

Channel Tunnel Rail Link
Union Railways South Ltd

West of Chapel Mill, Lenham Heath, Kent

ARC WCM 99

Archaeological Evaluation Report

Environmental Statement Route Window No.27

Contract No. S/400/SP/0009 P482

Oxford Archaeological Unit

February 1999

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UNION RAILWAYS SOUTH LTD

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ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION

Environmental Statement Route Window No.27

OS GRID TQ 9010 5030

Contract No. S/400/SP/0009 P482

FINAL REPORT

Volume 1 of 1

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February 1999

WEST OF CHAPEL MILL, LENHAM HEATH, KENT

ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION

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WEST OF CHAPEL MILL, LENHAM HEATH, KENT

ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION

SUMMARY

The Oxford Archaeological Unit was commissioned by Union Railways South Limited to conduct a field evaluation on land to the west of Chapel Mill, near Lenham Heath, Kent (NGR TQ 9010 5030, URL Grid 70050 30330).

Twelve evaluation trenches were excavated in two areas situated to the north-east and south west of Lenham Heath Road. The evaluation covered an area of c 3.04 ha in total.

An area of modern disturbance overlying a post-medieval ditch and two undated pits were identified to the north-east of the Lenham Heath Road. Five undated, shallow linear features and an undated curving ditch were identified to the south-west of Lenham Heath Road.

SECTION 1: FACTUAL STATEMENT

1 BACKGROUND

1.1 Introduction

1.1.1 The Oxford Archaeological Unit (OAU) carried out a field evaluation (Fig.1) on land to the west of Chapel Mill, near Lenham Heath, Kent (NGR TQ 9010 5030, URL grid URL Grid 70050 30330). The work was conducted on behalf of Union Railways South Ltd (URL) between 11th and 18th January 1999 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. The site lies within Environmental Statement Route Window No.27 and an environmental assessment has been prepared (URL 1994).

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

1.2 Geology, topography and land-use

1.2.1 The underlying geology of the site consists of Hythe Beds sand on the higher ground to the north, and Atherfield Clay on the lower ground to the south-west. Colluvial deposits were present in seven of the lower lying trenches (3567TT, 3568TT, 3569TT, 3570TT, 3571TT, 3572TT, and 3573TT).

1.2.2 The site comprised two areas located either side of the present Lenham Heath Road. The southern area lay within the north-western boundary of Chilston Park, a major historic landscape feature. This area forms part of a substantial wooded rise that has been severed from the main body of the park by the construction of the M20 motorway. The north-eastern part of the site includes a ridge of higher ground which slopes down towards Chapel Mill to the south-east.

1.2.3 The northern most part of the site had been recently ploughed, prior to the evaluation. Elsewhere the land was in use as pasture. Within the grounds of Chilston Park were the remnants of a belt of mature Scots pine trees.

1.2.4 The site is 3.04 hectares in area. The ground level elevations of the evaluation trenches varied from 101.14 m to 87.10 m above Ordnance Datum (OD).

1.3 Archaeological and historical background

1.3.1 A number of ring ditches (OAU No. 1317) are known from cropmarks in the area immediately to the north of the evaluation (URL 1994).

1.3.2 Royton Manor (OAU No. 158), a Grade II listed medieval hall house, is located *c* 150m to the east of the evaluation. Further to the east lies the site of a manorial chapel, possibly of 13th century date (URL 1994).

1.3.3 The evaluation covers two areas separated by Lenham Heath Road. This road forms the northern boundary of Chilston Park (OAU No. 2047), a formal park which dates from the 17th century.

1.3.4 The area to the north of Lenham Heath Road is believed to have been the site of a temporary works compound, used during construction of the adjacent motorway bridge.

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 METHOD

3.1 General

3.1.1 A detailed Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) for the evaluation was prepared by URS 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 surveyed by the Oxford Archaeological Unit using a total station theodolite. The trenches have been plotted (Fig. 2) from digital information provided by URS using the AutoCAD graphics programme.

3.2.2 All co-ordinates used in this report relate to the URL 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 a scale of 1:50. Sections were drawn at a scale of 1:20.

3.2.3 The evaluation area falls within URS Environmental Route Window 27.

3.3 Excavation

- 3.3.1 Twelve trenches were excavated. All were 30m long and 1.8m wide, with the exception of Trench 3565TT, which was shortened to a length of 22m to avoid power cables, which ran across the site. The trenches were excavated under close archaeological supervision, using a 360° tracked mechanical excavator fitted with a toothless ditching bucket. The trenches were machined to the first significant archaeological horizon, or to undisturbed natural where no archaeological features were present. Test pits were dug by machine in three trenches (3562TT, 3564TT and 3567TT), to a maximum depth of 1.2m, to check that the depth of excavation was correct.
- 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. Artefacts from archaeological features and colluvial deposits were collected by context and submitted for specialist examination.

