

UNION RAILWAYS LIMITED

**WEST OF MERSHAM**

ARC MSW97

An Archaeological Evaluation

Contract No. 194/870



Museum of London Archaeology Service

January 1998

© UNION RAILWAYS LIMITED

All rights including translation reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by means electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise, without prior written permission of Union Railways Ltd.

UNION RAILWAYS LIMITED

**WEST OF MERSHAM**

ARC MSW 97

An Archaeological Evaluation

**Final Report**

Volume 1 of 1

Contract No. 194/870

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



Museum of London Archaeology Service  
January 1998

## WEST OF MERSHAM

### *ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION*

#### **SUMMARY**

*As part of a programme of archaeological investigation along the route of the Channel tunnel Rail Link, Union Railways (URL) commissioned the Museum of London Archaeology Service (MoLAS) to undertake an evaluation of five trenches at Little Hook Farm, in the parish of Mersham, Kent TR 0465 3965, URL grid 84636E/19672N. The work took place between the 5th - 7th November 1997. The aim of the evaluation was to examine a number of geophysical anomalies. Archaeological features consisted of elements of a series of linear field ditches, probably of post-medieval date, and a ditch of late Iron Age date (100 BC to AD 60-70) in 1974TT. The Iron Age ditch contained several large unabraded pot sherds which suggests that there was an unlocated contemporary settlement nearby. Geologically the site lies on the boundary between the Cretaceous Lower Greensand/Speenton Clay and the Weald Clay. In all trenches there was an accumulation of brickearth type sediments of late Pleistocene and Holocene date from which the top soil was derived.*

**Table of Contents**

SECTION 1: FACTUAL STATEMENT	
1 BACKGROUND	1
1.1 Introduction	1
1.2 Geology, landscape and landuse	1
2 SPECIFICATIONS	3
2.1 Aims	3
3 METHODS	4
3.1 General	4
3.2 Survey	4
3.3 Excavation	4
3.4 Recording	4
4 RESULTS	6
4.1 General	6
5 TRENCH DESCRIPTIONS	7
5.1 General	7
5.2 Late Iron Age	8
5.3 Linear field boundaries	8
6 ARCHAEOLOGICAL DATASETS	11
6.1 Table 1: Events dataset	11
6.2 Table 2 : Archaeological context inventory	12
SECTION 2: STATEMENT OF IMPORTANCE	
7 CONCLUSIONS	13
7.1 Extent of archaeological deposits	13
7.2 Nature of archaeological deposits	13
7.3 Character of the site	13
7.4 Date of occupation	13
8 IMPORTANCE OF THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL REMAINS	14
8.1 Survival and conditions	14
8.2 Period	14
8.3 Rarity	14
8.4 Fragility and vulnerability	14
8.5 Diversity	15
8.6 Documentation	15
8.7 Group value	15
8.8 Potential	15
9 BIBLIOGRAPHY	16

**List of Appendices**

Appendix 1 Pottery	17
Appendix 2 Animal bones	19
Appendix 3 Terrestrial and freshwater molluscs	20
 Kent SMR Record Sheet	

**List of Tables**

Table 1 Events dataset	11
Table 2 Archaeological context inventory	12
Table 3 Bulk dataset, pottery	18
Table 4 Bulk dataset, animal bone	19
Table 5 Environmental dataset, molluscs	20

**List of Figures**

Cover: General view with one of 5 evaluation trenches	
Fig 1 Site location plan	
Fig 2 Plan of the evaluation trenches	
Fig 3 Trench <i>1974TT</i> with profile of feature [9]	
Fig 4 Trenches <i>1971TT</i> and <i>1972TT</i> with profiles of features [11], [13] and [15]	
Fig 5 Trenches <i>1973TT</i> and <i>1975TT</i> with profiles of features [7], [17], [19], [21] and [23]	

## ***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 between 5th - 7th November 1997 at Little Hook Farm, in the civil parish of Mersham, to the west of the village of Mersham, Kent (URL grid 84636/19672) (Fig 1-2). This 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 railway upon the archaeological heritage of Kent. An Environmental Assessment for the project has been prepared (URL 1994). This evaluation is within route window 34.
- 1.1.2 The work was carried out according a Specification for Archaeological Investigations, prepared by URL, which detailed the methodology and location of the trenches. The location of the site is shown in Fig 2.
- 1.1.3 The archaeological potential of the site was determined from a geophysical survey (URL, 1996, figure 70), which revealed anomalies within the area of *1972TT* and *1973TT*.

