

Channel Tunnel Rail Link
Union Railways Ltd

Pilgrims Way, Aylesford, Kent

ARC PIL 98

Archaeological Evaluation Report

Environmental Statement Route Window No. 20

Contract No. 194/ 870

Oxford Archaeological Unit

December 1998

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UNION RAILWAYS LTD

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ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION

Environmental Statement Route Window No. 20

OS GRID TQ 7530 6010

Contract No. 194/ 870

REPORT

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December 1998

PILGRIMS WAY, AYLESFORD, KENT

ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION

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PILGRIMS WAY, AYLESFORD, KENT

ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION

SUMMARY

The Oxford Archaeological Unit was commissioned by Union Railways Ltd (URL) to conduct a field evaluation at land to the south of the Pilgrim's Way and east of the old Chatham Road, as part of a wider programme of archaeological investigations along the route of the Channel Tunnel Rail Link. Two previous evaluations were undertaken in 1997 for URL adjacent to the present site: White Horse Stone (ARC WHS 97), situated immediately to the north, revealed archaeological features and artefacts which date to the late Bronze Age/early Iron Age period. Boarley Farm (ARC BFM 97), located to the south, revealed archaeological features and finds of the late Iron Age/early Roman period.

The present evaluation investigated the southern extent of a dry valley at the foot of the North Downs escarpment. It defined the southern extent of Pleistocene deposits, a buried soil and colluvium, previously identified in the White Horse Stone evaluation.

Archaeological features were mainly concentrated along the western slope of the dry valley. The features in this area comprise six pits, a human cremation, and two ditches. Both ditches produced late Bronze Age/early Iron Age pottery, although the sherds from one of the ditches were small and abraded and may have been residual. An adult human cremation, within a pit, was sealed by colluvium. It contained a flat-topped bone pin, which indicates a date in the Iron Age or Roman period. None of the other pits produced artefactual evidence. However, two contained fragments of broken sarsen, which suggests that the pits may be the result of removing sarsen boulders from the ploughsoil.

Dating evidence from the site as a whole was sparse (11 pottery sherds in total). The majority of the sherds are likely to be of late Bronze Age or early Iron Age date. Evidence from the ongoing excavations at White Horse Stone suggests that there was a settlement on the western flank of the dry valley in the late Bronze Age/early Iron Age. The majority of the pottery from the present evaluation could be contemporary with this site.

A buried soil was identified in three of the trenches and is probably a continuation of the upper buried soil identified in the White Horse Stone evaluation. Two small pottery sherds were recovered from the buried soil, and while the dating of these sherds is inconclusive, an Iron Age date is likely.

A sherd of medieval pottery of the 12th-14th century was recovered from a broad cut at the base of the colluvium in the northernmost trench. This feature may be the result of removing a sarsen from the ploughsoil.

Three ditches were located at the southern end of the site. Two of these appear to form part of a recent field boundary, aligned parallel to the existing hedgeline. The third is undated.

SECTION 1: FACTUAL STATEMENT

1 BACKGROUND

1.1 Introduction

- 1.1.1 The Oxford Archaeological Unit (OAU) carried out a field evaluation on land to the south of Pilgrim's Way and immediately east of the old Chatham Road, Aylesford, (Fig. 1) on behalf of Union Railways Ltd (URL). The site is bisected by the parish boundary of Aylesford and Boxley. The evaluation was carried out between 27th July and 1st August 1998 as part of a programme of archaeological investigation along the line of the Channel Tunnel Rail Link. The purpose of the investigation is to assess the impact of the rail link on the cultural heritage of the site. An environmental assessment has been prepared (URL 1994).
- 1.1.2 The site is situated between two previous URL evaluations: Boarley Farm and White Horse Stone (URL 1997). The site is approximately 3.7 hectares in area.
- 1.1.3 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 is located at the foot of the escarpment of the North Downs, on the east side of the Medway gap, in a dry valley formed between two spurs, outcropping from the Downs below Bluebell Hill. The solid geology is Middle Chalk (National Geological Survey, Chatham Sheet 272).
- 1.2.2 The site lies between 25m and 13m above Ordnance Datum, and is under arable cultivation. Pilgrim's Way forms the northern boundary and at the time of the evaluation the site was crossed by a temporary access road constructed by the National Grid Company.
- 1.2.3 The geology of the valley bottom consists of a typical dry valley sedimentary sequence of variably chalky colluvial sediments, with flint clasts interbedded with silt horizons. These recent colluvial deposits overlie silt deposits, which are present throughout the valley, and are probably solifluction sediments deposited in the late Devensian.
- 1.2.4 Natural sarsen boulders occur in large numbers buried under the colluvial deposits in the valley bottom. Such boulders are found in large numbers on either side of the Medway gap (Jessup 1970). They are thought to be the product of differential hardening of the Tertiary beds which formerly covered the chalk, by infiltration of iron and silica salts in solution. As the softer sands eroded, the boulders were left stranded on the chalk plateau, from where they have tended to accumulate at the foot of the Downs escarpment. Human activity has been

responsible for the extensive redistribution of these stones, usually to remove them from farmland, where they obstruct ploughing.

