

SEVINGTON (KE)

**CHANNEL TUNNEL RAIL LINK
Union Railways (South) Ltd**

Project Area 430

**BOYS HALL BALANCING POND, SEVINGTON, KENT
ARC BHB 99**

**STRIP, MAP AND SAMPLE ARCHAEOLOGICAL WORKS
INTERIM REPORT
FINAL**

Contract S/400/SP/0008 P481

**Oxford Archaeological Unit
31st August 1999**

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Prepared By:	cc. C Bell
Date:	31/8/99
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Date:	31/8/99
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Date:	31/8/1999

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31st August 1999

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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Location and specification

- 1.1.1 Oxford Archaeological Unit (OAU) was commissioned by Union Railways (South) Limited (URS) to undertake archaeological investigation at the site of Boys Hall Balancing Pond, adjacent to Boys Hall Moat, Sevington, near Ashford, Kent. This work formed part of an extensive programme of archaeological investigation carried out in advance of the construction of the CTRL. The site is centred on URL grid point 83100 20700 and NGR grid point TR 3095 0701. A total area of 0.52 hectares was excavated to a strip, map and sample specification.

1.2 Geology and topography

- 1.2.1 The site lies on gently rising ground on the north-east side of the river East Stour and is situated immediately south of the main Folkestone to London railway line. The solid geology is Atherfield Clay at the base of the Lower Greensand sequence.

1.3 Background

- 1.3.1 The site lies adjacent to Boys Hall Moat Scheduled Ancient Monument (Kent SAM 146), a former medieval and post-medieval manor house. The surviving earthwork comprises a rectangular moat 60 m by 70 m with extensive earthworks extending to the west. A survey and excavation of the moat site undertaken by RCHME and the OAU in 1993 (*Earthwork survey and excavation at Boys Hall Moat, Sevington, Ashford*, Booth and Everson 1995) indicated a central medieval moated area surrounded by post-medieval formal gardens, including raised terrace walks and water features. In addition, numerous features associated with late Iron Age and early Romano-British settlement (c. 100 BC – 200 AD) were revealed in a narrow trench excavated immediately south of the railway line.
- 1.3.2 Extensive fieldwalking and evaluation trenching carried out within and to the south of the excavation area by the Kent Archaeological Rescue Unit (KAR) in 1990, identified several areas of late Iron Age and early Romano-British activity (c. 100 BC – 200 AD). Although the three trenches within the excavation area did not contain any features, the area immediately to the east was identified as a potential focus of activity of this date (KAR Site 2).
- 1.3.3 A trial trench evaluation carried out by the Museum of London Archaeology Service in the area to the north of the railway line in 1997 (*Archaeological Evaluation at Boys Hall Road-Sevington Railhead, Channel Tunnel Rail Link*, Union Railways Ltd, 1997) revealed features associated with the post-medieval garden, and also uncovered further evidence of the late Iron Age and early Romano-British settlement.

2 SUMMARY OF RESULTS

2.1 Site Summary

- 2.1.1 The strip, map and sample excavation revealed two small clusters of late Iron Age/early Romano-British features situated in the south-west and south-east corners of the site, comprising a series of parallel ditches and gullies and a small group of cremation burials respectively. Two large north-east/south-west aligned ditches (features 6 and 28), which ran continuously through the west half of the site, were cut through a buried soil horizon which overlay the Iron Age/ Romano-British

features. The only finds recovered from these features consisted of a few small fragments of post-medieval tile and glass. These two ditches, and a cobbled surface which appeared to be contemporary with this later phase of activity, are almost certainly associated with the adjacent former medieval/ post-medieval manor house. A small number of ditches and gullies located in the northern half of the site were undated, but also appear most likely to be medieval or post-medieval in date.

2.2 Periods Represented

Late Iron Age/ early Romano-British

- 2.2.1 An east/west aligned ditch discovered in the south-west corner of the site contained 64 sherds of late Iron Age/ early Romano-British pottery (c. 100 BC – 200 AD). A gully running parallel to the south, and two shallow ditches running parallel to the north, all produced contemporary material though in smaller quantities (9 sherds, 2 sherds and 10 sherds respectively). Two shallow scoops of uncertain function were cut by these linear features but contained the same type of pottery.
- 2.2.2 A small cluster of shallow, charcoal-rich pits in the south-east corner of the site contained the remains of at least four *in situ* cremation burials within pottery vessels although these were much truncated by ploughing. In addition to the cremation urn, one of these features contained several other smashed pots apparently representing grave goods.

