Channel Tunnel Rail Link
Union Railways Ltd

Lodge Wood, Ashford, Kent

ARC LWD 98

Archaeological Evaluation Report

Environmental Statement Route Window No. 31

Contract No. 194/ 870

Oxford Archaeological Unit

January1999

UNION RAILWAYS LTD

LODGE WOOD, ASHFORD, KENT

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ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION

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OS GRID TQ 9900 4400

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REPORT

Volume 1 of 1

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LODGE WOOD, ASHFORD, KENT

ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION

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SUMMARY

The Oxford Archaeological Unit was commissioned by Union Railways Ltd to conduct a field evaluation of land situated south-west of the A20 and south-east of Godinton Lane, Ashford, Kent (NGR TQ 990 440). The work was conducted between 28th September and 2nd October 1998.

Five evaluation trenches were excavated in an area of 1.6 hectares. A pit and a ditch at the south end of the site produced a small assemblage of Iron Age and Roman pottery. The majority of the pottery (74% by weight) was recovered from the pit. The features were shallow and appear to have been truncated by later ploughing. A colluvial deposit which post-dates the features produced redeposited sherds of probable Iron Age date, late Iron Age/early Roman pottery and a single sherd of 2nd – mid 3rd century pottery as well as post-medieval tile. A single undated ditch cut the colluvium and is likely to be post-medieval in date.

SECTION 1: FACTUAL STATEMENT

1 BACKGROUND

1.1 Introduction

1.1.1 The Oxford Archaeological Unit (OAU) carried out a field evaluation (Figure 1) on land situated south-west of the A20 and south-east of Godinton Lane, Ashford, Kent (NGR TQ 990 440) (URL GRID 79000 24000). The work was conducted on behalf of Union Railways Ltd (URL) between 28th September and 2nd October 1998 as part of a programme of archaeological investigation along the line of the Channel Tunnel Rail Link. The purpose of the investigation was to assess the impact of the rail link on the cultural heritage of the site.

1.1.2 The evaluation was conducted in accordance with a Written Scheme of Investigation prepared by URL and agreed with the County Archaeologist and English Heritage.

1.2 Geology, topography and land-use

1.2.1 The site lies on light brown sandy clay, with silt and ragstone inclusions, which forms part of the Cretaceous Sandgate Beds (Geological Survey of Great Britain, Canterbury Sheet 289).

1.2.2 The site is 1.6 hectares in area and slopes away to the north-west. Trench 3504TT in the south lies at 79m above Ordnance Datum (OD). Trench 3500TT lies at 72m above OD.

1.2.3 Immediately prior to the evaluation, the site was under arable cultivation.

1.3 Archaeological and historical background

1.3.1 An environmental assessment has been prepared (URL 1994). No archaeological sites are recorded within the site boundaries. The OAU numbers listed below refer to Volumes 2 and 3 of *Union Railways Limited, Channel Tunnel Rail Link: Assessment of Historic and Cultural Effects. Final Report* (URL 1994). Lodge Wood (OAU No. 2069) forms part of an area of historic woodland (Fig. 1). Godinton Park is a Grade I Registered Park (OAU No. 2070). The park is possibly medieval in origin, although improved in the 18th-century and remodelled in 1902 (URL 1994).

1.3.2 A geophysical survey of the site has been carried out (URL 1996). The survey produced low magnetic susceptibility readings and very weak responses to a magnetometer scan. It was suggested that these responses may have been caused by carrying the instrument over newly ploughed rough ground.

2 AIMS

2.1 The aims of the evaluation, as set out in the Written Scheme of Investigation, are as follows:

2.1.1 To determine the presence/ absence, extent, condition, character, quality and date of any archaeological remains within the area of the evaluation.

2.1.2 To determine the presence and potential of environmental and economic indicators preserved in any archaeological features or deposits.

2.1.3 To establish the local, regional, national and international importance of such remains, and the potential for further archaeological fieldwork to fulfil local, regional and national research objectives.

3 METHODS

3.1 General

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

3.2 Survey

3.2.1 It was not possible to survey the trench locations before site work began because access to the land had not been agreed. The trenches were, therefore, set-out by hand. The trench locations were subsequently surveyed by P.H.Matts, Building and Civil Engineering Land Survey (Reading). The trenches have been plotted (Fig. 2) from digital information provided by P.H.Matts using the AutoCAD graphics programme.

