

**CHANNEL TUNNEL RAIL LINK
Union Railways (South) Ltd**

Project Area 420

**EAST OF BOARLEY FARM, BOXLEY, KENT
ARC BFE 99**

**DETAILED ARCHAEOLOGICAL WORKS
INTERIM REPORT
FINAL**

Contract S/400/SP/0009 P482A

**Oxford Archaeological Unit
13th September 1999**

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INTERIM REPORT
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Prepared By: Date:	
Checked By: Date:	
Approved By: Position: Date:	

Contract S/400/SP/0009 P482A

**Oxford Archaeological Unit
Janus House
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13th September 1999**

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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Location and specification

1.1.1 Oxford Archaeological Unit (OAU) was commissioned by Union Railways (South) Limited (URS) to undertake detailed archaeological investigation at the site of East of Boarley Farm, north-west of the village of Boxley, Kent. The work was conducted as part of an extensive programme of archaeological investigation carried out in advance of the construction of the Channel Tunnel Rail Link (CTRL).

1.1.2 The site is centred on URL grid point 56225 39225 and NGR grid point TQ 76219 59226. An area of late Iron Age/ early Romano-British activity, identified to the east of Boarley Farm during an evaluation of the CTRL corridor, has been designated for preservation *in situ*. The present trench, which was specified as detailed excavation, was located immediately to the south, within the trace of the rail link cutting. The site was 0.1 ha in extent (20 m x 50 m) and was excavated between 3rd and 22nd January 1999.

1.2 Geology and Topography

1.2.1 The site lies within the undulating landscape at the foot of the North Downs. The solid geology of the area is chalk. A Head deposit, generally consisting of silty clay with flints, has been deposited over this landscape by solifluction. Subsequent erosion has often removed the Head deposit and the weathered chalk, but in the vicinity of Boarley Farm a large area of the Head remains *in situ*.

1.2.2 The excavation area lies on a moderately steep slope, dropping from 52 m OD in the north-east to 50 m OD in the south-west, and coincides with a slight dry valley or erosion gully. Prior to the excavation, the site was under arable cultivation.

1.3 Background

1.3.1 The site lies in a landscape zone with high potential for survival of prehistoric settlement remains. The topographical position and geology are broadly similar to the White Horse Stone/ Pilgrim's Way/ West of Boarley Farm group of sites. Surface collection surveys carried out within the CTRL route corridor in the vicinity, recorded diffuse scatters of prehistoric worked flints, including a polished axe fragment, as well as burnt flint and Iron Age, Roman and medieval pottery (*Channel Tunnel Rail Link, Assessment of Historic and Cultural Effects*, OAU 1994, vols. 1 and 2).

1.3.2 In 1997, an evaluation carried out by the Museum of London Archaeological Service (MoLAS) identified a concentration of 34 postholes and 4 pits, dating to the late Iron Age/ early Romano-British period, indicating a potential area of occupation to the East of Boarley Farm (*Archaeological Evaluation at Boarley Farm, Aylesford, Kent. Channel Tunnel Rail Link*, MoLAS report for Union Railways Ltd, 1997).

1.3.3 A further evaluation carried out by the OAU in December 1998, on the west side of Boarley Lane, uncovered a possible chalk quarry and a shallow, flat-bottomed ditch. The date of these features is uncertain but they were thought to be medieval or post medieval. A few residual pieces of prehistoric flint and pottery were also recovered. (*Boarley Lane, Maidstone, Kent. Archaeological evaluation report*, OAU report for Union Railways Limited, 1999).

2 SUMMARY OF RESULTS

2.1 Site Summary

- 2.1.1 A single ditch, dated to the late Iron Age/ early Romano-British period by a small pottery assemblage, and three undated postholes were the only definite archaeological features identified. Other features and deposits which produced small quantities of residual late Iron Age/ early Romano-British pottery and worked flint, are interpreted as resulting from colluvial erosion and deposition.

2.2 Periods Represented

Prehistoric (to c. 100 BC)

- 2.2.1 A small number of residual prehistoric worked flints were recovered from deposits filling a large erosion gully.

