and point to a rural landscape with possibly organised field systems. The two hedgerow slots were also encountered. Apart from one postpit with stone packing, no other structural features were found.
- 7.2.2 The feature fills in general consisted mainly of sand and silt varying in colour from pale grey to yellow-orange and mid brown representing various shades of redeposited, weathered natural brickearth. From these fills the more recent deposits such as the hedgerows in trench 3443TT and 3457TT could easily be distinguished by the root content in their fills.

7.3 Character of the site

- 7.3.1 At a certain time during the history of the site the central area was covered with trees, stretching from trenches 3448TT, 3450TT and 3452TT in the north to trenches 3464TT and 3465TT in the south. Whether these trees were there prior to or after the agricultural landscape defined by ditches is impossible to say at this stage particularly as the ploughsoil may have obscured the original surface horizon.
- 7.3.2 The man made ditches and drains show an attempt to organise the land for agricultural purposes in ancient times. The site provided no definite evidence for localised settlement remains, although the presence of linear features suggesting an organised agricultural landscape in association with finds dating predominantly to the LIA-ERB period, indicates that settlement may have existed on the site but may have been totally truncated by later ploughing.

7.4 Date of occupation

- 7.4.1 The datable finds derived from ploughsoil and the use and disuse of features. The presence of occupation through various cultural periods is more closely testified by pottery sherds and flints found in features, from the late Mesolithic/Neolithic time onwards, through late Iron Age to early Romano-British and later Roman times (Appendices 1 and 3). Some evidence for medieval occupation derived from roofing peg tiles in redeposited and reworked ploughsoil (Appendix 2).
- 7.4.2 The more closely defined late Mesolithic/Neolithic flints came from ditch [23] in 3442TT; ditch [10] and brickearth [3] in trench 3443TT; ditches [25] and [31] in 3444TT; ditch [83] in 3457TT. The prehistoric pottery lay in ditch [72] in trench 3463TT and from ditch [83] in 3457TT. Both trenches lay next to each other in the centre of the site, just east of the wooded area.

- 7.4.3 LIA-ERB finds were distributed across the entire site, from trench 3442TT in the north-west to 3472TT in the south-east. Finds were recovered from sealed contexts and residually within ploughsoil layers.

8 IMPORTANCE OF THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL REMAINS

8.1 Survival and conditions

- 8.1.1 The site shows extensive evidence for the widespread reworking of agricultural soils. No features could be distinguished in the ploughsoil, implying that over the centuries a reworking of more than 0.5m of deposits in total depth had occurred. The surviving features were distinguished in the geological surface horizon which consisted in the north-west of sand, and in the south-east of brickearth.
- 8.1.2 Archaeological features were present in 14 of 39 trenches (3442TT-3444TT, 3446TT, 3455TT, 3457TT, 3460TT, 3461TT, 3463TT, 3466TT, 3467TT, 3472TT, 3473TT and 3479TT). 26 linear features consisting of field boundary ditches, field drains and shallow gullies were identified. Five non-linear features were identified in trenches 3444TT, 3446TT, 3457TT, 3460TT and 3461TT. All features were found to be truncated by ploughing activity. The ploughsoil horizon was maximum 0.50m in depth. Features were cut into natural geology and ranged from 0.10m to 0.80m in depth.

8.2 Period

- 8.2.1 One notched blade/flake from the pit in 3444TT could confidently dated to the late Mesolithic/Neolithic period. The other flakes were broadly assigned to the prehistoric period. The possible enclosures or field ditches were dated by pottery from late prehistoric, late Iron Age to early Romano-British times, with a very slight possibility of later Roman presence. The medieval evidence was present in reworked form in the ploughsoil bed. The ditches at Beechbrook Wood seem to be single phase features within one of the major periods. There seems to have been a break between late prehistoric times and late Iron Age to Roman occupation, the latter being most frequently represented.
- 8.2.2 The dating from the single phase features may suggest periodical occupation and associated settlements in the area beyond the evaluation.