3.2.3 All co-ordinates used in this report relate to the URL local project grid unless otherwise stated. A full list of Ordnance Survey National Grid trench co-ordinates, together with the conversion formula used to calculate them, is included in the site archive. Individual trenches were planned manually in the field at scales of 1:50 or 1:100. Sections were drawn at 1:20, unless circumstances dictated otherwise.

3.2.4 The evaluation area (Fig. 2) falls within URL Environmental Route Window 31.

3.3 Excavation

3.3.1 Five trenches were excavated to sample the evaluation area.

3.3.2 All trenches were 30m long and 1.60m wide. They were excavated using a JCB mechanical excavator with a toothless ditching bucket, under close archaeological supervision. In general, machine excavation was stopped at the top of the natural Sandgate Beds.

3.3.3 The trenches were hand-cleaned except where archaeological deposits were clearly absent. Sample sections were excavated through all archaeological features and possible features. Artefacts from archaeological features and colluvial deposits were collected by context and submitted for specialist examination.

3.3.4 A single bulk sample for the assessment of environmental indicators was recovered during the evaluation.

3.4 Recording

3.4.1 Recording followed the standard OAU single context recording system (Wilkinson ed. 1992). All site records were prefaced by the site code ARC LWD 98.

3.4.2 All trenches and archaeological features were photographed using colour slide and black and white print film.

4 RESULTS: GENERAL

4.1 Presentation of Results

4.1.1 The site is described according to the type of deposits and features exposed in the trenches. Detailed descriptions are presented in Section 5. A summary of all contexts and finds is presented in the archaeological context inventory (Section 6). Detailed reports on the pottery and environmental remains are contained in Appendices 1 and 2.

4.2 General stratigraphy

4.2.1 The underlying solid geology was overlain by colluvial deposits in part of the site which were 0.14m - 0.44m deep. The colluvium was overlain by modern topsoil.

4.3 Summary of archaeology

4.3.1 The evaluation located two ditches and a pit. A ditch in Trench 3503TT and an irregular pit in Trench 3504TT produced a small assemblage of late Iron Age/early Roman pottery.

4.3.2 A ditch in Trench 3500TT was cut into the top of the colluvium and is probably post-medieval in date.

4.3.3 Finds from the colluvium included sherds of undiagnostic prehistoric pottery, late Iron Age/early Roman pottery as well as a fragment of post-medieval tile.

4.4 Site archive

4.4.1 The site archive has been compiled in accordance with the specification prepared by URL and agreed with English Heritage and the County Archaeologist. It includes six

electronic datasets for the Fieldwork Event, Contexts, Bulk Finds, Finds, Environmental Samples and Graphical Output.

5 TRENCH DESCRIPTIONS (Trenches 3500TT, 3501TT, 3502TT, 3503TT, 3504TT)

5.1 *Trench 3500TT (Fig. 3)*

5.1.1 This trench was excavated to a depth of 0.7m. A colluvial deposit (2), a reddish brown sandy clay, overlay the natural bedrock, and was up to 0.44m deep. It produced twenty-four sherds of pottery, including undiagnostic prehistoric pottery, late Iron Age/early Roman, Roman and post-medieval material. This colluvial deposit was cut by Ditch 5.

5.1.2 Ditch 5 was 1.35m wide and 0.23m deep, and aligned from north-west to south-east. The fill (4), was a grey brown sandy clay. The ditch was partially truncated by a modern land drain.

5.2 *Trench 3501TT*

5.2.1 This trench was excavated to a depth of 0.47m and contained no archaeological features. A colluvial deposit (9), a reddish brown sandy clay, overlay the natural bedrock and was up to 0.22m deep. This layer was machine excavated and produced seven sherds of pottery of late Bronze Age or Iron Age date. The colluvium was overlain by the modern ploughsoil (8).

5.3 *Trench 3502TT*

5.3.1 This trench was excavated to a depth of 0.28m and contained no archaeological features. The natural bedrock (12) was directly overlain by the modern ploughsoil (11).

5.4 *Trench 3503TT (Fig. 3)*

5.4.1 The modern topsoil directly overlay the natural bedrock and was up to 0.35m deep. The natural bedrock was cut by a ditch.

5.4.2 Ditch 17 was 0.50m wide and 0.24m deep with a shallow U-shaped profile, and was aligned from north-west to south-east. The single fill (16), a grey brown silty clay with charcoal, produced three sherds of late Iron Age /early Roman pottery. The base of the ditch had been slightly heat-reddened.

