

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

Project Area 420

**CHAPEL MILL, LENHAM, KENT
ARC CML 99**

**STRIP, MAP AND SAMPLE ARCHAEOLOGICAL WORKS
INTERIM REPORT
FINAL**

Contract S/400/SP/0009 P482A

**Oxford Archaeological Unit
13th September 1999**

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Prepared By: Date:	
Checked By: Date:	
Approved By: Position: Date:	

Contract S/400/SP/0008 P482A

**Oxford Archaeological Unit
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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 Chapel Mill, south-east of Lenham, Kent. This work formed part of an extensive programme of archaeological investigation carried out in advance of the construction of the CTRL.
- 1.1.2 The site, which is centred on URL grid point 70400 30000 and NGR grid point TQ 90395 50001, was specified as strip, map and sample investigation and was *c.*0.95 hectares in extent.

1.2 Geology and Topography

- 1.2.1 The site lies on Folkestone Beds, close to the foot of the North Downs escarpment. The land lies at *c.*102 m OD and slopes gently downwards to the west. The M20 motorway lies immediately to the south.
- 1.2.2 At the time of the excavation the land was in use as pasture, although the excavation area showed clear indications of past ploughing, with variable degrees of plough-truncation.

1.3 Background

- 1.3.1 A number of archaeological cropmarks and findspots were known within 600 m of the site prior to the CTRL Environmental Assessment. They include a series of possibly prehistoric cropmarks recorded *c.*600 m north of the site, finds of late Iron metalwork, including a *La Tene* brooch and late Iron Age and Roman coins, found *c.*200 m east of Chapel Farm Cottages. Iron Age coins were found in 1781 *c.*500 m east of the site.
- 1.3.2 The site of the medieval and post-medieval Royton Chapel is located 150 m east of the eponymous Chapel Mill.
- 1.3.3 A geophysical survey carried out in advance of the CTRL, in a transect 700 m long and 40 m wide, produced a low level of magnetic response, except in an area at the west end of the transect, thought to have been disturbed by M20 construction works.
- 1.3.4 An archaeological evaluation of the site uncovered a small number of features, including a single pit containing a substantial amount of later prehistoric pottery from a simple tub-shaped vessel, dated to the late Bronze Age (*c.*1750 – 900 BC). Two ditches were also identified, one of which produced a small amount of mid-late Iron Age pottery and some residual Bronze Age material.

2 SUMMARY OF RESULTS

2.1 Site Summary

2.1.1 Few features were discovered apart from those identified by the evaluation. There was no indication of human occupation activity at any period. Two cremations, dated on the basis of a small amount of pottery to the Iron Age, were discovered in the same area as a Bronze Age pit identified by the evaluation. Two parallel, linear boundary ditches, on a north-east to south-west alignment, are also thought to be of later prehistoric (probably late Iron Age) date, on the basis of a small amount of pottery from one of the ditches.

2.1.2 A series of four parallel ditches are thought to be of post-medieval or modern date as they coincide with modern field boundaries crossing the site. The only material recovered from the sections excavated comprised a small amount of Iron Age pottery from the easternmost ditch, which must be residual.

2.2 Periods Represented

2.2.1 Features of later prehistoric (Bronze Age and Iron Age) and post-medieval date were discovered.

Late Bronze Age (c.1750 - 900 BC)

2.2.2 The pottery recovered from a pit (21) during the evaluation is of late Bronze Age date.

Late Iron Age (c.200 BC – 43 AD)

2.2.3 A small amount of pottery, from the two cremations and two boundary ditches, dates from the late Iron Age. Similar material was recovered from the boundary ditches during the evaluation.

Post-medieval/ modern (c.1500 – present)

2.2.4 The post-medieval features, which produced only residual prehistoric material, are dated on the basis of their alignment with modern field boundaries.

2.3 Feature Types

2.3.1 The later prehistoric features include a late Bronze Age pit, two unaccompanied late Iron Age cremations contained in shallow pits, and two late Iron Age boundary ditches (one of which was recut on the same alignment). Post-medieval features included only field boundaries.

2.4 Artefactual Remains

2.4.1 Artefacts recovered from *in situ* archaeological deposits were limited to small assemblages of later prehistoric pottery (63 sherds from the excavation, 47 from the evaluation) and worked flint (43 pieces in total).