1.3 Archaeological and historical background

- 1.3.1 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). The old Chatham Road forms the western boundary of the site and has been identified as the line of the Roman road from Rochester to Hastings (OAU No.1054).
- 1.3.2 The 'North Downs trackways' have been identified as a major prehistoric 'dual' route. They include the ridgeway, following the top edge of the Downs escarpment, and the Pilgrim's Way, or terraceway, which follows the chalk at the foot of the escarpment (Margary 1952). The Pilgrim's Way forms the northern site boundary and the track marks the parish boundary between Aylesford and Boxley at this point.
- 1.3.3 The site lies in the midst of a cluster of reputedly Neolithic monuments known as the 'Medway Megaliths': the Upper and Lower White Horse Stones' (TQ 753603, TQ 750603); Smythes' Megalith (TQ 753606); 'Kits Coty' (TQ 745609); Little Kits Coty (or 'The Countless Stones') (TQ 745604); and the 'Coffin Stone' (TQ 740606). All lie within a 1 km radius of the site. These are discussed in more detail in the White Horse Stone Evaluation report (URL 1997a).
- 1.3.4 The identification of the White Horse Stone as the remains of a Neolithic chambered tomb should be regarded with caution. Natural sarsen boulders are very common at the foot of the Downs on either side of the Medway Gap, and it is clear from documentary sources that many have been dug out of the fields by farmers in recent centuries, often being moved to the edge of fields or dumped in convenient hollows to remove them from the ploughsoil (Ashbee 1993).
- 1.3.5 Other sites recorded in the area include a late Iron Age/Roman building, possibly a temple, on the top edge of the escarpment, (TQ749640) (Kent Sites and Monuments Record KSMR TQ 76 SW 31). A scattered group of Roman burials were recorded to the north-west of the site in 1871, in the north-west corner of the same field (between TQ 7543 6079 and TQ 7603 6122) (KSMR TQ 76 SE 4).
- 1.3.6 The White Horse Stone evaluation (ARC WHS 97) identified a series of late Bronze Age or early Iron Age features concentrated on the spur to the west of the dry valley. These consisted of linear features and a pit deposit consisting of two neo-natal lambs, adult sheep bones, and the base of a late Bronze Age/ early Iron Age pot. The fill of the pit was exceptionally rich in charred grain of several different species, suggesting deliberate deposition. Further linear features were identified at the northern and southern ends of the dry valley. The features at the southern end were sealed beneath thick colluvial deposits and cut through an extensive buried soil horizon. Ongoing excavations on the western spur have

uncovered a probable settlement site, including two human pit burials and a substantial group of pits and post-holes (including several possible four-post structures). The pits and postholes forming the settlement site have produced pottery groups of both the late Bronze Age and early Iron Age. Some or all of the linear features are of Roman or later date.

- 1.3.7 The Boarley Farm evaluation (ARC BFM 97) identified two separate areas of Late Iron Age/ early Romano-British activity. The first was situated on high ground to the south-west of Boarley Farm, adjoining the present evaluation area. Two animal burials (a cow and a sheep), a posthole, pit and ditch were recorded. The second area, situated to the east of Boarley Farm, consisted of thirty-four postholes and four pits.

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 whether archaeological remains associated with, or in close proximity to, the two previous evaluations at White Horse Stone and Boarley Farm extend into the evaluation area.
- 2.1.3 To determine the presence and potential of environmental and economic indicators preserved in any archaeological features or deposits.
- 2.1.4 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 METHOD

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 The trench locations were established by P.H.Matts, Building and Civil Engineering Land Survey (Reading) based on the trench location plan provided by URL (Drawing No. 420-DGH-05770-62008-AB). The trenches have been plotted (Fig. 2) from digital information provided by URL using AutoCAD graphics programme.

- 3.2.2 Trenches 3101TT, 3102TT, 3103TT and 3104TT were moved to avoid the National Grid Company's temporary access track. Trenches 3096TT, 3098TT and 3100TT were moved to provide safe clearance from overhead electricity cables.
- 3.2.3 All coordinates used in this report relate to the URL local project grid unless otherwise stated. A full list of Ordnance Survey National Grid trench coordinates, 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 falls within URL's Route Window No. 20.

3.3 Excavation

- 3.3.1 An array of 13 trenches was excavated to sample the evaluation area. All trenches were 30m long and 1.90m wide. They were excavated using a 360° mechanical excavator, with a toothless ditching bucket, under close archaeological supervision. Machine excavation was stopped at the top of significant archaeological deposits, if encountered, otherwise on reaching bedrock or late glacial hillwash deposits.
- 3.3.2 The trenches were hand-cleaned except where archaeological deposits were clearly absent. Sample sections were excavated through all archaeological features and possible features. Sarsen boulders and examples of suspected sarsen removal marks were cleaned and recorded. Representative sample sections through the colluvial deposits in the base and sides of the dry valley were cleaned and recorded. Artefacts from archaeological features and colluvial deposits were collected by context and submitted for specialist examination.
- 3.3.3 Bulk samples were recovered from selected archaeological deposits (those containing artefacts or charred plant remains).
- 3.3.4 A colluvial sedimentary sequence in Trench 3097TT, including a possible palaeosol horizon, was sampled as a monolith column for possible future pollen or micromorphological analysis. Bulk samples were recovered from the more extensive soil horizon in 3098TT and wet-sieved for artefacts, charred plant and insect remains.

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 PIL 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 in three areas according to the type of features exposed in the trenches. Descriptions of individual trenches are presented in Section 5. A summary of all contexts and finds is presented in the Archaeological Context Inventory (Section 6).

