**Channel Tunnel Rail Link**

**London and Continental Railways**

**Oxford Wessex Archaeology Joint Venture**

# The Late Prehistoric and Roman Landscape at Snarkhurst Wood, Hollingbourne, Kent

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## ABSTRACT

As part of an extensive programme of archaeological investigation carried out in advance of the construction of the Channel Tunnel Rail Link (Channel Tunnel Rail Link -CTRL-), Oxford Archaeology (formerly Oxford Archaeological Unit) was commissioned to undertake a strip, map and sample excavation at South of Snarkhurst Wood in Kent. The excavation was carried out between January and February 1999, under the project management of Rail Link Engineering on behalf of Union Railways (South) Limited (a subsidiary of London and Continental Railways).

The occupation uncovered upon the site was principally of late Iron Age and Roman date. However, activity within the area since prehistoric times was suggested by the retrieval of an assemblage of redeposited worked flint ranging from the Mesolithic to early Bronze Age. Two pits may relate to middle Bronze Age occupation.

Late Iron Age and early Roman activity was identified in the form of a rural occupation area defined by enclosure ditches and a possible trackway. Associated discrete features include a circular post structure, two four-post structures, a domestic oven and a few pits and postholes. These remains are likely to represent the northern extent of a small scale, low status rural settlement. One cremation pit related to this phase was located *c* 200 m to the north-west of the enclosure. Few changes seem to occur in the few years following the Roman Conquest.

Some time after AD 50, some of the enclosure ditches seem to have fallen into disuse to be replaced by a less complex system of ditches. Another possible enclosure may have been dug during this phase, next to the first one. Discrete features of early to middle Roman date included three four-post structures and a few pits. Roman activity seems to have ceased on the site around AD 250.

Post-Roman activity was represented by a few field boundary ditches of early medieval and post-medieval date.

## RÉSUMÉ

L'Oxford Archaeology fut chargé d'entreprendre une surveillance archéologique à South of Snarkhurst Wood, dans le Kent, dans le cadre d'un programme de recherches archéologiques préventives de grande envergure, exécuté en avance sur la construction de la ligne ferroviaire du Tunnel sous la Manche (CTRL). Les fouilles furent menées entre janvier et février 1999, sous la direction du maître d'oeuvre, Rail Link Engineering, pour le compte de Union Railways (South) Limited (une filiale de London and Continental Railways).

L'occupation archéologique mise au jour sur le site datait essentiellement de l'âge du Fer tardif et de l'époque romaine. Cependant, la découverte d'un ensemble de silex taillés hors contexte, datant du mésolithique au début de l'âge du Bronze, semble suggérer des signes d'activités dans le secteur depuis les temps préhistoriques. Deux fosses pourraient également se rapporter à une occupation du milieu de l'âge du Bronze.

L'activité de la fin de l'âge du Fer et du début de l'époque romaine fut identifiée sous la forme d'un secteur d'occupation rurale, défini par des fossés d'enceinte et peut-être un chemin. Les structures archéologiques isolées associées avec cette occupation comprenaient une structure circulaire sur poteaux, deux structures sur quatre poteaux, un four domestique et quelques fosses et trous de poteaux. Ces vestiges représentent probablement la partie septentrionale d'un site modéré d'occupation rurale, de bas statut. Une fosse à incinération, située à environ 200 m au nord-ouest de l'enceinte, était également associée avec cette phase. Très peu de changements semblent apparaître dans les années qui suivirent la conquête romaine.

Quelques temps après l'an 50 de notre ère, certains des fossés d'enceinte semblent être tombés à l'abandon, pour être remplacés par un système moins complexe de fossés. Une autre enceinte, située à côté de la première, fut peut-être également creusée au cours de cette phase. Des structures isolées, datant du début jusqu'au milieu de l'époque romaine, comprenaient trois structures sur quatre poteaux et quelques fosses. Toute activité romaine semble avoir cessée sur le site aux environs de 250 ap. JC.

L'occupation postérieure à la période romaine était représentée par quelques fossés de délimitation agricole datant du début des époques médiévale et moderne.

## ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

Im Rahmen umfangreicher archäologischer Untersuchungen im Vorfeld des Baus der Bahnstrecke durch den Kanaltunnel (Channel Tunnel Rail Link, CTRL) wurde Oxford Archaeology (vormals Oxford Archaeological Unit) mit einer Notgrabung südlich von Snarkhurst Wood in Kent beauftragt. Die Grabung fand von Januar bis Februar 1999 im Auftrag von Union Railways (South) Limited (einer Tochtergesellschaft von London and Continental Railways unter der Projektleitung von Rail Link Engineering statt.

Die am Fundort entdeckten Besiedlungsspuren stammten vornehmlich aus der späten Eisen- und der Römerzeit. Allerdings wies eine Sammlung umgelagerter bearbeiteter Feuersteine, die vom Mesolithikum bis in die frühe Bronzezeit reichten, auch schon auf vorzeitliche Aktivitäten in dem Gebiet hin. Zwei Gruben dürften auf eine Besiedlung in der mittleren Bronzezeit zurückgehen.

Spuren aus der späten Eisen- und der frühen Römerzeit fanden sich in Form eines ländlichen Siedlungsareals, das durch Begrenzungsgräben und einen möglichen Weg definiert war. Als vergesellschaftete Einzelfunde ließen sich ein runder Pfostenbau, zwei Vierpfostenbauten, ein Ofen für den häuslichen Gebrauch und einige Gruben und Pfostenlöcher feststellen. Diese Überreste stellen wahrscheinlich den nördlichen Rand eines niederrangigen Dorfes dar. Eine Brandgrube aus dieser Periode lag ca. 200 m nordwestlich der Grabenanlage. In den Jahren nach der römischen Eroberung fanden offenbar keine großen Veränderungen statt.