2.4.2 The pottery recovered during the evaluation included 24 sherds of late Bronze Age date, probably deriving from a single tub-shaped vessel with affinities with either the Deverel-Rimbury or post-Deverel-Rimbury (Plain Ware) pottery traditions. Three other Bronze Age sherds were residual in later contexts. No further stratified Bronze Age material was found during the strip, map and sample excavation.

- 2.4.3 A small assemblage of late Iron Age pottery was recovered, the largest stratified group (27 sherds) being recovered from a boundary ditch during the evaluation. The material was generally heavily abraded and fragmentary. The two cremations appear to have been unaccompanied, but a sherd of probable late Iron Age date was recovered from one of them.

2.5 Palaeo-environmental and Economic Evidence

- 2.5.1 Deposits sampled during the evaluation included the Bronze Age pit and Iron Age boundary ditches. The only additional samples recovered during the strip, map and sample were the late Iron Age cremations, which were collected for wet-sieving in their entirety. The evaluation showed the density of charred remains in the prehistoric features to be low.

3 FIELDWORK EVENT AIMS

- 3.1 The aims of the excavation were as follows:
- To determine whether the late Bronze Age and Iron Age remains respectively were associated with other contemporary features and form part of a settlement.
 - To recover environmental and other economic indicators if present.
- 3.2 The investigation has established that neither the late Bronze Age nor the Iron Age activity are likely to have formed part of a settlement site, although the presence of field boundaries and cremations suggests that a settlement was probably located in the vicinity in the late Iron Age. The Bronze Age pit and the Iron Age cremations are nevertheless examples of ‘off-site’ activity with considerable potential group value, when considered alongside other feature groups of similar date and type, from the CTRL route and elsewhere in the region.
- 3.3 With regard to the late Bronze Age pit, isolated finds of this date and type, often comprising a single pottery vessel placed in a ditch or pit, have been found on other recent CTRL excavations and elsewhere, with no evidence for occupation in the immediate vicinity. The general characteristics and distribution of these apparently isolated deposits should be studied, and further parallels sought, in an attempt to identify their function. The occurrence of such deposits on known settlement sites of the period, such as White Horse Stone, may shed light on the issue.
- 3.4 Environmental samples have been recovered from the full range of archaeological features present. Although the evaluation results suggest that the charred remains from the Bronze Age pit deposit are of little intrinsic interest, any material recovered may help to establish the function or common characteristics of such deposits
- 3.5 Study of the content of the cremation deposits will be important for comparison and contrast with other Iron Age and Roman burial sites in the region, in terms of variation in burial practise through the Iron Age and Roman periods, and differences between rural and urban burial practises.
- 3.6 Within the framework of the research strategy, the Bronze Age pit and Iron Age cremations are relevant to studies of ‘ritual and ceremonial use of the landscape’ in the periods ‘farming communities’ (2000 BC – 100 BC) and ‘towns and their rural landscapes’ (sub-period 1, 100BC – 410 AD). The site falls within the Wealden

Greensand landscape zone, but such isolated features are unlikely to provide much useful information at this level of analysis.

- 3.7 The Iron Age field boundaries have little group value and are unlikely to provide useful information in isolation from directly associated settlement evidence.

4 SUMMARY OF POTENTIAL

- 4.1 The number and density of significant archaeological deposits is very low and the site, seen in isolation, is of little intrinsic interest. However, the late Bronze Age pit and the Iron Age cremations have some group value within the CTRL research framework as examples of particular site types.
- 4.2 The Bronze Age pit may be compared directly with the Deverel-Rimbury vessel recovered from a ditch at West of Blind Lane. Further study is needed to determine whether such deposits characteristically occur away from settlement sites or whether similar examples can be identified at known late Bronze Age settlement sites such as White Horse Stone or the Maidstone M20 Motorway Service Area site.
- 4.3 The two Iron Age cremations are directly comparable with other dispersed or isolated groups of cremations on the periphery of late Iron Age rural settlements, such as those at Boys Hall Balancing Pond and South of Snarkhurst Wood. They also provide an interesting comparison for earlier Iron Age and Roman rural burial practises, as seen at White Horse Stone and Thurnham Roman Villa respectively, and concentrated urban burial sites of the Roman period, such as the Pepper Hill cemetery.

