UNION RAILWAYS LIMITED

BOYS HALL ROAD - SEVINGTON RAILHEAD

ARC BHR97

An Archaeological Evaluation

Contract No. 194/870

museum of LONDON
Museum of London Archaeology Service
October 1997

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Final Report
Volume 1 of 1

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Prepared by: Date:
Checked by: Date:
Approved by: Position: Date:

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ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION

SUMMARY

As part of a programme of archaeological investigations along the route of the Channel Tunnel Rail Link, Union Railways Limited (URL) commissioned the Museum of London Archaeology Service (MoLAS) to undertake an evaluation comprising fifteen trial trenches situated in c. 4.7ha *of land 3km to the south-east of the centre of Ashford, Kent. The area of investigation was bounded by the existing London to Folkestone Railway to the south, Boys Hall Road to the west and Ashford Business Park to the north and east.*

At the eastern end of the site a large ditch or pond, located in trench 1701TT, was thought to be associated with Boys Hall Moat, a medieval and post-medieval former manor situated immediately to the south of the railway line. Although the railway cut through the north-eastern corner of the site in the 1840s, archaeology was expected within the current evaluation area. Boys Hall Moat was the subject of survey and excavation undertaken by the Oxford Archaeological Unit (OAU) in 1993 prior to the Channel Tunnel Rail Link project, the results of which indicated a central medieval moated area surrounded by post-medieval formal gardens, including raised terrace walks and water features. The cut feature in trench 1701TT and ragstone features found in trenches 1699TT, 1700TT and 1701TT are possibly associated with the post-medieval gardens.

Also at the eastern end of the site several Late Iron Age (LIA) and Early Romano-British (ERB) features were concentrated in trenches 1698TT and 1699TT. They are similar in nature and date to a series of LIA-ERB slots and ditches found during the earlier separate OAU excavations. The presence of Late Iron Age / Romano-British activity is also consistent with fieldwork carried out by the Kent Archaeological Rescue Unit (KARU) in 1990 as part of a separate project immediately to the south of the railway line. Fieldwalking and trial trenching located at least three sites within this general date range.

In the north-west corner of the evaluated area trenches 1687TT and 1688TT contained a number of features of medieval date including ditches and a small pit.

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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 on land approximately three kilometres south-east of the centre of Ashford, Kent. The evaluated area consisted of open ground north of the Ashford to Dover main railway line and east of Boys Hall Road, Willsborough (URL Grid 82890/20970) (Fig 1). The work was undertaken between the 5 and 12 August 1997. The evaluation forms part of a larger programme of archaeological investigation along the line of the Channel Tunnel Rail Link, the aim of which is to assess the effect of the construction of the new railway upon the cultural heritage. An Environmental Assessment has been prepared (URL 1994). This evaluation is within route window 33.

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. The preparation of this report is included within that specification. The evaluated area is shown on Fig. 2.

1.1.3 The evaluation was designed to define any features associated with Boys Hall Moat and to locate any archaeology of Iron Age, Romano-British or medieval date.

1.1.4 Boys Hall Moat is situated immediately to the south of the railway line forming the southern limit of the evaluation area. The moat defined the area of the residential centre for the manor of Sevington, probably from the time of Henry III, and survives as a rectangular moat 60m by 70m with extensive outworks. The latter are thought to relate to late 16th or early 17th century formal gardens. The site was abandoned as a residence in the second or third decades of the 17th century in favour of a site nearby in Willesborough. The north-eastern corner of the site was cut through by the main line of the south-eastern and Dover Railway in the 1840s and it was therefore thought likely that elements of the formal gardens survived within the evaluation area until the mid 19th century.

1.1.5 Several Late Iron Age (LIA) and Early Romano-British (ERB) sites are known to exist to the south of the railway line. A programme of field walking and trial trenching, which formed part of a separate project, was carried out by the Kent Archaeological Rescue Unit (KARU) in 1990 and the Oxford Archaeological Unit (OAU) in 1993; this fieldwork located at least three sites of LIA-ERB date including slots and ditches with Late Iron Age and Romano-British pottery.

1.2 Geology, landscape and landuse

1.2.1 The site was partly in Willsborough, Ashford and partly in the parish of Sevington and was approximately 3km south-east of the centre of Ashford. The East Stour River lay approximately 1km to the south-west.

1.2.2 The land gradually rises up from 45.81m OD at Boys Hall Road in the west to 49.16m OD close to the centre of the evaluated area. This slight plateau is truncated by a railway cutting to the south. The eastern half of the area is lower, at between 42.50m and 43.00m OD, with the sudden drop in OD levels partly a result of modern quarrying for ragstone.

1.2.3 The western half of the area was under meadow while the eastern half was under tended grassland.

1.2.4 The natural geology varied from west to east. In the western half of the site, close to the railway line, topsoil lay directly on green tinged sand (glaucanite sand) and sandy limestone (Kentish Rag), which comprise part of the Hythe Beds. On the plateau, away from the railway line, modern backfill was observed in the trenches and was probably associated with known ragstone quarrying. The geology at the eastern end of the area consisted of stiff sandy clay over firm clay, probably from the Atherfield Beds. The Atherfield clay is stratigraphically beneath the Hythe Beds, which is consistent with the relatively low ordnance datum (OD) levels at this end of the site.

1.2.5 Archaeological features were generally encountered cutting into the top of the natural deposits. It is assumed that in all cases the original ground surface had been truncated by ploughing and erosion.

2 SPECIFICATIONS

2.1 Aims

2.1.1 The 'Specification for Archaeological Investigations' describes the general aims of the archaeological works, that all the evaluations shall aim 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.

2.1.2 The site specific aims described in the specification were to:

determine the presence / absence of any features associated with, or in close proximity to, the medieval and post-medieval Boys Hall Moat site immediately to the north of the scheduled area;

determine the presence / absence of any structures, features or deposits associated with, or in proximity to, sites of Iron Age, Romano-British and medieval date recorded during recent fieldwork in the immediate area.

3 METHODS

3.1 General

3.1.1 A detailed project design for the evaluation was agreed by URL 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), specified by URL were established using a total station EDM from URL permanent ground markers.

