

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

Project Area 440

**WEST OF BLIND LANE, SEVINGTON, KENT
ARC BLN 98**

**DETAILED ARCHAEOLOGICAL WORKS
INTERIM REPORT
FINAL**

Contract S/400/SP/0009 P484A

**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:	

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**Oxford Archaeological Unit
Janus House
Osney Mead
Oxford OX2 0ES
13th September 1999**

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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Location and specification

1.1.1 The Oxford Archaeological Unit (OAU) was commissioned by Union Railways (South) Limited (URS) to undertake detailed archaeological investigation to the West of Blind Lane, Sevington, Kent. This work formed part of an extensive programme of archaeological investigation carried out in advance of the construction of the CTRL. The site is centred on URL grid point 84050 20100 and NGR grid point TR 04045 40101. The total area of the site was about two hectares: one hectare was detailed excavation and the other hectare comprised two areas of strip map and sample investigation.

1.1.2 The site lies within the parish of Sevington to the west of Blind Lane and is situated immediately north of the present Ashford to Folkestone railway (Figure 1). The fieldwork took place between 11th January and 5th March 1999.

1.2 Geology and Topography

1.2.1 Blind Lane is situated at 41m above OD and the site rises to the west to a maximum of 51m above OD. The site is situated on Atherfield Clay which to the north is overlain by silts and sand of the Hythe Beds.

1.3 Background

1.3.1 Little was known about the archaeology of the site prior to the *Channel Tunnel Rail Link: Assessment of Historical and Cultural Effect* (URL 1994). However, a dense scatter of Iron Age and Romano-British pottery and prehistoric flintwork is recorded c.300m north of the site. This potential settlement site is situated on the margins of an extensive cropmark complex of ring ditches, enclosures and field boundaries.

1.3.2 A CTRL surface collection survey recovered a scatter of Prehistoric, Roman and Medieval finds.

1.3.3 A CTRL evaluation by the Museum of London Archaeology Service (MoLAS) revealed a series of curvilinear ditches of middle- late Bronze Age date that were interpreted as two possible Bronze Age enclosures and an associated field system. Pottery from the evaluation included a Deverel-Rimbury urn from one of the ditches, dating from the 2nd millennium BC (*West of Blind Lane ARC BLN 97. An Archaeological Evaluation*. Report prepared by MoLAS for Union Railways Limited, January 1998).

2 SUMMARY OF RESULTS

2.1 Site Summary

2.1.1 There is no evidence for occupation of any date on the site. The finds and features discovered are consistent with agricultural land-use on the periphery of settlement. Periods represented include the mid-late Bronze Age (c.1750 BC – 1150 BC), and the late Iron age and early Romano-British period (c.100 BC – 200 AD).

2.1.2 The excavation area exposed at least 16 ditches, five gullies, three postholes and two undated charcoal-filled pits. A Deverel-Rimbury bucket urn recovered during

the evaluation from one of a pair of parallel ditches, indicates that this possible trackway is middle - late Bronze Age in date *c.*1750 BC – 1150 BC. One of these ditches had been recut.

- 2.1.3 Pottery from the remaining ditches was sparse. A late Iron Age or early Romano-British date (*c.*100 BC – 200 AD) is indicated for eight of the ditches and two smashed vessels were found in adjacent cuts forming part of a single Romano-British boundary. One of the vessels was a fragmented handled jar dated to *c.*50 – 200 AD. Some intercutting and recutting of the ditches suggests that there are three phases to the late Iron Age/early Romano-British boundary system, but it probably represents a relatively short-lived period of activity.
- 2.1.4 A large natural depression in the centre of the excavation area contained a thin deposit of waterlain sand and clay, which was overlain by colluvial deposits. The areas adjacent to the depression included areas of erosion which produced late Iron Age/early Romano-British pottery as well as struck flint.
- 2.1.5 The remaining ditches represent elements of the medieval/ post-medieval field system (*c.*1500 AD – present).

2.2 Periods Represented

- 2.2.1 Periods represented include the mid-late Bronze Age (*c.*1750 BC – 1150 BC), the late Iron Age and early Romano-British period (*c.*100 BC – 200 AD) and the post-medieval period (*c.*1500 AD – present).

2.3 Feature Types

- 2.3.1 The features on the site were predominantly ditches with very few discrete features.

2.4 Artefactual Remains

- 2.4.1 A total of 426 pottery sherds was recovered during the excavation, 218 of which derive from two early Romano-British vessels (*c.*50 – 200 AD). Apart from these two vessels, which were found in adjacent cuts forming part of a single Romano-British boundary, there were few diagnostic sherds. The evaluation produced 127 sherds, mostly from a single Bronze Age vessel.
- 2.4.2 A total of 111 pieces of struck flint and five pieces of burnt flint were recovered. The majority of the flint was found in the topsoil, on the stripped surface or within colluvial deposits and erosional features.
- 2.4.3 A small assemblage of poorly preserved animal bone was recovered from the site.
- 2.4.4 Two metal artefacts were recovered, including a copper alloy brooch of late Iron Age date, and a copper alloy pin, as yet undated.