4.2 Summary of Archaeology

Trenches with archaeological deposits on the western slope of the dry valley (Trenches 3097TT, 3098TT, 3100TT and 3103TT)

- 4.2.1 Pleistocene silts and chalk sediments were identified in these trenches and are likely to be a continuation of the periglacial deposits identified in the White Horse Stone evaluation (URL 1997a). A total of 17 sarsen boulders were recorded (in Trenches 3098TT, 3100TT, and 3103TT). All of the boulders were buried in periglacial deposits.
- 4.2.2 A buried soil was identified in 3097TT, 3098TT and 3103TT, although badly truncated by later ploughing. An environmental sample was taken from the buried soil in 3098TT and produced pottery of probable Iron Age date and small fragments of flint debitage. A number of features were located under the buried soil in Trench 3098TT, which were interpreted as root disturbance or solution holes.
- 4.2.3 Ditches in Trenches 3097TT and 3100TT produced pottery which probably dates to the late Bronze Age/early Iron Age. However, it should be noted that at White Horse Stone, the majority of linear features have proved to be of Roman or later date., although they often contain a high proportion of residual prehistoric pottery,
- 4.2.4 A total of seven pits were located. One of the pits, in Trench 3100TT, contained a human cremation and an associated bone pin, of Iron Age or Roman date. The remaining six pits were undated. The pits were similar in size except for a larger one in Trench 3103TT. This pit was cut at higher level in the colluvial sequence than the other features and may be later in date. A pit in Trench 3098TT contained a dense concentration of fire-cracked sarsen fragments. The distribution of the pits coincides with the distribution of natural sarsen boulders in the dry valley, which suggests that some of them may be socket holes left by the removal of sarsens from the ploughsoil.

Trenches with recent and undated ditches at south end of the site (Trenches 3102TT, 3106TT, and 3108TT)

- 4.2.5 Two ditches in Trenches 3102TT and 3106TT were aligned parallel to an extant hedgerow and were cut from immediately below the topsoil. They probably formed part of the modern field boundary. A ditch in Trench 3108TT produced no finds but was cut at a low level in the colluvial sequence.

Remaining Trenches (Trenches 3096TT, 3099TT, 3101TT, 3104TT, 3105TT and 3109TT)

- 4.2.6 The remaining trenches produced no archaeological features although periglacial deposits were recorded in 3096TT, 3101TT and 3104TT. Two layers of colluvium were present in all of these trenches, but relatively shallow ploughsoils/colluvium were recorded in Trenches 3099TT, 3102TT and 3106TT. A shallow 'pit' with an irregular base in Trench 3101TT may be due to weathering of chalk bedrock. Trenches 3099TT and 3109TT produced late Bronze Age/early Iron Age pottery from the base of the colluvium.

4.3 Context and find descriptions

- 4.3.1 Significant aspects of the site are summarised in the trench descriptions below. A summary of all contexts and associated finds appears in the Archaeological Context Inventory (Section 6). Detailed reports on the worked flints, pottery, environmental evidence, animal bones, human cremated bone are contained in Appendices 1-5.

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

5.1 Trenches with archaeological deposits on the western slopes of the dry valley (Trenches 3097TT, 3098TT, 3100TT and 3103TT)

Trench 3097TT (Fig.3)

- 5.1.1 This trench was excavated across the dry valley, immediately south of Pilgrim's Way and the site of the White Horse Stone evaluation (URL 1997a). The trench was excavated to a depth of 1.20m. The modern ploughsoil (106, 0.25m thick), and two colluvial layers (107, 0.35m thick; 108, 0.18m thick) were removed by machine, exposing a broad hollow (185), a buried soil (215), two pits (189, 191), a ditch (206) and periglacial deposits (186, 187, 188, 209).
- 5.1.2 The buried soil (215) was recorded along the full length of the trench, although it was not easily distinguished from the underlying periglacial deposits and was not as clearly defined as the buried soil recorded in Trenches 3098TT and 3103TT.
- 5.1.3 Ditch 206, which cut layer 215, had a shallow, U-shaped profile, 2.10m wide and 0.48m deep, with a slightly concave base, and was orientated north-east to south-west. The two fills (207, 208) consisted of brown silt with chalk flecks. The primary fill (207) also contained charcoal flecks and produced a sherd of late Bronze Age/early Iron Age pottery.

- 5.1.4 Pits 189 and 191 were located adjacent to one another. Pit 189 was circular, 0.48m in diameter and 0.10m deep, with a slightly irregular, rounded base. No finds were recovered from the single fill (190).
- 5.1.5 Pit 191 was circular, 0.44m in diameter and 0.22m deep. No finds were recovered from the fills (192 and 195), although charcoal was present in fill 192.
- 5.1.6 A broad cut (185), recorded at the east end of the trench, measured 10.50m along the trench and continued beyond the east end of the trench. It was 0.40m deep and contained three fills (109, 110, and 186). Fill 186 was restricted to its western edge and 109 and 110 extended for its full length. Fills 109 and 110 were very mixed, with charcoal flecks throughout, although a higher concentration of charcoal was recorded in the section immediately north of pits 189 and 191. A sherd of green-glazed medieval pottery, of 12th-14th century date, was recovered from fill 110.

Trench 3098TT (Fig.4)

- 5.1.7 This trench was located on the western side of the dry valley and excavated to a depth of 1.02m. The modern ploughsoil (149, 0.27m thick), a colluvial layer (150, 0.30 thick) and an earlier ploughsoil (151, 0.10m thick) were removed by machine, exposing a buried soil (152), a pit (193), periglacial silts (153 and 154) and eight sarsen boulders.
- 5.1.8 The buried soil (152), which was up to 0.09m thick, was machine excavated, except for a sample area c. 2m x 2m in extent, which was hand excavated to retrieve finds and environmental samples.
- 5.1.9 No finds were recovered from the hand excavation area, but two sherds of pottery were recovered from the soil sample. The date of these pottery sherds was unclear although one could be Iron Age in date.
- 5.1.10 The hand excavated area revealed five irregular features (170, 172, 178, 201, 203) located below the buried soil. The fill of these features was very similar to the buried soil.
- 5.1.11 Pit 193, located at the east end of the trench, was circular and flat-based, and measured 0.35m in diameter and 0.10m deep. The northern side had been dug down the side of a natural sarsen boulder. The pit fill (194) consisted largely of fragments of fire-cracked sarsen stone (average size of stone fragments 0.07m x 0.09m).