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 WCM 99.
- 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 trench descriptions are presented in Section 5. A summary of all contexts and finds is presented in the archaeological context inventory (Section 6). Reports on the pottery and ceramic building material are contained in Appendices 1 and 2.

4.2 General stratigraphy

- 4.2.1 The geology was variable, consisting of Hythe Beds (sand) on the higher ground to the north-east of the site, and Atherfield Clay on the lower ground to the south-west.
- 4.2.2 Colluvial deposits were present in eight trenches on the lower ground to the south-west. These deposits reached a maximum depth of *c* 0.92m and typically consisted of orange-brown silty sand or silty clay.
- 4.2.3 All trenches were sealed by up to 0.28m of topsoil.

4.3 Summary of archaeology

- 4.3.1 Five shallow, linear features were located within the grounds of Chilston Park, in trenches 3569TT and 3571TT. A single curvilinear ditch was located in trench 3573TT.

- 4.3.2 Trenches 3569TT and trench 3571TT were placed across a low bank, which was probably the result of landscaping work associated with construction of the M20 motorway.
- 4.3.3 The features identified were similar in character, consisting of shallow linear cuts, up to 0.24 m deep, filled with brownish grey to yellowish grey silty clay. Four of these features were aligned north-west to south-east. The fifth linear feature terminated within trench 3569TT and was aligned approximately east-west. The features produced no finds and are undated.
- 4.3.4 Several land-drains were recorded crossing trenches 3569TT and 3571TT. The fill of the drains was very similar to that of the other linear features, and it is likely that some of the features may relate to the laying of the field-drain system, and possibly to landscaping work during construction of the M20 motorway.
- 4.3.5 A sixth undated linear feature, similar in character to the others but curving, was recorded in trench 3573TT. It was sealed by 0.6m of colluvial silty clay. This ditch was aligned approximately north-west to south-east, and was 1.6m wide x 0.4 m deep.
- 4.3.6 To the north of Lenham Heath Road two trenches, 3565TT and 3566TT, revealed extensive modern disturbance which is likely to be associated with the construction of a road bridge over the M20 motorway at the southern corner of the site. A probable former field boundary ditch (6608), aligned north-west to south-east within trench 3566TT, had fills containing post-medieval and modern finds. A shallow pit (6614) adjoining the ditch is also likely to be modern. A large undated feature (6605) at the northern end of trench 3566TT was only partially uncovered within the trench and is probably a pit. A layer of soil containing modern finds overlay its fills, but it is possible that the feature pre-dates the modern disturbance in this area.

4.4 Site archive

- 4.4.1 The site archive has been compiled in accordance with the specification prepared by URS 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 3562TT, 3563TT, 3564TT, 3567TT, 3572TT (Fig. 2)

- 5.1.2 No archaeological finds or features were located within trenches 3562TT, 3563TT, 3564TT and 3567TT, which were located to the north of Lenham Heath Road. The trenches were typically excavated to a depth of *c* 0.35m. Test pits were dug into the natural, to a maximum depth of 1.2m, in trenches 3562TT, 3564TT and 3567TT.
- 5.1.3 Trench 3572TT, which was located to the south of the road, was similarly devoid of finds or features.

5.2 Trench 3565TT

- 5.2.1 This trench was shortened to a length of 22m to avoid services located to the south-east of the trench, and overhead power lines. It was excavated to a maximum depth of 1.2 m.
- 5.2.2 A single, very large modern feature crossed the trench on a north-west to south-east alignment. The feature had irregular stepped sides with a flat base and was at least 0.58m deep. Modern finds including plastic sheet were recovered from the fills.

5.3 Trench 3566TT (Fig 3)

- 5.3.1 Three features (6605, 6608, 6615) were identified in this trench, which was excavated to a maximum depth of 1.40m. These included a substantial ditch (6608), which was aligned approximately north-west to south-east across the trench. The sides of the ditch were slightly stepped and its base was uneven. It measured 2.6m wide and 1.2m deep. One piece of probable post-medieval brick and a single sherd of medieval pottery were recovered from one of its lower fills. These fills had been truncated by a modern re-cutting of the ditch on the same alignment.
- 5.3.2 A small shallow depression (6614) was partially visible adjacent to ditch 6608. Although it produced no finds, the fill of the feature, a dark orange brown sandy clay, was very similar to the overlying subsoil layer (6601), which contained modern material.
- 5.3.3 A large undated feature, partially exposed at the northern end of the trench, was probably a pit (6605). This feature was at least 1.6m wide by 0.7m deep, with steeply sloping sides and a flat base. No finds were recovered from its fills.
- 5.3.4 A layer of grey brown silty sand containing modern debris (6601), including barbed wire and discarded fencing, was particularly noticeable towards the south of the trench. This layer appeared to seal features 6605 and 6614 (see above) but appears to be earlier than a modern re-cutting of ditch 6608.