#### **1.2 Geology, landscape and landuse**

- 1.2.1 The site is situated on a south facing slope, to the north of the present railway line and to the east of Little Hook Farm buildings. The ground level in the northernmost trench *1971TT* was 46.85m OD falling to 45.65m OD at the southern end of *1973TT*. The area of the site was under pasture.
- 1.2.2 The geological deposits located consisted of (in stratigraphic order) Cretaceous Weald Clay [26], Cretaceous Lower Greensand/Speeton Clay beds [04], late Pleistocene or Holocene Brickearth sediment [03], the top portion of which had been altered by weathering and biological reworking [02]. The top soil [01] was derived from the *in situ* breakdown of the brickearth. There was probable evidence of periglacial action in one trench *1974TT*, which consisted of fluvial sand [25], lying directly over the Weald Clay. This sand was sealed by a layer of redeposited Weald Clay [24] which was interpreted as material which had slumped down slope during periglacial conditions.
- 1.2.3 The upper portion of all the archaeological features had been destroyed to varying degrees by biological (root/worm) action, which resulted in features which were actually sealed by top soil and only defined within or below the underlying brickearth.
- 1.2.4 The site drainage had been impeded by the construction of the railway and the failure to maintain the ditch or catch drain, running from east to west along the northern side of the railway embankment, which should have removed ground water from the site. In an attempt to improve the drainage there have been three phases of land drainage since

the railway was constructed. The earliest phase comprised a network of red ceramic land drains, later upgraded by a second network of yellow ceramic land drains of recent date and finally an undated phase of mole drainage. The land drains were generally laid in the brickearth, but some were laid along the interface between the brickearth and the overlying top soil.

## **2 SPECIFICATIONS**

### **2.1 Aims**

2.1.1 In general the works aimed 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 More specifically the Specification for Archaeological Investigations (URL, 1997) stated:

- Trenches 1972TT and 1973TT were located to sample areas of geophysical anomalies, interpreted as archaeological features (URL 1996, figure 70).



### **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 +/- 15 mm over 1 km. The trench location plan is based on this information. Drawn plans have been digitised using an AutoCAD graphics program.

3.2.3 The central site coordinate, according to the given URL grid, was 84636E/19672N.

#### **3.3 Excavation**

3.3.1 Five trenches were planned originally, each measuring 30 x c. 1.60 metres. Trench numbers were allocated by URL. One trench, *1971TT*, was extended to 34.80m in length.

3.3.2 The trenches were excavated using a JCB sitemaster fitted with a ditching bucket. Due to restricted access via a small tunnel through the adjoining railway embankment, it was not possible to get a tracked machine onto site. Topsoil and homogenous deposits of ploughsoil were removed to expose deposits of archaeological significance or, if absent, the underlying geological strata. In most cases trenches were deepened at each end (up to c. 1.20 m) to test the natural geology. Archaeological features 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 pro-forma context sheets. Scale plans and sections were drawn of features and geological sequences, 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 compiled.

- 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 archaeological features represent two periods of activity on site. The earlier period was represented by only one feature, a late Iron Age ditch in *1974TT*. The later period consisted of an undated series of linear field ditches which are thought to be of post-medieval date.