Trench 3100TT (Fig.4)

- 5.1.12. This trench was excavated down to the top of the periglacial deposits (139, 140, 147) and exposed six sarsen boulders, two pits (119, 156) and a ditch (145). Pit 119 contained a human cremation.
- 5.1.13 Ditch 145 had a U-shaped profile, was 1.60m wide and 0.40m deep, and was aligned from north-west to south-east. The single fill (146) produced a small

sherd of late Bronze Age/ early Iron Age pottery. The ditch cut periglacial deposits 139 and 140 and was overlain by colluvial deposit 138.

- 5.1.14 Pit 119 was 0.80m in diameter and 0.42m deep. Three fills were excavated (142, 143, 144). The secondary deposit (143) contained cremated adult human bone (Appendix 4) and associated charred material, including a flat-headed bone pin which was also burnt. A bulk environmental sample from the cremation consisted almost entirely of wood charcoal. A bulk sample from fill 143 also contained charcoal.

Trench 3103TT (Fig. 5)

- 5.1.15 This trench was located on the west side of the dry valley and excavated to a depth of 1.10m. The modern ploughsoil (160, 0.22m thick) and two colluvial layers (161, 0.24m thick; 162, 0.22m thick) were removed by machine, exposing a buried soil (163), two pits (117, 118), periglacial deposits (163, 169, 181, 182) and three sarsen boulders.

- 5.1.16 Two sarsen boulders were exposed in the trench and a third was removed by the machine during the initial trench excavation. The sarsen boulders in this trench were close together and occurred at a slightly higher level than the boulders in Trenches 3100TT and 3098TT. The surface of the largest boulder was pitted, perhaps by frost action, and it was overlain by periglacial deposits (180). The buried soil was significantly deeper (0.22m) on the south downslope side where it abutted the boulder suggesting both an accumulation of soil downslope and protection from ploughing by the boulder. It produced no finds.

- 5.1.17 Pits 117 and 118 were located close to one another. Pit 117 was circular with a slightly rounded base, and was 0.58m in diameter and 0.20m deep. No finds were recovered from its fills (120, 121). The relationship with the buried soil was uncertain although fills were similar to the buried soil.

- 5.1.18 Pit 118 was exposed in the section and cut the lower colluvial deposit (162). The pit was steep-sided with a slightly undercut north side. In plan it appeared to be square with slightly rounded corners, and was 1.20m wide and 0.80m deep. The full plan of the pit was not exposed. No finds were recovered from the pit fills (148, 155) which were very mixed in character, although both fills contained broken fragments of sarsen. It is possible that the feature is the socket-hole left by the removal of a sarsen boulder.

5.2 Trenches with recent and undated ditches at south end of the site (Trenches 3102TT, 3106TT, 3108TT)

Trench 3102TT (Fig.5)

- 5.2.1 This trench was located on the eastern slope of the dry valley near to the eastern site boundary and was excavated to a depth of 0.70m. The modern ploughsoil (174, 0.30m thick), earlier ploughsoil (175, 0.15m thick) and a colluvial layer (176, 0.25m thick) were excavated by machine down to solid chalk.

- 5.2.2 Ditch 183 (1.89m wide, 0.40m deep), which had a U-shaped profile, was visible from directly below the topsoil. The ditch was aligned from north to south and lay parallel to an existing hedge line.

Trench 3106TT (Fig.6)

- 5.2.3 This trench was excavated along the eastern slope of the dry valley, near to the eastern site boundary, and was excavated to a depth of 0.46m. The modern ploughsoil (196, 0.32m thick), and earlier ploughsoil (197, 0.14m thick), were excavated by machine down to solid chalk.

- 5.2.4 Ditch 199 was located directly below the topsoil and had a U-shaped profile (1.76m wide, 0.34m deep). The ditch was aligned from north to south and lay parallel to an existing hedge line. It is probably a continuation of ditch 183 in Trench 3102TT.

Trench 3108TT (Fig.6)

- 5.2.5 This trench was located at the southern end of the site where the dry valley broadens out. The trench was and excavated to a depth of 1.0m down to solid chalk. The modern ploughsoil (100, 0.30m thick), and two colluvial layers (101, 0.40m thick; 102, 0.27m thick) and a ditch (105), were revealed in the trench.

- 5.2.6 Ditch 105 had a U-shaped profile, 1.50m wide and 0.44m deep, and was aligned from east to west. It produced no finds, but was cut through colluvial deposit 102, and was sealed by colluvial deposit 101.

6 CONTEXT INVENTORY

TRENCH	CONTEXT	TYPE	ASSOCIATIONS	FINDS	NUMBER	DATE
3108	100	topsoil	over 101			
3108	101	colluvium	over 104, under 100			
3108	102	colluvium	over 103, under 101, cut by 105			
3108	103	natural chalk	under 102			
3108	104	primary fill of ditch	over 105, under 101			
3108	105	ditch	cuts 103, filled by 104			
3097	106	topsoil	over 107			
3097	107	colluvium	over 108, under 106			
3097	108	colluvium	over 109, under 107	pot	1	LBA/EIA
3097	109	fill of broad cut	over 110, under 108, fill of 185			
3097	110	fill of broad cut	over 186, under 109, fill of 185	pot	1	Med
3099	111	topsoil	over 112			
3099	112	early ploughsoil	over 113, under 111			
3099	113	early ploughsoil	over 114, under 112	pot	1	LBA/EIA
3099	114	natural chalk	under 113			
3103	117	pit	cuts 164, filled by 121			
3103	118	pit	cuts 162, filled by 155			
3100	119	cremation pit	cuts 139, filled by 142, 143, 144			
3103	120	upper fill of pit	fill of 117, over 121			
3103	121	primary fill of pit	fill of 117, under 120			
3105	122	topsoil	over 123			
3105	123	colluvium	over 124, under 122			
3105	124	colluvium	over 125, under 123			
3105	125	natural chalk	under 124			
3109	126	topsoil	over 127			
3109	127	colluvium	over 128, under 126			
3109	128	colluvium	over 129, under 127			
3109	129	natural	under 128			
3109	130	disturbance	cuts 129, filled by 131			
3109	131	disturbance	fill of 130, under 128	pot	3	LBA/EIA
3101	132	topsoil	over 133			
3101	133	colluvium	over 134, under 132			
3101	134	colluvium	over 135, under 133			
3101	135	natural	under 134			
3100	136	topsoil	over 137			
3100	137	colluvium	over 138, under 136			
3100	138	colluvium	under 137, over 144			
3100	139	colluvium	over 141, under 140, cut by 145, 119			
3100	140	periglacial silt	over 139, under 138			
3100	141	periglacial deposit	over 147, under 139			
3100	142	primary fill of cremation pit	fill of 119, under 143			
3100	143	fill of cremation pit	fill of 119 over 142, under 144	Bone pin	1	IA or Roman
				Cremated bone	10+	IA or Roman
3100	144	upper fill of cremation pit	fill of 119, over 143, under 138			