5.5 *Trench 3504TT (Fig. 3)*

5.5.1 The modern topsoil, 0.25m thick, overlay a former ploughsoil (18), 0.13m thick. The former ploughsoil was cut by a pit.

5.5.2 Pit 21 was 1.44m wide and 0.10m deep, the sides were shallow and the base was slightly irregular. The fill (20) was a grey brown silty clay which produced twenty-five sherds of late Iron Age/early Roman pottery. An environmental sample was found to contain wood charcoal but no other charred remains were present (Environmental Indicators Appendix 2).

6 ARCHAEOLOGICAL CONTEXT INVENTORY

Abbreviations:
LBA- Late Bronze Age
IA - Iron Age
LIA/ERB - Late Iron Age or early Roman
ROM - Roman
Post-med - Post-medieval

CONTEXT	TRENCH	COMMENTS	ASSOCIATION	FINDS	NUMBER	DATE
1	3500	topsoil	overlies 4, 2			
2	3500	colluvium	cut by 5, overlain by 1, overlies 3	pot	24	LBA-IA ROM
				tile	2	Post-med
				?fired clay	2	
3	3500	natural	overlain by 2			
4	3500	ditch fill	fill of 5, overlain by 1			
5	3500	ditch	cuts 2, filled by 4			
6	3500	fill of root disturbance	fill of 7			
7	3500	root disturbance	filled by 6			
8	3501	topsoil	overlies 9			
9	3501	colluvium	overlain by 8, overlies 10	pot	8	LBA-IA
10	3501	natural	overlain by 9			
11	3502	topsoil	overlies 12			
12	3502	natural	overlain by 11			
13	3503	topsoil	overlies 16, 15			
14	3504	topsoil	overlies 20, 18			
15	3503	natural	overlain by 13, cut by 17			
16	3503	ditch fill	fill of 17, overlain by 13	pot	3	LIA/ERB
17	3503	ditch	filled by 16, cuts 15			
18	3504	earlier ploughsoil	overlain by 14, overlies 20	pot	2	LIA/ERB
19	3504	natural	overlain by 18			
20	3504	fill of pit	fill of 21, overlain by 18	pot	26	LIA/ERB
				fired clay	3	
21	3504	pit	overlain by 18, filled by 20			

SECTION 2: STATEMENT OF IMPORTANCE

7 CONCLUSIONS

7.1 Extent of archaeological deposits (Fig. 4)

7.1.1 Colluvium was recorded in Trenches 3500TT and 3501TT in the northern part of the site.

7.1.2 The evaluation located a ditch and a pit containing late Iron Age/early Roman pottery in Trenches 3503TT and 3504TT respectively.

7.1.3 An undated ditch was recorded in Trench 3500TT.

7.2 Date and character of archaeological deposits

7.2.1 The pottery recovered from features has been dated to the late Iron Age/early Roman period (1st - 2nd century AD). A substantial proportion of the pottery (25 sherds, 40% of the total number and 74% of the total by weight) was recovered from the Pit 21 in Trench 3504TT and securely dates it to this period. The trench was located outside the area of the earlier geophysical survey (URL 1996), although a small area of weak magnetic susceptibility enhancement was located some 15m to the north-east.

7.2.2 The ditch (17) in Trench 3503TT produced three sherds of pottery of the same date. The quantity of material recovered, while not large, does suggest some occupation activity in the vicinity. The slight reddening of the base of the ditch was presumably caused by heat, but was not sufficient to produce any enhancement in the responses recorded during the magnetometer and magnetic susceptibility surveys of the site (URL 1996).

7.2.2 The colluvial deposits are difficult to date. Although sherds of Bronze Age or Iron Age pottery were recovered, their abraded condition and small size strongly indicates that they are residual. The colluvium in Trench 3500TT also produced sherds of late Iron Age and Roman material, as well as two fragments of post-medieval tile. Even if the latter are intrusive the deposition of colluvium post-dates, perhaps by a considerable period, the mid 2nd-3rd century AD.

7.2.3 The undated ditch in Trench 3500TT was cut into the top of the colluvium. Its stratigraphic position suggests that it may be post-medieval in date. A weak magnetic susceptibility enhancement had been recorded in this area in the earlier geophysical survey of the site (URL 1996).

7.3 Environmental evidence

7.3.1 An environmental sample from Pit 21 in Trench 3504TT produced only charcoal, representing at least two tree species.