## 5 TRENCH DESCRIPTIONS

### 5.1 General

- 5.1.1 Archaeological features were located in every trench.
- 5.1.2 Geologically the earliest deposit located on site was a stiff light grey - blue clay [26], interpreted as Weald Clay. It was only located in one trench, *1974TT*; at the north end of the trench its surface was at 46.01m OD and at the southern end at 45.55m OD.
- 5.1.3 In trenches *1971TT*, *1972TT* and *1973TT* the earliest geological deposit was a layer of orange-brown slightly clayey fine sand, containing abundant patches of off-white calcite mineral staining and frequent pebbles [04]. This deposit has been interpreted as part of the Lower Greensand/Speeton Clay beds.
- 5.1.4 In trenches *1974TT* and *1975TT* there was evidence of reworking of Weald Clay, which was interpreted as resulting from periglacial activity during the Pleistocene. At the southern end of *1974TT*, the Weald Clay [26] was directly overlain by a layer of orange-brown pebbly sand [25], which also filled a probable ice wedge cast 0.15m deep (top 45.59m OD). This sand was sealed by an 0.18m thick layer of mottled orange-brown and grey-blue clay [24]. This deposit was also located at the southern end of *1975TT* (top 46.82m OD), where it was over 260mm thick and showed a gradual transition with depth from orange-brown and grey-blue to a purer grey colour, which suggested that, at depth, it merges into undisturbed and unweathered Weald Clay [24]. The mottled clay was interpreted as the result of mass movement or solifluction of the upper part of the Weald Clay during periglacial conditions.
- 5.1.5 At the end of the Pleistocene or early in the Holocene the area of the site was covered by an accumulation of an orange-brown (stone - free), clayey silt containing frequent manganese nodules [3], (top 46.94m OD to 45.12m OD). This deposit could be described as a brickearth sediment and part of the local drift geology. Brickearth occurs in many parts of south-east England and is believed to be a wind-blown deposit of early post-glacial date, but in many instances it has subsequently been redeposited by fluvial action.
- 5.1.6 The top soil here has clearly been developed *in situ* from the underlying brickearth. This process of soil formation has resulted in the reworking of the top portion of the brickearth into an orange-brown clayey silt [02], with a slightly brown hue and a very diffuse top and bottom interfaces, the result of massive biological reworking or root/worm action, (top 47.77m OD to 45.41m OD). It was up to 0.30m thick and had a much higher humic content than the underlying brickearth. In trenches *1971TT* and the south end of *1972TT*, this horizon and the underlying brickearth had merged into one unit due to massive biological reworking.
- 5.1.7 The top soil consisted of a *c.* 0.30m thick layer of dark greyish - brown fine sandy silt (stone-free). It was capped by a dense root mat and showed extensive evidence of biological reworking (top 48.02m OD to 44.46m OD).

## 5.2 Late Iron Age

### 5.2.1 Trench 1974TT (Fig 3)

- 5.2.1.1 An east-west ditch with a U-shaped profile [09] was excavated. It measured 1.70m in length, was 0.70m wide and 0.62m deep (top 45.62m OD ; base 45.05m OD). The top portion of the ditch fill [08], (45.62m OD) was only defined in section as a result of biological reworking; in plan it was only defined at a lower level of 45.49m OD. A 0.75m long slot was dug through it which revealed that the base of the ditch sloped slightly from west to east. The ditch was sealed by reworked brickearth [02] and filled with a mid grey clayey silt [08], containing mammal bone and large sherds of unabraded late Iron Age pottery. The amount of pottery recovered from this ditch suggested that there was an unlocated contemporary settlement nearby and that this ditch may have part of enclosure that marked the outer limit of the inhabited area. This might suggest that the rest of the settlement lies on the north side of the ditch.

## 5.3 Linear field boundaries

### 5.3.1 Trenches 1971TT, 1972TT (Fig 4), 1973TT and 1975TT (Fig 5)

- 5.3.1.1 A series of linear field ditches aligned south-west to north-east and north-west to south-east were recorded. The excavation of sections of the these ditches, or in one case [06] total excavation of the feature, failed to produce any dating evidence. All the ditches were sealed by the top soil [01], but in most cases the upper portion of the feature had been destroyed by biological reworking, so often the features were only defined within or below the brickearth [02] and [03]. The ditches have been provisionally interpreted as representing a phase of post-medieval land allotment; there was no evidence of associated hedge or fence lines. With the exception of [06], the ditches each contained one fill and there was no evidence of re-cuts. Three of the ditches [06], [11] and [12] were all fragments of the same feature. The ditches represent two phases of activity or land allotment.

### 5.3.2 Trench 1971TT

- 5.3.2.1 A linear field ditch [13] with a U-shaped profile was located at the southern end of the extended trench. It was aligned south-west to north-east, and had a recorded length of 2.90 m, width 0.72m and depth in plan 0.42m (top 45.84m OD; base 45.43m OD); in section 0.70m (top 46.13m OD). The ditch was filled with pale grey slightly clayey sandy silt [12], becoming more sandy at depth. No finds were retrieved from the fill. A 1.0m long slot was excavated through the ditch. The upper portion of the ditch could not be defined in plan due to biological reworking.