Einige Zeit nach 50 n. Chr. wurden, wie es scheint, einige Begrenzungsgräben aufgegeben und durch ein weniger komplexes Grabensystem ersetzt. In dieser Phase wurde womöglich neben der ersten eine weitere Grabenanlage angelegt. Zu den Einzelfunden aus der frühen bis mittleren Römerzeit zählten drei Vierpfostenbauten und einige Gruben. Die Aktivität an dieser Stätte ging wohl 250 n. Chr. zu Ende.

Aus nachrömischer Zeit wurden einige Begrenzungsgräben aus dem Frühmittelalter sowie dem Nachmittelalter gefunden.

## ABSTRACTO

Como parte de un largo programa de investigación arqueológica previo a la construcción del Channel Tunnel Rail Link (CTRL), Oxford Archaeology (antes Oxford Archaeological Unit) fue el encargado de realizar el seguimiento, planimetría y evaluación al sur de Snarkhurst Wood en Kent. La excavación se desarrolló entre los meses de Enero y Febrero de 1999, bajo la dirección de Rail Link Engineering para Union Railways (South) Limited (parte de London and Continental Railways Limited).

El yacimiento resultó principalmente de ocupación del final de la Edad del Hierro y de época romana. Sin embargo, cierta actividad prehistórica en el área se supuso a partir de la recuperación de un conjunto de sílex trabajado redepositado con datación desde el Mesolítico hasta el inicio de la Edad de Bronce. Dos fondos podrían asimismo relacionarse con una ocupación de mitad de la Edad de Bronce.

La actividad de finales de la Edad del Hierro y comienzos de época romana fue identificada en forma de ocupación rural delimitada por cercos y un posible camino. Entre las diferentes estructuras asociadas se incluyen una circular a base de postes, dos estructuras de cuatro postes cada una, un horno doméstico y una serie de hoyos y postes. Estos restos representan posiblemente la extensión norte de un asentamiento de menor escala y bajo estatus rural. Un hoyo de cremación relacionado con esta fase se localizó a unos 200 metros al noroeste del encerramiento. Escasos cambios parecen haber ocurrido en los años siguientes a la conquista romana.

Algo después del ano 50 d.C., algunas de las zanjas que formaban el cerco parecen haber caído en desuso para ser substituidas por un sistema menos complejo. Otro posible encerramiento pudo haberse excavado durante esta fase, junto al primero. De entre las estructuras de inicios y mediados de época romana se incluían tres estructuras de cuatro postes cada una y algunos hoyos. La actividad romana parece haber cesado en el yacimiento hacia el año 250 d.C.

La actividad que sigue al período romano queda representada por escasas zanjas limítrofes de época medieval y post-medieval.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The investigations at Snarkhurst Wood were undertaken principally by staff from Oxford Archaeology (OA), with support and overall management framework during the post-excavation phase provided by the Oxford Wessex Archaeology Joint Venture (OWA). The work was supervised by an archaeological team from Rail Link Engineering (RLE), on behalf of the employer, London and Continental Railways.

The author would like to thank all those whose efforts contributed to the success of the excavation: The fieldwork was supervised by Charlie Newman and managed by Stuart Foreman. Annie Bingham prepared the post-excavation assessment report. The full field team and specialist contributors to the assessment report are credited in the main project acknowledgements in the digital archive (ADS 2006).

The following specialists contributed to this report: Malcolm Lyne (late Iron Age and Roman pottery), Rebecca Devaney (lithics), Hilary Cool (small finds), Lynne Keys (iron slag) and Annsofie Witkin (human remains). All illustrations were prepared by Anne Stewardson. The abstract was translated by Mercedes Planas (Spanish), Gerlinde Krug (German) and Valerie Diez (French).This report was edited by Paul Booth (Roman period team leader) and the project senior editor was Julie Gardiner.

The author is also grateful to those who contributed to management of the CTRL post-excavation project: Leigh Allen (finds manager), Niall Donald (data manager), Liz Stafford (environmental manager), Rob Goller and Anne Stewardson (senior illustrators). OWA senior project managers were Stuart Foreman and Valerie Diez.

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# 1 INTRODUCTION

## 1.1 Project Background

The site at South of Snarkhurst Wood, Hollingbourne, Kent (OS NGR 582270 155170) was excavated as part of an extensive programme of archaeological investigation carried out in advance of the construction of the Channel Tunnel Rail Link (CTRL). CTRL was built by London & Continental Railways Limited in association with Railtrack Group plc. The project was authorised by Parliament with the passage of the CTRL Act, 1996. The high-speed line runs for 109 km (68 miles) between St Pancras Station in London and the Channel Tunnel and was built in two sections. Section 1 lies entirely within Kent and runs from Fawkham Junction (Gravesham) to Folkestone. The work was project managed by Rail Link Engineering (RLE).

Oxford Archaeology was commissioned by Union Railways (South) Limited (URS) to undertake a strip, map and sample excavation, in an area previously known to contain extensive archaeological remains (Kent Sites and Monuments Record 2879; Scott 1997). The potential of the area was confirmed by evaluation trenching in 1999 (URL 1996). The location of the site is shown on Figure 1 and the details of the archaeological works are given in Table 1.

*Table 1: Fieldwork Events*

| Fieldwork Event Name | Type | Fieldwork Event Code | Contractor | Dates of Fieldwork |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| South of Snarkhurst Wood | Excavation | ARC SNK99 | OA | 22/01/99 - 17/02/99 |
| South of Snarkhurst Wood | Watching Brief SDS | ARC 420 99/66+300 | OA | 04/06/99 - 01/01/00 |
| Musket Lane | Watching Brief General | ARC 420 99/67+100 | OA | 04/06/99 - 01/01/00 |

The site was excavated as two separate areas totalling *c* 1.36 ha. The central part of the site was not excavated because of the proximity of a balancing pond and underground services associated with the adjacent M20 motorway. The adjacent sections of the CTRL trace were stripped under variable watching brief conditions (Fig.2). In some areas, the topsoil alone was stripped and the depth of excavation was insufficient to reveal archaeological features. Excavation of the main site was undertaken over a period of 1 month, during January and February 1999.