3.2.2 The standard error of the trench positioning was set to normal engineering standards, a traverse accuracy of +/- 15mm over 1km. The trench location plan is based on this information. Drawn plans have been digitised using an AutoCAD graphics program.

3.2.3 Individual features in trenches were planned at 1:20 and occasionally 1:50, taking as a grid the line between the two survey pegs used to mark out the trench. Sections, drawn at 1:10, 1:20 and 1:50 were also positioned using these lines. These survey pegs were accurately positioned and marked out the western side of a north/south trench or the southern side of an east/west trench.

3.2.4 The central site coordinate, according to the given URL grid, was 82890/20970.

3.3 Excavation

3.3.1 Fourteen of the planned fifteen trenches were located and excavated, each measuring 30 x 2 metres. Trench *1700TT* was located within ground owned by the Ashford Business Park and was therefore unavailable for excavation.

3.3.2 An additional trench, 15m long, was located to the north of the gap between trenches *1699TT* and *1701TT* (the number *1700TT* was re-allocated to this trench), and a further 15m trench was excavated 12m to the west of trench *1695TT* and allocated the number *3059TT.* The total site area was 4.7ha. (Fig 2).

3.3.3 It was also necessary to move trenches *1692TT*, *1694TT* and *1696TT* slightly to the north to avoid dense tree cover alongside the railway line.

3.3.4 Trench numbers were allocated by URL. The trenches were excavated using a 360^{o} tracked mechanical excavator fitted with a ditching bucket; topsoil and any overburden were excavated to deposits of archaeological significance and in many cases deepened to test the natural geology (*1689TT, 1691TT, 1692TT, 1693TT, 1694TT, 1695TT, 1696TT* and *1697TT*). Archaeological deposits were partially 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 procedures followed the MoLAS Archaeological Site Manual (1995). Each archaeological deposit and cut feature was given a context number and descriptions recorded on context sheets. 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. Individual sheets were prepared for each trench, recording the nature and depth of each observed deposit and recording the archaeological features contained within each trench.

3.4.2 A photographic record of the site was kept.

3.4.3 Artefacts and samples were collected for dating and identification.

3.4.4 A site code 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. A summary of all the archaeological contexts and associated finds are listed in the Archaeological Context Inventory (Table 2). Detailed reports on the pottery, building materials, animal bones, plant remains and flint are contained in Appendices 1-5. The site archive has been prepared and includes URL datasets for the Fieldwork Event, Contexts, Bulk Finds and Environmental Samples.

4.1.2 Archaeological features may be divided into three groups:

4.1.2.1 A concentration of features, including possible slots or small ditches of Late Iron Age or Romano-British date were located at the eastern end of the site within trenches *1698TT* and *1699TT.*

4.1.2.2 Features, possibly associated with the Boys Hall Moat site, were also located at the eastern end of the site. A large moat or pond associated with a ragstone foundation was found in trench *1701TT* (Fig 4). Possible ragstone foundations were also located in *1700TT* to the north. A ragstone surface was also located in trench *1699TT.*

4.1.2.3 Linear features and one small pit in the north-west corner of the site were medieval in date. These features were located in trenches *1687TT* and *1688TT.*

5 TRENCH DESCRIPTIONS

5.1 General

5.1.1 All trenches will be described in order from west to east.

5.1.2 The majority of archaeological features were recorded cutting natural sandy clay deposits on the slightly lower ground at the western and eastern limits of the site. Where topsoil directly overlay the Hythe Beds no cut features were noted, perhaps indicating a greater degree of erosion on this higher ground.

5.2 Trench descriptions

5.2.1 *Trench 1687TT* (Fig 3)

5.2.1.1 Base North: 43.66m OD: South: 42.57m OD. Depth 0.60m. Topsoil over mid brown sandy silt over orange sandy clay and pockets of green sand and ragstone.

5.2.1.2 Within this north-south trench a number of archaeological features were located; nearly all were linear features, most aligned approximately NW-SE.

5.2.1.3 At the southern end of the trench cut [125] was 1.10m wide and 0.30m deep and filled with grey sandy silt [124]. The feature crossed the trench on a NW-SE alignment. No dateable finds were recovered from this feature but a small fragment of burnt flint was noted.

5.2.1.4 A narrow ditch or slot [127] was located a few metres to the north of [125]. It was 0.50m wide and 0.15m deep and filled with light grey clayey silt [126]. No finds were recovered.

5.2.1.5 A ditch or slot [129] was located to the north of [127]. Cut [129] was aligned slightly differently to other linear features in the trench, being WNW-ESE. The feature was 0.60m wide and 0.30m deep and filled with a light grey sandy silt [128]. No finds were recovered from this feature.

5.2.1.6 Cut [131] partly merges with cut [129]. It was not possible to ascertain which was the later cut because of the homogeneity of the fills. [131] was aligned NW-SE, was 1.40m wide and 0.40m deep with a gently sloping U-shaped profile. It was filled with grey sandy silt [130] with frequent charcoal flecks, occasional fragments of burnt daub, burnt flint, bone and pottery dated AD 1140-1220.

5.2.1.7 Cut [133] was located to the north of [131], cutting a small pit [135] to the north. The ditch was aligned WNW-ESE, was 1.60m wide, 0.30m deep with a shallow U-shaped profile, and was filled with light grey clayey silt [132]. Pottery was dated AD 1200-1300. The feature appeared to be heavily truncated by ploughing.

5.2.1.8 Cut [135] was a small pit truncated on its southern side by [133]. It was 0.20m in diameter and 0.10m deep and was filled with ashy silt [134] with charcoal flecks.

5.2.1.9 Towards the northern end of the trench was a linear feature [137] aligned WNW-ESE. Only the base of the feature survived where it was at least 0.80m wide but survived to a depth of only 0.20m. It was filled with mid brown sandy silt [136]. No finds were recovered.

5.2.2 *Trench 1688TT* (Fig 4)

5.2.2.1 Base West: 43.39m OD, East: 45.18m OD. Depth 1.20m. Topsoil over mid brown sandy silt with frequent chalk fragments over weathered chalk. An orange sandy gravel deposit was sandwiched between the two at the western end of the trench and was probably a dump of modern material.