Late Iron Age/ early Roman (c. 100 BC – 200 AD)

- 2.2.2 A single ditch terminal was dated to the late Iron Age/ early Romano-British period by a group of six pottery sherds from the secondary fill. Three isolated postholes may be of similar date but produced no artefacts.
- 2.2.3 The colluvial sequence is as yet undated, but all of the pottery recovered from layers filling the erosion gully are of late Iron/ Age or early Romano-British date.

2.3 Feature Types

- 2.3.1 One ditch terminal and three post-holes were the only clearly archaeological features present. Two shallow, undated linear features could be natural erosion gullies or drainage ditches.
- 2.3.2 A large, irregular gully, c. 11 m wide, certainly represents a natural erosion feature. It was visible before excavation as a slight, north-west to south-east aligned fold in the ground. It was filled with a sequence of hillwash deposits, including a layer of gravel interpreted as a gravel fan.

2.4 Artefactual Remains

- 2.4.1 A small collection of finds was recovered, mainly comprising pottery and worked flint. The pottery assemblage comprised c. 40 sherds of late Iron Age/ early Roman-British material, recovered from colluvial layers in a large erosion gully and a ditch terminal.

2.5 Palaeo-environmental and Economic Evidence

- 2.5.1 A series of bulk samples, incremental samples and intact monoliths were taken from the colluvial sequence, which reached a total maximum thickness of 2.70 m in the erosion gully, at the north-eastern edge of the site. Samples were taken for mollusc analysis, recovery of charred plant remains, artefacts and animal bone, palaeomagnetic dating, micromorphology, pollen, OSL dating, pedology, particle size analysis and soil chemistry. Although the potential of the samples is not clear at present, it is expected that any data recovered will be valuable for comparison with samples from the nearby sites of White Horse Stone, Pilgrim's Way and West of Boarley Farm. The artefactual material from the sequence is all of late Iron Age or early Romano-British date, and almost certainly derives from the occupation area of that date recorded immediately up-slope to the north-east.

3 FIELDWORK EVENT AIMS

3.1 The following research aims were identified prior to the fieldwork:

- Recover individual artefacts and artefact assemblages and other indicators, such as faunal and charred plant remains, from securely dated sequences, to establish the economic basis of agricultural communities.
- Determine the local environment of the site focii through the recovery of palaeo-environmental data, particularly the recovery of molluscs from cut features and colluvial sequences in the dry valleys.

3.2 The above aims were addressed as far as possible, given that the area of known archaeological interest was excluded from the excavation area (it was designated for preservation *in situ*). The few features present are most likely to belong to the late Iron Age/ early Romano-British period (c. 100 BC – 200 AD).

3.3 The thick colluvial sequence recorded in the erosion gully was sampled for a full range of environmental indicators and for analysis of the deposits themselves. The potential of this material has yet to be assessed.

4 SUMMARY OF POTENTIAL

4.1 The main potential of the site lies in the palaeo-environmental samples recovered from the colluvial sequence. These are an unknown quantity at present but could potentially provide valuable evidence for comparison with the much more extensive dry valley sequence at the White Horse Stone site. Possible limiting factors include the paucity of reliable dating evidence. Pottery recovered the sequence dates from the late Iron Age/ early Romano-British period and, apart from residual worked flint, no other dateable material was recovered. However, the presence of an occupation site of that period immediately up-slope means that the pottery is not necessarily a reliable indicator of the date of deposition. Radiocarbon dating of organic material from the samples will suffer from similar limitations. Unlike the White Horse Stone site there are no clearly *in situ* deposits in direct stratigraphic relationship with the sequence with the potential to provide reliable dating evidence.

APPENDIX 1

ARCHIVE INDEX

ITEM	NUMBER OF ITEMS	NUMBER OF FRAGMENTS	CONDITION (No. of items) (W=washed; UW=unwashed; M=marked; P=processed; UP=unprocessed; D=digitised; I=indexed)
Contexts records	39		
A1 plans	4		
A4 plans	0		
A1 sections	2		
A4 sections	5		
Small finds	0		
Films (monochrome) S=slide; PR=print	3 PR		
Films (Colour) S=slide; PR=print	3 S		
Flint (boxes)	see Misc	8	W, M
Pottery (boxes)	1 size 4	45	W, M
Fired clay (boxes)			
CBM (boxes)			
Stone (boxes)	see Misc	2	W, M
Metalwork (boxes)			
Glass (boxes)			
Slag (boxes)			
Human Bone (boxes)			
Animal Bone (boxes)	see Misc	13	W, M
Misc.	1 size 3		
Soil Samples (No.)	53		
Soil Samples (bags)	44 (snails and pedology)		P
Soil Samples (bags/tubs)	8 (bulk)		UP
Soil Samples (Monolith/kubiena tin)	1		UP