### 5.3.3 Trench 1972TT

- 5.3.3.1 A linear field ditch [11] with sloping sides and a flat base was located at the western end of the trench. It was aligned south-west to north-east and had a recorded length of

21.15m, width 0.80m, depth 0.38m (top 45.52m OD; base 45.11m OD). The ditch was filled with a pale greyish-brown (stone-free) clayey silt [10], containing a few land snail shells - both whole and fragmentary - which were more frequent in the basal portion of the fill (sample 2). No other finds were retrieved from the fill. Analysis of the snails revealed a limited diversity of species dominated by *Cepaea* sp. The impression is that the snails had been washed into the ditch and carried downhill by running water. A 1.0m long slot was excavated through the ditch. At the eastern end of trench 1972TT another linear field ditch [15] was located. It had a U-shaped profile and was aligned north-west to south-east. It had a recorded length of 3.50m, width 45cm, depth in plan 17cm (top 45.96m OD; base 45.78m OD) and in section 31cm (top 46.09m OD). The upper portion of the ditch had been obscured by biological reworking. The ditch was filled a pale greyish-brown clayey silt [14], it contained no finds. A 1.0m long slot was excavated through the ditch.

#### 5.3.4 *Trench 1973TT*

5.3.4.1 A linear field ditch [06] was located at the southern end of the trench. It was aligned south-west to north-east and had steeply sloping sides and a rounded base, which sloped from east to west. The recorded length was 2.40m, its width in plan was 0.55m and in section 1.10m. Its depth in plan was 0.23m (top 45.03m OD; base 44.74m OD) and in section 0.56m (top 45.33m OD). The upper portion of the ditch was obscured by intense biological reworking and could not be defined in plan. The upper portion of the ditch was filled with pale greyish-brown (stone-free) clayey silt [5] containing a moderate frequency of flecks of charcoal and ferrous minerals. The lower portion of the ditch was filled with a light grey clayey silt [7], containing abundant land snail shells, both whole and fragmentary (sample <1>). Analysis of the molluscs confirmed that they were well preserved, but species diversity was limited and dominated by *Cepaea* sp. As the represented snails include freshwater aquatic species and other species which live in a variety of ecological habitats, it implies that all the snails have been washed into the ditch and carried down slope by running water. Also many of the snails were badly concreted which could be the result of transportation. Excavation of the whole of the ditch within the trench failed to provide any dating evidence.

#### 5.3.5 *Trench 1975TT*

5.3.5.1 This trench contained four linear field ditches. At the northern end of the trench a linear field ditch [17], aligned north-west to south-east, was located. The ditch had steeply sloping sides and flat base. It was 3.10m long, 0.60m wide and 0.30m deep in plan (top 47.74m OD; base 47.44m OD) and in section it was 0.36m deep (top 47.76m OD). The upper portion of the ditch had been obscured by biological reworking. It was filled with grey (stone-free) slightly clayey sandy silt [16]; the amount of sand was greater in the basal portion of the fill. Excavation of a 1.10m long slot through the ditch failed to produce any finds or dating evidence.

5.3.5.2 In the centre of the trench were two intercutting linear field ditches [21] and [23]. The earlier one [21] was aligned north-west to south-east and had U-shaped profile. It was

3.80m long, 0.30m wide and in plan was 80mm deep (top 47.39m OD; base 47.30m OD). It was filled with a mid grey (stone-free) clayey silt [20]. The amount of sand in the basal portion of the fill was greater than the rest of the context. Excavation of a 1.2m long section of the ditch failed to produce any finds.

- 5.3.5.3 The later linear ditch [23] was aligned north-west to south-east. It had a U-shaped profile and was 3.50m long, 0.50m wide and 0.24m deep (top 47.37m OD; base 47.12m OD). The excavated portion of the base sloped from west to east. The ditch was filled with mid grey (stone-free) clayey silt [22]; the amount of sand in the basal portion of the fill was greater than the rest of the fill. A 1.45m long segment through the ditch was excavated but failed to produce any dating evidence.
- 5.3.5.4 At the southern end of the trench a linear field ditch [19], aligned south-west to north-east, was located. It had sloping sides and a flat base. It was 2.90m long, 0.52m wide, in plan it measured 0.15m deep (top 47.19m OD; base 46.99m OD), and in section it was an estimated 0.35m deep (top 47.39m OD). The upper part of the ditch was very badly defined due to extensive biological reworking. The ditch was backfilled with a pale greyish-brown (stone-free) clayey silt [18]. A 1.0m long portion of the ditch was excavated, but failed to produce any dating evidence.