5.4 Trench 3569TT (Fig. 4)

- 5.4.1 The trench was located across a bank immediately to the north of the M20 motorway, thought to be the result of modern landscaping during the motorway construction. It was excavated to a maximum depth of 1.2 m.
- 5.4.2 Three linear features (6904, 6906, 6909) were identified, aligned north-west to south-east across the trench. They had straight sloping sides with flat or slightly concave bases and contained similar silty clay fills. They measured from 0.7m to 1.2m in width and from 0.17 m to 0.22m in depth. These features are undated but it is thought that they may relate to land-drainage or cultivation, as the land drains found in this area were on a parallel alignment and contained similar fills.
- 5.4.3 A fifth shallow, undated feature (6910) located within the trench was aligned approximately from east to west. It had gently sloping sides, a concave base, and a brown-grey silty clay fill similar to that of features 6904, 6906 and 6909. It may be the

terminus of a shallow linear feature but is thought more likely to be the result of root disturbance.

5.4.4 All of these features were sealed by up to 0.65 m of orange brown clayey silt subsoil.

5.5 Trench 3570TT

- 5.5.1 The natural in this trench was encountered at a depth of 1.1m beneath the present ground surface (93.43m OD).
- 5.5.2 A single feature was uncovered at this depth. This consisted of an irregular cut (7004), whose fill (7003) consisted of a yellowish brown loamy sand with frequent charcoal flecks. Both fill and cut were poorly defined against the surrounding deposits and the feature is probably the result of tree root disturbance.

5.6 Trench 3571TT

- 5.6.1 The trench was excavated to a maximum depth of 1.2 m at the north-west end of the trench. At the south-east end of the trench, the colluvium and subsoil had been removed, presumably by landscaping work associated with construction of the M20, leaving a clearly defined bank. The trench at this point was 0.5m deep.
- 5.6.2 At the south-eastern end of the trench was a broad shallow feature (7104), with a grey clay fill. Although the feature is undated, the irregularity of the base and location beside the landscaped bank, suggests that it results from motorway construction activity.

5.7 Trench 3573TT (Fig. 5)

- 5.7.1 The trench was excavated to a maximum depth of 1.2m.
- 5.7.2 A curving ditch (7304) ran across the trench on a north-west to south-east alignment. The ditch measured 1.5m wide by 0.4m deep and had concave sides with a flat base. No finds were recovered from its fill.
- 5.7.3 A shallow irregular feature (7306), which lay 5m to the south-east of ditch 7304, was found to contain no finds. It is thought to be the result of root action.