Key to box sizes

Cardboard boxes

Size 1 = Bulk box	391mm x 238mm x 210mm
Size 2 = Half box	391mm x 238mm x 100mm
Size 3 = Quarter box	386mm x 108 mm x 100mm
Size 4 = Eighth box	213 mm x 102 mm x 80 mm
Size 5 = Sixteenth box	110mm x 88 mm x 60 mm
Size 6 = Skeleton box	600 mm x 241 mm x 225 mm

Plastic boxes

Size 4 = Small	(dimensions as size 4 cardboard)
Size 8 = Medium	260mm x 184mm x 108mm
Size 9 = Large	308mm x 216mm x 144mm

APPENDIX 2**SUMMARY REPORT****East of Boarley Farm, Kent (TQ 9370 4820)**

Oxford Archaeological Unit (OAU) was commissioned by Union Railways (South) Limited (URS) to undertake detailed archaeological investigation at the site of East of Boarley Farm, north-west of Boxley, Kent. The work was conducted as part of an extensive programme of archaeological investigation carried out in advance of the construction of the Channel Tunnel Rail Link (CTRL).

An area of late Iron Age/ early Romano-British activity, identified to the east of Boarley Farm during an evaluation of the CTRL corridor, has been designated for preservation *in situ*. The present trench, which was specified as detailed excavation, was located immediately to the south, within the trace of the rail link cutting. The site was 0.1 ha in extent (20 m x 50 m).

A single ditch, dated to the late Iron Age/ early Romano-British period by a small pottery assemblage, and three undated postholes were the only definite archaeological features identified. Other features and deposits which produced small quantities of residual late Iron Age/ early Romano-British pottery and worked flint, are interpreted as resulting from colluvial erosion and deposition.

A thick colluvial sequence, filling a large erosion gully, has been sampled for a range of environmental indicators and for pedological analysis. The potential of the material has yet to be assessed but it is hoped that it will provide material for comparison with the important dry valley sequence at the nearby White Horse Stone site.

APPENDIX 3

SMR SHEET

Site Name: East of Boarley Farm	
Summary: Oxford Archaeological Unit (OAU) was commissioned by Union Railways (South) Limited (URS) to undertake detailed archaeological investigation at the site of East of Boarley Farm, north-west of Boxley, Kent. The work was conducted as part of an extensive programme of archaeological investigation carried out in advance of the construction of the Channel Tunnel Rail Link (CTRL).	
District: Maidstone	Parish: Boxley
Period(s): 1. Prehistoric 2. Late Iron Age/ early Romano-British	
NGR Easting: TQ 76219	NGR Northing: 59226
Type of Recording: Evaluation (Delete) Excavation	Watching — Brief Geophysical Survey Field Walking Measured Survey
Date of Recording: (From) 3/1/99	(To) 22/1/99
Unit Undertaking Recording: Oxford Archaeological Unit	
Summary of Fieldwork Results: An area of late Iron Age/ early Romano-British activity, identified to the east of Boarley Farm during an evaluation of the CTRL corridor, has been designated for preservation <i>in situ</i> . The present trench, which was specified as detailed excavation, was located immediately to the south, within the trace of the rail link cutting. The site was c. 0.1 ha in extent (20 m x 50 m). A single ditch, dated to the late Iron Age/ early Romano-British period by a small pottery assemblage, and three undated postholes were the only definite archaeological features identified. Other features and deposits which produced small quantities of residual late Iron Age/ early Romano-British pottery and worked flint, are interpreted as resulting from colluvial erosion and deposition. A thick colluvial sequence, filling a large erosion gully, has been sampled for a range of environmental indicators and for pedological analysis. The potential of the material has yet to be assessed but it is hoped that it will provide material for comparison with the important dry valley sequence at the nearby White Horse Stone site.	
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Bibliography:	
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