

ARCHAEOLOGY AND THE CHANNEL TUNNEL*

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INTRODUCTION

Three separate construction areas have received attention from the Canterbury Archaeological Trust: Ashford, where the inland freight clearance depot has been built; Dover, where a construction camp, offices, working areas and a shaft leading down to the tunnel have been constructed; and Folkestone, where the main U.K. terminal facilities, the tunnel portals and a length of 'cut-and-cover' tunnel are presently under construction.

Negotiations with Eurotunnel for archaeological work connected with this, the largest ever privately-funded civil engineering venture in Europe, began at an early stage in the life of the project. A document containing all known information regarding sites of archaeological interest was prepared by English Heritage (November 1986)¹ and these designated areas were assessed in the field during July and August 1987. The results of this initial phase of evaluation were used to determine priorities for further evaluation, major excavation or watching brief works. Many of the sites designated to be of importance in the English Heritage report lay outside the lines

* The archaeological fieldwork and post-excavation studies currently in progress are being entirely funded by Eurotunnel.

¹ T. Darvill (compiler), *Channel Tunnel Environmental Impact Assessment Archaeology (Stage II): Assessment and Evaluation*, (H.B.M.C., November 1986).

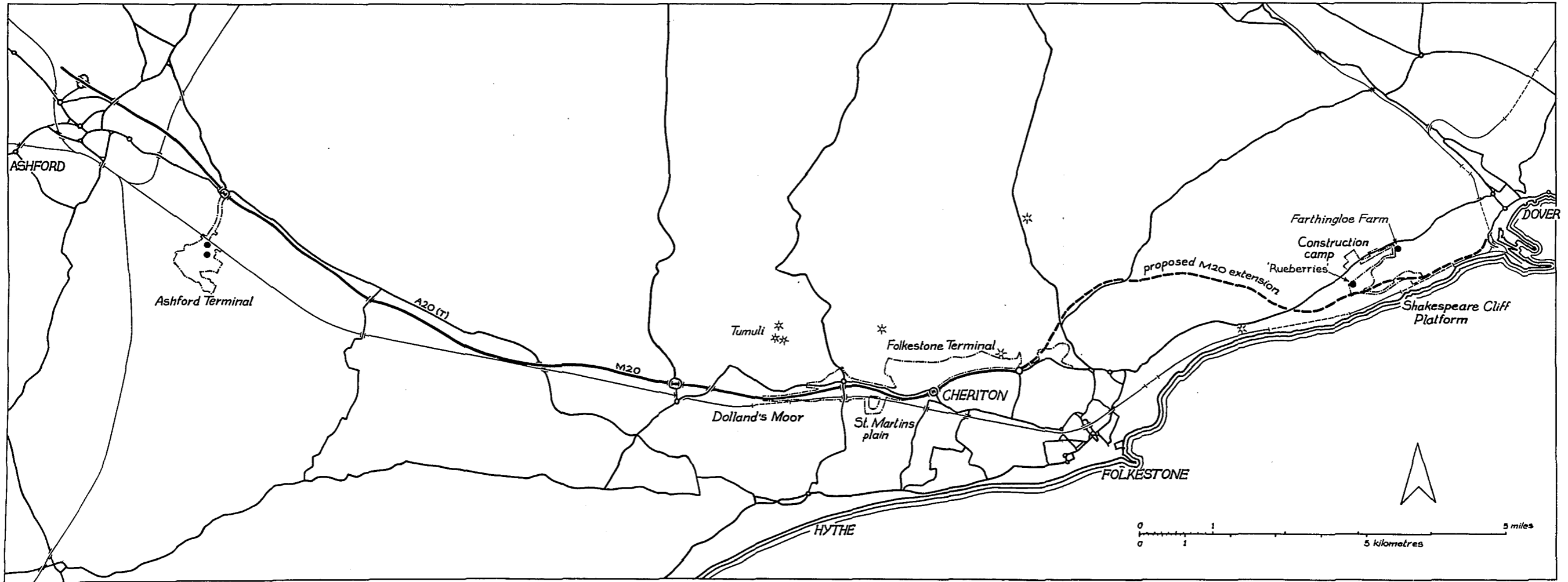


Fig. 1. Location of the Ashford, Folkestone and Dover construction areas.

of deviation for Eurotunnel groundworks, others were of recent origin, or proved to be natural anomalies in the soils.

A. DOVER

Two sites near Dover were evaluated during July 1987. At 'Rueberies'² air photographic evidence indicated the presence of a number of large and small square enclosures. These proved to be Second World War features and no other evidence for historic sites was located here either during the evaluation phase or during subsequent watching brief works. At Farthingloe Farm³ evidence of Roman occupation of first- to third-century date was discovered, perhaps associated with a nearby farmstead or villa. Extensive prospection trenching revealed a number of pits and ditches in the development zone. These appeared to be associated with domestic rubbish disposal and perhaps fields on the fringes of an occupation area. The centre of the settlement, which is likely to underlie existing farm buildings, is not threatened by development.

B. ASHFORD

Groundworks at the Ashford terminal revealed two definite areas of occupation, both dating from the later Iron Age and 'Belgic' periods. The first, located in the north-west extremity of the terminal, has now been buried under an embankment leading to a temporary Bailey bridge. This settlement appeared to be extensive, with the highest concentrations of features lying against the site boundaries, perhaps indicating that much of the habitation area will survive development. The second area of occupation was located in the southern extremity of the terminal. Again, the settlement centre appeared to lie outside the development zone and many of the features briefly examined here were rapidly buried under soil mounds imported from the northern area of the terminal. New groundworks at the Ashford terminal planned for 1989-90 will be closely monitored.

² N.G.R. TR 28603955.

³ N.G.R. TR 29574044.

