

Barry Cunliffe, Oxford Professor of European Archaeology and adviser to Dover District Council, to whose good offices we owe his appearance, spoke on DOVER IN THE FOREFRONT, AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE. Like Dr Williams, Prof. Cunliffe highlighted the predominant importance of the close link with the continental mainland, emphasising the geographical unity underlying the North Sea culture of north France, the Netherlands and the south and east England up to the Humber. This he illustrated with picardy pins from Ramsgate and scrap metal axes from a wreck in Langdon Bay, the result of Bronze Age trade with the Somme valley. There was even greater evidence of Iron Age trade, c. 5-400 BC in the 'French' black and rusticated pottery found at Dollond's Moor from Channel Tunnel excavation and other recent rescue excavations all over east and mid-Kent.

Around 80BC gold coins, derived in design from Philip of Macedon (father of Alexander the Great)'s period, were received as gifts in the Dover area from Belgica in the Netherlands and gold coins purchased British mercenaries to defend Gaul against the military and political ambitions of Julius Caesar between 60 and 50 BC. His gee-whiz expeditions here, comparable to moon landings, in 55 and 54 BC were part of the same political programme. He was diverted (by warlike Dovorians) from Dover to Richborough and withdrew after a river battle at Bigbury (near later Canterbury) the site of which would ultimately be found.

Between 50 and 20 BC Rome lost interest in Britain and the native culture survived, with economic development between Britain and the Moselle-Rhine area which included Roman wine and Augustan silver bowls, included rich burials and other evidence of urban(!) sophistication.

As with Julius Caesar's expeditions, so with the Claudian conquest of AD 43. Claudius needed a triumph to overcome his flagging political credibility. Dover was ignored in favour of Richborough, which progressed from ditches and ramparts to roads, a castle and a granary and then to the foundations for a quadrifons, a monumental memorial gateway. Dover did develop as a port (with twin lighthouses) and became the headquarters of the Classis Britannica, a Roman fleet, but most trade was direct to the Thames. Silts and pollens in boreholes now evidenced food production methods and there was also evidence of the development of riverine routes for access to Wealden iron.

From the second century pirate raids necessitated the defensive forts of the Saxon Shore, including the sequence at Dover which had been excavated by Brian Philp. Prof. Cunliffe said that were St Mary's to be demolished a great deal more would be revealed!

CHANNEL TUNNEL AND RAIL LINK

The County Planning Officer Brian Briscoe began by saying that the Channel Tunnel Rail Link was equal in obscurity to archaeology. The Channel Tunnel was directly responsible for Dept of Transport investment in the road network: the proposed upgrading of Jubilee Way on M2/A2, the completion of M20 including the widening of the Maidstone bypass and the new A20 from Folkestone to Dover, all in time for the opening of the tunnel in 1993. The bypasses along the south coast would be completed in 1994 or later and all these were to the advantage of ferry competition. Kent County road schemes south of Ashford, from Folkestone to Canterbury, Dover to Thanet and the dualling of Thanet Way were part of the same response. Traffic growth in the last nine years had been well beyond forecasts, worse in Kent than elsewhere.

The County Council's immediate criteria for the new rail link were the use of existing corridors where possible, the avoidance of built development, minimum

noise and visual intrusion, commuter use of new tracks, compensation, reinstatement of roads, paths and farmland and highest environmental treatment. Beyond these immediate and local considerations, however, was the need to attract more freight onto rail. Eurotunnel and the ferries would compete for cars and lorries: the tunnel was in fact an extension of the road system but the rail link was of Europe-wide strategic importance. Both in terms of landtake and energy consumption (including carbon dioxide emission) rail was respectively nine times and thirty times less damaging than road and both the German and French railway systems had shown what could be achieved in design, speed, comfort and fares. In Switzerland, for instance, 48% of freight went by rail, mainly overnight and with week-end restrictions.

Unfortunately British Rail's view of the possibilities of the rail freight market was very limited. Rail freight (train ferry) to the continent was now 2 million tons per annum which BR proposed merely to treble in 1993 and rail connections through and beyond London were quite inadequate both for freight and passengers. Location of the second London terminal was still in dispute between King's Cross (Eurorail) and Stratford (Ove Arup and Bechtel).

According to the Channel Tunnel Act there was to be an International Passenger station at Ashford together with improved provision for commuters but last November British Rail, as well as cancelling its own proposed route and delaying its replacement by a year, had suddenly introduced another International Passenger station at Swanley (in the Green Belt) on the (already congested) M25 but in the new No 3 Rail Bill the location at Ashford had been changed and the absence of planning applications suggested that the undertaking might be broken. Yet Kent's County Structure Plan (submitted 3½ years ago) designates Ashford a prime growth area.

Eurorail (British Rail and its partner Trafalgar House) now ask for a hybrid rather than a private parliamentary Bill which would mean government support and the possibility of government finance (to make provision for improvements on behalf of commuters!). This latter possibility, which would contradict a clause in the Channel Tunnel Act, continues to be denied by the Dept of Transport. Mr Briscoe lamented the transfer of the minister, Michael Portillo, who had acknowledged the validity of Kent policies and objections, to another department.

Mr Briscoe said the the existing train ferry would continue for hazardous goods and agreed with criticisms of BR's S.E Network though he said that new rolling stock was imminent. He also agreed on the desirability of a green lung between Maidstone and the Medway.

Concluding the meeting the Chairman, Jack Woolford, in addition to thanking the speakers, thanked John Clayton, Dover District Council's Director of Planning and Technical Services, for making possible the appearance of Prof. Barry Cunliffe and for his provision and skilful deployment of visual aids. He also thanked Lin Clackett who, as ever, catered so well for our corporeal needs.

Jack Woolford

The impressions of Hugh Bax are overleaf.