5.2.2.2 Trench *1688TT* was located close to and south-west of trench *1687TT* (Fig. 2). It also contained a number of medieval and probable medieval features.

5.2.2.3 Towards the western end of the trench was cut [145]; a linear feature aligned WNW-ESE. The feature was 0.50m wide and 0.20m deep with a shallow U-shaped profile. It was filled with a light greenish brown sandy silt [144]. No finds were recovered.

5.2.2.4 In the centre of the trench a wide ditch [139] was located aligned N-S. It was 2.50m wide and 1.30m deep. For the first 0.70m of its depth it had a wide gently sloping profile terminating in a marked step down into a narrow slot in the base. For most of its depth the feature was filled with a light greenish grey silty sand [140] with occasional ragstone fragments and occasional charcoal flecks. No finds were recovered from this deposit. The upper deposit was a greyish brown sandy silt [138] with occasional burnt daub fragments, charcoal flecks and occasional sherds of pottery. One residual Saxon sherd and medieval pottery dated AD 1230-1350 were recovered.

5.2.2.5 Towards the eastern end of the trench was a narrow ditch or slot [142] crossing the trench on a NW-SE alignment. It was 0.60m wide and 0.12m deep and was filled with greyish brown silt [141]. Some bone fragments were recovered from this feature but there were no dateable finds.

5.2.2.6 [143] was a spread of orange brown silt surviving between [139] and [142] and containing several bone fragments.

5.2.3 *Trench 1689TT* (Fig 2)

5.2.3.1 Base North: 44.30m OD, South: 44.11m OD. Depth 1.10m. At the northern end of the trench topsoil overlay green sand. The southern twenty metres of the trench was occupied by part of a large modern cut feature which had been backfilled with orange and grey mottled clayey sand over orange and grey mixed clay. The base of the feature was not reached. Probable backfilled quarry. No archaeology was noted

5.2.4 *Trench 1690TT* (Fig 2)

5.2.4.1 Base West: 43.84m OD, East: 44.76m OD. Depth 1.20m. Topsoil over a series of possible modern dumped deposits at the western end of the trench, over brick rubble over grey clay. At the eastern end of the trench topsoil overlay natural superficial geology comprising yellow brown sandy silt over yellow orange sandy clay over grey clay. No archaeology was noted

5.2.4.2 Brick rubble was noted in the centre and towards the western end of the trench. Bricks were unfrogged and very friable and were almost identical to those used in the construction of a road bridge crossing the railway line immediately to the west of the trench.

5.2.5 *Trench 1691TT* (Fig 2)

5.2.5.1 Base West: 45.20m OD, East: 46.20m OD. Depth 1.30m. Topsoil over brown sandy silt over green sand with pockets of ragstone. No archaeology was noted.

5.2.6 *Trench 1692TT* (Fig 2)

5.2.6.1 Base West: 45.24m OD, East: 45.93m OD. Depth 1.20m. Topsoil overlay natural superficial geology composed of green sand for most of the length of the trench. At the western end of the trench topsoil overlay superficial geology composed of orange clayey sand with gravel which overlay the green sand. No archaeology was noted.

5.2.7 *Trench 1693TT* (Fig 2)

5.2.7.1 Base North: 47.32m OD, South: 47.41m OD. Depth 1.20m. Topsoil over made ground composed of clay and gravel with modern material (plastic bags and felt) over superficial geology composed of ragstone and green sand. No archaeology was noted.

5.2.8 *Trench 1694TT* (Fig 2)

5.2.8.1 Base West: 46.89m OD, East: 47.85m OD. Depth 0.45m at eastern end, 1.30m at western end. Topsoil over superficial geology composed of green sand and ragstone. The eastern 15m of the trench was dominated by a layer of ragstone which occurred 0.30m below the top of the green sand. The western half of the trench was topsoil over green sand to the base of the trench. No archaeology was noted.

5.2.9 *Trench 3059TT* (Fig 2)

5.2.9.1 Base North: 48.06m OD, South: 47.99m OD. Depth 0.90m. Topsoil over 0.40m of re-deposited ragstone and sand over re-deposited grey and orange mottled clay. Probable backfilling of quarry. No archaeology was noted.

5.2.10 Trench 1695TT (Fig 2)

5.2.10.1 Base North: 48.61m OD, South: 48.08m OD. Depth 1.10m. Topsoil over re-deposited gravel and sand containing modern plastic and fabric to a depth of 0.95m. Possible backfilling of quarry. Beneath this superficial geology comprised Green sand and ragstone.

5.2.11 *Trench 1696TT* (Fig 2)

5.2.11.1 Base West: 47.70m OD, East: 48.63m OD. Depth 1.10m. Topsoil over superficial geology comprising green sand and ragstone. No archaeology was noted.

5.2.12 *Trench 1697TT* (Fig 2)

5.2.12.1 Base West: 47.66m OD, East: 47.79m OD. Depth 0.60m. Topsoil over superficial geology comprising green sand and ragstone. No archaeology was noted.

5.2.13 *Trench 1698TT* (Fig 5)

5.2.13.1 Base West: 44.04m OD, East: 42.41m OD. Depth 1.00m. Topsoil over superficial geology comprising a thin deposit (0.08m thick) of orange sandy clay over yellow-grey clay.

5.2.13.2 A narrow cut feature [113] was recorded aligned NW-SE at the western end of the trench. It was filled with a firm reddish brown clayey silt [112]. No finds were recovered.

5.2.13.3 Towards the centre of the trench three linear features [103], [105] and [107] were found to lie on an approximate N-S alignment. [103] was 0.60m wide and 0.10m deep with a gently sloping U-shaped profile and was filled with a light reddish-brown clayey silt [102]. The fill contained occasional flecks of charcoal and burnt daub. [103] cut [105], a linear feature of similar dimensions to [103]. This feature was 0.70m wide and 0.10m deep and was also filled with a reddish brown clayey silt [104] containing flecks of charcoal, burnt daub and a single pottery sherd of Late Iron Age date. To the side of [105] a small slot, [107] also contained a reddish brown clayey silt [106]. Features [103] and [105] abutted each other and [107] lay adjacent. All three continued in a parallel alignment, they, therefore, seem to have been contemporary.