Eurotunnel evaluation ~ Dover

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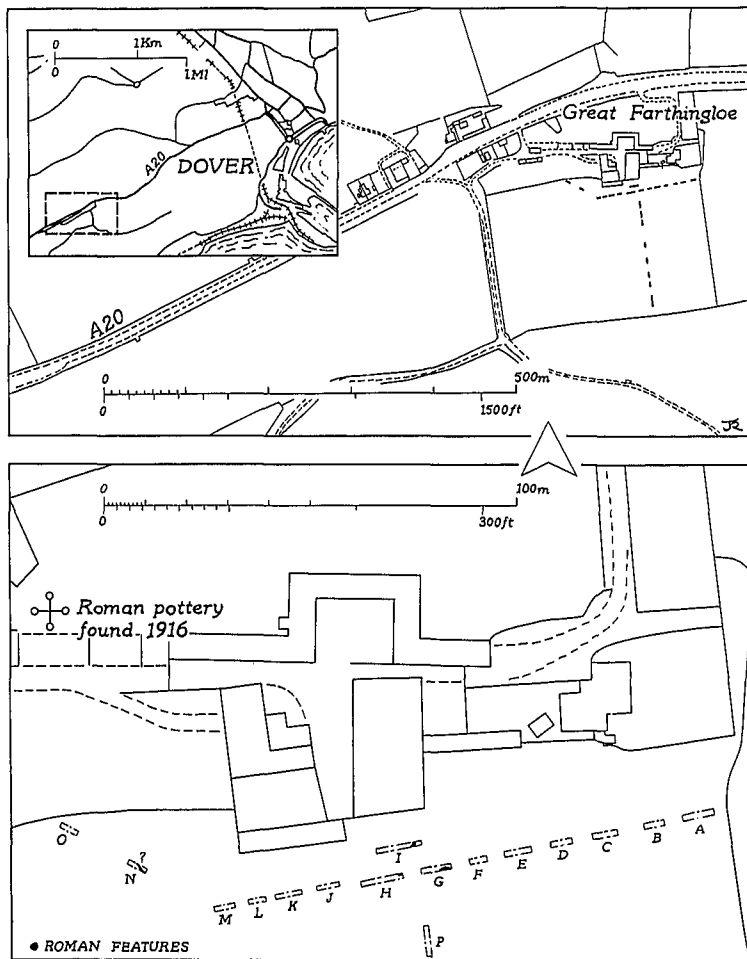


Fig. 2. Roman features located by machine trenching at Farthingloe Farm, Dover in 1987.

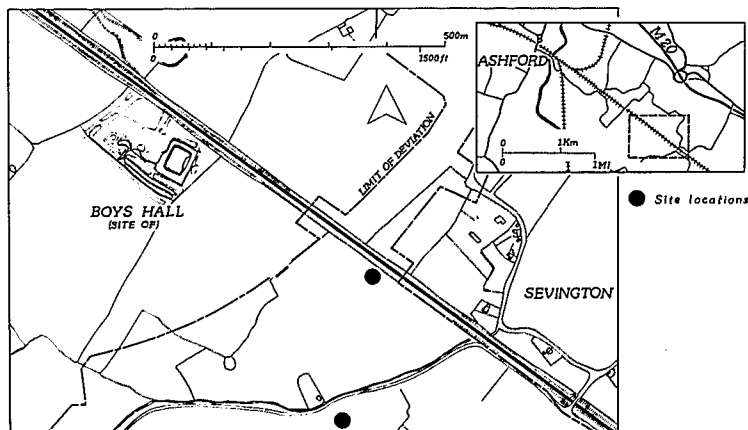


Fig. 3. Location of two Late Iron Age occupation areas recorded during the construction of the Ashford terminal.

C. FOLKESTONE

Most of the archaeological fieldwork for Eurotunnel has concentrated on the main terminal site at Folkestone, on a strip of land against the foot of the North Downs, which has been intensively settled and exploited since prehistoric times. Space does not allow for a detailed site-by-site description of discoveries here. The information presented below has, therefore, been designed briefly to draw out the main threads of the extraordinary story of that area; a story which continues to be wrested from the soil during the period of construction.

Of the ninety-nine separate areas of archaeological and historical interest defined in early reports as being within the Folkestone area, only twenty-six were within the U.K. terminal boundaries, and most of these proved to be of passing interest only. This initial period of evaluation by machine-cut linear trenches, involved the removal of topsoil to the level of natural subsoils and detailed shovel and trowel work to determine the presence of archaeological features by changes in the colour, texture, and content of the soil. Though much of the historic landscape had been badly plough-damaged, tantalising traces of habitation suggested settlement over a considerable period.