7.3.2 No animal bones or molluscs were recovered during the evaluation, perhaps due to adverse soil conditions.

8 IMPORTANCE OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL DEPOSITS

8.1 Survival/condition

8.1.1 The late Iron Age/early Roman features in Trenches 3503TT and 3504TT and the undated ditch in Trench 3500TT were truncated by later ploughing. All of these features were shallow (*c.* 0.16-0.23m deep).

8.2 Period

8.2.1 The quantity of pottery from the features in Trenches 3503TT and 3504TT indicates activity in the late Iron Age early Roman period (1st - 2nd Century AD).

8.2.2 The colluvial deposits are possibly post-medieval in date on the evidence of two fragments of tile, although these may be intrusive. The pottery recovered from the colluvium was predominantly prehistoric (probably late Bronze Age or Iron Age) although late Iron Age and Roman pottery was also recovered.

8.2.3 An undated ditch in Trench 3500TT was cut into an earlier colluvial deposit and is possibly post-medieval in date.

8.3 Rarity

8.3.1 The late Iron Age/early Roman features in the southern area of the site probably represent localised rural activity. This type of evidence is not unusual on rural sites in southern Britain.

8.4 Fragility/vulnerability

8.4.1 The archaeological features in the southern area of the site have been truncated by ploughing and continue to be vulnerable to plough damage.

8.4.2 The colluvial horizons in the northern area of the site would provide protection from plough disturbance to any deeply buried archaeological deposits, but are themselves vulnerable to plough damage.

8.5 Diversity

8.5.1 Little diversity of archaeological features or artefacts was recorded.

8.6 Documentation

8.6.1 There is little documentation relating directly to the site prior to the Assessment of Historic and Cultural Effects (URL 1994). A geophysical survey of the site was carried out by URL as part of a wider programme of investigations (URL 1996).

8.7 Group value

8.7.1 There is limited group value that can be attributed to the results of this evaluation.

8.7.2 Late Iron Age to early Roman sites have been identified recently to the south-east of Ashford. At Boys Hall, Sevington a number of ditches were revealed and grog-tempered pottery was recovered (Booth and Everson 1994). The late Iron Age/early Roman activity probably continues to the south of Boys Hall and further evidence of ditches and a possible rectangular structure has been located at Waterbrook Farm (Rady 1996). Ditches and pits and a large amount of 1st and 2nd century pottery have been excavated from Park Farm south of Ashford (Hicks 1993).

8.7.3 The concentration of these apparently rural sites of the late Iron Age/early Roman period south-east of Ashford has been noted (Booth and Everson 1994 433). Although the features and finds from the present evaluation are sparse, the recently discovered sites suggest this may be a component of a wide spread rural settlement pattern in the 1st and 2nd century AD in the Ashford area, along the valley of the East Stour and the Roman road to Lympne.

8.8 Potential

8.8.1 The presence of Prehistoric pottery within the colluvium suggest that evidence of activity of this date may exist on higher ground. However, due to the plough damage evident with the later features, any such evidence would probably be of limited potential.

8.8.2 The results indicate a low level of late Iron Age/early Roman features concentrated around Trenches 3503TT and 3504TT. The features were truncated by ploughing which limits the potential for the survival of shallow features.

8.8.3 The quantity of pottery from the features suggests some domestic activity in the vicinity, possibly to the south beyond the limits of the site.

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APPENDIX 1

POTTERY

by Paul Booth, Oxford Archaeological Unit

1 Introduction

1.1 A total of 63 sherds of pottery, weighing 503 g, was recovered from five separate contexts in four of the evaluation trenches. The pottery was broadly of later prehistoric to early Roman date, but closely diagnostic material was almost entirely absent.

2 Methodology

2.1 The pottery was recorded by context in terms of broad fabric categories for the purposes of assigning dates, with quantification by sherd count and weight. Vessel type, where identifiable, was also recorded, and other characteristics were noted as appropriate. Coding followed the standards established in the OAU prehistoric and Roman pottery recording system. The pottery was generally in fairly poor condition. While the average sherd weight was quite high, at 14.5g, in one context group (Pit fill 20 in Trench 3504TT), the remainder of the material was quite fragmented, with an average sherd weight of 3.4g, and some pieces were quite abraded. Preservation of surfaces (owing to soil conditions) was also generally poor.

3 Fabrics and Chronology

3.1 Two main traditions were represented by the material, the first consisting primarily of hand made flint- or flint and sand-tempered fabrics, here merely labelled 'prehistoric'. The second tradition consisted primarily of sand-tempered and grog-tempered fabrics of Late Iron Age character. There was only one sherd in a Romanised fabric of mid-late 1st century AD or later date.