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	50		
A1 plans	2		
A4 plans	10		
A1 sections	0		
A4 sections	13		
Small finds	34		
Films (monochrome) S=slide; PR=print	3		
Films (Colour) S=slide; PR=print	3		
Flint (boxes)	1 size 4	39	W,M
Pottery (boxes)	1 size 4	63	W,M
Fired clay (boxes)	see Misc. finds		W,M
CBM (boxes)	see Misc. finds		W,M
Stone (boxes)	0		
Metalwork (boxes)	see Misc. finds		P
Glass (boxes)	0		
Slag (boxes)	0		
Human Bone (boxes)	0		
Animal Bone (boxes)	see Misc. finds		
Misc.	1 size 3	108	P
Soil Samples (No.)	29		see below
Soil Samples (bags/tubs)	94		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

Chapel Mill, Lenham, Kent (NGR TQ 90395 50001)

OAU was commissioned by Union Railways (South) Limited (URS) to undertake an archaeological investigation at the site of Chapel Mill, Lenham, 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 70400E 30000N and NGR grid point TQ 90395 50001. The site, which was specified as strip, map and sample and was *c.*0.95 hectares in extent, was excavated between 29th March and 21st April 1999.

An archaeological evaluation of the site uncovered a small number of features, including a single pit containing a substantial amount of later prehistoric pottery, from a simple tub-shaped vessel dated to the late Bronze Age (*c.*1750 – 900 BC). Two ditches were also identified, one of which produced a small amount of mid-late Iron Age pottery and some residual Bronze Age material.

The strip, map and sample excavation identified few new features apart from those identified by the evaluation. There was no indication for human settlement on the site at any period. Two cremations, dated on the basis of a small amount of pottery to the Iron Age, were discovered in the same area as a Bronze Age pit discovered during the evaluation. Two parallel, linear boundary ditches, on a north-east to south-west alignment, are also thought to be of later prehistoric (probably late Iron Age) date, on the basis of a small amount of pottery from one of the ditches.

A series of four parallel ditches are thought to be of post-medieval or modern date as they coincide with modern field boundaries crossing the site. The only material recovered from the sections excavated comprised a small amount of Iron Age pottery from the easternmost ditch, which must be residual.

APPENDIX 3

SMR SHEET

Site Name: Chapel Mill, Lenham, Kent	
Summary: The site has produced a small number of isolated features, including a pit containing a later Bronze Age vessel (found during the evaluation) and two unaccompanied cremations, one of which produced a small amount of late Iron Age or Roman pottery. There was also a pair of parallel Iron Age or Roman field ditches and a series of post-medieval/ modern field boundary ditches. There was no evidence for human settlement on the site at any period.	
District: Maidstone	Parish: Lenham
Period(s):	
1. later Bronze Age	
2. Late Iron Age/ early Romano-British	
3. Post-medieval/ modern	
NGR Easting: TQ 90395	NGR Northing: 50001
Type of Recording:	Evaluation Watching Brief Field Walking
(Delete) Excavation	Geophysical Survey Measured Survey
Date of Recording: (From) 29/03/99	(To) 29/3/99
Unit Undertaking Recording: Oxford Archaeological Unit	
Summary of Fieldwork Results:	
<p>OAU was commissioned by Union Railways (South) Limited (URS) to undertake an archaeological investigation at the site of Chapel Mill, Lenham, 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 70400E 30000N and NGR grid point TQ 90395 50001. The site, which was specified as strip, map and sample and was c.0.95 hectares in extent, was excavated between 29th March and 21st April 1999. An archaeological evaluation of the site uncovered a small number of features, including a single pit containing a substantial amount of later prehistoric pottery, from a simple tub-shaped vessel dated to the late Bronze Age (c.1750 – 900 BC). Two ditches were also identified, one of which produced a small amount of mid-late Iron Age pottery and some residual Bronze Age material. The strip, map and sample excavation identified few new features apart from those identified by the evaluation. There was no indication for human settlement on the site at any period. Two cremations, dated on the basis of a small amount of pottery to the Iron Age, were discovered in the same area as a Bronze Age pit discovered during the evaluation. Two parallel, linear boundary ditches, on a north-east to south-west alignment, are also thought to be of later prehistoric (probably late Iron Age) date, on the basis of a small amount of pottery from one of the ditches. A series of four parallel ditches are thought to be of post-medieval or modern date as they coincide with modern field boundaries crossing the site. The only material recovered from the sections excavated comprised a small amount of Iron Age pottery from the easternmost ditch, which must be residual.</p>	
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Bibliography:	
Summary Compiler: Stuart Foreman	Date: 29/7/99