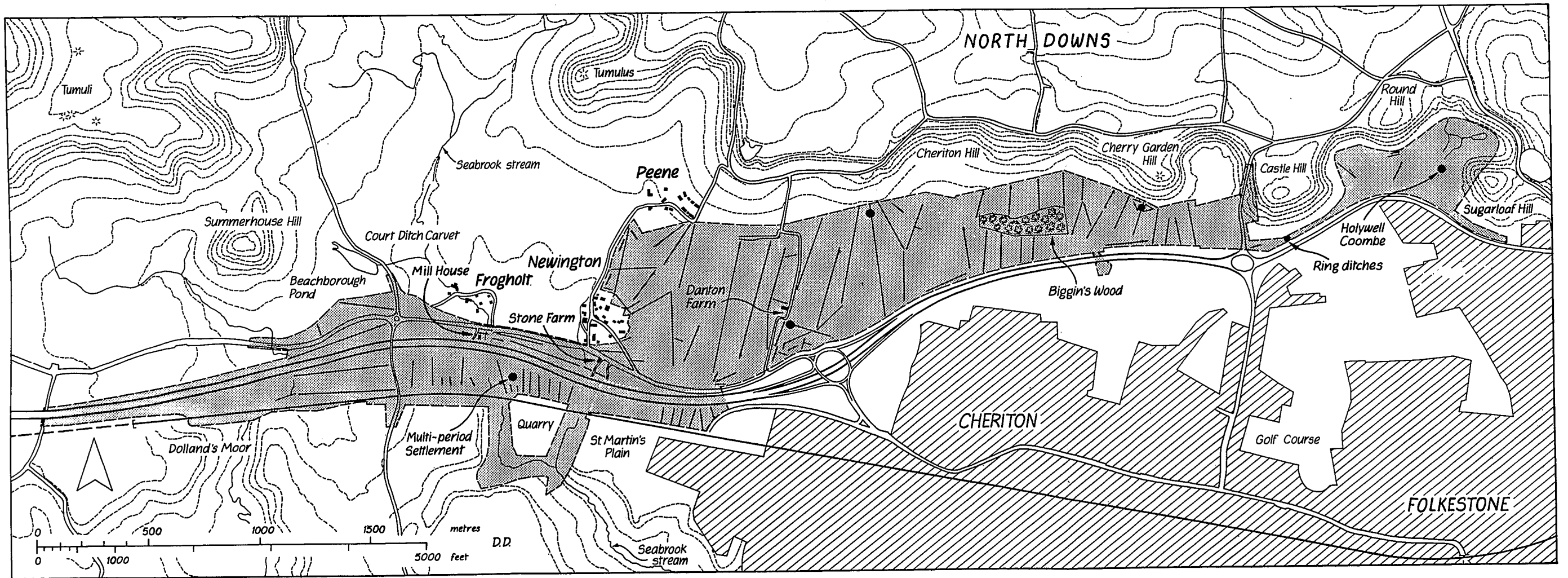


Fig. 4. Plan of the Folkestone terminal (toned) and surrounding district, showing position of linear trenches and the main sites described in the text.

One kilometre of linear trenches was cut during this phase of fieldwork. The immediate results were disappointing, with only three areas producing promising remains. Three prehistoric ring ditches (burial mounds) were located at the southern foot of Castle Hill, a site in the ownership of the Department of Transport, which has yet to be excavated. A large area east of Dolland's Moor, owned by British Rail, produced evidence for multi-period occupation spanning over 1,500 years. A rare Early Bronze Age settlement, dating back to 3,800 years ago, was discovered at Holywell Coombe, on a site destined to be the principal portal to the Channel Tunnel. This was located as a consequence of the Trust's involvement with a multi-disciplinary team, investigating a sequence of important post-glacial deposits at the eastern limit of the coombe, an operation which commenced in early July 1987. Many of the evaluation trenches cut at this time yielded a relative abundance of prehistoric, Roman and medieval finds, particularly pottery and flints, all indicators of the proximity of habitation sites. To uncover a true picture of man's activities in the broad area of the U.K. terminal, further prospecting on a large scale had to be carried out before construction processes began in early spring 1988.

Although various methods of prospecting were considered, the success of the early phase of evaluation by linear trenching (even though few sites were produced) was evident and we concluded in early November 1987 that an extensive programme of trenching should commence immediately to investigate the unknown landscape. Nearly 100 separate transects, joining points of cartographic significance, were arranged with roughly equal spacing from Castle Hill to Summerhouse Hill, all aligned downslope for easy drainage. Separate evaluation operations were undertaken in Holywell Coombe field and on other sites prior to the construction of work-camps and the visitors' centre. The resultant 14 km. of transects, comprising 700 or more separate trenches and over 10,000 square metres of inspected subsoil, were all completed in four months, during the wettest winter in living memory and the aftermath of the October 'hurricane'.

Of the seventeen or so areas of archaeological significance located to date, fourteen were found during this phase of prospecting. Some of these sites, and other isolated find-spots, are briefly discussed below. The archaeological works continue in tandem with construction. The watching/recording brief presently in progress is yielding additional information which will provide an increasingly detailed picture of the long history of the site destined to become the U.K. terminal to the Channel Tunnel at Folkestone.

1. *The Early Landscape*

The geological deposits at Holywell Coombe,⁴ sampled and surveyed by Dr Richard Preece and Mrs Mary Seddon, produced an environmental history of the area, extending back to the recolonisation of Britain with plants and animals in the wake of the ravages of the very last glaciers, 13,000 years ago.

The evidence for the arrival of plants and animals and main vegetational changes thereafter has been gleaned from deeply buried coombe strata underlying ploughsoil. The coombe layers can be broadly divided into three groups: first, 'solifluxion' deposits; basal sediments, resting on Gault clay, comprised of redeposited Gault or chalk that has been heavily frost-shattered and moved down-slope as a slurry; second, 'tufa' deposits; calcium carbonate layers precipitated from lime-rich springs that became active in the valley some 10,000 years ago. Much of the tufa is a pure white sediment with a consistency not unlike cheese. In places, the basal layers of tufa are rich in organic matter and from these many hazelnuts and the remains of wild boar have been recovered. Third, 'colluvium'; a chalky hill-wash which is the product of soil erosion initiated by forest clearance for agricultural purposes by man from the Neolithic period onwards, and which blankets the early sequence.

A comprehensive study of the fossils contained in those sediments has enabled Dr Preece and a number of associate specialists to reconstruct the depositional environment of the valley in considerable detail. Samples taken every 5 or 10 cm. from a number of test pits, have been rigorously examined in laboratory conditions for fossil remains. Unlike earlier geological periods, all the fossils gleaned from the samples belong to species which survive today, although not necessarily in Britain. The chief fossil groups recovered have been land (occasionally freshwater) snails, insects and plant remains including seeds and even pollen.

The proportions of each type of fossil have been carefully recorded so that a dynamic picture of the changing plant and animal communities can be built up. At Holywell Coombe arctic alpine communities present in the basal layers were replaced by those characteristic first of boreal forest and then deciduous forest before there appears to have been a reversion to grassland

⁴ For earlier examinations of the Coombe deposits, see M.P. Kerney, R.C. Preece and C. Turner, 'Molluscan and Plant Biostratigraphy of some late Devensian and Flandrian Deposits in Kent', *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society of London* (B) 291, (1980), 1-43.

2. *The First Farmers*

Looking at rural Britain today many of us imagine that we are seeing a natural, harmonious landscape. In fact, what we see is the product of several thousand years of intensive use and abuse by man. In the same way that current land use changes in response to the activities of modern farming and development, archaeologists have discovered that ancient man caused changes to his environment on an even greater scale.