## 6 ARCHAEOLOGICAL DATASETS

### 6.1 Table 1: Events dataset

EVENT_NAME:WEST OF MERSHAM
EVENT_CODE:ARC MSW 97
EVENT_TYPE:Evaluation
CONTRACTOR:Museum of London Archaeology Service
DATE:5/11/97-7/11/97
GRID:84636/19672 (URL Grid)
PROJECT:CTRL
COUNTY:Kent
DISTRICT:Ashford
PARISH:Mersham
SMR:
SITE_TYPE:Grassland; Cultivated Land 3 - Operations to a depth >0.25m
PERIOD:Late Iron Age
METHOD:Mechanical removal of topsoil; hand excavation and recording of archaeological features.
PHASING: Late Iron Age ditch and undated system of linear field ditches, believed to be of post-medieval date.
ENVIRON: Two samples of land snails from post-medieval ditches
FINDS:Late Iron Age pot and animal bones
GEOLOGY: Lower Greensand and Weald Clay, plus Pleistocene or Holocene sediments.
CONTEXT_NUM:26 (+ 5 trench sheets)
THREAT:CTRL
SAMPLE:2%
SUMMARY: Five trenches revealed a Late Iron Age ditch and elements of undated linear field system, which is believed to be of post-medieval date.
ARCHIVE: Temporarily at URL warehouse in Aylesford, Kent.
ACC_NUM:



## 6.2 Table 2: Archaeological context inventory

TRENCH	CONTEXT	TYPE	PERIOD	ASSOCIATION	COMMENTS
1973TT	1	deposit			topsoil, pasture
1973TT	2	deposit			reworked brickearth
1973TT	3	deposit			natural drift, brickearth
1973TT	4	deposit			natural drift, sand
1973TT	5	deposit		6	fill
1973TT	6	cut		5, 7	ditch
1973TT	7	deposit		6	fill
1974TT	8	deposit		9	fill
1974TT	9	cut		8	ditch
1972TT	10	deposit		11	fill
1972TT	11	cut		10	ditch
1971TT	12	deposit		13	fill
1971TT	13	cut		12	ditch
1972TT	14	deposit		15	fill
1972TT	15	cut		14	ditch
1975TT	16	deposit		17	fill
1975TT	17	cut		16	ditch
1975TT	18	deposit		19	fill
1975TT	19	cut		18	ditch
1975TT	20	deposit		21	fill
1975TT	21	cut		20	ditch
1975TT	22	deposit		23	fill
1975TT	23	cut		22	ditch
1974TT	24	deposit			reworked clay
1974TT	25	deposit			sand + pebble
1974TT	26	deposit			pure clay

**SECTION 2: STATEMENT OF IMPORTANCE****7 CONCLUSIONS****7.1 Extent of archaeological deposits**

7.1.1 Archaeological features were found in all of the five evaluation trenches. In *1973TT* and *1972TT*, where archaeological features were predicted from ground scanning, the only archaeological feature was an undated linear field ditch, possibly of post-medieval date. Other features should have been expected in these trenches and possibly the numerous land drains and high water-table may explain the recorded geophysical anomalies within this area.

**7.2 Nature of archaeological deposits**

7.2.1 The archaeological features consisted of ditches of varying depth, cut into the brickearth sediments. The upper part of most of these features had been destroyed by biological reworking. The archaeological deposits consisted of cut features which survived beneath a truncated land surface; no buried soil horizons or build-up of horizontal deposits were observed during the evaluation.

**7.3 Character of the site**

7.3.1 The whole area of the site was situated on a south facing slope and it is this topography which has determined the slope or fall of the linear field ditches. Interestingly the late Iron Age ditch [09] is aligned to drain down slope.

**7.4 Date of occupation**

7.4.1 The earliest feature on site was a late Iron Age (100 BC to AD 60/70) ditch [09]. All the other linear field ditches appear to form one field system [06-11-12, 15, 17 and 23], except one ditch [21] which is narrower and cuts across an earlier ditch, so clearly there are two phases of ditches. Both phases of field ditch are undated and are assumed to be of post-medieval date. The alignment of the ditches suggests that they pre-date the construction of the railway line.