8.3 Rarity

- 8.3.1 The Late Iron Age to Roman period is generally well represented in Kent. The results of the evaluation at Beechbrook Wood indicate an agricultural land use for which physical boundary and drainage features survive. Investigation of Romanised late IA-RB native settlements remains minimal to date in Kent and represents an important research theme. However, within the evaluation area, definitive settlement evidence was lacking. Environmental evidence was found to be of low potential (see Appendix 4) due to continuous reworking of ploughsoil and introduction of intrusive materials.

8.4 Fragility and vulnerability

8.4.1 All features of archaeological significance are likely to be destroyed by ground works.

8.5 Diversity

8.5.1 The archaeological features are restricted to linear field, and perhaps enclosure, boundaries. No occupation or undisturbed activity surfaces survived. Several amorphous pit features are interpreted as tree throw holes. One post pit in 3446TT may have had a structural purpose. Two small pits in 3460TT and 3461TT may indicate use of fire.

8.6 Documentation

8.6.1 There are no documented finds from the site. There has been no previous investigation at the site. Immediately south-west of the evaluated area evaluation of crop marks at South of Beechbrook Wood (URL 1997c) has revealed a similar LIA-ERB agricultural landscape.

8.7 Group value

8.7.1 Together with results from South of Beechbrook Wood (URL 1997c) the site represents the opportunity to map an extensive area of agricultural land use dating here predominantly to the LIA-ERB period, while the South of Beechbrook features dated mostly to the 1st to 3rd century Roman period.

8.7.2 Although heavily truncated, sealed contexts do survive as negative features within the uppermost geological deposit. Despite agricultural truncation there is still datable evidence to be found across the site. No evidence was found to suggest that the ditch-marked land was associated with areas of occupation, but they may be located nearby.

8.8 Potential

8.8.1 The evaluation has not identified areas within the site that may have been a focus for settlement, although finds assemblages would suggest that settlement probably occurred nearby. The site would appear to have some potential for mapping features of the late prehistoric landscape.

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Archaeological Evaluation Report (Prepared for URL by MoLAS)

APPENDIX 1**Pottery**

By Louise Rayner (supervised by Robin Symonds & Jon Cotton)

Introduction

The evaluation at Beechbrook Wood (ARC BBW 98) produced a total of 87 sherds (1127g), dating to the later prehistoric and late Iron Age to early Romano-British periods. The sherds are in very poor condition, very fragmentary and with heavily abraded surfaces. The average sherd weight is just under 13g. The pottery was examined using a x20 binocular microscope and recorded using standard MoLAS codes on pro-forma sheets. Quantification of the material was by sherd count and weight. Pottery was recorded from 13 contexts, although context [2] was recorded in five trenches.

Fabrics

The fabrics have been defined on the basis of their main inclusions and have not been divided into defined fabric types. The fabrics identified fall into four broad temper types, with an additional sherd of sourced Roman imported fine ware. The later prehistoric sherds are all tempered with coarse, ill-sorted crushed burnt flint. The late Iron Age to early Romano-British sherds fall into three temper types: glauconite, sand and grog. The glauconite (greensand) rich fabrics are likely to be local products to Kent with the Medway Valley serving as a focus for sites with glauconite rich fabrics, because of the local greensand deposits. The grog-tempered sherds include probable examples of Patchgrove ware, but the worn surfaces make identification problematic. The only sourced fabric of definite Roman date is one sherd of central Gaulish black colour-coated ware.

Fabric groups*Later Prehistoric*

Flint-tempered fabric	14 sherds	78g
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Late Iron Age to early Romano-British

Grog-tempered fabrics	42 sherds	773g
Sandy-tempered fabrics	11 sherds	23g
Patchgrove ware	12 sherds	217g
Glauconite-rich fabric	4 sherds	14g
Oxidized sandy ware	3 sherd	20g
Central Gaulish black colour-coated ware	1 sherd	2g

Forms

Very few forms could be discerned due to the undiagnostic nature of the material. One sherd is the knob from a lid. The only rim sherds present come from necked jars of late Iron Age to early Romano-British date. The only type of decoration present is combed and rilled body sherds. There are no diagnostic sherds at all amongst the flint-tempered later prehistoric material.