Britain became heavily forested when climatic conditions improved following the final retreat of the glaciers from northern Europe, some 13,000 years ago. The flora and fauna, whose early manifestations were attested by the geological excavations at Holywell Coombe, were little affected by man until the coming of the first farmers. At Folkestone this may have been 4,500–5,000 years ago. From then on the fate of the truly natural vegetation here, and elsewhere in southern Britain, was sealed. In the same way that the destruction of the forests in places like Nepal and Brazil causes catastrophic erosion, ancient farmers, on the site presently being developed for the U.K. terminal of the Channel Tunnel, almost certainly initiated massive soil loss, following the clearance of the natural forest cover to establish fields for crops and pastures for domesticated animals.

Soil erosion is usually initiated when the bare ground surface is exposed to the effect of heavy rain, which carves rills and gullies into the topsoil and carries it away. Soil loss can be an inevitable consequence of deforestation by 'slash-and-burn' methods followed by intense arable farming or over-grazing by sheep and cattle. In the past erosion may have led to the abandonment of land with farmers only returning when the soil had weathered sufficiently to provide a satisfactory growth medium for crops and pasture. In this way there may have been a cycle of erosion, paralleling and indeed sometimes causing changes in land use.

Past erosion episodes in the terminal area are contained within the soils themselves. Along the foot of the North Downs, on slightly elevated sites overlooking Folkestone and the sea, various periods of erosion and deposition have been identified dating back over 3,800 years to the Early Bronze Age, with later evidence for further soil losses in the Iron Age and Anglo-Saxon periods. The evidence on these sites appears as a colourful sandwich of layers comprising horizontal deposits of light brown hill-wash (colluvium) interspersed by darker bands of buried topsoil.

One site in particular, at the east end of the terminal site, has produced remarkable evidence for an Early Bronze Age settlement, which was, through time, buried by a thick carpet of migrated soil.

This, the Holywell Coombe settlement, situated on rising ground at the western foot of Sugar Loaf Hill, proved to be one of a number of Bronze Age habitation sites found under hill-wash in the development area. Although some of these settlements were undoubtedly long-lived, most may have flourished for less than a century before they were sealed by colluvium. These sites perhaps reflect the way in which early agricultural processes exhausted land fertility and caused a cycle of erosion which eventually forced their occupants to exploit new areas, in the shadow of the North Downs and elsewhere.

Occupation at Holywell Coombe was long-lived, with a few worn sherds of Late Neolithic pottery and a number of worked flints attesting activity in that area 4,500–5,000 years ago. The majority of the potsherds from this site, however, appear to be in the Beaker tradition, an intrusive style of pottery reaching Britain from continental Europe about 4,000 years ago. The repertoire of decoration employed on the pots and the general shape of the vessels all suggest an assemblage, which is early in the tradition, perhaps dating from 3,800 years ago.

The occupation sequence associated with the buried Early Bronze Age topsoil and subsequent layers of hill-wash may have commenced with an agricultural phase, highlighted by the survival of parallel rows of 'ard' marks (the 'ard' was the ancestor of the plough), showing in the underlying natural deposits. The early field was eventually covered by a small settlement with a trackway or 'hollow-way', this presumably created by the constant passage of men and animals. Flints, the bones of cattle and pig, and sea shells (limpet, winkle and mussel) were found trodden into the track's surface. A bewildering profusion of post-holes, associated with the old buried topsoil and trackway, probably marked the location of timber-framed huts and fence-lines established there during a long occupation sequence.

These finds in Holywell Coombe are extremely important as few, if any, other early Beaker domestic sites have yet been located in this country. Early Bronze Age burial sites are less rare and here one finds Beaker-style pottery in association with other Late Neolithic forms. This association of Beakers with 'native' vessels from different ceramic traditions has generally been used to argue against the once-established hypothesis of Beaker invasions from Europe. Of particular significance in this regard is the site immediately south of Castle Hill. Evaluation trenching confirmed the existence of three burial mounds here and produced a number of worked flints and potsherds indicating an Early Bronze Age date for these extremely important monuments, which have yet to be fully excavated.

The identification of Holywell Coombe as an Early Bronze Age site on the south-east coast, and the other associated sites located in

PLATE I



Holywell Coombe: Excavation in progress, showing the hollow way and post-holes. Looking north-east.

the terminal area, therefore affords an opportunity to re-assess the Beaker invasion arguments and, as such, the sites are of national significance.

With few exceptions Bronze Age settlement in the terminal appears to have concentrated at the foot of the Downs. Although exploitation of the flat landscape to the south is likely, particularly the lighter sandy soils of Dolland's Moor and elsewhere, much of the low-lying area from Holywell Coombe to Newington may have been subject to flooding and, therefore, unsuitable for settlement. Outside the terminal air photographic reconnaissance indicates the existence of ring-ditches for burial mounds on the upper escarpment of the Downs and one immediately south of Holywell Coombe. Only three groups of finds indicating settlement south of the terminal are known, these concentrated in the area of Folkestone Golf Course.⁵

Although Bronze Age and earlier Neolithic finds, particularly flints, were recovered in prospection trenches in the low-lying ground south of the Downs, the relative quantities are not significant, and it is not until the Early Iron Age that settlement appears to expand to embrace a greater part of the terminal area.

3. *The Iron Age Settlers*

The greatest concentration of features and finds of Early-to-Mid Iron Age date, 2,300–3,000 years ago, was uncovered during a major excavation to the east of Dolland's Moor. The features, mainly large pits often 2 m. in diameter and nearly as deep, appear to represent an extensive 'open' settlement which extended over a considerable area south of the M20 and as far as a nearby modern quarry. Some were probably cut for rubbish disposal, but other large, drum-shaped pits appear to have been left open for a long time and may represent underground grain silos. One pit may have had a religious function; it contained a single horse's head laid carefully flat within it.

Only deeply-cut features survived the ravages of modern ploughing throughout the entire terminal area and no structural remains associated with the pits have been discovered. Some field ditches have been dated to this period, and it seems likely that there was an Early Iron Age system of square fields to the east of the settlement, although the many cattle and pig bones found suggest that animal husbandry also played an important role in the agricultural life of the community.

⁵ R.F. Jessup, 'A Flint Dagger and two Beakers from East Kent', *Antiq. Journ.*, xx (1940), 486–7.