## **8 IMPORTANCE OF THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL REMAINS**

### **8.1 Survival and conditions**

- 8.1.1 The survival and condition of the archaeological features is not good due to extensive biological reworking which has destroyed the upper portion of most features. There is no evidence of deep cultivation.
- 8.1.2 The survival and condition of finds and faunal material within the late Iron Age ditch [08] was good. However, the condition of the land snail shells within the linear field ditches [07] and [10] was poor and the shells were in the process of being broken down into calcite mineral formations, probably because of an acid soil environment.

### **8.2 Period**

- 8.2.1 The evaluation suggests that there is an unlocated late Iron Age settlement, possibly a farmstead, nearby. Interestingly there is little or no evidence, except the one late Iron Age feature, for Romano-British occupation of the area, which could suggest that the site was abandoned during the mid to late 1st century AD.
- 8.2.2 After the late Iron Age, when it is provisionally suggested that the site was abandoned (due to negative evidence), there is no evidence for occupation or activity on the site until the post medieval period. The site may have been characterised by open country, possibly pasture and was only divided into fields during the post-medieval period. The nearby farm cottage dates from the 19th century.

### **8.3 Rarity**

- 8.3.1 The late Iron Age in Kent is interpreted as a period of population growth as it was marked by the geographical expansion of earlier Iron Age rural settlement (the chalk downlands, the North Kent coastal plain and the Greensand ridge - Champion and Overy 1989, 33). The rural settlements of the late Iron Age consisted of farmsteads, characterised by ditched enclosures containing round houses with associated storage and rubbish pits. The settlements were surrounded by ditched rectilinear field systems, including drove or trackways. The only extensively excavated late Iron Age rural site in Kent is Farningham Hill in the Darent Valley dating from 50 BC to 50 AD. Recently the development of the area of the new Channel Tunnel Rail Link station at Ashford revealed two areas of late Iron Age occupation (Champion and Overy 1989, 34).

### **8.4 Fragility and vulnerability**

- 8.4.1 The evaluation has confirmed that archaeological features survived cut into natural drift deposits. Any intrusive work undertaken in connection with the CTRL will be likely to damage these archaeological features.

## **8.5 Diversity**

- 8.5.1 The features encountered on site consisted of one late Iron Age ditch and elements of post-medieval system of ditched fields.

## **8.6 Documentation**

- 8.6.1 There is no known documentation for this site, except for the geophysical survey undertaken by URL.

## **8.7 Group value**

- 8.7.1 The late Iron Age occupation on site could be compared with contemporary sites recently investigated at Ashford and Farningham Hill ( Champion and Overly 1989, 33).

## **8.8 Potential**

- 8.8.1 The evaluation has confirmed the presence of a late Iron Age ditch and suggests the presence of an unlocated late Iron Age farmstead nearby. The system of ditched fields is believed to be of post-medieval date and has limited potential for any further work.. While it would be worthwhile to establish the plan of these fields, the value of further excavation is questionable, as the ditch fills examined contained only land snail shells. Analysis of the snails suggests they were washed into the ditch and then carried down hill by running water. The presence of freshwater aquatic species confirms that the ditch sometimes contained water, possibly on a seasonal basis.

## 9 BIBLIOGRAPHY

Champion, T and Overy, C 1989

Archaeology in Kent, HBMC report.

MoLAS, 1995

Archaeological Site Manual (MoLAS)

MoLAS, 1997

Method Statement for the Provision of Archaeological Investigations: Packages 1-4, Part I: Generic Method Statement (MoLAS)

URL, 1994

Channel Tunnel Rail Link, Assessment of Historic and Cultural Effects, Final Report, Volume 1 of 4 (Prepared for URL by OAU)

URL, 1996

Channel Tunnel Rail Link, Report on Geophysical Survey, Volume 1 of 2, (Prepared for URL by Geophysical Surveys of Bradford)

URL, 1997

Agreement for the Provision of Archaeological Investigations (URL)

## ***APPENDIX 1***

### 1.1.1.1 pottery

*By R. P Symonds, with Louise Rayner*

#### **1.1.1.1.1 Introduction**

1.1.1.1.1.1 The evaluation produced a total of 25 sherds (396g) of Late Iron Age date. The sherds are in moderate condition with only limited surface damage and abrasion. The average sherd weight is just under 16g. There are a number of joining sherds, with ten sherds representing one vessel. Pottery was only recorded from one context [8].