5.2.13.4 Approximately 3m to the east of [103] a narrow linear cut feature [101] was observed crossing the trench on a N-S alignment. The feature was 0.40m wide, 0.14m deep with a shallow rounded profile and contained firm reddish brown clayey silt [100] with occasional flecks of charcoal and burnt daub.

5.2.13.5 Towards the eastern end of the trench a narrow linear cut feature [111] was seen to cross the trench on a N-S alignment. It was 0.50m wide, 0.14m deep with a shallow rounded profile and was filled with a soft grey clayey silt mottled orange [110]. No finds were recovered.

5.2.14 *Trench 1699TT* (Fig 5)

5.2.14.1 Base West: 42.06m OD, East: 42.23m OD. Depth 0.75m. Topsoil over a brown sandy silt ploughsoil over superficial geology composed of yellow-brown sandy clay.

5.2.14.2 LIA-ERB features: [120] and [122] were two linear cut features meeting at right angles close to the western end of the trench. [122] was aligned SW-NE, was at least 1m wide and 0.30m deep with a shallow curving profile and was filled with a mid grey-brown clay silt [121] with occasional charcoal and burnt daub flecks and many pottery sherds of LIA-ERB date. Feature [120] was much narrower, 0.40m wide, 0.14m deep and filled with light greyish brown clay silt [119] with occasional flecks of charcoal and burnt daub and occasional pot sherds of LIA-ERB date.

5.2.14.3 Medieval/post-medieval features: a spread or layer of ragstone [118] was recorded as covering much of the eastern end of the trench, being 7m E-W and at least 1.5m N-S and 0.10m thick. It was impossible to say if this was a modern dump or whether it was associated with the 17th century formal gardens. No finds were recovered.

5.2.15 *Trench 1700TT* (Fig 6)

5.2.15.1 Base West: 42.27m OD, East: 42.51m OD. Depth 0.40m. Topsoil over superficial geology composed of orange sandy clay. This was an additional trench and was only 15m in length.

5.2.15.2 A spread of ragstone designated [114] may possibly represent the base of wall foundations forming a corner and associated with an area of crushed brick fragments. Possible 17th garden features associated with Boys Hall Moat.

5.2.16 *Trench 1701TT* (Fig 6)

5.2.16.1 Base West: 41.98m OD, East: 41.97m OD. Depth 0.90m. Topsoil over 0.60m of mixed clay and silt over superficial geology composed of orange sandy clay.

5.2.16.2 A large cut feature [116], interpreted as a pond or moat, occupied most of the trench, terminating at its western end. The primary fill of the feature composed a stiff, dark grey clay [115] with occasional wood fragments. This was covered by a soft light brown organic silt with a number of tree trunks. The latter contained some modern material, including plastic. A ragstone foundation [117] aligned NNW-SSE ran along the western edge of the cut.

6 ARCHAEOLOGICAL DATASETS

6.1 Table 1: Events Dataset

EVENT_NAME:Boys Hall Road-Sevington Railhead
EVENT_CODE:ARC BHR 97
EVENT_TYPE:Evaluation
CONTRACTOR:Museum of London Archaeology Service
DATE:5/8/97-12/8/97
GRID: 82890/20970
PROJECT: CTRL
COUNTY:Kent
DISTRICT: Ashford
PARISH:
SMR:
SITE_TYPE:Grassland
PERIOD:Late Iron Age-Early Romano British; Medieval
METHOD:Mechanical removal of topsoil; hand excavation and recording of archaeological features.
PHASING:Late Iron Age to Early Romano British; Medieval
ENVIRON:4 samples: Med ditch fill: hawthorn; Med ditch and pit fills: charred cereal grains (wheat) and large legumes, possibly pea.
FINDS:LIA-ERB pottery, a few residual Saxon among Med sherds (1140-1350); roof tiles; bones of horse, cattle, pig; a few burnt flint.
GEOLOGY:Hythe Beds (sand and limestone), Atherfield Clay.
CONTEXT_NUM:46 + 16 trench sheets
THREAT:CTRL
SAMPLE:?
SUMMARY:16 trenches revealed concentrations of Late Iron Age features and medieval archaeology. Post-medieval features associated with the Boys Hall Moat site were also located.
ARCHIVE:
ACC_NUM:

6.2 Table 2: Archaeological Context Inventory

Key:
LIA-ERB Late Iron Age to Early Romano British
M Medieval
PM Post-Medieval

TRENCH	CONTEXT	TYPE	PERIOD	ASSOCIATION	COMMENTS
1698TT	100	Deposit		101	Fill of linear feature
1698TT	101	Cut			Linear feature
1698TT	102	Deposit		103	Fill of linear feature
1698TT	103	Cut			Linear feature
1698TT	104	Deposit	LIA-ERB	105	Ditch fill
1698TT	105	Cut			Ditch
1698TT	106	Deposit		107	Slot fill
1698TT	107	Cut			Slot
1698TT	108	Deposit		109	Channel fill
1698TT	109	Cut			Channel
1698TT	110	Deposit		111	Fill of linear feature
1698TT	111	Cut			Linear feature
1698TT	112	Deposit		113	Fill of linear feature
1698TT	113	Cut			Linear feature
3059TT	114	Wall			Possible wall foundation
1701TT	115	Deposit		116	Pond/moat fill
1701TT	116	Cut			Pond or moat
1701TT	117	Wall			Possible wall foundation
1699TT	118	Deposit			Rubble deposit
1699TT	119	Deposit	LIA-ERB	120	Fill of linear feature
1699TT	120	Cut			Linear feature
1699TT	121	Deposit	LIA-ERB	122	Ditch fill
1699TT	122	Cut			Ditch
1701TT	123	Deposit		16	Ditch fill
1687TT	124	Deposit		125	Ditch fill
1687TT	125	Cut			Ditch
1687TT	126	Deposit		127	Fill of linear feature
1687TT	127	Cut			Linear feature
1687TT	128	Deposit		129	Fill of linear feature
1687TT	129	Cut			Ditch
1687TT	130	Deposit	M	131	Ditch fill
1687TT	131	Cut			Ditch
1687TT	132	Deposit	M	133	Ditch fill
1687TT	133	Cut			Ditch
1687TT	134	Deposit		135	Pit fill
1687TT	135	Cut			Pit
1687TT	136	Deposit		137	Fill of linear feature
1687TT	137	Cut			Linear feature
1688TT	138	Fill	M	139	Secondary fill of ditch
1688TT	139	Cut			Ditch
1688TT	140	Deposit		139	Primary fill of ditch
1688TT	141	Deposit		142	Ditch fill
1688TT	142	Cut			Ditch
1688TT	143	Deposit			Deposit
1688TT	144	Deposit		145	Fill of linear feature
1688TT	145	Cut			Linear feature

