

Sea Link Project      10/11/2025

Good afternoon, thank you for giving me the opportunity to speak

My name is Ian Peter Alan Smith

I have lived near the edge of the marsh in part of the Wantsum area for [REDACTED] and farmed there for much of that time.

I am interested in the amount of description and planned handling of soil, it looks impressive, but my experience leaves me with some concerns.

As the Ice Age receded the melt water built up in the North Sea and scoured the Wantsum Channel deeply, until the land bridge joining Thanet to France was breached, from then on the Wantsum channel began to silt up laying down the alluvial fill which we now recognize as marshland. In Roman times it was a much-used sea way about 2 to 3 miles wide, the last recorded ship to sail through was in about 1500 AD and now it is a narrow river surrounded by the marshland that we now cultivate.

This marshland has a crust about 1 meter thick over a deep fill like a blancmange, which becomes semi liquid and moves sideways when subjected to a heavy weight on top. Squeeze

When the Richborough power station was being built it began to sink and they had to do extensive piling some of which was up to 80 meters deep. Squeeze

After the 1953 flood we had a D8 bulldozer preparing for cultivations when it found a soft spot and got stuck, so the operator went home to the yard for help and returned next morning to find his machine had sunk almost out of sight. Squeeze

Where we were trying to get extra volume for irrigation water storage and dug the ditches 2 meters deep the bottom began to push up. Squeeze

When we built a reservoir for irrigation water, all went well till we tried to go below the 1 meter crust and the D8 promptly got stuck and began to sink, fortunately the contractor had a tracked excavator on site which dug it out, we did not go deeper than 1 meter again. Squeeze

(I have borrowed a kids squeezy toy to give a visual impression)