## 1.2 Geology and Topography

The South of Snarkhurst Wood site lies close to the foot of the North Downs escarpment. The site lies mainly on Gault Clay with the Folkestone Sand Beds surfacing approximately along the line of the CTRL corridor to the South of Snarkhurst Wood (Fig.1). The geological substrate is overlain by sandy clay soils.

The site lies between the existing M20 motorway, the Maidstone to Ashford railway line and Snarkhurst Wood. The land is undulating, ranging from *c* 57 m OD at the western end of the site to *c* 63.5 m OD at the eastern end. A balancing pond, lying between the two excavated areas, occupied most of the width of the CTRL trace in the central part of the site, and a culverted stream crossed the site in the same area.

The site was under arable cultivation before the CTRL works started. Although intensive agricultural land-use has resulted in significant loss of field boundaries, some important areas of historic woodland have survived, immediately adjacent to the north of the site.

## 1.3 Archaeological and Historical Background

The potential for Bronze Age, Iron Age and Roman activity in the vicinity was highlighted by various discoveries. Prehistoric activity was present in the form of worked flint scatters, discovered in the course of field walking surveys undertaken in 1990 and 1994, on behalf of Union Railways Limited. The first one was located at the intersection of the motorway and the railway, at the western end of the site. The second one was situated at Crismill Lane, to the north.

In 1995, an evaluation and subsequent excavation were undertaken by OAU on behalf of Esso Petroleum Ltd at the Maidstone Motorway Service Area (MSA). The site lay immediately to the north of the CTRL corridor, and evidence was recovered for a probable late Bronze Age settlement (Scott 1997). A single small ditch or gully, and a possible pond, were the only features datable to the Romano-British period. There was no evidence of Iron Age activity.

Excavation prior to the CTRL project included the construction of the Maidstone Bypass (now the M20) in 1958, which uncovered the probable site of an Iron Age and /or Roman settlement, immediately adjacent to, and south of, the CTRL corridor. Excavation on the north side of the bypass revealed a ditch containing late Iron Age pottery, and a number of Iron Age burial urns. Investigations on the south side of the bypass located the foundations of a late Iron Age 'kiln', and a small ragstone building accompanied by 1st and early 2nd-century AD pottery (Kent Sites and Monuments Record No 2879, unpublished).

Prior to the commencement of the CTRL construction, an evaluation of the trace south of Snarkhurst Wood was undertaken by OAU (Fig. 2). In addition to residual late Bronze Age

pottery, the evaluation produced a group of late Iron Age or early Roman ditches and a pit, interpreted as the northern edge of the settlement located during construction of the Maidstone Bypass (URL 1996). An area of the settlement was preserved *in situ* beneath the bund adjacent to the CTRL trace (Fig. 2).

The site of South of Snarkhurst Wood had access to two main roads in the Roman period, Watling Street *c* 10 km to the north, connecting Canterbury to London and a second one *c* 6 km to the west, running south from Rochester towards Hastings (Margary 1973, 13). Rochester (*Durobrivae*) was probably an important late Iron Age centre that developed into a Roman town and (presumably) port. Unfortunately, relatively little is known about Roman Rochester except for its defences, which enclosed an area of about 9.5 ha (Burnham and Watcher 1990, 76-81).

Some 13 km away from Rochester and at an important road junction, Maidstone was the site of another late Iron Age centre (Kelly 1971) and has also been claimed as the site of a possible Roman 'small town' (Webster 1975, 59) but the evidence remains inconclusive. The Maidstone area is notable for a concentration of villa sites, such as Barton Road and The Mount (Houliston 1999) and possibly related lower status rural settlement, such as that of Queen Elizabeth Square (Booth and Howard-Davis 2004) are also known. Other building remains of uncertain character in the town centre may yet prove to relate to a nucleated settlement of some kind.

Excavation in advance of the construction of the CTRL in the vicinity of the site has revealed late Iron Age and Roman activity in a major site at Thurnham *c* 3 km north-west of the site. Thurnham Roman Villa (Lawrence 2006) was a Scheduled Ancient Monument, with a history of previous investigation by antiquarians and archaeologists. An estimated one third of the villa complex was destroyed by the construction of the Maidstone bypass in 1958. The remaining area of the Scheduled Monument was largely encompassed by the CTRL corridor and subjected to extensive excavation prior to the construction of the CTRL. The excavation of the villa and its surroundings uncovered evidence for a sequence of late Iron Age and Roman occupation from the 1st century BC to the early 5th century AD. The Roman sequence included enclosure boundaries, several phases of the main villa house, a stone-built square temple-like structure, a large aisled building and a 14-post building.

Other substantial evidence of late Iron Age/Roman activity, elsewhere along the CTRL, includes three rural settlements at Leda Cottages (Diez 2006a), Beechbrook Wood (Brady 2006) and Bower Road (Diez 2006b), located around Ashford, *c* 22 km from Snarkhurst Wood.

## 2 AIMS

The aim of this report is to present synthesised data at an interpretative level that can be assimilated into complementary studies. This synthetic report is supported by the fieldwork and research archive which is freely available as a web-based digital archive.

In support of the CTRL Project Monograph (Booth *et a*l. 2007), the Snarkhurst Wood report integrates key assemblages and stratigraphic data into a site sequence secured on key dating evidence from artefact groups. The report includes a discursive narrative describing the sequence of activity and reasoning evidence (URS 2003, 15-16).

The updated research aims specific to South of Snarkhurst Wood included refining the chronology and the understanding of the general character of the settlement, but also comparing the South of Snarkhurst Wood site development sequence with that of other sites in the vicinity (URS 2000a, 19).