6. ARCHAEOLOGICAL CONTEXT INVENTORY

ARC WCM 99: West of Chapel Mill evaluation							
Trench	Context	Type	Description	Association	Finds	Number	Date
3562TT	6200	Layer	Ploughsoil	Over 6201			
3562TT	6201	Layer	Ploughsoil	Over 6202			
3562TT	6202	Layer	Subsoil	Fills 6204, over 6205			
3562TT	6203	Layer	Silty sand	Cut by 6204			
3562TT	6204	Cut	Ploughmarks	Cuts 6203, filled by 6202			
3562TT	6205	Layer	Natural	Under 6202			
3562TT	6206	Layer	Natural	Under 6205			
3563TT	6300	Layer	Ploughsoil	Over 6301			
3563TT	6301	Layer	Subsoil	Over 6302			
3563TT	6302	Layer	Subsoil	Over 6303			
3563TT	6303	Layer	Natural	Under 6302			
3564TT	6400	Layer	Ploughsoil/ topsoil	Over 6401, 6402			
3564TT	6401	Layer	Ploughsoil	Over 6403			
3564TT	6402	Layer	Subsoil	Over 6403			
3564TT	6403	Layer	Natural sand	Over 6404			
3564TT	6404	Layer	Natural sand	Over 6405			
3564TT	6405	Layer	Natural sand	Over 6406			
3564TT	6406	Layer	Natural sand	Over 6407			
3564TT	6407	Layer	Natural sand	Under 6406			
3565TT	6500	Layer	Topsoil	Over 6504			
3565TT	6501	Layer	Subsoil	Cut by 6503, over 6502			
3565TT	6502	Layer	Natural sand	Under 6501			
3565TT	6503	Cut	Modern disturbance	Cuts 6501, filled by 6504, 6505			
3565TT	6504	Fill	Fill of disturbance	Fill of 6503	CBM Plastic	2 1	Post-medieval Modern
3565TT	6505	Fill	Fill of disturbance	Fill of 6503			
3566TT	6600	Layer	Topsoil	Over 6601, 6606, 6613			
3566TT	6601	Layer	Subsoil	Over 6603			
3566TT	6602	Layer	Subsoil	Over 6610, cut by 6605			
3566TT	6603	Fill	Fill of ditch	Fill of 6605			
3566TT	6604	Fill	Fill of ditch	Fill of 6605			
3566TT	6605	Cut	Pit?	Cuts 6602			
3566TT	6606	Fill	Fill of service trench?	Fill of 6608			
3566TT	6607	Fill	Fill of service trench?	Fill of 6608	Pottery	1	Medieval
3566TT	6608	Cut	Ditch	Cuts 6609			
3566TT	6609	Layer	Natural	Cut by 6608, over 6616			
3566TT	6610	Layer	Natural	Under 6602			
3566TT	6611	Fill	Fill of ditch	Fill of 6608			
3566TT	6612	Fill	Fill of ditch	Fill of 6608			
3566TT	6613	Fill	Fill of depression 6614	Fill of 6614			
3566TT	6614	Cut	Depression	Filled by 6613, cuts 6601			
3566TT	6615	Fill	Fill of ditch	Fill of 6608	Cardboard	1	Modern
3566TT	6616	Layer	Stoney natural	Under 6609, over 6617			
3566TT	6617	Layer	Natural sand	Under 6616			
3567TT	6703	Layer	Topsoil	Over 6701			

Trench	Context	Type	Description	Association	Finds	Number	Date
3567TT	6701	Layer	Subsoil	Over 6702			
3567TT	6702	Layer	Colluvium	Over 6703			
3567TT	6703	Layer	Natural	Under 6702			
3568TT	6800	Layer	Topsoil	Over 6801			
3568TT	6801	Layer	Colluvium	Over 6802			
3568TT	6802	Layer	Colluvium	Over 6803			
3568TT	6803	Layer	Natural sandy loam	Under 6802			
3569TT	6900	Layer	Topsoil	Over 6901			
3569TT	6901	Layer	Colluvium	Over 6903, 6905, 6907, 6911			
3569TT	6902	Layer	Natural	Cut by 6904, 6906, 6907, 6911			
3569TT	6903	Fill	Fill of linear feature	Fill of 6904			
3569TT	6904	Cut	Linear feature	Filled by 6903, cuts 6902			
3569TT	6905	Fill	Fill of linear feature	Fill of 6906			
3569TT	6906	Cut	Linear feature	Filled by 6905, cuts 6902			
3569TT	6907	Fill	Fill of linear feature	Fill of 6909			
3569TT	6908	Fill	Fill of linear feature	Fill of 6909			
3569TT	6909	Cut	Shallow cut	Filled by 6907, 6908, cuts 6902			
3569TT	6910	Cut	Root-hole?	Filled by 6911, cuts 6902			
3569TT	6911	Fill	Fill of root-hole?	Fill of 6910			
3570TT	7000	Layer	Topsoil	Over 7001			
3570TT	7001	Layer	Colluvium	Over 7003			
3570TT	7002	Layer	Natural	Cut by 7004			
3570TT	7003	Fill	Fill of root disturbance	Fill of 7004			
3570TT	7004	Cut	Root disturbance	Cuts 7002			
3571TT	7100	Layer	Topsoil	Over 7101			
3571TT	7101	Layer	Colluvium	Over 7102			
3571TT	7102	Fill	Fill of shallow feature	Fill of 7104			
3571TT	7103	Layer	Natural	Cut by 7102			
3571TT	7104	Cut	Shallow feature	Filled by 7102, cuts 7103			
3572TT	7200	Layer	Topsoil	Over 7201			
3572TT	7201	Layer	Colluvium	Over 7202			
3572TT	7202	Layer	Natural	Under 7201			
3573TT	7300	Layer	Topsoil	Over 7301			
3573TT	7301	Layer	Colluvium	Over 7303, 7305			
3573TT	7302	Layer	Subsoil	Cut by 7304, 7306			
3573TT	7303	Fill	Ditch fill	Fill of 7304			
3573TT	7304	Cut	Ditch	Filled by 7303, cuts 7302			
3573TT	7305	Fill	Root disturbance fill	Fill of 7306			
3573TT	7306	Cut	Root disturbance	Filled by 7305, cuts 7302			
3573TT	7307	Layer	Natural	Under 7302			