Pottery from these Iron Age features has continental parallels in the Low Countries and northern France, and it is tempting to suggest that cultural links existed between communities on either side of the Channel during this period and perhaps throughout the Iron Age.

Finds of Iron Age date have been recovered from numerous transects in the terminal area, suggesting a thorough exploitation of the entire landscape. Much of this material may have been introduced into the soil as a consequence of transient occupation, traces of which have been lost to the plough, or as a by-product of more general agricultural activities associated with herding or muck-spreading to enrich exhausted soil. Significant quantities of Iron Age pottery from soil horizons buried by hill-wash indicate that intensive farming did occur at that time, encouraging further episodes of soil erosion at the foot of the Downs.

4. *The Arrival of the Belgae*

Evidence for Late Iron Age occupation on the terminal and in the Folkestone area is relatively prolific. The key settlement for understanding the nature of this phase of the cultural continuum is again east of Dolland's Moor, where a significant number of ditches and pits suggest a radical change from more open, dispersed occupation to 'enclosed', village life. Again, modern ploughing removed all but deeply-cut features, although significant gaps in the distribution of pits and positioning of ditches may reflect domestic habitation areas. The complex sequence of ditches indicates continuous modification to the internal arrangements of the hamlet, with perhaps the repositioning of small, ditched, cultivation areas or paddocks for keeping domesticated animals. Many ditches were maintained for long periods and examination of the soils filling them has shown that they were often cleaned or recut. Substantial ditches with deep U- or V-shaped profiles appear to enclose the village and there is some evidence to suggest that a timber stockade may have accompanied the earthwork.

Finds from the settlement and from other smaller sites in the terminal area are manifest, and again bear testimony to close contacts with the Continent. Julius Caesar's *Gallic Wars* (a public diary written to publicise his military exploits in Gaul and Britain) explicitly states that there was a folk movement from Belgica to south-east Britain approximately 2,100 years ago⁶ and the large quantity of

⁶ Caesar, *De Bello Gallico*, v, 12.



Site east of Dolland's Moor: Excavation in progress, showing one of the Iron Age ditches. Looking south.



Site east of Dolland's Moor: The Late Iron Age sword *in situ*. Scale 40 cm.

pottery and other evidence from the site will help us to re-assess the role of the 'Belgic' settlers in this area.

The Roman conquest of Gaul and Caesar's invasions of 55 and 54 B.C. opened the communities of Kent to luxury goods from the Continent, although in the inland farming settlements this sort of influx only occurs from the period of the later conquest in A.D. 43. Among the small finds from this site, lost over 2,000 years ago, are two Late Iron Age brooches and a rare silver coin of the Roman republic, dating from 130–128 B.C. Of equal importance and rarity was the discovery of a sword of Late Iron Age type found discarded in one of the 'Belgic' field ditches. The republican Roman coin may be the first to have been found in an Iron Age context in this country. The sword is only the second found in a stratified context in north-west Europe.

The pottery evidence from this settlement and elsewhere in the terminal area suggests continuous occupation from Caesar's arrival on our shores to the appearance of the Roman legions of Aulus Plautius under the banner of the Emperor Claudius in A.D. 43.

5. *The Roman Countryside*

Historically the arrival of the Roman armies in A.D. 43 is seen as a major event. It is easy to forget that such an apparently momentous happening may hardly have touched the lives of the indigenous Iron Age farmers. The terminal area has yielded very little evidence of

Roman activity, as if the armies swept through on their way to subjugate the island, but at the foot of the Downs leaving little trace of their presence, or of settlers who followed in their wake.

On the site east of Dolland's Moor a major change did take place. The whole settlement shifted to the north, out of the old defensive enclosure, which was then converted into fields. The village area was divided into plots, defined by new ditches. Each plot probably contained buildings, as well as the ubiquitous rubbish pits and a new element, grave pits, one to each plot. One grave yielded a silver brooch and a considerable amount of fine ware pottery, including a quantity imported from the Continent. This conspicuous discovery may have been the final resting-place of the village headman. The house site next to this grave was fronted with a stone revetment, emphasising its pre-eminence in the village.

The Late Roman period saw the rise of the landed gentry and the prosperous villa owner. Wealth was invested in land as the value of coinage declined. The settlement east of Dolland's Moor was abandoned, the inhabitants possibly moving to a new site. There is some evidence to suggest that soil fertility was exhausted by this time and good for little else than pasture.

6. *The Coming of the English*

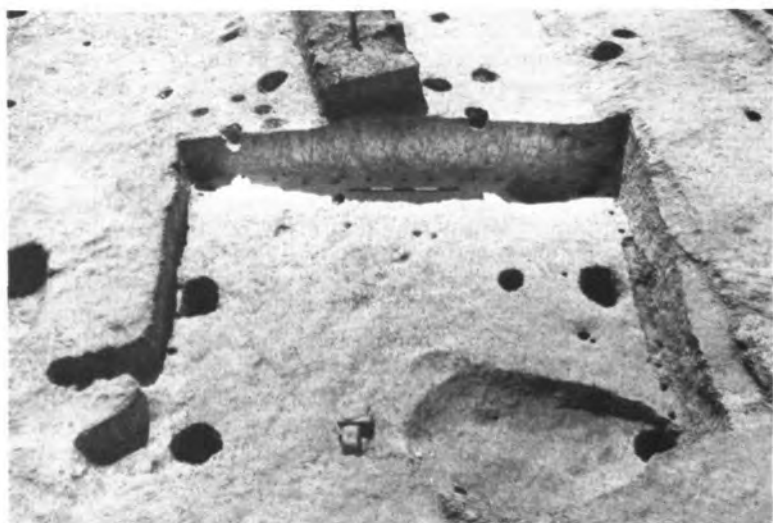
The arrival of southern Scandinavian, 'Jutish' settlers in Kent some 1550 years ago is mainly represented by cemetery sites, well-known in the archaeological literature for the quality of their grave goods, particularly jewellery. Local burials are known from a barrow on Cherry Garden Hill above the terminal, Milky Down Beachborough and Dover Hill, east of Folkestone. Although early re-occupation of the old Roman towns of Canterbury and Dover has been recorded, rural habitation sites in Kent have eluded archaeologists until now. However, here at Folkestone four separate sites, located across the broad area of the terminal, have produced rare and exciting evidence for both early and later Anglo-Saxon settlement.