## 3 METHODS

The site was stripped in two parts (Areas A and B; Fig. 2 and 3) using a 360-degree excavator with a toothless ditching bucket. All groundworks surrounding the excavation areas were monitored by an archaeologist. The South of Snarkhurst Wood/Musket Lane watching brief identified a few pits and ditch segments, dated to some of the phases identified on the main site. All fieldwork, from site stripping to recording and sampling, was conducted by Oxford Archaeology (OA). All work on the main excavation areas was carried out in accordance with the Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) for Snarkhurst Wood (URS 1998). The excavation strategy at Snarkhurst Wood was limited to significant features, in accordance with the agreed strip, map and sample methodology. The key aim was to establish an extensive plan of the site, the relative and absolute chronology of the remains, and to undertake sufficient sampling to recover paleoenvironmental and other economic indicators to achieve the project aims (URS 2000a). All watching brief monitoring and recording were carried out in accordance with the Written Scheme of Investigation for Project Area 420 (URS 1999). Both WSIs were prepared by the Project Manager, Rail Link Engineering (RLE).

A post-excavation assessment report was produced by OA in accordance with the specification produced by RLE (URS 2000b). All method statements followed national guidelines and were agreed in consultation with English Heritage and Kent County Council (KCC) on behalf of the Local Planning Authority.

The post-excavation analysis and report were carried out by Oxford Wessex Archaeology Joint Venture (OWAJV) following the methodology set out by the Updated Project design for archaeological analysis and publication (URS 2003).

# 4 RESULTS

## 4.1 Phase Summary

The sequence of phases for the site was defined initially on the basis of the stratigraphic record, and their dating depends almost entirely upon ceramic evidence. In most cases pottery evidence alone was used as the basis for assigning discrete features to specific phases. The fills of all archaeological features were of a similar nature, mainly sandy clay, and in most cases did not help in the site's phasing. For this reason they are discussed in the narrative only when needed for the understanding of the site sequence. The following phases were recorded (Fig. 3):

- Middle Bronze Age to middle Iron Age (1500 - 100 BC): two pits and an irregular linear feature may belong to this phase.
- Late pre-Roman Iron Age to early Roman (50 BC- AD 30): This phase was represented by an occupation area defined by enclosure ditches and a possible trackway. A few discrete features included a circular post structure, two four-post structures, an oven, a cremation pit and a few pits and isolated postholes
- Early to middle Roman (AD 50-250): Some of the previous enclosure ditches were replaced by a less complex ditch system. Other Roman features included three four-post structures and a few isolated pits and postholes. Another enclosure ditch, to the south-east of the previous one may belong to this phase. Roman activity ceased around AD 250
- Early medieval (AD 1170 - 1350): A single ditch was dated to this phase
- Post-medieval (AD 1500 - 1799): Five post-medieval field boundary ditches were identified

*Table 2: General quantification of pottery by site phase*

| Phase | Count | Weight (g) | Count % | Weight % |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Unphased | 72 | 1126 | 3.9 | 6.4 |
| Middle Bronze Age to middle Iron Age | 18 | 218 | 1.0 | 1.2 |
| Late Pre-Roman Iron Age | 491 | 4265 | 26.3 | 24.1 |
| Late Pre-Roman Iron Age to early Roman | 910 | 8970 | 48.7 | 50.7 |
| Early Roman | 168 | 1359 | 9.0 | 7.7 |
| Early to middle Roman | 174 | 1359 | 9.3 | 7.7 |
| Early medieval | 11 | 45 | 0.6 | 0.3 |
| Post-medieval | 23 | 346 | 1.2 | 2.0 |
| ***Total*** | ***1867*** | ***17688*** | ***100*** | ***100*** |

## 4.2 Hunter-gatherers and early Agriculturalists- Mesolithic to late pre-Roman Iron Age (*c* 13,000 uncal bc - *c* 100 BC)

Mesolithic and Neolithic periods were represented only by redeposited struck flint, found in features and deposits of later date. Mesolithic material includes an opposed platform blade core and a small blade element. Most of the flint however was dated to the Neolithic and Bronze Age (Devaney 2006). A total of 141 residual struck flints was recovered, including 65 pieces from the topsoil. Flakes constitute 92% of the debitage category, suggesting the predominance of Bronze Age material.

Three features identified on Area B could be of later prehistoric date (Fig. 4). Pit 245 had a roughly oval shape, measuring 1.3 by 1.2 m, and 0.25 m deep. It produced 15 sherds of undiagnostic but probably prehistoric pottery (154 g). Sub-oval Pit 249 was 0.94 by 1.17 m and 0.50 m deep. It produced one tiny sherd of worn middle Bronze Age pottery (4 g) and three flint pieces, two flakes and a single platform flake core. Finally, irregular gully 376 was probably of natural origin (possibly an animal burrow), *c* 19.90 m long, and produced 2 sherds of middle Bronze Age pottery (60 g) and 22 struck flints, consisting of 1 blade, 1 blade-like piece, 8 flakes, 1 multi-platform flake core and 11 chips.

The attribution of these features to a prehistoric date is rather tentative. They could, however, be related to the probable Bronze Age settlement excavated in 1995 at the Maidstone Motorway Service Area (Scott 1997) or be later features, in which case the finds represent residual material. In any case, the presence of prehistoric material, even residual, suggests sporadic or peripheral activity occurring within this area.

## 4.3 Towns and their Rural Landscapes I - The later pre-Roman Iron Age and Romano-British Landscapes II (c 300 BC to c AD 500)

### *4.3.1 Late Pre Roman Iron Age to early Roman (50 BC - AD 50)*

*Late pre-Roman Iron Age (50 BC - AD 30)*

Four ditches were attributed to the late Iron Age period and are likely to have been dug in the second half of the 1st century BC (Fig. 5). Although the boundary ditches do not form a spatially coherent pattern, the concentration of discrete features within the central part of Area A indicates that the enclosure was probably defined by the north-south arm of 242 on the western side, ditch 244 to the south and ditch 357 on the eastern side.