SECTION 2: STATEMENT OF IMPORTANCE

7 CONCLUSIONS

7.1 Extent of archaeological deposits

7.1.1 Archaeological features were found in 6 of the 16 trenches; nearly all were cut features. They can be broadly divided into three groups:

- LIA-ERB features at the eastern end of the site
  Trenches 1698TT, 1699TT
- features possibly associated with the northern extremity of the Boys Hall Moat site
  Trenches 1699TT, 1700TT, 1701TT
- medieval features in the north-west corner of the site
  Trenches 1687TT, 1688TT

7.1.2 The remaining trenches contained no archaeological deposits.

7.2 Nature of archaeological deposits

7.2.1 Archaeological deposits within cut features were distinguishable from the natural sands and clays of the Hythe Beds and the Atherfield clay. Most features were heavily truncated at the top by ploughing and erosion. Generally the soil conditions allowed a moderate to poor degree of survival for bones and organic materials (see Appendices 3 and 5).

7.3 Character of the site

7.3.1 Features containing LIA-ERB material were located at the eastern end of the site. They were linear or slightly curvilinear in plan and may have been either slots or narrow ditches. The features were cut into sandy clay and were probably heavily truncated through ploughing and natural erosion.

7.3.2 Several features in the north-west corner of the site contained medieval artefacts. A concentration of linear features in this area, probably boundary and/or drainage ditches, may be evidence for several phases of a field system. The majority of features were aligned NNW-SSE, i.e. downslope.

7.3.3 Features were usually very shallow. It is likely that a great deal of downslope erosion has occurred with only the lowest part of most features surviving.

7.3.4 One much deeper feature [139] was aligned SSW-NNE in trench *1688TT.* This ditch also had a very distinctive stepped profile.

7.3.5 The large pond/moat feature [116] in trench *1701TT* contained some waterlain deposits but was mainly filled with fairly recent organic material. Areas of ragstone in trenches

1699TT, 1700TT and *1701TT* are likely to have been structural in nature rather than naturally occurring outcrops, but whether they can be associated with the 17th century formal gardens of Boys Hall Moat or not is uncertain.

7.4 Date of occupation

7.4.1 As there was hardly any stratigraphical superposition most of the archaeological features have been dated by ceramic artefacts (see Appendix 1). Other features which contained no dating evidence were provisionally dated by morphological and spatial associations and the characteristics of their fills. However, the small size of the assemblage and its undiagnostic nature only allowed the application of broadest period divisions. Three period ranges were provisionally identified:

7.4.2 LIA-ERB (Fig 3)
[101], [103], [105], [107], [109], [111] and [113] *1698TT*
[120] and [122] *1699TT*

7.4.3 Medieval (Fig 4)
[125], [127], [129], [131], [133], [135] and [137] *1687TT*
[139], [142] and [145] *1688TT*

7.4.4 Post-medieval (Fig 5)
[118] *1699TT*
[114] *1700TT*
[116] and [117] *1701TT*

8 IMPORTANCE OF THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL REMAINS

8.1 Survival and conditions

8.1.1 Topographical variations appear to have had a marked influence on archaeological survival. In broadest terms, survival was good in two areas: on the lower west facing slopes close to Boys Hall Road and at the eastern end of the site adjacent to the railway line.

8.1.2 Medieval features located in trenches *1687TT* and *1688TT* may have been protected by the accumulation of deposits derived from higher up the slope. The proximity of the present Boys Hall, built at the beginning of the 17th century, and its associated buildings, immediately to the east and to the north may also have contributed to the preservation of these earlier features. The two trenches appear to lie within the original grounds of the house and would therefore have been protected against most agricultural activity (such as ploughing).

8.1.3 Survival of Late Iron Age / Early Romano-British archaeology at the eastern end of the site may also be explained by the low lying nature of the ground with some accumulation of deposits over the archaeological features.

8.1.4 The central plateau containing trenches *1691TT-1697TT* was notable for an absence of archaeological features. In general, a thin layer of topsoil directly overlay the natural sands and ragstone outcrops of the Hythe Beds. Any archaeological features which may once have existed on this upper area may therefore have been completely eroded.

8.1.5 Some of this higher area was also affected by quarrying for Kentish Ragstone. Trenches *1689TT, 1695TT* and *3059TT* contained large areas of modern backfill.

8.1.6 The sherds were in a moderate condition although some sherds have abraded edges and surfaces. Both the hand collected and sieved bones were well preserved. It can be assumed, from the condition of the bones, that they suffered little to no disturbance following deposition. Plant remains were in a good condition within the cut features.

8.2 Period

8.2.1 Preliminary results indicate the presence of LIA-ERB activity at the eastern end of the site. This is consistent with the location of sites of a similar date excavated immediately to the south of the present evaluation area.

8.2.2 The presence of part of a medieval field system will be of importance in defining changes in land use patterns between the mid 12th century and the establishment of the current Boys Hall at the beginning of the 17th century.

8.2.3 The location of the possible north-east corner of the formal gardens associated with the site of Boys Hall Moat may be of limited significance. The gardens may be of late 16th or early 17th century date but survive in a well preserved and more extensive form to the south of the railway line.

8.3 Rarity

8.3.1 A number of sites of LIA-ERB date have been examined in the immediate vicinity. Two late Bronze Age-early Iron Age sites were found at Waterborne farm to the south of Boys Hall and a further Late Iron Age site lies immediately to the north-east of Boys Hall. South-east of Boys Hall two Late Iron Age sites were located in the vicinity of the Ashford freight terminal.