Medieval/post-medieval

- 2.2.3 The two large ditches running through the west half of the site produced only a small number of finds, comprising two pieces of post-medieval brick/tile, two fragments of 18th-century bottle glass and an iron nail. Although these finds indicated that these features were backfilled in the post-medieval period (c. 1500–1800 AD), the larger of the two ditches had been recut at least three times and it remains possible that one or both of these features were medieval in origin (c. 1100 – 1500 AD). A substantial cobbled surface, which extended into the edge of the north-western of the two large ditches, may have been a ford across this hollow, which may have been seasonally waterlogged or boggy.

2.3 Feature Types

- 2.3.1 The site was predominately characterised by ditches and gullies, with just one small group of discrete features (a cluster of late Iron Age/ early Romano-British cremations) located in the south-east corner. The only other type of deposit discovered was a cobbled surface which appeared to be associated with one of the larger medieval/ post-medieval ditches.
- 2.3.2 The cluster of ditches and gullies found in the south-west corner of the site all produced late Iron Age/ early Romano-British pottery. The quantity of finds recovered, and the discovery of a group of broadly contemporary cremation burials to the east, suggests that this early phase of activity derives from settlement activity in the immediate vicinity.
- 2.3.3 The two large ditches and cobbled surface appeared to be associated with the late medieval/ early post-medieval house and garden (c. 1300 – 1640 AD), although their exact function is unclear.

2.4 Artefactual Remains

- 2.4.1 An assemblage of approximately four hundred sherds of pottery was recovered from the excavation, which will increase when all of the cremation samples have been processed. All of this material is late Iron Age/ early Romano-British in date (c. 100 BC – 200 AD). However, it should be noted that the comparatively large sherd count is in part due to the recovery of several smashed cremation vessels. The only other finds recovered comprised a small number of tile fragments, post-medieval glass and two iron nails.

2.5 Palaeo-environmental and Economic Evidence

- 2.5.1 The fills of the group of cremation features were sampled in their entirety, resulting in five samples. These have yet to be examined in detail but are clearly rich in wood charcoal and contain numerous fragments of cremated bone. Some of the samples also contain sherds of pottery, where these could not easily be separated from the soil in the field.

3 FIELDWORK EVENT AIMS

- 3.1 The aims of the fieldwork event were as follows:

- Establish the extent, morphology and function of any remains.
- Provide further evidence of the character and extent of the late Iron Age/ early Romano-British settlement found in adjacent areas of the site.
- Recover evidence associated with the adjacent former medieval and post-medieval manor house and gardens.
- Recover dated environmental and economic indicators if present.

- 3.2 The aims of the fieldwork event were all addressed, but with limited success in some cases. The features present were planned and sampled, and most features produced some dating evidence. In the case of the cremation group, their function is readily apparent but the upper parts of the features were severely plough-damaged and the full extent of the cemetery remains unknown. The group of late Iron Age/ Romano-British linear features in the south-west corner of the site suggests that occupation of this date extends beyond the excavation in that direction, but provides little additional information as to its character or extent.

- 3.3 The contents of late Iron Age/ Romano-British cremations have been sampled in their entirety. Study of the content of the cremation deposits will be important for comparison and contrast with other Iron Age and Romano-British burial sites in the region, in terms of variation in burial practise through the Iron Age and Romano-British periods, and differences between rural and urban burial practises.

- 3.4 Within the framework of the research strategy, Iron Age cremations are particularly relevant to studies of 'ritual and ceremonial use of the landscape' in the period 'towns and their rural landscapes' (sub-period 1, 100BC – 410 AD). The accumulated evidence for dispersed settlement activity of this period will provide useful information of specific relevance to the Wealden Greensand landscape zone.

Establishing a coherent picture from the various investigations will require careful reassessment of the various investigations previously carried out in the vicinity.