Ditch 242 was aligned east-west for 35.50 m and then turned at a right angle to the south for 25.60 m. It had a V-shaped profile *c* 2.90 m wide and 1.30 m deep (section 126 on Fig. 5). Its east-west arm may have formed the south side of a trackway with ditch 358, aligned east-west, parallel to ditch 242, 5.60 m to the north. Ditch 358 ran for 42 m, had moderately sloping sides and an irregular base and was 2.10 m wide and 0.6 m deep. Its western extremity seems to have been truncated and it is likely to have extended further. This probable trackway appears to lead into the enclosure. A sub-circular arrangement of 6 post settings (structure 208) was identified at the eastern end of the trackway. Five postholes, giving an internal 'diameter' of *c* 3.85 m by 4.30 m, surrounded a central post pad. The typical depth of the postholes was *c* 0.14 m. Although no dating evidence was recovered from structure 208, its spatial location suggests it was associated with this phase. A standing structure in this position, however, would have had the effect of blocking the trackway, in which case a later date is possible. Alternatively, and perhaps more likely, the posts formed the basis for controlling access into the enclosure, perhaps by supporting arrangements of hurdles or comparable barriers.

Ditch 244 had a V-shaped profile, a width of *c* 1.40 m and a depth of 0.9 m. Finally, to the south-east of the enclosure, ditch 357 had near vertical sides with a broad flat base and was 0.86 m wide and 0.6 m deep.

Ditches 242, 244, 357 and 358 produced a total of 289 sherds of pottery (5138 g), totally dominated by glauconitic-sand tempered wares to the extent of suggesting production in the immediate vicinity (Lyne 2006). The vessels are predominantly bead-rimmed barrel-shaped jars with corrugated shoulders.

One four-post structure (205) was tentatively attributed to this phase. Its internal dimensions (from the centre of the postholes) were 1.20 by 1.50 m. The postholes were *c* 0.42 m deep, with a diameter of *c* 0.45 m. Only one of the postholes produced a tiny sherd (4 g) of late Iron Age pottery so it is possible that the structure was of later date. A further three discrete features, a pit (331) and two postholes (336 and 338), were also tentatively dated to

the late Iron Age on the basis of one or two sherds recovered from the top fills. All three features were unexcavated and could not be seen to form any coherent spatial pattern with other features.

Two further small ditches (373, 375) were dated to this phase in Area B (Fig.4). Ditch 373 ran NE-SW for 14 m, and had a U-shaped profile, 0.2 m deep. Ditch 375 was aligned north-south, with a similar profile and depth. They respectively produced 3 sherds (11 g) and 9 sherds (18 g) of late Iron Age pottery. In addition, the watching brief areas to the south-west and south-east of Area A, revealed a further ditch segment (44) and two pits (8 and 21) dated to the late Iron Age (Fig.3). It is however difficult to relate these features to Area A because of the fragmentary picture given by these isolated remains.

Although the chronological division between the phases 50 BC - AD 30 and AD 30-50 may appear at first glance arbitrary, it is based on the relative percentages of the pottery fabric types recorded in successive phases. The overall fabric breakdown shows radical shifts in pottery supply during the late pre-Roman Iron Age and pre-Flavian occupation. Quantification shows that glauconitic wares accounted for nearly all of the pottery in use on the site in the late Iron Age, but that at a point probably fairly shortly before the Roman conquest (Malcolm Lyne suggests *c* AD 30) were supplanted in part by sand and calcined-flint tempered wares (Lyne 2006).

*Late pre-Roman Iron Age/early Roman (AD 30-50)*

Few changes appear to have occurred in settlement from either just before or in the immediate aftermath of the Conquest. The same ditches and enclosure seem to have been in use. Ditch 242 remained open throughout this phase although it seems to have started silting up. It is uncertain if ditch 358 was still utilised, as it did not produce any pottery specific to this phase. A small ditch (365) was recorded across the apparent western entrance to the enclosure, possibly indicating that this had fallen into disuse. If this was the case, the trackway had possibly also fallen into disuse and a building was inserted into it. It had a V-shaped profile and concave base, a width of 0.85 m and was 0.45 m deep. It produced 42 sherds (384 g) of pottery dated to *c* AD 30-50. The plan (Fig. 5) shows ditch 242 cutting 365, however this relationship was not investigated but only recorded in plan and ditch 365 could have butted 242

Ditch 244 on the southern side was re-cut along its entire visible length by ditch 243, which had a similar profile to the original ditch and a depth of 0.60 m. Ditch 243 produced 69 sherds (851 g) of pottery. On the south-eastern side, Ditch 357 appears to have been replaced by ditch 356, which had a U-shaped profile and was 0.80 m wide and 0.5 m deep. A probable continuation of ditch 356 (45) was recorded to the south of Area A, in the watching brief area (Fig. 3). Ditch 356 produced a total of 25 sherds (296 g), mostly dated to AD 30-50.

South-east of ditch 356, a further two shallow ditches (368 and 369), running on the same alignment, were attributed to this phase. Their function remains obscure although they could possibly have formed a small trackway. In the south-east corner of Area A was ditch 241, aligned NE-SW for 9.88 m and NW-SE for 24.88 m. This possible enclosure ditch had a broad U-shaped profile, a width of 0.80 m and a depth of 0.3 m. Ditch 48, recorded during the watching brief immediately to the south-west, was a continuation of 241 (Fig. 3). The attribution of ditch 241 to this phase is rather tentative as only 4 sherds (24 g) of abraded residual late Iron Age pottery were recovered. It is likely however, that ditch 241 belonged to this phase or the following one.