TRENCH	CONTEXT	TYPE	ASSOCIATIONS	FINDS	NUMBER	DATE
3100	145	ditch	cuts 140,139, filled by 146			
3100	146	fill of ditch	fill of 145, under 138	pot	1	LBA/EIA
3100	147	natural chalk	under 141			
3103	148	upper fill of pit	fill of 118, over 155, under 161			
3098	149	topsoil	over 150			
3098	150	colluvium	over 151, under 149			
3098	151	earlier ploughsoil	over 152, under 150			
3098	152	buried soil	over 153, under 151	pot	1	?IA
				pot	1	?Roman
				flint chips	4	
3098	153	periglacial deposit	over 154, under 152			
3098	154	periglacial deposit	under 153, cut by 193			
3103	155	primary fill of pit	over 118, under 148			
3100	156	pit	cuts 139, filled by 157			
3100	157	fill of pit	fill of 156,			
3101	158	natural depression	cuts 135, filled by 159			
3101	159	fill of natural depression	fill of 158, under 134			
3103	160	topsoil	over 161			
3103	161	colluvium	over 148, 162, under 160			
3103	162	colluvium	over 163, 182, under 161, cut by 118			
3103	163	buried soil	over 164, under 162			
3103	164	periglacial deposit	over 169, under 163			
3104	165	topsoil	over 166			
3104	166	subsoil	over 167, under 165			
3104	167	colluvium	over 168, under 166			
3104	168	natural	under 167			
3103	169	periglacial deposit	under 164			
3098	170	root/solution hole	cuts 153, filled by 171			
3098	171	fill of root/solution hole	over 170, under 152			
3098	172	root/solution hole	cuts 153, filled by 173			
3098	173	fill of root/solution hole	fill of 172, under 152			
3102	174	topsoil	over 184			
3102	175	earlier ploughsoil	over 176, under 174			
3102	176	earlier ploughsoil	over 177, under 175			
3102	177	natural	under 176			
3098	178	posthole	cuts 153, filled by 179			
3098	179	fill of root/solution hole	fill of 178, under 152			
3103	180	periglacial deposit	over 181, under 163			
3103	181	periglacial deposit	under 180			
3103	182	chalk / flint deposit	over 200, under 162			
3102	183	ditch	cuts 175,176,177, filled 184			
3102	184	fill of ditch	over 183, under 174	bone	3	
3097	185	cut of natural hollow	filled by 186			
3097	186	fill of broad cut	fill of 185, under 110			
3097	187	periglacial deposit	under 186			
3097	188	periglacial deposit	under 215			
3097	189	pit	under 190			

TRENCH	CONTEXT	TYPE	ASSOCIATIONS	FINDS	NUMBER	DATE
3097	190	pit fill	fill of 189			
3097	191	pit	cuts 188, filled by 192, 195			
3097	192	primary fill of ditch	over 191, under 195			
3098	193	pit with fire-cracked stone	cuts 154, filled by 194			
3098	194	fill of pit	fill of 193, under 153	stone	2	
3097	195	upper fill of pit	over 192			
3106	196	topsoil	over 197, 205			
3106	197	earlier ploughsoil	over 198, under 196			
3106	198	natural	under 197			
3106	199	recent ditch	cuts 198, filled by 205			
3103	200	chalk deposit	over 163, under 182			
3098	201	root/solution hole	cuts 153, filled by 202			
3098	202	fill of root/solution hole	fill of 201, under 152			
3098	203	posthole	cuts 153, filled by 204			
3098	204	fill of posthole	fill of 203, under 152	pot	1	?
3106	205	ditch fill	over 199, under 196			
3097	206	ditch	cuts 209, filled by 207			
3097	207	primary fill of ditch	fill of 206, under 208	pot	1	LBA/EIA
3097	208	secondary fill of ditch	fill of 206, over 207, under 108			
3097	209	colluvium	over 206, under 187			
3096	210	topsoil	over 211			
3096	211	colluvium	over 212, under 210			
3096	212	colluvium	over 213, under 211			
3096	213	colluvium	over 214, under 212			
3096	214	natural	under 213, 211			
3097	215	buried soil	over 187, cut by 185, 206	bone	1	