- 3.5 The late medieval/ post-medieval features discovered add significantly to knowledge of the morphology of the moated site. However, the dating of the features is imprecise, due to the small number of dateable finds recovered, and the fact that the large ditch, although potentially of medieval origin, seems to have been filled comparatively recently. The subsidiary drainage ditches produced no dating evidence at all.

4 SUMMARY OF POTENTIAL

- 4.1 The excavation uncovered further evidence of the late Iron Age/ early Romano-British settlement previously seen in the immediately adjacent areas. The small number of features which lay within the area of excavation, and the absence of animal bone and other environmental indicators, means that the site is unlikely to add any significant new information about the character of this occupation. Nevertheless, the discovery of these deposits will contribute to the understanding of the overall layout and extent of the settlement, and information recovered from the pottery assemblage, which includes several cremation vessels and other grave goods, has potential to contribute evidence on the chronology and status of the site.
- 4.2 The accumulated evidence for dispersed settlement activity of the late Iron Age and early Romano-British period (*c.* 100 BC – 200 AD) will provide useful information of specific relevance to the Wealden Greensand landscape zone. Establishing a coherent picture from the various investigations will require careful reassessment of the various investigations previously carried out in the vicinity. Directly comparable sites could include South of Snarkhurst Wood and North of Saltwood Tunnel. Useful contrast could be drawn with broadly contemporary settlement sites of different type or landscape setting, such as Thurnham Villa.
- 4.3 Deposits associated with the former medieval and post-medieval manor house and gardens have some potential for detailed analysis to establish the date and character of the deposits. Their spatial relationship to earthworks and buried features of similar date investigated previously to the north and west, should provide further evidence of their exact date and function.
- 4.4 The overall interpretation of this important late medieval and early post-medieval site (*c.* 1300 – 1640 AD) is of particular relevance to the Wealden Greensand landscape zone in the 'towns and their rural landscapes' period (sub-period 1100-1700 AD). Directly comparable sites include Mersham and Parsonage Farm.

APPENDIX 1

ARCHIVE INDEX

ITEM	NUMBER OF ITEMS	NUMBER OF FRAGMENTS	CONDITION (No. of items) (W=washed; UW=unwashed; M=marked; P=processed; UP=unprocessed; D=digitised; I=indexed)
Contexts records	74		
A1 plans	4		
A4 plans	1		
A1 sections	1		
A4 sections	14		
Small finds	0		
Films (monochrome) S=slide; PR=print	4		
Films (Colour) S=slide; PR=print	4		
Flint (boxes)	see Misc. finds		
Pottery (boxes)	1 size 2	373	W,M
Fired clay (boxes)	0	0	W,M
CBM (boxes)	see Misc. finds	17	W,M
Stone (boxes)	see Misc. finds		W,M
Metalwork (boxes)	see Misc. finds	2	
Glass (boxes)	1 plastic size 4	2	W,M
Slag (boxes)	0	0	
Human Bone (boxes)		not available	UP
Animal Bone (boxes)	1 size 2	2	W,M
Misc.	1 size 2	27	
Soil Samples (No.)	6		P
Soil Samples (bags/tubs)	7		see above
Soil Samples (Monolith/kubiena tin)	0		UP

Key to box sizes

Cardboard boxes

Size 1 = Bulk box	391mm x 238mm x 210mm
Size 2 = Half box	391mm x 238mm x 100mm
Size 3 = Quarter box	386mm x 108 mm x 100mm
Size 4 = Eighth box	213 mm x 102 mm x 80 mm
Size 5 = Sixteenth box	110mm x 88 mm x 60 mm
Size 6 = Skeleton box	600 mm x 241 mm x 225 mm

Plastic boxes

Size 4 = Small	(dimensions as size 4 cardboard)
Size 8 = Medium	260mm x 184mm x 108mm
Size 9 = Large	308mm x 216mm x 144mm

APPENDIX 2

SUMMARY REPORT

Boys Hall Balancing Pond, Sevington, near Ashford, Kent. (NGR TR 3095 0701)

Oxford Archaeological Unit (OAU) was commissioned by Union Railways (South) Limited (URS) to undertake a strip, map and sample excavation at the site of Boys Hall Balancing Pond, adjacent to Boys Hall Moat, Sevington, near Ashford, Kent (URL grid 83100 20700). This work was conducted between 26th April and 14th May 1999, as part of a programme of archaeological investigation along the line of the Channel Tunnel Rail Link.