Chronology

The assemblage is not closely datable, due to the small groups and poor condition. The use of glauconite fabrics in this area has its origins in the mid Iron Age and continues in use until the conquest period. Patchgrove ware dates from the conquest period onwards and the other grog-tempered fabrics probably have a similar date, although they could be slightly earlier. The single sherd of central Gaulish black colour-coated ware dates between 70-200 AD, depending on the form, which cannot be identified from this sherd.

The later prehistoric sherds are not closely datable because of the lack of diagnostic features. The fabric would suggest a date of Bronze Age to early Iron Age, but a larger sample is required before this can be confirmed and refined.

General Comments

This assemblage is similar to others recovered in this area. The glauconite rich fabrics and Patchgrove ware are Kent products in common use in the late Iron Age to early Romano-British period. The fabric of the later prehistoric sherds is similar to other assemblages from the area, but needs further evidence before the dating can be refined.

Assessment of Potential and further work

The small assemblage size and poor condition of the sherds results in an assemblage that is at present of little potential. A larger sample would be desirable in order to refine the dating for both periods represented.

Table 3: Bulk dataset, pottery

1.1.1.1 Table 3: Bulk dataset, pottery

Key: LPH - later prehistoric; LIA-ERB - late Iran Age to Early Romano British; MED - medieval

TRENCH	CONTEXT	MATERIAL	COUNT	WEIGHT	COMMENTS
3442TT	2	POTTERY	5	6	ploughsoil: LPH, LIA-ERB,
3447TT	2	POTTERY	7	21	ploughsoil: LPH, LIA-ERB
3448TT	2	POTTERY	2	2	ploughsoil: LPH, LIA-ERB
3450TT	2	POTTERY	2	5	ploughsoil: LPH, LIA-ERB
3465TT	2	POTTERY	2	13	ploughsoil: LPH, LIA-ERB
3443TT	3	POTTERY	7	33	reworked natural brickearth: LIA-ERB
3443TT	9	POTTERY	1	6	ditch fill: LIA-ERB
unstratified	17	POTTERY	1	10	Roman
3442TT	22	POTTERY	2	2	ditch fill: LIA-ERB
3442TT	24	POTTERY	3	10	ditch fill: LIA-ERB
3444TT	30	POTTERY	1	4	ditch fill: LIA-ERB
3472TT	62	POTTERY	4	4	gully fill: LIA-ERB
3457TT	68	POTTERY	1	31	gully fill: LIA-ERB
3457TT	70	POTTERY	11	238	gully fill: LIA-ERB
3463TT	71	POTTERY	2	17	ditch fill: LPH
3466TT	79	POTTERY	30	676	ditch fill: ERB
3457TT	82	POTTERY	6	49	drain fill: LPH

APPENDIX 2

BUILDING MATERIALS

By Jackie Keily (supervised by Terence Paul Smith)

Introduction

The site at Beechbrook Wood, near Ashford in Kent (ARC BBW98) produced a total of five fragments (73g) of medieval ceramic building material, three fragments of stone (298g) and two fragments of daub (165g). The ceramic building material fragments are all very small. All the building materials and stone were examined using a x10 binocular microscope and recorded using standard MoLAS codes on pro-forma sheets. Quantification of the material was by fragment count and weight. Ceramic building material was recorded from three contexts, stone from two contexts and daub from two contexts.

Ceramic Building Material

Two different fabrics were recorded, both similar to established MoLAS fabrics.

Fabric 1 (similar to MoLAS fabric 2271): orange/brown in colour, with a hard, well fired texture and very few inclusions. Grey, reduced core. This fabric is very common on sites in London from around AD 1180 onwards and is thought to have been produced locally. Fragments of peg tile in this fabric were found in contexts [2] and [10].

Fabric 2 (some similarities with MoLAS fabric 3201): various shades of red or orange, with a hard well fired texture with occasional quartz and red iron oxide inclusions and frequent fine calcium carbonate. Very smooth surfaces. This fabric occurred in contexts [2] and [3].

Forms

All the ceramic building material is made up of fragments of peg tile. These tiles were primarily used for roofing but were also frequently used in other contexts within buildings.

Daub

Two fragments of daub were recovered from the site.

Context [42]: a small rounded fragment with a fine brown sandy fabric with some red iron oxide inclusions.