#### **1.1.1.1.2 Fabrics**

1.1.1.1.2.1 The fabrics identified fall into two broad types. The fabrics have been defined on the basis of their inclusions or temper and were not divided further into defined fabric types.

##### 1.1.1.1.2.2 *Fabric groups*

Grog-tempered fabrics (GROG) 23 sherds, 371g

Sand-tempered fabrics (SAND) 2 sherds, 25g

#### **1.1.1.1.3 Forms**

1.1.1.1.3.1 A minimum of seven individual vessels are represented in context [8]. The most complete vessel is a handmade bead-rimmed jar with a single girth groove (Thompson type C1-1). Two other bead-rimmed jars are present, one with oblique combed lines on the body (Thompson type C4). A fourth vessel is also represented by a body sherd with this type of combed decoration. The other identifiable form is an everted-rimmed jar with rippled shoulder (Thompson type B2-1).

#### **1.1.1.1.4 Chronology**

1.1.1.1.4.1 The use of grog-tempered fabrics forms part of a tradition commonly described as 'Belgic' or of 'Aylesford-Swarling' type, which dates from 100 BC and continues into the post-Conquest period. The bead-rimmed jar forms (Thompson type C1-1 & C4) identified in this assemblage are dated by Thompson to either side of the Conquest period. The everted rim jar with rippled shoulder (Thompson type B2-1) has a wider date range of 100 BC - AD 60/70. The use of oblique combed lines to decorate the bodies of vessels is a diagnostic feature of late Iron Age ceramics in east Kent (Pollard 1988,31). The absence of any vessels with a Romanised appearance supports a pre-conquest or conquest date for this assemblage.

#### **1.1.1.1.5 General Comments**

1.1.1.1.5.1 The vessels identified in this assemblage are consistent with our current understanding of the late Iron Age pottery of east Kent. The most interesting aspect is the recovery of an assemblage that represents at least seven vessels and that at least two of the vessels have joining sherds present. The condition of the pottery, coherence of the dating and identification of joining sherds suggests that this deposit is not far from the foci of activity and is the result of primary deposition.

#### 1.1.1.1.6 Assessment of potential and further work

1.1.1.1.6.1 The assemblage at present is of limited potential due to the small number of sherds and isolated nature of the deposit. However the recovery of the assemblage does suggest late Iron Age activity in the vicinity, which is of significance. Further excavation and the recovery of a larger assemblage would greatly increase the potential of the assemblage and enable questions such as the chronology and nature of the activity to be addressed more fully.

#### 1.1.1.1.7 Table 3: Bulk dataset, pottery

Key: LIA Late Iron Age

TRENCH	CONTEXT	MATERIAL	COUNT	WEIGHT	COMMENTS
1974TT	8	POT	25	396	LIA

#### 1.1.1.1.8 Bibliography

Pollard, R J 1988,  
*The Roman pottery of Kent*

Thompson, I 1982  
Grog-tempered 'Belgic' pottery of south-eastern England,  
*BAR British Series 108*

## *APPENDIX 2*

### 1.1.1.1 animal bones

*By Kevin Rielly*

#### **1.1.1.1.1 Introduction**

1.1.1.1.1.1 This report discusses the animal bones from West of Mersham (ARC MSW97).

1.1.1.1.1.2 Recovery was essentially by hand, though two samples were taken, specifically for molluscs, from the linear ditch in trenches *1972TT* and *1973TT*. These samples were also sorted for animal bones.

#### **1.1.1.1.2 Results**

1.1.1.1.2.1 A small site assemblage of just three fragments were recovered from one of the ditchfills, context [8]. The same deposit contained a number of pottery sherds which indicate a late Iron Age deposition date for this material.

1.1.1.1.2.2 The bones can all be identified as cattle, namely a head and two lower limb fragments, and all are well preserved. None of these bones are from juvenile or younger animals, more likely representing the remains of adult individuals. Two of these bones are measurable.

1.1.1.1.2.3 Neither of the two samples taken produced animal bones.

#### **1.1.1.1.3 Conclusions**

1.1.1.1.3.1 In essence the assemblage represents the well dated remains of a very minor food waste dump. Though the condition, as well as the potential information available from these bones (regarding both age and size), is good, the major concern must be the lack of any noticeable concentrations of bone waste. Thus it can be expected that any further excavation should produce information concerning both the use and type of animals exploited during this period, albeit at a somewhat limited level.