An east/west aligned ditch discovered in the south-west corner of the site contained 64 sherds of late Iron Age/ early Romano-British pottery. A gully running parallel to the south, and two shallow ditches running parallel to the north, all produced contemporary material though in smaller quantities (9 sherds, 2 sherds and 10 sherds respectively). Two shallow scoops of uncertain function were cut by these linear features but contained the same type of pottery.

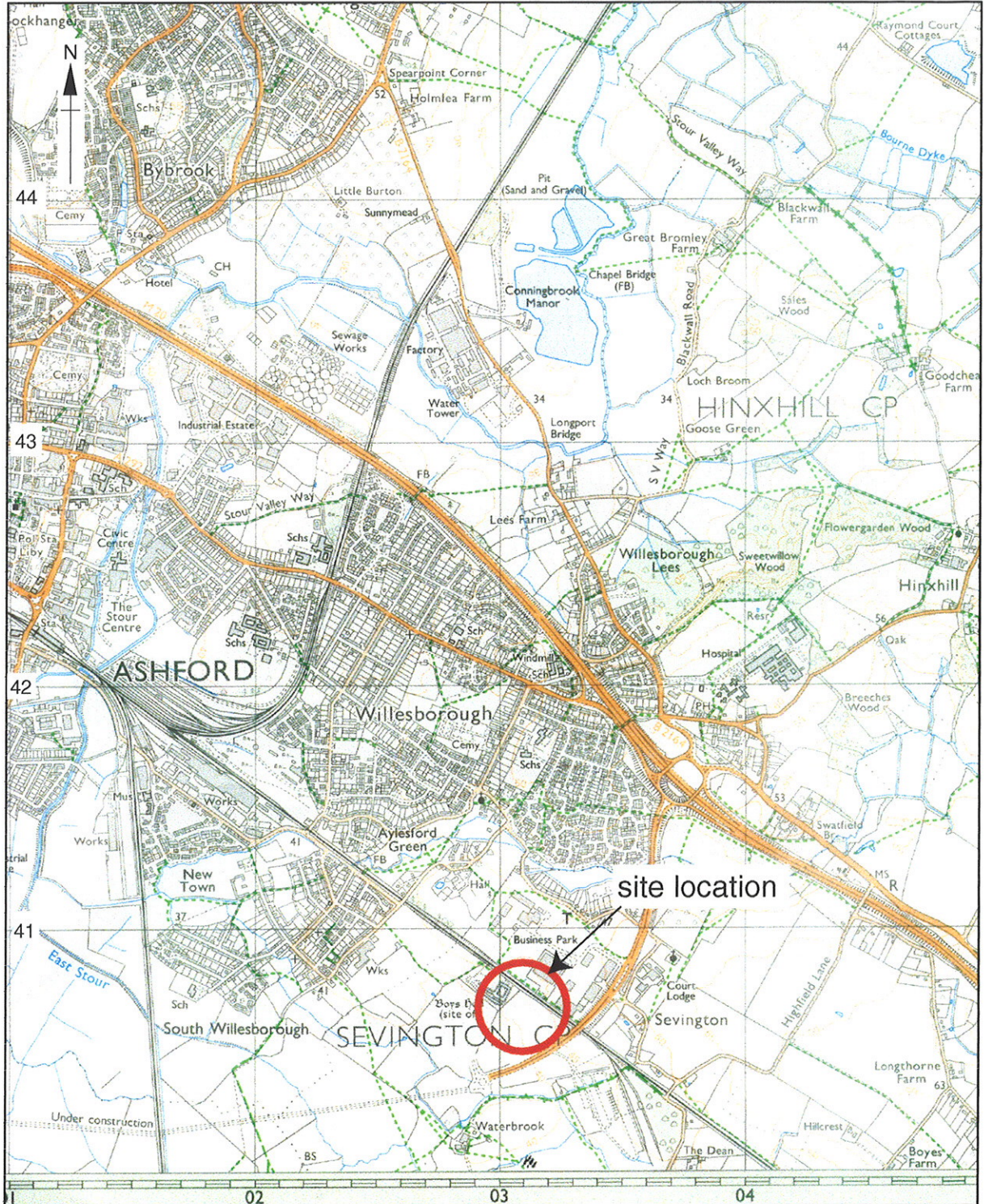
A small cluster of shallow, charcoal-rich pits in the south east corner of the site contained the remains of at least four *in situ* cremation burials within late Iron Age/ early Romano-British pots, though these were much truncated by later ploughing. In addition to the cremation urn, one of these features contained several other smashed pots apparently representing grave goods.