Context [79]: a fragment of a soft, light brown daub with some straw/hay impressions.

Wattle-and-daub was used in buildings from prehistoric times onwards, both in the construction of walls and also as infill panels in timber-framed buildings. Neither of the two fragments of daub from this site has any remaining diagnostic features to indicate how they may have been used.

Stone

Two fragments of ferruginous sandstone came from context [3]. They may have been used as rubble but since there are no signs of mortar on them it is impossible to say for certain. This iron-rich sandstone is found in various outcrops in Kent.

Table 4: Bulk dataset

TRENCH	CONTEXT	MATERIAL	COUNT	WEIGHT	COMMENTS
Topsoil	1	CERAMIC BUILDING MATERIAL	1	19	topsoil
3442TT	2	CERAMIC BUILDING MATERIAL	3	37	ploughsoil
3443TT	3	CERAMIC BUILDING MATERIAL	1	27	reworked natural brickearth
3443TT	3	STONE	2	296	reworked natural brickearth
3460TT	42	DAUB	1	10	ditch fill
3466TT	79	DAUB	1	155	ditch fill

APPENDIX 3

Flints

*By Jonathan Cotton***Summary**

In all, 17 pieces of struck flint were examined, the raw material comprising derived 'gravel' flint. None of the collection was diagnostic as to date, though a notched blade/flake from context [30] is of possible late Mesolithic/Neolithic type.

Other points of interest include: the presence of a hammerstone from context [24]; another possible fragmentary example from context [15]; a retouched and utilised truncated blade from context [9]; and two core-trimming/rejuvenation flakes and other fragments from ploughsoil context [2] in trench 3456TT, several of which have marked incipient cones of percussion.

Table 5: Bulk dataset, Flints

TRENCH	CONTEXT	MATERIAL	COUNT	WEIGHT	COMMENTS
3442TT	2	WORKED FLINT	1	5	retouched flake
3456TT	2	WORKED FLINT	4	61	core-rejuv flake; core-trim flake; spall; misc waste
3443TT	3	WORKED FLINT	1	1	retouched flake frag
3443TT	9	WORKED FLINT	1	4	notched blade/flake
3443TT	15	WORKED FLINT	2		hammerstone frag; shatter frag
3442TT	22	WORKED FLINT	2	5	flakes
3442TT	24	WORKED FLINT	2	458	hammerstone; flake
3444TT	30	WORKED FLINT	1	11	notched blade/flake
3466TT	79	WORKED FLINT	2	20	flakes
3457TT	82	WORKED FLINT	1	10	shatter frag

Burnt flint

In addition, 12 pieces of burnt flint were recovered: two from ploughsoil contexts [2] in trench 3447TT, and in contexts [22] and [30]; three from contexts [2] in trench 3448TT and from context [9]. The remainder 20 or so pieces are not burnt, but comprise naturally shattered, bleached and pot-lidded fragments which have clearly been exposed to extremes of temperature. A number of these pieces are re-corticing.

Table 6: Bulk dataset, burnt flint

TRENCH	CONTEXT	MATERIAL	COUNT	WEIGHT	COMMENTS
3447TT	2	BURNT FLINT	2	8	ploughsoil
3448TT	2	BURNT FLINT	3	24	ploughsoil
3443TT	9	BURNT FLINT	3	106	ditch fill
3442TT	22	BURNT FLINT	2	130	ditch fill
3444TT	30	BURNT FLINT	2	554	pit fill

Table 7: Naturally shattered flint

TRENCH	CONTEXT	MATERIAL	COUNT	WEIGHT	COMMENTS
3443TT	15	FLINT	1	220	ditch fill
3442TT	22	FLINT	2	131	ditch fill
3442TT	24	FLINT	4	368	ditch fill
3444TT	30	FLINT	5	1381	pit fill
3460TT	44	FLINT	2	41	ditch fill
3460TT	53	FLINT	1	94	pit fill
3457TT	82	FLINT	2	82	?ditch fill

APPENDIX 4

Plant remains

By John Giorgi

Introduction

Two 10 litre bulk samples were taken from the fill [9] (sample <1>) of a ditch in trench 3443TT, and the fill [30] (sample <2>) of an oval pit in trench 3444TT, during excavations at Beechbrook Wood (ARC BBW 98) for the potential recovery of biological and artefactual remains. The two features have been dated as part of the late Iron Age to early Romano-British period.