The early immigrants soon developed close dynastic and mercantile links with Merovingian Franks across the Channel, and rapidly forged one of the most cosmopolitan, prosperous and influential kingdoms of the Early English. As a result it was to Kent and Canterbury that missionaries, under St. Augustine, came in A.D. 597 to begin the conversion of the English to Christianity. It is to this period, shortly after the arrival of Augustine, that two of the settlements belong.

East of Dolland's Moor two sunken-floored buildings and a number of other features associated with an isolated household were



Site east of Dolland's Moor: One of the sunken-featured buildings. Scale 2 m. Looking east.



Site north-west of Biggin's Wood: the sunken-featured building. Scale 1 m. Looking west.

uncovered. The houses, with axial post-holes for stout timbers supporting the ridge of the roofs and posts for the structural corners, were lined with small stakes which once retained horizontally planed walls. Distinctive grass-tempered pottery, loom-weights and animal bones were recovered from the backfill of the huts and associated features.

A third sunken-floored building, perhaps that of another subsistence farmer or shepherd, was located at the foot of the Downs, north-west of Biggin's Wood. This structure, associated with a trackway, rubbish pits, and post-holes for fences or animal pens, was extremely well preserved. The floor of the hut was cut deeply into the ground surface and substantial structural posts survived in all four corners, together with posts for the ridge of the roof. Small stake-holes lining the internal edge of the house indicated a wattle wall, which supported a covering of clay and dung. Copious amounts of burnt clay (daub) in the backfill of the hut and covering the upper fill of associated features was residue from the walls of the building, which had apparently been consumed by fire. Pottery, animal bone and sea-shell refuse recovered here, together with a single piece of jewellery (possibly of Roman origin) bear testimony to the frugal life of an impoverished family. This discovery, found beneath deposits of hill-wash, perhaps indicates that attempts to cultivate the higher slopes of the Downs during this period caused yet another episode of soil erosion.

The third site dates to the period after Kentish supremacy and independence was supplanted, first by Mercia and later by Wessex (c. A.D. 725). This discovery, on a high plateau overlooking the terminal, was at Cherry Garden Hill. Here, two groups of intercutting rubbish pits containing pottery, animal bones and sea shells, revealed the presence of another isolated habitation site, possibly occupied by a single family. Although no trace of the house was found, the distribution of pits may reflect the position of a building which modern ploughing had removed.

The fourth site was near Danton Farm. Here the post-holes of a large timber-framed structure, possibly a barn were uncovered, a forerunner of the documented medieval hamlet of Dalmington, later occupied by Danton Farm. This structure, probably destroyed by fire, was associated with pottery dating to shortly before the Norman conquest.

Based on this evidence the overall picture of Anglo-Saxon occupation up to the conquest appears to be one of subsistence farmers, perhaps randomly scattered on the lower slopes of the Downs, eking out a poor living based on cultivation and herding.

7. *The Medieval Landscape*

The extensive network of prospection trenches cut across the terminal area, produced no substantial trace of medieval occupation. A considerable number of early and later field drains and quantities of surface finds, mainly pottery, did, however, indicate intensive agricultural exploitation of the landscape from the Norman period onwards; a pattern of land use and settlement which is largely reflected in existing villages and the recent layout of fields.

The village of Newington with its church was probably established in the late Anglo-Saxon period, being described as 'a New Town' in the Domesday Survey of 1086.⁷ Domesday also records at least three mills attached to the manor. Excavations under Mill House near Newington failed to produce any sign of a Norman mill, but early medieval pottery recovered from peat deposits there may well indicate the presence of one nearby. Also of Norman origin is the magnificent motte-and-bailey castle, called 'Castle Hill'. This famous landmark, which overshadows the terminal, was subjected in 1878 to the first ever scientific excavation of a medieval site, conducted by General Pitt-Rivers, the father of modern archaeology.⁸

An important 'lost' settlement may exist north-east of Frogholt, just outside the terminal area. Here not only are there clear indications of ancient cultivation, but a number of surviving irregular earthworks may signify house platforms, small cultivation plots, a fish pond (Beachborough Pond) and most curious of all a small oval enclosure once called 'Court Ditoh Carvet'⁹ which may mark the site of the Hundred court (a judicial unit for civil cases dating from Anglo-Saxon times), all indicating that this small area of densely-packed earthworks may have been an important domestic, political and judicial centre in medieval times. Traces of medieval fields also survived until recently near Newington and Peene, and it is plausible that much of the terminal area was once carpeted with similar field systems.

Animal husbandry was well attested on the terminal site in the form of sheep folds. Some were located in transects, others are known from aerial reconnaissance or from early maps and field names.

⁷ J.K. Wallenberg, *The Place-names of Kent*, (Uppsala, 1934), 453.

⁸ Major-General A.H.L.F. Pitt Rivers, 'Excavations at Caesar's Camp near Folkestone, conducted in June and July, 1878', *Archaeologia*, xlvii (1882), 429-65.

⁹ See note 7, p. 457.

Post-medieval settlement appears to have followed the earlier pattern. Enclosure probably took place in later medieval times and fossilised the patchwork of fields and tracks that survived until recently. The series of interconnecting footpaths that run along the edge of the Downs, spuriously called 'Pilgrims' Way', may well have been established as a common thoroughfare during the medieval or post-medieval period.

Of the 'Holy Well' situated in the north-east corner of Holywell Coombe little can be said, except that it was called 'St. Thomas's Well' eighty or so years ago. No evidence exists to suggest that it may have been a ceremonial well of great ancestry, and no masonry structure for a well-head has yet been found. One can be sure, however, that its waters were exploited to the full by untold generations of farmers.

8. *The Historic Buildings*

Only three buildings within the terminal boundaries proved to be of any antiquity and of these only one was of particular merit.