SECTION 2: STATEMENT OF IMPORTANCE

7 CONCLUSIONS

7.1 Extent of archaeological deposits

- 7.1.1 Five shallow, undated linear features were found in trenches 3569TT and 3571TT, located between Lenham Heath Road and the M20 motorway, within the boundaries of Chilston Park.
- 7.1.2 A single, undated curvilinear ditch was found in trench 3573TT, close to the southern edge of the site.
- 7.1.3 Two undated pits and a post-medieval/ modern ditch were found in trench 3566TT.
- 7.1.4 Modern features and disturbance were identified in trenches 3565TT and 3566TT.

7.2 Date and character of archaeological deposits

- 7.2.1 The only potentially significant archaeological features identified were a series of shallow linear ditches located between Lenham Heath Road and the M20, none of which produced artefacts. Three of these features were aligned from north-west to south-east and lay parallel to nearby land-drains. They are therefore interpreted as possible land drainage or cultivation features. The fourth linear feature differed from the others in that it terminated within trench 3569TT and was aligned from east to west. Otherwise it was similar in fill and profile to the others.
- 7.2.2 The date and function of a curvilinear ditch (7304) in trench 3573TT is also uncertain.
- 7.2.3 Modern features and disturbance to the north of Lenham Heath Road are probably associated with the laying of electrical cables and use of the field as a temporary works site during construction of the adjacent motorway bridge. They include a substantial re-cut boundary ditch (6608) and a small pit (6614). A large possible pit (6605) in the same trench may also be of modern date.
- 7.2.4 To the south of the Lenham Heath Road there is further evidence for modern truncation of the natural soil sequence alongside the M20, probably dating from construction of the motorway.

7.3 Environmental evidence

- 7.3.1 No deposits containing material suitable for paleo-environmental reconstruction were identified.

8 IMPORTANCE OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL DEPOSITS

8.1 Survival/condition

8.1.1 The few features identified were generally well preserved beneath colluvial deposits or the present topsoil. However, some areas of the site appear to have suffered from truncation by modern activity, including works associated with construction of the M20 motorway.

8.2 Period

8.2.1 Very few finds were recovered during the evaluation. A single sherd of medieval pottery, which could have reached the site through normal agricultural processes, is the only material that clearly predates the twentieth century.

8.2.2 To the north of Lenham Heath Road there was evidence for modern disturbance, but no *in situ* dateable material from earlier periods. Two undated pits are also likely to be of modern date.

8.2.3 To the south of the road, five shallow linear features and a curvilinear ditch, found within the grounds of Chilston Park, remain undated.

8.3 Rarity

8.3.1 No finds or features diagnostic of date or function were identified.

8.4 Fragility/vulnerability

8.4.1 Given the limited archaeology present, the impact of the CTRL is unlikely to be significant.

8.5 Diversity

8.5.1 The limited range of features and very small quantity of finds recovered suggest a low level of past human activity on the site.

8.6 Documentation

8.6.1 No archaeological works had been undertaken in relation to this site prior to the CTRL Assessment of Historic and Cultural Effects (URL 1994).

8.7 Group value

8.7.1 The limited archaeological finds and features discovered are undiagnostic of either period or function. The site therefore has little group value.

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APPENDIX 1

The ceramic building material

By Kate Atherton (Oxford Archaeological Unit)

Three fragments of ceramic building material were recovered from the evaluation. Two fragments were found in context 6504, the fill of a modern depression (6503), and one fragment from context 6607, a fill of ditch 6608.

The two pieces of tile from context 6504 are probably both part of post-medieval roof tiles, but are from separate tiles that have been fired differently.

The other fragment (context 6607) does not contain any dateable characteristics, although it is probably part of a wall brick and is unlikely to pre-date the post-medieval period.

APPENDIX 2

The pottery

By Paul Booth (Oxford Archaeological Unit)

A single medieval sherd (11g) was recovered from a ditch fill (6607) in trench 3566TT. The sherd is reduced, in a fairly coarsely sand-tempered fabric with some irregular voids, indicating former organic or, perhaps more likely, shell inclusions. The sherd is probably from a cooking pot. Close dating is not possible, but an 11th-13th century date is most likely.