8.4 Fragility and vulnerability

8.4.1 Evaluation work has confirmed that archaeological features survive cut into natural geology overlain by topsoil. Any intrusive work undertaken in connection with the CTRL will be likely to damage features and deposits of archaeological interest.

8.5 Diversity

8.5.1 The features encountered range from ditches of LIA-ERB date to field systems and structural and occupational features associated with a medieval and post-medieval

moated site.

8.6 Documentation

8.6.1 There is no previous documentation relating directly to the site.

8.7 Group value

8.7.1 The concentration of LIA-ERB material may be associated with other similarly dated sites in the vicinity, especially those identified immediately to the south of the railway line (see 8.3.1 above).

8.8 Potential

8.8.1 Evaluation has shown that the area is likely to contain LIA to ERB features at its eastern end, possibly representing part of a settlement.

8.8.2 The north-west corner of the site contained part of a medieval field system. Further examination of this area may indicate the extent to which the field system survives.

8.8.3 It may be possible to define the original northern limits of the Boys Hall Moat site.

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APPENDIX 1

Pottery
By R. P. Symonds & Roy Stephenson with Louise Rayner

Introduction

The evaluation produced a total of 69 sherds (400g) of late Iron Age - early Romano-British, Saxon and medieval date. The sherds are in moderate condition; some sherds have abraded edges and surfaces. The average sherd weight is just under 6g. The eleven sherds recovered from the environmental samples are very small and fragmentary. The pottery was examined using a x20 binocular microscope and recorded using standard MoLAS codes on pro-forma sheets. Quantification of the assemblage was by sherd count and weight. Pottery was recorded from nine contexts.

Fabrics

The fabrics identified have been recorded in broad fabric types. The fabrics have been defined on the basis of their main inclusions, and were not divided into defined fabric types. The late Iron Age - early Romano-British fabric could not be considered 'Romanised'. The fabric type identified is a tradition of the pre-Roman period, which continued in use into the 1st century AD.

Fabric groups

Late Iron Age - early Romano-British

Grog-tempered fabric (GROG) 44 sherds, 296g

Saxon

Chaff tempered ware (CHAF) 1 sherd, 5g

Medieval

Ashford ware 11 sherds, 55g
Early medieval flint tempered ware (EMFL) 2 sherds, 7g
Early medieval sandy ware (EMS) 3 sherds, 3g
Kingston type ware (KING) 1 sherd, 13g
London type ware (LOND) 1 sherd, 10g
Sand and shell tempered ware (SSW) 5 sherds, 9g
Tyler Hill ware 1sherd, 5g

Forms

Within the late Iron Age - early Romano-British assemblage the only forms that can be identified are jars. In context [121] six vessels are present: one is a short necked jar with an everted rim, one has furrowed surface decoration and one has a rippled shoulder (Thompson type B2) with black paint or resin on the shoulder. No further forms could be identified from this assemblage.

The only medieval form to be identified among this assemblage is that of a Kingston ware cooking pot from context [138].

Chronology

The grog-tempered fabrics have been dated to the late Iron Age - early Romano-British period and form part of the ceramic tradition commonly described as 'Belgic' or 'Aylesford -Swarling ' type. The use of grog-tempered fabrics was established prior to the conquest in c.1st century BC and was widespread across the south-east of England. The rippled shoulder jar is a common form type of this tradition. The furrowed surface treatment is a regional style indicative of east Kent in the late Iron Age (Pollard 1988, 31).

The residual chaff tempered sherd is abraded, but its presence is important. The Medieval sherds are 12th-14th century, the sherds from [132] are assumed to be Ashford ware (Groves and Warhurst 1952), additionally the hard redware sherd from [138] is thought to a product of the Tyler Hill kiln. The other sherds are all commonly occurring types from London and the South-east.

General Comments

The fabrics identified in this assemblage are consistent with our current understanding of the pottery of Kent for these periods. The number of vessels identified in context [121] suggests occupation or activity in the nearby vicinity, but the assemblage is too small to elucidate further on the nature of this activity.

Assessment of potential and further work

Late Iron Age - The assemblage at present is of limited potential due to its small size, but serves as a useful find spot for further evidence of activity for this period. The recovery of further material would greatly enhance the potential and form a more useful assemblage. Further assemblages of this date are required to refine the chronologies of the fabrics and forms used.

Medieval pottery - The assemblage has no further potential beyond dating, although the presence of the chaff tempered sherd may be an indicator of Saxon activity on or near the site.

Table 3: Bulk dataset, pottery

TRENCH	CONTEXT	MATERIAL	COUNT	WEIGHT	COMMENTS
1698TT	104	POT	1	3	LIA-ERB
1699TT	119	POT	5	17	LIA-ERB
1699TT	121	POT	34	273	LIA-ERB
1678TT	124	POT	5	6	enviro. sample <2> (1mm Res.) LIA-ERB
1687TT	130	POT	3	9	1140-1220
1687TT	132	POT	11	55	1200-1300
1687TT	134	POT	5	3	enviro. sample 3 (1mm res.) Medieval
1688TT	138	POT	4	35	1230-1350; residual Saxon sherd
1688TT	140	POT	1	2	enviro. sample 4 (1mm res.) Medieval

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APPENDIX 2

Building materials
By Terence Paul Smith

Introduction

Building material from the site, nearly all of it in the form of fragments of plain roofing tile, came from just four contexts: [100], [106], [117], and [132]. In addition, context [100] also yielded two tiny fragments of unidentifiable ceramic material; they were *perhaps* fragments of plain tile, but it is impossible to be certain and they are not considered further below. From context [106] came a further small fragment, possibly of brick or daub (see below, section 3). All the material was examined at x10 magnification. The roofing tiles have been classified according to their fabrics, all of which are similar to established MoLAS fabric types; that is, to fabrics occurring within the London area.