(i) Danton Farm

A 250-year-old barn, until recently part of Danton Farm, was recorded prior to dismantlement and reconstruction on a new site near Peene. This building is destined to house a small railway museum.

(ii) Mill House

Mill House, a Grade II listed building, proved to be a complex structure, originally a late seventeenth-century mill, which had been extended in the nineteenth century with the addition of a brick-built house, a detached stable block and a large paved yard. The mill was situated in a small valley, whose higher, northern end contains the village of Frogholt. The Seabrook stream cuts a meandering course down the valley bottom. In fields to the north of Mill House and west of the stream, earthworks for the original mill sluice, pond and race can still be seen. The continuing line of the race was found by excavation west and south of Mill House, where the channelled water once drove the wheel of the undershot mill. The 'spent' water was ducted onward to merge with the stream a short way to the west. A small brick-built bridge, constructed when the mill was extended, existed until recently upstream, spanning the Seabrook, close to the stable block. The original timber frame of Mill House, though severely impaired by later work, was retained for reconstruction, together with a number of millstones found in the surrounding area.



Mill House during demolition. Looking south-west.



Stone Farm being dismantled. Looking north-east.

(iii) Stone Farm

Stone Farm, another Grade II listed building, was an interesting, well-preserved structure, whose origins may date to the mid-sixteenth century. Excavations under the building and in the surrounding area, yielded the footings of an earlier dwelling, perhaps of fourteenth-century date, and traces of old farm buildings associated with the later establishment, together with a large and deep brick-built well, from which had been drawn water over the past 250 years.

The development of Stone Farm is typical of most historic buildings in that it had undergone many alterations at the hands of a changing pattern of families who lived beneath its roof. Despite a multiplicity of amendments, survey and analysis provided sufficient details of the original fabric to enable a picture of the sixteenth-century building to emerge. This original house was of a transitional type, which harkened back to older medieval traditions, yet provided 'new-style' accommodation for the relatively prosperous family who commissioned it. A ground-floor cross-passage ran from the front door to the back. On entering from the front a door to the right gave onto the principal living room (the 'Hall'), ceiled by exposed floor joists and frame timbers modestly decorated with chamfered edges. An external stack to the rear of the property possibly heated the room and provided the basic requirements for cooking. The floor was covered with a durable mortar, later sealed by ceramic tiles. A second room with decorated ceiling timbers lay beyond the hall. A door left of the passage opposite the hall, led into a small chamber, ceiled with undecorated timbers. A staircase, left of the passage near the back door, gave access to the first floor. Here three individual rooms separated by lathe-and-plaster partitions, which extended up to the apex of the roof, were lit by windows that still survived, fossilised in later fabric.

Major rebuilding probably took place in the eighteenth century, when the stone walls, roof, and brick fireplace were built or rebuilt and a long narrow extension was added to the rear of the house to replace an earlier wing that was roughly contemporary with the main house. Further building work, repairs, alterations and modifications were in evidence spanning the past 200 years or so.

These three buildings are representative of classes of medieval and post-medieval buildings surviving in the urban and rural landscape of south-east England. Peene, Newington and Frogholt all possess similar or older examples of 'standing archaeology',¹⁰ and it is

¹⁰ E.W. Parkin, 'Newington, Near Hythe: The threatened Village', *Arch. Cant.*, ciii (1986), 167-89.

pleasing to note that they will survive for future generations of historians and archaeologists to discover and record. It is equally pleasing and a tribute to Eurotunnel that the three recorded buildings briefly discussed here will be reconstructed on new sites near the historic villages of which they have formed a part in the past and will now continue to do so for centuries to come.

9. *Folkestone in the Nineteenth Century*

The construction of the Channel Tunnel terminal at Folkestone will undoubtedly change both the landscape and prosperity of the area.

No less dramatic was the arrival of the railway here, 140 years ago. Having purchased the freehold of the harbour for £18,000, the South-Eastern Railway Company proceeded to establish Folkestone as one of the leading passenger ports in the country.¹¹ Three quarters of a century or so before this event, opinions on the condition of Folkestone varied, being described as a 'considerable fishing town'¹² and 'wealthy and populous', even 'romantic'.¹³ By the early 1800s, however, opinions changed. The Duke of Rutland in 1805 stated that 'it appears a dirty town, nor does it seem to possess anything to induce the passing traveller to stop within it'¹⁴ whilst John Jenkins, a Quaker who settled in the town in the 1820s was prepared to admit that 'its ugliness has almost become proverbial!' Finally, there is the more extreme view of Lord Liverpool who wished 'Folkestone blotted from the map of Kent because it is muck from the sea';¹⁵ an outburst in exasperation at the continued and successful activities of those concerned with Folkestone's oldest and principal industry, 'owling' (smuggling).¹⁶ Such was the scale and longevity of smuggling along the coast that, as late as 1819, the revenue brig *Pelter* was permanently stationed in the Warren to maintain watch. The incidence of smuggling gradually decreased with the formation of Folkestone Harbour Company and the construction of an enclosed harbour by 1820. The success of the harbour installation was short-lived, however, and by 1842 problems of silting-up eventually caused

¹¹ E. Course, *The Railways of Southern England: the Main Lines*, (London, 1973).

¹² W. Gostling, *Walks in and about the City of Canterbury*, (Canterbury, 1774).

¹³ C. Seymour, *A Topographical, Historical and Commercial Survey of the Cities, Towns and Villages of the County of Kent* (Canterbury, 1776).

¹⁴ Duke of Rutland, *Journal of a Tour around the Southern Coasts of England* (London, 1805).

¹⁵ Cited in C.H. Bishop, *Folkestone, the Story of a Town* (Ashford, 1973).

¹⁶ L.R. Jones, 'Smuggling Days in Folkestone', in (Ed.) J. Howarth, *Folkestone Past and Present* (Folkestone Borough Council, 1954).

the company to go bankrupt.¹⁷ Although an initial expansion of the town occurred in the early nineteenth century, it was the arrival of the railway in 1843, extended to Dover by 1844 and later still the establishment of the Elham Valley line,¹⁸ together with major improvements to the harbour facilities, that considerably changed Folkestone's fortunes.