One four post-structure (204) was attributed to this phase on the basis of 6 sherds (11 g) of pottery. The structure's internal dimensions were 1.20 by 1.45 m. Two other discrete features were dated to this phase, an unexcavated pit (326) and an oven (319). Circular pit 326 was not excavated but 12 sherds (238 g) of pottery were recovered from the top fill. Oven 319 had an elongated, irregular shape, 3.25 m long by 0.90 m wide and a maximum depth of 0.38 m (Fig. 6). Excavation identified three episodes of firing. Iron slags (8342 g), daub (300 g) and fired ceramic material (682 g) were detected within the deposits, from the second episode of firing through to the final deposits. A total of 564 sherds of pottery (4665 g) were recorded throughout the sequence. The lower deposits associated with construction and the first episode of firing produced 88 sherds (1092 g) of pottery, most of them from two part complete glauconitic jars (Nos 12 and 14, Fig. 7). The remaining, 476 sherds (3573 g), mainly from the last two episodes of firing and final backfill, included mostly bead-rim jars in calcined flint and sand-tempered wares (Fig. 7). The glauconitic wares are much less significant than the flint and tempered wares in this later assemblage. This feature was originally interpreted as a pottery kiln (URS 2000), however the lack of any remains of a clay structure and general morphology suggest this is more likely to be a domestic oven.

One pit (236) in Area B was attributed to this phase (Fig. 4). It was roughly oval, measuring 1.3 by 1.4 m and 0.40 m deep. It produced 7 sherds (78 g) of pottery and contained the cremated remains of an adult, possibly male (180 g), and redeposited pyre debris of an unurned burial.

*Nature of the occupation: discussion*

The limited extent of the excavation means that only a restricted overview of the occupation is possible. The excavated features on Area A suggest that a late pre-Roman Iron Age enclosure was established perhaps around 50 BC and occupied, with minimum changes, through to AD 50. The few identified features, four-post structures, an oven and a few pits and postholes suggest a domestic context, probably associated with a small agricultural rural settlement. This settlement does not seem to have extended to the north-west as Area B

produced very little evidence related to this phase of the site. On this basis, it seems likely that Area A falls within the northern part of the settlement identified during the 1958 Maidstone Bypass excavation. The excavated area is too limited to identify meaningful concentrations of specialised activities, however a few observations can be made related to the nature of the occupation and activities carried out on site.

The assessment of environmental samples taken from various features on site highlighted a low level of charred seeds and chaff thus indicating that no cereal processing was carried out on site (URS 2000a). Spelt wheat was the dominant cereal as is generally the case for the late Iron Age and Roman periods throughout southern Britain. Hulled barley was also cultivated. It is not possible to establish if the cereals were locally produced or were imported into the site. Agricultural activity on the site was only hinted at by the discovery of an iron rake prong, from ditch 358 (Cool and Keys 2006). A further two iron objects, a bar and a chain were recovered from this ditch. As a rural settlement, it is likely that some agricultural activity was carried out on site, however the crop processing and storage areas may have been located elsewhere in the settlement. The excavated postholes, which were part of four-post structures, did not contain substantial amounts of charred plant remains to confirm the traditional function of these features as granaries. However this could be the result of poor preservation rather than a definitive absence of crop-related activity. In any case, no further evidence was found to suggest a different function.

The animal bones analysis did not yield much information on pastoral activities on site. Only 609 fragments (431 g) of animal bone were retrieved by hand and 506 fragments (87 g) were retrieved from environmental sieving from the entire site. The bone was generally in very poor condition and the majority of surviving elements were teeth and burnt bones (URS 2000a), mostly of cattle and sheep. The majority of the sheep bones identified were feet bones, indicative of butchery waste.

A small quantity of slag, fired clay, vitrified hearth lining and cinder (almost 9.8 kg) was recovered, mostly concentrated within and around oven 319 (Cool and Keys 2006). This material may be indicative of a brief period of iron smelting, carried out in the immediate vicinity of the north-easterly limit of Area A. Although most of this material was retrieved from the fills of oven 319, this feature's morphology did not correspond with that of a furnace. The slag could have been used to backfill the oven, or alternatively the disused oven was possibly utilised as a rubbish pit.

Limited evidence available for the earlier excavation carried out in advance of the construction of the Maidstone bypass also suggested craft or industrial activity during the late Iron Age, in the form of a kiln. The discovery of a number of late Iron Age burial urns indicated that a number of inhabitants of the settlement were buried on site (see background section).

Although no specialised activity areas could be identified, available evidence suggests that various activities, domestic and industrial, were carried out on a small scale, consistent with an interpretation of the site as a low status rural settlement based on a partly self-sufficient economy. The site did not seem to have been immediately affected by the Roman Conquest and the character of the occupation seems constant throughout the period 50 BC-AD 50. The only visible change overall appears to be in pottery supply (see previous discussion).

### *4.3.2 Early to middle Roman (AD 50 to AD 250)*

*The enclosure*

Ditch 242 seems to have entirely silted up by *c* AD 50 and the western side of a possible enclosure was formed by subsequent ditches 359 and 360, thus altering substantially the main boundary alignment on this side of the enclosure (Fig. 8). Stratigraphic relationships show that 360 cut ditch 242 (section 104, Fig. 8) while 359 cut ditch 358. Ditch 360 was aligned NNW-SSE for 15.5 m, with a northern terminus, and had moderately sloping sides, a width of 1.49 m and a depth of 0.42 m. Ditch 359 was aligned NNE-SSW for 19.20 m, terminating at its southern limit in a regular U-shaped profile, 0.80 m wide and 0.30 m deep (section 120, Fig. 8). The gap between the two termini is likely to have formed an entrance some 3.30 m across into the enclosure. The two ditches produced respectively 70 sherds (682 g) and 2 sherds (34 g) of pottery. Ditch 359 was attributed to this phase mainly through alignment and stratigraphic relationships. The pottery assemblage from ditch 360 included calcined-flint and glauconitic wares each accounting for nearly a third of the material by sherd count. Other fabrics were Rhenish white ware and pinkish-white ware imported from Gallia Belgica. The presence of the latter in the primary silting of ditch 360 dates the deposition of this assemblage to after AD 60.