2.5 Palaeo-environmental and Economic Evidence

- 2.5.1 The evaluation results suggested that the environmental potential of the site was very poor. Nevertheless, a small number of representative samples were recovered from a range of features, for comparative purposes. Eight samples were taken from the middle – late Bronze Age ditches, one of the late Iron Age/early Romano-British ditches, a posthole, and an undated charcoal-filled pit.

3 FIELDWORK EVENT AIMS

3.1 The aims of the fieldwork event were as follows:

- to determine the morphology and function of the supposed Bronze Age settlement, including any adjacent enclosures and trackways, etc.
- to determine the economic basis for the site.
- to recover pottery assemblages for assessment and analysis.
- to recover environmental and other economic indicators if found to be present.

3.2 The aims were formulated in the light of the evaluation results, which strongly suggested the presence of a mid-late Bronze Age settlement on the site (*c.*1750 – 1150 BC). This conclusion was based primarily on the discovery of a complete Deverel-Rimbury bucket urn and a small number of other Bronze Age sherds, associated with a series of ditches.

3.3 Contrary to expectations the excavation has revealed a low density of features, mainly comprising linear field boundary and trackway ditches. Two of the parallel ditches, one of which produced the bucket urn, probably form a middle - late Bronze Age trackway, but there is otherwise little to suggest Bronze Age settlement activity. Several of the ditches thought to be of Bronze Age date have proved on further investigation to be late Iron Age or early Romano-British field boundaries (*c.*100 BC – 200 AD).

3.4 By chance the evaluation located the majority of the features on the site, including the isolated middle Bronze Age pottery deposit. Such deposits are not uncommon, and can be paralleled elsewhere on the CTRL at Chapel Mill, where a single pit containing a mid-late Bronze Age vessel was found in isolation from any contemporary settlement evidence.

4 SUMMARY OF POTENTIAL

4.1 The mid-late Bronze Age activity (*c.*1750 – 1150 BC) lies within the ‘farming communities’ period (*c.*2000-100BC), as defined by the CTRL research strategy. The site has some potential to address research aims relating to spatial organisation and routeways in the landscape.

4.2 The isolated Bronze Age pottery deposit is of particular interest as it may reflect a widespread practise of deliberate deposition, ritual or otherwise. The Deverel-Rimbury pottery deposit may be compared directly with the Bronze Age vessel recovered from a pit at Chapel Mill. The common characteristics and variations between such deposits will need to be identified, and parallels sought from elsewhere. Further study is needed to determine whether such deposits characteristically occur away from settlement sites or whether similiar examples can be identified at known late Bronze Age settlements such as White Horse Stone or the Maidstone M20 Motorway Service Area site, adjacent to South of Snarkhurst Wood.

4.3 The late Iron Age/early Romano-British activity lies within the period ‘towns and their rural landscapes’ (sub-period 100 BC- 410 AD). Considered in isolation from

associated settlement evidence the features have little intrinsic interest. However, within the context of a wider study of agricultural activity in the Wealden Greensand landscape zone, the site has some group value.

- 4.4 It seems likely that the activity identified at West of Blind Lane could be associated with a dense scatter of Iron Age and Romano-British pottery and prehistoric flintwork, located *c.*300m north of the site. This potential settlement site is situated on the margins of an extensive cropmark complex of ring ditches, enclosures and field boundaries (URL 1994, *Channel Tunnel Rail Link: Assessment of Historical and Cultural Effects*). This might suggest that later prehistoric and Romano-British farming communities in this area favoured the zone immediately to the north of the rail link route for settlement sites, situated on the better drained geology of the Hythe Beds. The archaeological features identified during the current excavation could therefore define routes and field systems which extended from the favoured settlement zone, southwards into the valley of the East Stour River.

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	298		
A1 plans	20		
A4 plans	2		
A1 sections	1		
A4 sections	80		
Small finds	20		
Films (monochrome) S=slide; PR=print	10		
Films (Colour) S=slide; PR=print	10		
Flint (boxes)	1 size 3	124	W,M
Pottery (boxes)	1 size 2	430	W,M
Fired clay (boxes)	1 size 2	22	W,M
CBM (boxes)			
Stone (boxes)	see Misc.	7	W,M
Metalwork (boxes)	1 plastic size 4	3	W,M
Glass (boxes)	see Misc.	1	P
Slag (boxes)	see misc.	1	P
Human Bone (boxes)			
Animal Bone (boxes)	see Misc.	133	W,M
Misc.	1 size 2		
Soil Samples (No.)	8		see below
Soil Samples (bags/tubs)	25		UP
Soil Samples (Monolith/kubiena tin)			

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

West of Blind Lane, Sevington, Kent (NGR TR 04045 40101)

The Oxford Archaeological Unit (OAU) was commissioned by Union Railways (South) Limited (URS) to undertake detailed archaeological investigation at West of Blind Lane Sevington, Kent. This work formed part of an extensive programme of archaeological investigation carried out in advance of the construction of the CTRL.