By the 1880s Folkestone had become a populous, wealthy place and one of the most fashionable seaside resorts in the country. Fine Victorian balconied houses and hotels, wide tree-lined streets, well-proportioned squares, and principal attractions like the 'Pleasure Gardens' and the Leas promenade were all recorded by numerous artists and enjoyed by well-to-do visitors. By 1901, Folkestone could claim to be the most aristocratic resort in the country.¹⁹

The increasing prosperity of Folkestone throughout the nineteenth century caused considerable suburban expansion and proliferation of industrial buildings and features in the countryside, including the vicinity of the present site of the terminal; for instance chalk pits and lime kilns along the foot of the Downs; clay pits, tile and brick works at Cheriton and Park Farm²⁰ and by 1850 a large reservoir at Cherry Gardens supplying Folkestone with piped water.²¹ The rural community was inevitably affected by the growing market, as evidenced by new farm and village buildings erected to replace or extend older ones.

Well before the lighting of the Armada beacons in 1588, coastal defences and a military presence were in evidence at Folkestone, the most imposing edifice being Henry VIII's fort at Sandgate, built between 1538–39.²² Throughout the following centuries camps and batteries were established and maintained along the coast,²³ culmin-

¹⁷ *Op. cit.*, Bishop 1973, 79–86.

¹⁸ M.J. Forwood, *The Elham Valley Railway* (Chichester, 1975).

¹⁹ F. Stafford and N. Yates, *The Later Kentish Seaside (1840–1974)*, (Gloucester, 1985), 83–8.

²⁰ Sources for industrial archaeology and history are largely ephemeral or indirect; see, for instance: *Kentish Gazette* 4th March, 1808, 4d; *Folkestone Gazette* 8th June, 1966, 15; F.L.H.C. Photo Collection: CTRA/1–3 for brick manufacture.

²¹ K.A.O.: FO/F1965/2: records of the Folkestone Waterworks Company, one of the few surviving archives for local business history. Its antecedent was the Town Dyke, otherwise known as St. Eanswith's course; for a history see K.A.O.: FO/CC2/1.

²² W.L. Rutton, 'Sandgate Castle, A.D. 1538–40', in *Arch. Cant.*, xxi (1895), 244–59.

²³ Abraham Walter, *A true Mapp of the Towne of Folkestone*, 1698, Earl Radnor Archives; John Powell, *A Map or Ground plot of the Town of Folkestone and its Environs*, 1782, Earl Radnor Archives.

ating in the construction of Shorncliffe camp in 1794²⁴ and the Martello Tower system of fortlets between 1805–09.²⁵ After a period of relative neglect, following the peace of 1815, Shorncliffe camp and an associated site at Hythe underwent a revival during the Crimean War from 1855 with regular and local volunteer regiments becoming a familiar sight around Folkestone;²⁶ regimental china of the XVth Hussars being found during the excavation of Stone Farm. Rifle ranges were in frequent use on the terminal site at Holywell and Cherry Garden coombes.²⁷ The camp became significant again during the First World War, when it was host at any one time to 40,000 British and colonial troops, *en route* for the battlefields of Flanders. Shorncliffe was expanded west towards Dibgate and Sandling and north to St. Martin's plain at this time.²⁸ Makeshift tented accommodation was also established further afield, from Cherry Garden Hill to Sugar Loaf Hill. Substantial quantities of pottery, glass and other debris, located over a wide area during prospection works in Holywell Coombe field, marked the sites of canvas billets for contingents of Zulus, Indians, Fijians, Canadians and the Chinese Labour Corps.²⁹ By the close of hostilities in 1919 over four million soldiers had been transported via Folkestone to France.

10. Conclusion

Archaeological and geological excavations at Folkestone have provided information about the origins of the present landscape during the formation of the Channel and evidence for almost continuous settlement from the earliest farmers to the present; a story spanning 13,000 years.

The rejoining of Britain and France, with the completion of the tunnel in the closing decade of the twentieth century, marks the start of another major chapter in the long history of cross-Channel contact; contact involving the exchange of peoples, ideas and merchandise, to which the many discoveries by the Canterbury Archaeological Trust on the U.K. Terminal site bear ample testimony.

²⁴ 34. Geo. III c.76: *An Act for vesting certain messuages, lands, tenements and hereditaments in Trustees, for the better securing His Majesty's batteries and other works, in the counties of Kent and Devon.*

²⁵ S. Sutcliffe, *Martello Towers*, (Newton Abbot, 1972).

²⁶ S.J. Mackie, *A descriptive and historical Account of Folkestone and its Neighbourhood* (Folkestone, 1856).

²⁷ Ordnance Survey 6 in. map: Kent, Sheet lxxv. First Edition 1877 (surveyed 1872).

²⁸ J.C. Carlisle (ed.) *Folkestone during the War 1914–18*, (Folkestone, 1920).

²⁹ F.L.H.C. Photo Collection: FWW1/96.

POSTSCRIPT

During the progress of fieldwork at Dover, Ashford and Folkestone, close liaison has been maintained with French archaeologists working on the Sangatte-Frethun terminal. The results of their work have been quite startling. This part of the Pas-de-Calais has been intensively settled since prehistoric times and a prodigious number of archaeological sites have been sampled in advance of the construction of the French terminal for the Channel Tunnel. Where our work at Folkestone has shown multi-period rural settlement reminiscent of subsistence farming, the Sangatte/Frethun sites are those of a rich, dynamic population. Large barrow cemeteries of Neolithic and Bronze Age date, sprawling multi-period open and enclosed settlements of the Iron Age and a Roman villa and cemetery have come to light. A Merovingian cemetery rich with grave goods, situated by a triple-ditched Bronze Age Barrow, has been another focus of interest. A medieval church and cemetery and the 'lost' small town of Sangatte, sacked by the English in the late fourteenth century, are additional important discoveries. Close contact with our French colleagues is continuing and we are currently formulating plans to publish the results of our work in a bilingual monograph before the Channel Tunnel is completed in 1993.