The south-east side of the enclosure seems to have still been bounded by ditch 356, possibly until the late 1st century or early 2nd century AD when it was replaced by ditch 355, on the same alignment but slightly straighter than its predecessor. Ditch 243 did not produce any material dating after AD 50, suggesting that it may have gone out of use by then. This may have had the effect of extending the enclosure to the south-west. As noticed previously, ditch 241 may have belonged to this phase, although the slight dating evidence does not allow certainty.

Three pits were dated to the early Roman phase (AD 50-100). Pit 172 was circular, 1.1 m in diameter and 0.20 m deep. This feature produced a small quantity of burnt bone and charcoal and 162 sherds of pottery (1816 g) including large parts of a narrow-mouthed jar, fragments of four bead-rim jars and a butt beaker, all in early Roman 'Belgic' type fabrics. An

absence of Romanised wares suggests a date no later than *c* AD 60 for this group. Another large circular pit, 232, with a diameter of 2.2 m and a depth of 1 m, produced 84 sherds (583 g) of early Roman pottery. Pit 102, situated in enclosure 241, produced 12 sherds (60 g) of pottery dated to AD 43-100.

Three four-post structures were attributed to this phase. Structures 206 and 207 were dated through artefactual evidence to AD 70-250. Their internal dimensions were respectively, 1.15 m by 1.75 m and 2.12 m by 2.33 m. Structure 206 produced a total of 17 sherds (71 g) and Structure 207 20 sherds (126 g) including black burnished wares and Romanised coarse ware. The third four-post structure (366) did not produce any dating evidence, however its postholes cut ditch 243 so it is likely to have been of early Roman date. Its internal dimensions were 2.60 by 2.95 m. Pit 197 also cut ditch 243.

Other discrete features included two pits, 200 and 137, both dated to AD 150-200. Pit 137 was located just outside the enclosure, between ditches 241 and 355. This roughly circular pit had a diameter of 2.20 m and was 0.10 m deep. It produced 33 sherds (354 g) of pottery, including fragments of a Central Gaulish samian platter, a mortarium in cream fabric, some grey Upchurch ware and cooking-pot sherds in sandy grey Thameside fabric.

A further two features, a ditch segment (47) and a pit (23), recorded during the watching brief to the south-west of Area A, were dated to AD 70-250 (Fig. 3).

*Nature of the occupation: discussion*

Based on the limited evidence available, the nature of the site does not appear to have changed much throughout the Roman period. The enclosure was partly replaced by a less complex system of ditches, with no defined trackway approaching from the west, but retaining an entrance in the same general area as previously. Amounts of pottery from features dated to after AD 70 are rather small, possibly indicating that the level of activity on the site had started to decline. Alternatively, it is possible that while Area A was part of the settlement area in the late Iron Age, it became peripheral to the main settlement in the Roman period. This hypothesis seems to be supported by the discovery to the south in 1958 of a small stone-founded building, associated with pottery of the 1st and early 2nd century AD. A small quantity of Roman ceramic building material, recovered from Area A excavations, and datable to the same period, may have derived from this building.

The majority of the pottery has been dated to before AD 200. Small quantities could be of slightly later date, up to the middle of the 3rd century, however no pottery could be dated closely to the period AD 200-250. It is therefore likely that most activity on site ceased around the late 2nd century AD, with perhaps very limited or sporadic occupation in the first half of the 3rd century AD.

### 4.4 Towns and their Rural Landscapes - The post-Roman to recent Landscape (*c* AD 410 to the modern day)

One feature was dated to the early medieval period (Fig. 9). Narrow ditch 371 was aligned WSW-ENE, visible for 7.10 m, and produced 11 sherds (45 g) of pottery dated to *c* AD 1170-1350.

Various post-medieval field boundaries (362, 363, 364, 353, 354) were recorded on site. The latter two continue the lines of 41 and 42 identified during the watching brief. These ditches were generally dated from pottery evidence to the 16th-18th centuries. They are marked on the 1797 OS map of the area and subsequent historical maps.

### 4.5 Unphased features

A number of discrete features were not excavated and could not be phased (Fig. 9) while others produced few datable finds. Ninety-four archaeological features were recorded in Areas A and B (this total excludes all tree bowls and other natural features). Out of these, 44% could be attributed to a specific phase, leaving 56% of the features unphased, essentially pits and postholes. However, the majority of the activity on the site is of late Iron Age/early Romano-British date, therefore it is likely that the majority of unphased features will be of this date. The unphased postholes include possible structural elements and overall their alignments (rows of postholes etc) suggest the presence of ephemeral structures and boundaries within the late Iron Age/Roman enclosures.

## 5 GUIDE TO ARCHIVE

The following tables detail the various archive components.

The site has been analysed and published as part of the Channel Tunnel Rail Link Section 1 Post-excavation Project. This Integrated Site Report is one of 20 publication level site reports available to download from the Archaeology Data Service website: **http://ads.ahds.ac.uk/catalogue/projArch/ctrl/index.cfm**. These present synthesised data from key site sequences at an interpretative level that can be assimilated into complementary studies. The ADS site also includes five schemewide specialist reports, which provide synthetic overviews of the specialist data from CTRL Section 1 in its regional context. Underpinning the site reports and overviews, is a comprehensive archive of individual specialist reports and databases, which are also available to download. The CTRL reports and data can be accessed through the 'Project Archives' section of the ADS website.

Hard copy publication of the CTRL Section 1 results comprises a single volume synthetic overview of the excavated results in their regional context, which includes a complete site gazetteer and guide to the digital archive (Booth et al 2007).

Table 3 below details all available digital data for the Bower Road site. The Post-excavation assessment report is included in the digital archive, but assessment databases have only been included for categories of material which were not subsequently subject to full analysis. All reports and accompanying figures are presented as downloadable, print-ready Adobe Acrobat files (.pdf). ADS also maintain higher resolution archive versions of report image pages (.tiff). The report text and databases are available as text files (.rtf and .csv respectively). The digitised site plan is available as an Arcview shapefile (.shp) and in drawing exchange format (.dxf).