4 Character and date of assemblage

4.1 Prehistoric

4.1.1 Some twenty-two sherds (43 g) were in flint or flint and sand-tempered fabrics, but all were small and there were no diagnostic features or evidence of decoration. These sherds were confined to colluvial layers. In one of the colluvial layers (Context 9 in Trench 3501) they were associated with a small oxidised sherd (3 g) with large voids, probably representing leached shell, and two tiny fragments (2 g) in a fine sand-tempered fabric, neither of which was certainly pottery. A single sherd (3 g) in a greensand-tempered fabric occurred residually in Context 20.

4.1.2 The dating of this material is very problematic owing to its condition. The flint-tempered sherds could date from the middle to late Bronze Age (though the former seems

unlikely) into the Iron Age. The associated fragments in Context 9 are likely to have been broadly contemporary. The single greensand-tempered sherd can be attributed more confidently to the Iron Age.

4.2 Late Iron Age/early Roman

4.2.1 Thirty-six sherds (431 g) were assigned to the late Iron Age or early Roman period. All were grog-tempered, in fabrics consistent with the 'Belgic' tradition (in the sense of Thompson 1982, 5). A single cordoned shoulder sherd was consistent with the proposed date, but there were no rim sherds or other diagnostic pieces. This material could date to either side of the Roman conquest.

4.3 Roman

4.3.1 A single Roman sherd occurred in Colluvial Layer 2. This was the rim of a dish or bowl in a fairly fine sand-tempered reduced ware, the form being akin to Monaghan's type 5C1, dated roughly mid 2nd-mid 3rd century (Monaghan 1987, 140).

5 Context and discussion

5.1 The generally poor condition of the material precludes close dating of the contexts from which it derived. The earlier pottery, most probably of late Bronze Age to Iron Age date, was confined to Colluvial Layer 2 in Trench 3500TT and Colluvial Layer 9 in Trench 3501TT. In the former of these deposits it was associated with late Iron Age pottery, a Roman sherd and two fragments of post-medieval tile. Even if the last of these were intrusive, the prehistoric material was clearly residual here, as is indicated additionally by the very small size of the sherds. A similar situation prevails with Colluvial Layer 9 in which, again, the sherds were very small, and despite the absence of any later material in this trench the colluvium is likely to post-date the fragments which it contains.

5.2 Larger sherds, most probably of late Iron Age to early Roman date, occurred in Trench 3503TT (Ditch Fill 16, with two sherds) and Trench 3504TT (Ploughsoil 18 with two sherds, and Pit Fill 20 with 25 sherds). Only in Pit Fill 20 is the material in sufficient quantity and the sherds of sufficient size (average weight 14.9 g) to indicate immediately adjacent activity. As with the earlier pottery, the absence of diagnostic features makes close dating very difficult. While a late Iron Age to early Roman date seems most likely, there were later Roman grog-tempered potting traditions in Kent (e.g. Pollard 1988, 98), though it is felt that their products were sufficiently different, particularly with regard to firing, that they should be distinct from the present material.

APPENDIX 2

ENVIRONMENTAL INDICATORS

by Dana Challinor, Oxford Archaeological Unit

1 Introduction and Methods

1.1 A single soil sample (Context 20) from Pit 21 was taken during the evaluation for the assessment of environmental indicators. A volume of 20 litres was processed by mechanical flotation in a modified Siraf machine for the recovery of charred plant remains, with the sample held on a 500µm mesh and the flot collected on a 250µm mesh. The remaining residue was then washed through 10, 4 and 2 mm sieves and sorted for bone and artefacts. The flot was scanned under a microscope at x10 magnification.

2 Results

2.1 The flot was small in size and dominated by modern roots and seeds. The charred content was limited to charcoal; cereal grain, chaff and charred weed seeds were absent. There were more than ten identifiable charcoal fragments which represented at least two tree species. No molluscs or bone were recovered.

3 Discussion

3.1 Charred plant remains are preserved at the site, and any further work on the site should include charred remains recovery as a component. Given the paucity and limited range of charred remains, further analysis on this sample would not be productive.

3.2 The lack of animal bones and snails confirms the picture from the hand-retrieved material that the ground conditions prevent their preservation, and these do not need to be included in any strategy. The likely absence of contemporary snails and bones in any soils and colluvium at the location make these deposits less informative and interpretable than similar deposits which do contain these materials. If these deposits are deemed to merit investigation, information and interpretation will rely on geoarchaeological and micromorphological techniques.