SECTION 2: STATEMENT OF IMPORTANCE

7 CONCLUSIONS

7.1 Extent of archaeological deposits (Fig. 7)

- 7.1.1 The majority of the archaeological deposits and features were concentrated in the north-western area of the site, centred around Trenches 3097TT, 3098TT and 3100TT. This approximates to the area of buried soil on the western slope and in the base of the dry valley.
- 7.1.2 A buried soil was identified in Trenches 3097TT, 3098TT and 3103TT. The full extent of the soil horizon is *c* 140m x 40m, but it is better preserved on the western valley slope (in Trenches 3098TT and 3103TT). It is a continuation of the buried soil identified in the area of the White Horse Stone evaluation (URL 1997a).
- 7.1.3 Colluvial deposits, consisting of two distinct horizons, were identified across the site. The combined depth of topsoil and colluvial layers varied from 0.70m to 1.10m deep, reaching the greatest depth in the valley bottom and becoming thinner further up the valley slope (in Trenches 3096TT, 3101TT, 3102TT and 3106TT).
- 7.1.4 Ditches were located in Trenches 3102TT, 3106TT and 3108TT on the eastern side of the site. The two ditches in 3102TT and 3106TT are recent in date and the ditch in 3108TT, although undated by finds, was cut at a high level in the colluvial sequence and is also unlikely to be prehistoric in date.
- 7.1.5 Trenches 3096TT, 3099TT, 3101TT, 3104TT, 3105TT, and 3109TT revealed no archaeological features.

7.2 Date and character of archaeological deposits

- 7.2.1 The date of the features is uncertain because of the small quantity of finds recovered. The pottery assemblage, although very small, is dominated by sherds of probable late Bronze Age or early Iron Age date. Pottery of this date occurs in the buried soil and throughout the overlying colluvial deposits on both sides of the Pilgrim's Way. This material probably derives from the late Bronze Age/early Iron Age settlement identified *c* 240m to the north-west, at the White Horse Stone site (URL 1997a and ARC WHS 98, Area B, 1998).
- 7.2.2 Most of the prehistoric pottery is likely to have been redeposited as a result of slope erosion and is not necessarily an accurate reflection of the date of the archaeological features or colluvium. However, in support of a prehistoric date for the buried soil and the bulk of the colluvial sequence, it should be noted that these deposits are present to similar depths on both sides of the 'Pilgrim's Way'. This trackway and boundary, even if not of prehistoric origin as is normally supposed, is certainly of considerable antiquity. If the colluvial sequence was of

recent origin, the 'Pilgrim's Way' should have formed a barrier to the movement of colluvium into the lower part of the dry valley.

- 7.2.3 A single sherd of medieval pottery was found in the fill of a broad, shallow feature (185), apparently sealed beneath the colluvium. This find casts some doubt on the postulated prehistoric date of the colluvial sequence. However, a single sherd is insufficient evidence to contradict the cumulative evidence for a prehistoric date. It is likely that intrusive material has been deposited at considerable depths in the colluvium in the process of digging up and removing sarsen boulders.
- 7.2.4 The bone pin from the cremation indicates burial activity on the site in the Iron Age or Roman periods, perhaps associated with the possible settlement of the date identified by the Boarley Farm evaluation (URL 1997b).

7.3 Late Bronze Age/ early Iron Age pottery

- 7.3.1 The majority of the pottery recovered from the evaluation is late Bronze Age or early Iron Age in date. None of the sherds were particularly large and only a small number were recovered from stratified archaeological contexts. The largest sherd (28g) was recovered from the primary fill of a ditch in Trench 3097TT, and may be considered fairly reliable dating evidence. A small sherd recovered from a ditch in Trench 3100TT is too small to be considered reliable dating evidence. The remaining sherds were recovered from colluvial deposits.

7.4 Sarsen boulders (Fig. 7)

- 7.4.1 The present evaluation has recorded 17 sarsen boulders, the largest in excess of c 1.3m in length. The boulders all occurred in the valley bottom, within an area c 0.5 ha in extent.
- 7.4.2 There is no convincing evidence that any of the boulders recorded on the site have been utilised, although broken fragments of sarsen stone occurred in a pit in 3103TT and fire cracked stone formed the majority of the fill of a pit in Trench 3096TT. This suggests that some of the pits identified may be socket-holes left by the removal of sarsens. There is ample evidence, both archaeological and documentary, that numerous boulders have been removed from the field by farmers, probably over many centuries, as an obstruction to ploughing (Ashbee 1993, Evans 1948, A.Veitch pers.comm.).
- 7.4.3 Boulders removed from fields have been disposed of in a number of ways in recent times: They have often been incorporated into buildings, used as park or garden decorative features, or dumped in convenient holes (Ashbee 1993).
- 7.4.4 A provisional list of sarsen boulders recorded in Kent (Ashbee 1993), indicates a close correspondence between the distribution of the Medway Megaliths and that of natural concentrations of sarsen boulders. The latter are recorded exclusively at the foot of the North Downs escarpment, with the vast majority occurring in concentrations on either side of the Medway Gap (Ashbee 1993). This suggests

that the occurrence of megalithic monuments in the area owes more to the ready availability of suitable boulders than to cultural factors. The interpretation of the White Horse Stone as the remains of a megalithic tomb (rather than a boundary marker) is debatable (Evans 1950, Holgate 1981, Ashbee 1993).

7.5 Environmental evidence

- 7.5.1 The environmental evidence from the site identified molluscs and charred plant remains, including cereal grains (Appendix 3).
- 7.5.2 The five trenches in the lower valley bottom all revealed thick colluvial sedimentary sequences, including late glacial and post-glacial deposits.
- 7.5.3 The extensive buried soil horizon identified on the western side of the valley forms the southern extent of the upper buried soil located in the White Horse Stone evaluation (URL 1997a).

8 IMPORTANCE OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL DEPOSITS

8.1 Survival/ condition

- 8.1.1 The archaeological features in Trenches 3097TT, 3098TT and 3100TT were overlain by up to 0.80m of colluvium, which has protected them from damage by ploughing. The shallow depth of overburden on the valley slopes means that any features present are likely to have been disturbed by ploughing.