Plain Roofing Tile

Fabrics

Fabric 1 (= MoLAS fabric 2271): various shades of red or orange-red, with a hard, well-fired, fine texture.
Fabric 2 (= MoLAS fabric 2276): similar to fabric 1, but distinguished by fine moulding sand on the lower face.
Fabric 3 (= MoLAS fabric 2586): orange-red in colour, with a fine clay matrix and a scatter of quartz inclusions.
Fabric 4 (= MoLAS fabric 3062): orange colour, with common quartz, cream pellets, red clay/iron oxide inclusions, and occasional flint inclusions.

Roofing tile fragments were recovered from contexts [100], [117], and [132]. Roofing tiles were used in parts of south-eastern England (at London and Canterbury, for example) from the late 12th century down to the modern period and remained essentially unchanged throughout their long history. They are therefore extremely difficult to date precisely. Fabric 2, however, with its distinctive fine moulding sand, is of the late 15th century or later. The piece from this site, context [117], preserved part of a round peg- or nail-hole. The small fragments from this site preserved no other diagnostic features. None was glazed. No full dimensions were preserved. It is possible that those at this site are local variants, made perhaps in north-west Kent, perhaps even closer to the Ashford area itself.

One small fragment from context [100] was completely overfired and its fabric therefore not certain; some inclusions within it, however, suggest that it may have been a further example of fabric 4; it was from this same context that the more definite example of fabric 4 came.

One small fragment from context [132], in fabric 1, had a slightly yellowish upper face; this, however, was not due to the application of slip, and was probably an accidental effect of firing.

One fragment from context [117], in fabric 3, had mortar on its lower face. This may be due to sealing of a tiled roof structure, although this was not necessary with this kind of roofing material and was only rarely done. The mortar may, therefore, indicate that the tile was used for some purpose other than roofing. From the Middle Ages onwards, roofing tiles have been much used for such alternative applications, whether whole or in a broken state - for example, in hearths, in foundations, as levelling courses in brickwork, or as the backing to joist-holes in brick walls.

Possible Brick Fragment

A small fragment (6 gm) of ceramic material from context [106] is of uncertain form. Its fabric is quite hard and dark, almost purplish red, with several dark spots, probably due to the burning of organic material included within the body. The piece may be an abraded fragment of brick or a fragment of daub, hardened by proximity to the heat of a fire, although it is not burned.

Assessment of Potential and Further Work

The material is all very fragmentary and of no great intrinsic interest. It does not warrant any further work.

Table 4 : Bulk dataset, building material

TRENCH	CONTEXT	MATERIAL	COUNT	WEIGHT	COMMENTS
1698TT	100	CERAMIC BUILDING MATERIAL	4	39	from fill of ditch
1698TT	106	CERAMIC BUILDING MATERIAL	1	6	from fill of slot
1701TT	117	CERAMIC BUILDING MATERIAL	4	118	from rubble layer
1687TT	132	CERAMIC BUILDING MATERIAL	3	29	from ditch fill; pottery: AD 1200-1300
1698TT	100	POSSIBLE CERAMIC BUILDING MATERIAL	2	12	small fragments - perhaps peg tile

APPENDIX 3

Animal bones
By Kevin Rielly, with Alan Pipe

Introduction

This report discusses the animal bones from Boys Hall Road (ARC BHR97).

The potential value of the recovered assemblage in terms of the information which could be available with further excavation, was calculated by recording certain key features. These included, for each context, the quantity and condition of the bones, the range of species and skeletal parts, the incidence of bones with butchery marks and those which can be aged and/or measured. Where identification to species was not possible, the bones were assigned to an approximate size group.

Hand recovery was augmented by an extensive sampling programme. The bones recovered by this method were separated from the residues obtained by washing the samples through a 1mm mesh using a Siraf tank.

Results

Both the hand collected and sieved bones were well preserved. However there was a clear difference in the levels of fragmentation between the bones recovered by these two methods. The majority of the hand collected bones were only minimally fragmented, all greater than 30mm in length and the identifiable bones ranging from 25-50% complete. In contrast the sieved collections consisted essentially of very small fragments, the great majority less than 25% complete and all 10mm or smaller in length.

Seven bones (0.252kg) were recovered by hand from four contexts and a further nineteen bones (0.008kg) from two samples. Five out of six of these contexts are ditchfills, the other, [143], represents an indeterminate deposit. These contexts were divided between just two trenches; *1678TT* and *1688TT* (see table). It would appear that the bones in these trenches can be given a general medieval date, as suggested by the dating evidence found in associated levels, as well as the dateable materials found in two of these contexts; [132] and, especially [130], which produced pottery with a date range of 1140 to 1220 AD.

The hand recovered collections produced cattle, horse and pig bones, as well as a few unidentifiable fragments, all of which can be assigned to cattle-size (see table). Pig was also identified amongst the sieved collection; this species represented by just one bone. Otherwise the sieved bones consisted of unidentifiable fragments, mostly sheep-size, with a few cattle-size and a single rat-size fragment.

Cattle is represented by a radius belonging to a juvenile individual, and horse by two radii (one complete and one half complete) and a mandible, all from adult individuals. The two pig bones, a

femur fragment and a tooth (the latter bone from the sieve), may be from immature animals. Most of the cattle-size bones are longbone pieces, with the exception of a vertebrae from [143].

Epiphyseal ends are limited to the horse radii. Both of these bones can be accurately aged and measured. None of the bones found at this site provided butchery evidence.

Conclusions

The bone assemblages found within these two trenches are well preserved and apparently well dated. It can be assumed, from the condition of the bones, that they suffered little to no disturbance following deposition. The absence of similar preservation conditions may account for the lack of bones within the other trenches excavated. A case could certainly be made, regarding the collection of bone data, for concentrating any further excavation in the general area of these two trenches.

The bones clearly represent a rather loose scatter of general refuse, including both food and non-food remains. Further excavation in this area may reveal similar bone scatters. The absence of any concentrated bone dumps highlights the major limitation of the assemblage i.e. the very small quantity of bones recovered, or which may potentially be recovered. The information potentially available from such assemblages (extrapolating from the present assemblage) is likely to be limited to a list of the species used, a rough indication of how they were used (from the ageing evidence) and a small amount of data concerning the stature of these animals.