Two large north-east/south-west aligned ditches which ran continuously through the west half of the site were cut through a buried soil horizon which overlay the Iron Age/ Romano-British features. The only finds recovered from these features consisted of a few small fragments of post-medieval tile and glass. These two ditches, and a cobbled surface which appeared to be contemporary with this later phase of activity, were almost certainly associated with the adjacent former medieval manor house or later post-medieval garden (Boys Hall Moat Scheduled Ancient Monument, Kent SAM 146). A small number of further ditches and gullies located in the northern half of the site were undated, but also appeared most likely to be medieval or post-medieval in date.

APPENDIX 3

SMR SHEET

Site Name: Boys Hall Balancing Pond, Sevington, near Ashford, Kent			
<p>Summary: An excavation immediately to the west of Boys Hall Moat revealed a group of four late Iron Age/ Romano-British cremations and four linear features of similar date. Previous investigations have provided ample evidence for settlement of this date in the vicinity. Two large ditches, and a contemporary cobbled surface, are almost certainly associated with the adjacent former medieval manor house or the attached post-medieval garden (Boys Hall Moat Scheduled Ancient Monument, Kent SAM 146).</p>			
District: Ashford		Parish: Sevington	
<p>Period(s):</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Late Iron Age/ early Romano-British 2. Medieval/ post-medieval 			
NGR Easting: TR 3095		NGR Northing: 0701	
Type of Recording:	Evaluation	Watching—Brief	Field Walking
(Delete)	Excavation	Geophysical Survey	Measured Survey
Date of Recording: (From) 26/04/99		(To) 14/05/99	
Unit Undertaking Recording: Oxford Archaeological Unit			
<p>Summary of Fieldwork Results: Oxford Archaeological Unit (OAU) was commissioned by Union Railways (South) Limited (URS) to undertake at strip, map and sample excavation at the site of Boys Hall Balancing Pond, adjacent to Boys Hall Moat, Sevington, near Ashford, Kent (URL grid 83100 20700). This work was conducted between 26th April and 14th May 1999, as part of a programme of archaeological investigation along the line of the Channel Tunnel Rail Link. An east/west aligned ditch discovered in the south-west corner of the site contained 64 sherds of late Iron Age/ early Romano-British pottery. A gully running parallel to the south, and two shallow ditches running parallel to the north, all produced contemporary material though in smaller quantities (9 sherds, 2 sherds and 10 sherds respectively). Two shallow scoops of uncertain function were cut by these linear features but contained the same type of pottery. A small cluster of shallow, charcoal-rich pits in the south east corner of the site contained the remains of at least four in situ cremation burials within late Iron Age/ early Romano-British pots, though these were much truncated by later ploughing. In addition to the cremation urn, one of these features contained several other smashed pots apparently representing grave goods. Two large north-east/south-west aligned ditches which ran continuously through the west half of the site were cut through a buried soil horizon which overlay the Iron Age/ Romano-British features. The only finds recovered from these features consisted of a few small fragments of post-medieval tile and glass. These two ditches, and a cobbled surface which appeared to be contemporary with this later phase of activity, were almost certainly associated with the adjacent former medieval manor house or later post-medieval garden (Boys Hall Moat Scheduled Ancient Monument, Kent SAM 146). A small number of further ditches and gullies located in the northern half of the site were undated, but also appeared most likely to be medieval or post-medieval in date.</p>			
Location of Archive / Finds:			
Bibliography:			
Summary Compiler: Stuart Foreman		Date: 27/7/99	



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figure 1 : site location .



figure 2 : interpretative site plan



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