8.2 Period

- 8.2.1 Most of the pottery recovered is late Bronze Age or early Iron Age in date (Appendix 2). The evaluation produced 11 pottery sherds. However none had diagnostic features and the majority were very small (2-6g). The size and abraded condition of the remaining sherds suggests they may have been redeposited as a result of colluvial erosion.
- 8.2.2 The cumulative evidence to date from the White Horse Stone site and the present evaluation, suggests that the buried soil was sealed by colluvium in the later prehistoric period, perhaps as a result of deforestation or the introduction of arable cultivation to the site. However, the pottery from the buried soil and overlying colluvium may be redeposited from the known late Bronze Age/early Iron Age site on the western side of the valley, and does not necessarily reflect the date of deposition of the colluvium.
- 8.2.3 The cremation in Trench 3100TT is likely to be either Iron Age or Roman in date, based on the evidence of the bone pin. This is the only feature identified which is likely to be contemporary with the late Iron Age/ early Roman sites identified to the east and west of Boarley Farm (URL 1997).

- 8.2.4 The medieval pottery from Trench 3097TT was found in a broad hollow, perhaps created by the removal of a sarsen boulder.
- 8.2.5 Six pits remain undated, some or all of which could result from removing sarsens from the ploughsoil. They could therefore be of widely differing date. Of the pits identified, one large, square pit in Trench 3103TT differed in character from the others and was cut through the upper part of the colluvial sequence. Stratigraphic evidence shows that it is later in date than the Iron Age/ Roman cremation.

8.3 Rarity

- 8.3.1 A small but growing number of sites of late Bronze Age/early Iron Age date are known in Kent, mostly from evaluations (Barclay 1994). This site has largely confirmed and expanded on the previous evaluation at the White Horse Stone (1997a). In particular, the southern extent of the buried soil has been defined (The total area is estimated at *c* 1.5 ha).
- 8.3.2 Considerable work has been carried out on post-glacial colluvial sites in Wessex (Allen 1992), but in Kent such studies have normally been concerned mainly with the late glacial sequence. Notable exceptions which have produced important post-glacial environmental data include Holywell Combe, near Folkestone, where two post-glacial buried soil horizons, in a deep colluvial sequence, produced Bronze Age and Iron Age artefacts respectively (Preece 1993). However, radio-carbon dating and mollusc analysis both produced considerably older dates than the Early Bronze Age date indicated by the archaeology. Preece suggests that the palaeosols represent periods of scrub regeneration and consequent retardation of slope erosion (Preece 1993).
- 8.3.3 At the Devils' Kneadingtrough, near Brook, another scarp-face combe, mollusc analysis indicated that clearance of the primary woodland had taken place by 2590±105bc. Pollen analysis of organic valley deposits from Frogholt and Wingham showed the presence of cleared land and agriculture by the Bronze Age (Kerney 1963, Holgate 1993).

8.4 Fragility/ vulnerability

- 8.4.1 The truncated state of the archaeological features on the higher valley slopes, and the comparatively shallow depth of topsoil and colluvium, indicates that they are under threat from active slope erosion and ploughing.
- 8.4.2 Although the archaeological features in the lower valley bottom are deeply buried, the potential palaeoenvironmental significance of the palaeosols and overlying colluvial deposits suggests that this area should also be treated as vulnerable to any ground disturbance.

8.5 Diversity

- 8.5.1 The archaeological features are restricted to pits and ditches and the single Roman or Iron Age cremation in Trench 3100TT. The date and function of the pits remains uncertain. Some are likely to be the result of removing sarsen boulders from the ground, and could date from any period from the late Bronze Age/ early Iron Age onwards.

8.6 Documentation

- 8.6.1 No excavations have previously been carried out on the site. Prior to the evaluation, the site was the subject of a surface collection survey. The results of this evaluation add further information to that obtained during previous and ongoing investigations at White Horse Stone (URL 1997a) and the Boarley Farm evaluation (URL 1997b) The White Horse Stone evaluation report discusses the local and regional context of The Medway Megaliths in more detail.
- 8.6.2 Apart from ongoing work at the White Horse Stone site, no detailed palaeoenvironmental studies have been carried out in the immediate area.

8.7 Group value

- 8.7.1 The main interest of the site lies in the conjunction of potentially prehistoric features with an artefact-bearing colluvial sequence, with high palaeoenvironmental potential. The contribution of the site to studies of the Medway Megaliths to date comprises mainly negative evidence, with less group value than had been expected.

8.8 Potential

- 8.8.1 The evaluation has demonstrated the southern continuation from the White Horse Stone site of colluvial silts and an extensive palaeosol horizon, cut by archaeological features. These two sites have the considerable potential for establishing a dated late-and post-glacial environmental sequence for the area and examining depositional processes in the lower slopes of the dry valley.

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APPENDIX 1

WORKED FLINT

by P.Bradley, Oxford Archaeological Unit

1 Introduction

- 1.1 Processing of a soil sample from the buried soil (152) in Trench 3098TT produced three small struck flint chips and a possible flake.

Table 1: Distribution of worked flint by context

Context	Description	Type
152	Buried soil	3 chips of struck flint and a possible flake

APPENDIX 2

POTTERY AND FIRED CLAY

by A.J.Barclay, Oxford Archaeological Unit

1 Introduction

- 1.1 The evaluation produced a small collection of 11 (101g) body sherds that ranged in date from the late Bronze Age to medieval. None of the sherds are decorated. Most of the pottery is of a relatively small size and in a worn state, indicating that it could well be residual (contexts 108, 113, 146, 152, 204 in particular).