The purpose of the assessment was to evaluate the quality of preservation and the abundance and diversity of biological and artefactual remains in the two samples. It was hoped that the remains in the samples could provide information on human activities in the area including the possible function of the two features.

Methods

The two samples were processed in a flotation tank and the flots recovered on a 0.25mm mesh. The residues, retained on a 1mm sieve, were dried and sorted for biological and artefactual remains.

The dried flots were scanned under a binocular microscope. Modes of preservation, abundance and diversity of organic remains were noted. A summary of the results is shown below (Table 6).

Results

Ditch Fill [9] 3443TT (sample <1>, flot vol. 2ml.): The sample produced a very small flot which consisted mainly of flecks and very small fragments of charcoal. Other botanical remains included very occasional seeds of wild plants preserved by waterlogging, eg. knotgrass (*Polygonum aviculare*), fumitory (*Fumaria* sp.), bedstraw (*Galium* sp.), elder (*Sambucus nigra*) and modern rootlets. The residue was made up of gravel and was sterile in terms of biological and artefactual remains.

Oval Pit Fill [30] 3444TT (sample <2>, flot vol. 2ml.): This sample also produced only a very small flot which again consisted mainly of flecks and very small fragments of charcoal, very occasional seeds of wild plants preserved by waterlogging, eg. chickweed/stitchwort (*Stellaria* sp.), rush (*Juncus* sp.), and modern rootlets. The residue consisted mainly of gravel and occasional small charcoal fragments.

Statement of Potential

The only biological remains found in the two samples were a small number of ‘waterlogged’ seeds and charcoal. The waterlogged seeds however are probably intrusive given the soil conditions on the site, with the presence of the rootlets supporting the possibility that they were transported down the soil profile. Several of the charcoal fragments may be identifiable although it is unlikely to contribute significantly to our understanding of human activities in the area. Moreover, the possibility that some or all of this charcoal is intrusive can also not be discounted.

Recommendations

No further work is suggested on the basis of the assessment results.

Table 8: Environmental dataset, plant remains

TRENCH	CONTEXT	SAMPLE	METHOD	SUMMARY	COMMENTS
3443TT	9	1	flotation (flot size 0.25mm)	‘waterlogged’ seeds+; rootlets++; charcoal+++	No further work is recommended
3444TT	30	2	flotation (flot size 0.25mm)	‘waterlogged’ seeds+; rootlets++; charcoal+++	No further work is recommended

Kent SMR Record Sheet

Site Name: Beechbrook Wood			
Site code: ARC BBW 98			
Summary: An evaluation of 39 trenches, commissioned by Union Railways Limited, was carried out by the Museum of London Archaeology Service in August 1998 at Beechbrook Wood, north-west of Ashford, Kent. The evaluation explored the area north-west of a site excavated in 1997, ARC BWD 97.			
District: Ashford		Parish: Hothfield	
Period(s):			
1. Late Mesolithic/Neolithic			
2. Late Iron Age to-Early Romano British			
3. Possibly Roman			
4. Medieval in ploughsoil			
NGR Easting 598500		NGR Northing 145500	
Type of Recording:			
Evaluation		Watching Brief	Field Walking
(Delete)		Excavation	Geophysical Survey
			Measured Survey
Date of Recording: (From)		12/08/1998	(To) 28/08/1998
Unit Undertaking Recording: Museum of London Archaeology Service, Walker House, 87 Queen Victoria Street, London EC4V 4AB			
Summary of Field Results: Fourteen of the thirty nine trenches revealed archaeological features, most of them were ditches and drainages but there were also some pits. Apart from a few late Mesolithic/Neolithic type sherds and flints, the majority of the material retrieved was of late Iron Age to early Romano-British period. Several 12th century building material in form of pegtiles came from the ploughsoil.			
Location of Archive/Finds:		URL archive at Aylesford	

Bibliography:	Evaluation report
Summary Compiler: Friederike Hammer	Date: 28/09/1998