The excavation area exposed at least 16 ditches, five gullies, three postholes and two undated charcoal-filled pits. A Deverel-Rimbury bucket urn recovered during the evaluation from one of a pair of parallel ditches, indicates that this possible trackway is middle - late Bronze Age in date *c.* 1750 BC – 1150 BC. One of these ditches had been recut.

Pottery from the remaining ditches was sparse. A late Iron Age or early Romano-British date (*c.* 100 BC – 200 AD) is indicated for eight of the ditches and two smashed vessels were found in adjacent cuts forming part of a single Romano-British boundary. One of the vessels was a fragmented handled jar dated to *c.* 50 – 200 AD. Some intercutting and recutting of the ditches suggests that there are three phases to the late Iron Age/ early Romano-British activity, but it probably represents a relatively short-lived period of activity.

A large natural depression in the centre of the excavation area contained a thin deposit of waterlain sand and clay, which was overlain by colluvial deposits. The areas adjacent to the depression revealed areas of erosion, which produced late Iron Age/early Romano-British pottery as well as prehistoric struck flint.

A total of 426 pottery sherds were recovered from the site (in addition to the 127 sherds of mainly Bronze Age pottery recovered during the evaluation). 218 of these represent two fragmented early Romano-British vessels. There were few diagnostic sherds apart from the two vessels. A total of 111 pieces of struck flint and five pieces of burnt flint were recovered. The majority of the flints were recovered from topsoil, colluvial deposits or erosional features. A small assemblage of poorly preserved bone was recovered from the site.

Two metal artefacts were recovered, including a copper alloy late Iron Age brooch and a copper alloy pin.

The site is situated *c.* 300 m south of a dense surface concentration of pottery and flintwork, and an extensive cropmark complex of ring ditches, enclosures and field boundaries, which probably include a later prehistoric and Roman settlement focus. This suggests that later prehistoric and early Romano-British farming communities in this area may have favoured the better-drained geology of the Hythe Beds for settlement sites, rather than the heavy Atherfield Clay.

APPENDIX 3

SMR SHEET

Site Name: West of Blind Lane, Sevington, Kent	
Summary: The excavation revealed a pair of middle – late Bronze Age parallel ditches, which probably form a trackway. Also present was evidence of late Iron Age/ early Romano-British activity (boundary ditches) as well as medieval and post-medieval ditches.	
District: Ashford	Parish: Sevington
Period(s): 1. Middle – late Bronze Age 2. Late Iron Age/ early Romano-British 3. Medieval	
NGR Easting: TR 04045	NGR Northing: 40101
Type of Recording: Evaluation (Delete) Excavation	Watching – Brief Field Walking Geophysical Survey Measured Survey
Date of Recording: (From) 11/01/99	(To) 05/03/99
Unit Undertaking Recording: Oxford Archaeological Unit	
Summary of Fieldwork Results: The Oxford Archaeological Unit (OAU) was commissioned by Union Railways (South) Limited (URS) to undertake detailed archaeological investigation west of Blind Lane Sevington, Kent. This work formed part of an extensive programme of archaeological investigation carried out in advance of the construction of the CTRL. The excavation area exposed at least 16 ditches, five gullies, three postholes and two undated charcoal-filled pits. A Deverel-Rimbury bucket urn recovered during the evaluation from one of a pair of parallel ditches, indicates that this possible trackway is middle - late Bronze Age in date <i>c.</i> 1750 BC – 1150 BC. One of these ditches had been recut. Pottery from the remaining ditches was sparse. A late Iron Age or early Romano-British date (<i>c.</i> 100 BC – 200 AD) is indicated for eight of the ditches and two smashed vessels were found in adjacent cuts forming part of a single Romano-British boundary. One of the vessels was a fragmented handled jar dated to <i>c.</i> 50 – 200 AD. Some intercutting and recutting of the ditches suggests there are three phases to the late Iron Age/early Roman activity, but it probably represents a relatively short-lived period of activity. A large natural depression in the centre of the excavation area contained a thin deposit of waterlain sand and clay, which was overlain by colluvial deposits. The areas adjacent to the depression revealed areas of erosion, which produced late Iron Age/early Roman pottery as well as struck flint.	

(Summary of Fieldwork Results Cont.)

The site is situated *c.* 300 m south of a dense surface concentration of pottery and flintwork, and an extensive cropmark complex of ring ditches, enclosures and field boundaries, which probably include a later prehistoric and Roman settlement focus. This suggests that later prehistoric and early Romano-British farming communities in this area may have favoured the better-drained geology of the Hythe Beds for settlement sites, rather than the heavy Atherfield Clay.

A total of 426 pottery sherds were recovered from the site. 218 of these represent two fragmented early Roman vessels (*c.* 50 – 200 AD). There were few diagnostic sherds apart from the two vessels. A total of 111 pieces of struck flint and five pieces of burnt flint were recovered. The majority of the flints were recovered from topsoil, colluvial deposits or erosional features. A small assemblage of poorly preserved bone was recovered from the site.

Two metal artefacts were recovered, including a copper alloy late Iron Age brooch and a copper alloy pin.

Location of Archive / Finds:**Bibliography:****Summary Compiler:** Andrew Parkinson**Date:** 30/7/99