2 Methodology

- 2.1 The assemblage is quantified by sherd count and weight (see Table 2). In the absence of diagnostic featured sherds, dates have been assigned by fabric.

3 Late Bronze Age/early Iron Age

- 3.1 Seven sherds could be of this date. These sherds were manufactured from either flint, flint and sand or flint and grog-tempered fabrics. Contexts 131 and 207 produced relatively large and thick walled (c.10-5 mm) sherds that had been manufactured from flint and grog-tempered fabrics. These sherds are most likely to be of late Bronze Age date, although in the absence of diagnostic sherds their precise date is uncertain. A coarse flint-tempered sherd from context 113 is most likely late Bronze Age in date. Two fine flint and sand tempered sherds from contexts 146 and 108 respectively could be of either late Bronze Age or early Iron Age date.

4 Iron Age

- 4.1 A small and abraded sand-tempered sherd from context 152 could be of Iron Age date.

5 Roman

- 5.1 A small and abraded shell-tempered sherd from context 152 could be of early Roman date, alternatively it could be prehistoric.

6 Medieval

- 6.1 Context 110 contained a single glazed medieval sherd of 12-14th Century date.

7 Indeterminate

- 7.1 Context 204 produced a very small fragment of fired clay that could be either pottery or tile. The fabric appears to contain grog or ferruginous clay pellets.

8 Discussion

8.1 Most of this material was recovered from either layers or features of natural origin. However, ditch 207 in Trench 3097TT contained a single late Bronze Age sherd. Probable late Bronze Age sherds were recovered from the ploughsoil or colluvium in Trenches 3097TT and 3099TT. Other residual late Bronze Age sherds came from a burrow in Trench 3109TT and a later ditch in 3100TT. An Iron Age sherd and a possible early Roman sherd came from a buried soil in Trench 3098TT, while an indeterminate sherd came from a possible feature associated with a buried soil in Trench 3098TT.

Table 2. Quantification of all pottery by sherd number and weight.

Trench	Context	LBA/ EIA	IA	Roman	Medieval	Indeterminate	Total
3097	108	1, 3g					1, 3g
3097	110				1, 25g		1, 25g
3099	113	1, 6g					1, 6g
3109	131	3, 32g					3, 32g
3100	146	1, 2g					1, 2g
3098	152		1, 2g	1, 2g			2, 4g
3098	204					1, 1g	1, 1g
3097	207	1, 28g					1, 28g
	Total	7, 71g	1, 2g	1, 2g	1, 25g	1, 1g	11, 101g

APPENDIX 3

ENVIRONMENTAL REMAINS

By, Greg Campbell, Oxford Archaeological Unit

1 Introduction

- 1.1 In order to characterise the preservation of palaeoenvironmental indicators, three deposits were sampled: the possible buried soil (152), and two of the fills (143 and 144), of a cremation pit (119). These samples (each of 40 litres) were processed to extract their charred remains and artefacts.
- 1.2 Modern contamination was apparent (in the form of modern herbaceous roots, burrowing types of snail, and fragments of coal) in all sampled deposits. Contamination was least marked in deposit 143. All samples contained snails, the buried soil (152) being extremely rich.

2 Discussion

- 2.1 All sampled deposits contained charred plant remains. The largest quantity of these was recovered from the fill of the cremation pit (143), but the remains are almost entirely wood charcoal too small to be identified, except for three or four pieces. One possible grain seed was observed. The other cremation fill was dominated by wood charcoal too small to identify, but also contained charred herbaceous plant remains in very small quantities (three unidentifiable cereal grains, and two weed seeds).
- 2.2 The buried soil (152) also contained charred plant remains dominated by wood charcoal too fine to be identifiable and a small quantity of herbaceous plant remains. The latter include four unidentifiable cereal grains, two weed seeds and three pieces of chaff (including one glume base, probably of hulled wheat).
- 2.3 Bone included burnt human remains from the cremation pit, and one fragment of long bone with severe chemical pitting from the buried soil.

APPENDIX 4

CREMATED HUMAN REMAINS

By, Angela Boyle, Oxford Archaeological Unit

1 Introduction

- 1.1 A single deposit of cremated human bone (143) was recovered from the fill of a pit (119). It was associated with a worked bone pin which had also been burnt. The cremated bone has been scanned and the results appear in the table below.

Table 3: Summary of cremated bone

Trench	3100TT
Context	143
Weight	189g
Age	Adult
Sex	?
Colour	Predominantly white and well calcined
Identifiable bone	Skull vault, ulna, misc. long bone fragments
Comments	Only the largest fraction (>10 mm) has been scanned and weighed at this stage, fragments of unburnt animal bone were present

- 1.2 The pin is of a type which can be paralleled at a number of sites of broadly Roman date including Colchester (Crummy 1983, 24, fig. 22) nos 420, 423.

APPENDIX 5

ANIMAL BONE

By Bethan Charles, Oxford Archaeological Unit

1 Introduction

1.1 The evaluation produced a total of 4 bone fragments, all retrieved by hand. The condition of the bone is summarised in Table 4.

1.2 *Condition of the bone*

The condition of the bone is graded on a scale of 1 to 5. Bone graded as 1 is in excellent condition with little post-depositional damage, and that graded as 5 cannot be graded to either species or element. The assemblage from Pilgrim's Way had post-depositional surface pitting and root damage.

Table 4: Condition of animal bone

Condition	1	2	3	4	5
No of contexts	0	0	0	2	0

1.3 *Species representation*

A bone recovered from the buried soil (215) in Trench 3097TT was a fragment of a right cattle femur. The bone from a ditch fill (184) in Trench 3102TT consisted of 3 fragments of unidentifiable bone.

Table 5: Number of animal bone fragments divided by species

	Cattle	Sheep/goat	Pig	Unidentified
Hand retrieved	1	0	0	3