*Table 3: Digital archive*

| Description | Filename root | Principal authors and organisation |
|---|---|---|
| **Integrated site report** | | |
| Integrated site report | SNK_ISR | Diez V (OWA JV) |
| Integrated site report figures | SNK_ISR | Diez V (OWA JV) |
| | | |
| **Site research database** | | |
| Site database | SNK | Diez V (OWA JV) |
| **CAD/ GIS drawings** | | |
| CAD drawing | SNK_CAD | |
| ESRI ArcMAP GIS project | SNK_GIS | |
| GIS limit of excavation shapefile | SNK_GIS | |
| GIS feature plan | SNK_GIS | |
| **Specialist research reports** | | |
| Ceramics (late Iron Age and Roman) | CER_ROM_SNK | Lyne M |
| Lithics | FLI_SNK | Devaney R (OWA JV) |
| Small finds | SFS_SNK | Cool H (Freelance) and Keys L (Freelance) |
| Human remains | HUM_SNK | Witkin A (OWA JV) |
| **Specialist datasets** | | |
| Ceramics (late Iron Age and Roman) | CER_ROM_SNK | Lyne M |
| Lithics | FLI_SNK | Devaney R (OWA JV) |
| Lithics | FLI_SNK | Devaney R (OWA JV) |
| Small finds | SFS_SNK | Cool H (Freelance) |
| Human remains | HUM_SNK | Witkin A (OWA JV) |
| **Post-excavation assessment** | | |
| Post-excavation Assessment | SNK_PXA | OA |

*Table 4: Artefactual and environmental archive quantities*

| Item | Number of fragments | Weight (g) if appropriate | Number of boxes |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Flint worked and unworked** | | | |
| ARC SNK 99 | 139 | | 2 size 3 |
| ARC 420 99/66+300 | 18 | | |
| ARC 420 99/67+100 | 1 | | |
| **Pottery (total)** | | | |
| ARC SNK 99 Hand collected | 1437 | 3906 | 2 size 1<br>1 size 2 |
| ARC SNK 99 Sieved Roman pottery | 426 | 2241 | |
| ARC 420 99/66+300 Hand collected | 426 | 3861 | |
| ARC 420 99/67+100 Hand collected | 4 | 7 | |
| **Ceramic Building material (total)** | | | |
| ARC SNK 99 | 25 | | 1 size 3 |
| ARC 420 99/66+300 | 42 | | |
| **Metalwork Iron (total)** | | | |
| ARC SNK 99 | 12 | | 1 plastic size 8 |
| ARC 420 99/66+300 | 5 | | |
| **Glass Small Finds (total)** | | | |
| ARC SNK 99 | 2 | | 1 size 4 |
| ARC 420 99/66+300 | 3 | | |
| **Fired Clay (total)** | | | |
| ARC SNK 99 | 388 | | 1 size 3 |
| ARC 420 99/66+300 | 208 | | |
| **Slag (total)** | | | |
| ARC SNK 99 | 489 | 9758 | 1 size 2<br>1 size3 |
| ARC 420 99/67+100 | 1 | | |
| **Stone (total)** | | | |
| ARC SNK 99 | 30 | | 1 size 4 |
| ARC 420 99/66+300 | 1 | | |
| **Animal bone (total)** | | | |
| ARC SNK 99 | 598 | | 1 size 4 |
| ARC 420 99/66+300 | 9 | | |
| **Human bone** | | | |
| ARC SNK 99 | | 180 | 1 size 4 |

*Table 5: Fieldwork paper archive*

| Contents | Comments |
|---|---|
| **Primary Context records** | |
| Context record sheets | 387 |
| **Primary drawings** | |
| Plans | 16 A1 plans |
| | 10 A4 plans |
| Sections | 51 A4 sections |

Cardboard boxes

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Size 1 = Bulk box | 391mm x 238mm x 210mm | 0.020 m3 |
| Size 2 = Half box | 391mm x 238mm x 100mm | 0.009 m3 |
| Size 3 = Quarter box | 386mm x 108 mm x 100mm | 0.004 m3 |
| Size 4 = Eighth box | 213 mm x 102 mm x 80 mm | 0.002 m3 |

Plastic boxes

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Size 8 = Medium | 260mm x 184mm x 108mm | 0.005 m3 |

## 6 CATALOGUE OF ILLUSTRATED FINDS

The numbers presented below follow the catalogue numbers used by the pottery specialist in the Snarkhurst Wood pottery report. They do not follow a continuous sequence, as the drawings presented in this report are a limited selection, drawn from the larger body of drawings in the specialist report.

**Figure 6**

12 Neck cordoned jar in buff-brown grog-tempered fabric, *c* 50 BC - AD 50. Oven 319

13 Butt-beaker in rough black glauconitic fabric, *c* 0-AD 50. Oven 319

14 Neck cordoned jar in rough black glauconitic fabric, *c* 50 BC - AD 50. Oven 319

15 Neck cordoned jar in black-brown glauconitic fabric, *c* 50 BC - AD 50. Oven 319

16 Necked jar in black-brown glauconitic fabric, *c* 50 BC - AD 50. Oven 319

17 Bead rim jar in oxidised pale orange/buff fabric, *c* 50 BC - AD 50. Oven 319

18 Bead rim jar in handmade calcined flint and sand tempered fabric, *c* AD 30-70. Oven 319

19 Bead rim jar in handmade calcined flint and sand tempered fabric, *c* AD 30-70. Oven 319

23 Lower par of vessel in sparse flint tempered fabric, *c* 25 BC - AD 50. Oven 319

24 Cup in grey quartz sanded ware, *c* 0 - AD 50. Oven 319

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