#### **1.1.1.1.4 Table 5: Bulk dataset, bones**

TRENCH	CONTEXT	MATERIAL	COUNT	WEIGHT	COMMENTS
1974TT	8	BONE	3	190	



**APPENDIX 3****TERRESTRIAL AND FRESHWATER MOLLUSCS**

By Kevin Rielly, with Jane Sidell

**1.1.1.1.1 Introduction**

1.1.1.1.1.1 Samples for mollusc analysis were collected from two ditches on this site. The specific research aim considered was the characterisation of local ecological conditions.

1.1.1.1.1.2 The samples collected for specific mollusc analysis were placed in buckets, soaked in water and disaggregated using hydrogen peroxide. They were then sieved through a 0.50mm sieve and air-dried. The snails were then removed from any remaining matrix.

1.1.1.1.1.3 The mollusc assemblages from both sample suites were scanned under a low power binocular microscope. Individual shells were identified to species or genus level where possible in order to quantify species diversity. However, this assessment does not aim to provide an exhaustive identification list, but rather comments on abundance and diversity which can then be used to assess the potential of the material for full analysis. Codes were assigned for abundance ratings, and are as follows:

1.1.1.1.1.4	1-10	individual apices	1
	11-20	individual apices	2
	21-50	individual apices	3
	50+	individual apices	4

**1.1.1.1.2 Results**

1.1.1.1.2.1 Two samples were collected specifically for mollusc analysis.

Sample 1	context [7]	fill of ditch [6]	1973TT	probably post-medieval
Sample 2	context [10]	fill of ditch [11]	1972TT	probably post-medieval

**1.1.1.1.2.2 Table 5: Environmental dataset, molluscs**

TRENCH	1973TT	1972TT
CONTEXT	7	10
SAMPLE	1	2
Clausiliidae	1	
<i>Valonia</i> sp.	?1	?1
<i>Discus rotundatus</i>	1	1
<i>Pisidium/Sphaerium</i>	1	1
<i>Cepaea</i> sp.	4	4

1.1.1.1.2.3 Preservation of molluscs was good, but species diversity was limited and dominated in both cases by *Cepaea* sp. with over a hundred individuals. Both whole and fragmented remains were present; additionally some examples were badly concreted. This may indicate that they have been transported in from elsewhere. This genus is catholic in its habitat preferences. The Clausillidae and *Discus* exemplify damp, shaded conditions, whilst the *Pisidium/Sphaerium* are freshwater aquatic species.

#### **1.1.1.1.3 Statement of potential**

1.1.1.1.3.1 There is limited potential for the reconstruction of local conditions from this site. The dominant species in both cases is of catholic habitat tolerance and therefore it will not be possible to make any other than very general comments. It seems likely that at certain times of the year at least, water and vegetation was present in the ditches, either flowing or not. The fact that the bivalves (*Pisidium/Sphaerium*) are all juveniles suggest that this may be a seasonal occurrence.

#### **1.1.1.1.4 Recommendations**

1.1.1.1.4.1 It is recommended that no further work is carried out on these samples other than to deposit the archive.

**1.1.1.1.5 ARC MSW97****1.1.1.1.6 BULK DATASET, POTTERY***Key:* LIA Late Iron Age

TRENCH	CONTEXT	MATERIAL	COUNT	WEIGHT	COMMENTS
1974TT	8	POT	25	396	LIA

**1.1.1.1.7 BULK DATASET, BONES**

TRENCH	CONTEXT	MATERIAL	COUNT	WEIGHT	COMMENTS
1974TT	8	BONE	3	190	

**1.1.1.1.7.1 Environmental dataset, molluscs**

TRENCH	1973TT	1972TT
CONTEXT	7	10
SAMPLE	1	2
Clausiliidae	1	
<i>Valonia sp.</i>	?1	?1
<i>Discus rotundatus</i>	1	1
<i>Pisidium/Sphaerium</i>	1	= 1
<i>Cepaea sp.</i>	4	4

**1.1.1.1.7.2 Environmental dataset, molluscs**

TRENCH	1973TT	1972TT
CONTEXT	7	10
SAMPLE	1	2
Clausiliidae	1	
<i>Valonia sp.</i>	?1	?1
<i>Discus rotundatus</i>	1	1
<i>Pisidium/Sphaerium</i>	1	= 1
<i>Cepaea sp.</i>	4	4