Table 5: Bulk dataset, animal bones

TRENCH	CONTEXT	MATERIAL	COUNT	WEIGHT	COMMENTS
1687TT	124	BONE	9	7	S.No.2.pig+uniden
1687TT	130	BONE	2	118	horse
1687TT	132	BONE	1	8	uniden
1688TT	140	BONE	10	1	S.No.4. uniden
1688TT	141	BONE	2	80	horse+?pig
1688TT	143	BONE	2	48	cattle+uniden

APPENDIX 4

Flint
By Jonathan Cotton

The flint assemblage

The entire assemblage consists of four flints from *1687TT* which are burnt and unworked. They may have originated from a cooking pit.

Table 6: Bulk dataset, flint

TRENCH	CONTEXT	MATERIAL	COUNT	WEIGHT	COMMENTS
1687TT	124	FLINT	1	8	Burnt
1687TT	130	FLINT	3	24	Burnt

APPENDIX 5

PLANT REMAINS

By Anne Davis

Introduction

Four environmental soil samples were collected, from a moat or pond [123] <1>, from ditches [124] <2>, and [140] <4>, and one from the fill of a small pit [134] <3>. The samples were all between eight and 20 litres in volume. Fill [123] is thought to be post-medieval in date and the other three features, while not producing any dating evidence, are thought to be medieval because of their association with other features of this period in the same area.

The samples were assessed to evaluate the abundance, diversity, and quality of preservation of any surviving plant remains.

Methods

The samples were processed in a flotation machine, using sieve sizes of 0.25mm and 1.00mm to recover the flot and residue respectively. The residues were dried and sorted by eye for biological and artefactual remains.

Flots were scanned using a low-powered binocular microscope, and the abundance, diversity and modes of preservation of all organic remains were recorded. A summary of the results is shown in Table 7 below.

Results

Post-medieval pond/moat fill [123] 1701TT, sample<1>: Many unidentifiable stems, twigs, bark, and fragments of other plant tissue were present in the flot, as well as a number of hawthorn (*Crataegus* sp.) stones and weed seeds.

Medieval ditchfill [124] 1687TT, sample <2>: Modern rootlets were quite abundant, suggesting that the uncharred weed seeds may also be recent in origin. Charred remains included a moderate number of cereal grains, most of them wheat (*Triticum* sp.), and a large leguminous seed, possibly a pea (*Pisum sativum*).

Medieval pitfill [134] 1687TT, sample <3>: Modern rootlets were again abundant. A moderate number of charred cereal grains were present, as were several large legumes, similar to that in the previous sample.

Medieval ditchfill [140] 1688TT. sample<4>: The flot from this sample was very small, and contained no significant plant or animal remains.

Statement of potential

The charred cereals, and probably also the legumes, found in samples <2> and <3> represent waste from food plants used locally to feed people or livestock, and so give some insight into the diet and economy of the settlement using these features. The plant assemblages are not very large however, and the interpretative potential of these two samples alone is low. If further excavation and sampling were to take place however, a more useful picture of medieval plant use could be formed, in an area where little previous archaeobotanical work has been done.

The plant assemblage from post-medieval fill [123] of pond or moat [116] contained only remains of wild plants, and probably represented mainly the vegetation growing in the immediate vicinity of the ditch. Analysis of this sample alone would provide little useful information, although the reasonably good "waterlogged" preservation seen here could indicate that it is worth sampling any further cut features excavated in the area, providing they are well sealed, and the possibility of modern contamination can be excluded.

Recommendations

The charred plant remains from [124] and 134] should be analysed, as the information provided will add to the scarce archaeobotanical records of medieval plant use in this area.

Any further excavations in the area of this site should involve sampling for environmental material, and the samples should ideally be 30-50 litres.

Table 7: Environmental dataset, plant remains

TRENCH	CONTEXT	SAMPLE	METHOD	SUMMARY	COMMENTS
1701TT	123	1	flotation (0.25mm sieve)	waterlogged seeds++; stems etc.+++	limited potential for nature of local enviro.
1687TT	124	2	flotation (0.25mm sieve)	rootlets++, waterlogged seeds ++, charred grain ++, charred seeds +, charcoal +++.	charred grain and seeds of moderate potential.
1687TT	134	3	flotation (0.25mm sieve)	rootlets+++, waterlogged seeds +, charred grain ++, charred seeds ++, charcoal ++	charred grain and seeds of moderate potential.
1688TT	140	4	flotation (0.25mm sieve)	charcoal +	no botanical potential.

Kent SMR Record Sheet

Site Name: Boys Hall Road, Sevington Railhead **Site code:** ARC BHR 97		
Summary: An evaluation of 16 trenches, commissioned by Union Railways Limited, was carried out by the Museum of London Archaeology Service, in August 1997, north-west of Ashford, Kent. Archaeological features were present in 6 evaluation trenches.		
District: Ashford	**Parish:** Sevington CP	
Period(s): **1.** Late Iron Age to Early Romano British **2.** Medieval **3.** Post-medieval		
NGR Easting 602900	**NGR Northing** 141000	
Type of Recording: **Evaluation** **(Delete)** ~~**Excavation**~~	~~**Watching Brief**~~ ~~**Geophysical Survey**~~	~~**Field Walking**~~ ~~**Measured Survey**~~
Date of Recording: (From) 05/08/1997	**(To)** 12/08/1997	
Unit Undertaking Recording: MoLAS Museum of London Archaeology Service, Walker House, 87 Queen Victoria Street, London EC4V 4AB		
1.1.1 **Summary of Field Results:** The natural geology of the site consisted of green tinged sand, (glaucanite sand) and sandy limestone (Kentish rag), which comprise part of the Hythe Beds. At the eastern end of the site, stiff sandy clay over firm clay is probably part of the Atherfield Beds. The ground surface varied between 42.50m and 49.20m OD. The evaluation revealed concentrations of Late Iron Age ditches, Medieval ditches and a small pit. A large ditch or pond was probably associated with the Post-medieval Boys Hall Moat site.		
Location of Archive/Finds:	URL archive at Aylesford	

Bibliography:	Evaluation Report.	
Summary Compiler:	Phil Treveil/Friederike Hammer	**Date:** 8/1/1998