KAS KENT ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY

THE OLDEST AND LARGEST SOCIETY DEVOTED TO THE HISTORY AND ARCHAEOLOGY OF THE ANCIENT COUNTY OF KENT

№ 117
New Year 2022

ST ANDREWS
SOCIETY FOR THE PROTECTION OF ANCIENT BUILDINGS

KAS KENT ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY

WELCOME FROM THE EDITOR

Welcome to the New Year 2022 Newsletter.

Some intriguing articles in this issue that were a pleasure to read. I'm always astonished and fascinated at the sheer variety of subject matter contributors submit to the Magazine for publication. Whilst editing the articles on Gunther Plüschow, the WW2 decoy airfields in Kent and the work of the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings, I wondered what the Magazine editor might be reading through in 2122 and will he or she be enjoying the role as much as me?

COVID-19 has reared its head again, though the activities of the Society and local groups have adapted and continue. Amongst these is a revised strategy that sets out the direction of the Society for the next twenty years. The Board of Trustees will soon deliberate this strategy and present it to the Membership at the next AGM.

The Newsletter remains an outlet for the fantastic heritage and the tremendous work going on out there and to communicate important information. Moreover, it exists so that you, the Membership, can continue to convey a broad range of topics devoted to the history and archaeology of Kent. As Editor, I have now received articles from over one hundred different contributors. So, once again, I encourage all members, think about writing that article and help inform the broader historical and archaeological community of what is taking place in our heritage-rich and diverse county.

Enjoy this issue, stay safe and let's look forward to sunshine and more settled times when we can, once again, get outside, engage with and enjoy the history and archaeology of our county.

Best wishes and wishing you all a happy and healthy New Year.

Richard

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REGULAR

PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

It has been a long time coming, but finally, in November this year, the Kent Archaeological Society has held in-person meetings, where actual human beings have been able to interact in the same space as they did before the pandemic set in almost 18 months ago.

The first meeting I attended was the book launch of the excellent volume on the history of Maritime Kent edited by Stuart Bligh, Sheila Sweetinburgh and Elizabeth Edwards, which took place in the historic Guildhall Faversham in late October. It was good to see people turn out to celebrate a timely and substantial work, the fruit of almost five years of planning and researching. Details of the book are here (https://boydellandbrewer.com/9781783276257/maritime-kent-through-the-ages), and the Membership Secretary Rachel Hills can furnish members with a code to unlock a generous discount.

I was struck while reading parts of the book before the launch event by the way the sea, surrounding Kent's 240 miles plus of coastline, is such a huge factor in the county's history and one that takes on many guises. It is, of course, a natural barrier, a source of economic activity and livelihood, a means of transportation, and a magnificent and epically beautiful and impressive landmark. But it has also been a space for confrontation, exploration, mythmaking and, perhaps most fascinatingly of all, one that is intrinsically mixed up with people's identities. Even today, the seas around Kent are spaces in which events like the recent arrivals of refugees have promoted international concern and notice, as we saw right at the end of November in the tragic deaths of 27 people. Bligh et al.'s book makes powerfully clear that the history of Kent makes less sense if we exclude the crucial role of the sea and its relationship with the land it surrounds.

Continuing this theme, the excellent conference on 21st November on fieldwork made clear, to the more than 80 that attended at the University of Kent, that while the lockdowns had been occurring, digs and discoveries had also been continuing. Each case study unfolded remarkable narratives which had been underappreciated or simply unknown before archaeological teams did their meticulous work. The Roman settlement at Newington was the subject of one presentation, with a temple basement unearthed. Then, with the support of the property developers, it was moved and reconstructed as a permanent display earlier this year. Another talk on discovering the site of a long-abandoned and lost priory at Lossenham, on the Kent border with Sussex, was also a remarkable record of detection and rediscovery.

Kerry Brown

A similar process was described around the Guildhall in the centre of Dover, which disappeared in the nineteenth century, but the foundations of which were uncovered in the last few years by a team there.

The quality of the talks, and the contents that they outlined, were awe-inspiring and made clear why the archaeology of Kent is so fascinating and important. Listening to the lecture on the market square in Dover, it struck me that in this relatively small patch of what is now urban space, there were threads of different kinds and phases of history going back 2000 years and beyond, from remnants of a vast church to the indications of Roman constructions of a riverbank wall, and shifting patterns of roads and thoroughfares.

We hope that in 2022, with luck, we will be able to continue with more in-person lectures, with support for digs, and, perhaps, an exhibition with some of our historic and more recently unearthed finds. I am grateful for our members' continuing support of our work, my fellow trustees, and the wider community that engages with the issues we support. Here is looking forward to a dynamic, exciting and successful 2022!

Best wishes,

Kerry Brown
President

GUNTHER PLÜSCHOW

‘THE ONE WHO GOT AWAY’: FROM GRAVESEND IN 1915

By Victor Smith

Making his daring get-away from Gravesend in July 1915, Lieutenant Gunther Plüschow, a German naval aviator, gained the distinction of becoming the only German prisoner of war to escape from Britain itself in either world war.

This feat was celebrated at an international event held in Gravesend and Tilbury on its centenary in July 2015 and on another anniversary in July 2021. Plüschow’s escape was, but one exploit in his dare-devil life of adventure. This began in 1914 in China, where he flew numerous and risky reconnaissance missions over the lines of the Japanese and British forces besieging the German colony of Tsingtao. Starting his departure back to Germany just before the fall of the colony, he headed away first in his aircraft, which crash-landed at an inland location, and he then reached a port to join a ship. This began a journey across the vast expanse of the Pacific Ocean to the United States. Travelling overland to the East Coast, and thence by steamer across the Atlantic, his luck ran out when he was captured by the British at Gibraltar on 8th February 1915. Via short stays in a prison ship in the Solent and then a detention camp at Dorchester, he ended up at a prisoner of war camp at Donnington Hall in Leicestershire.

Unwilling to remain incarcerated, he was impatient to escape and get back to flying. So he broke out with another prisoner on the evening of 4th July. They headed separately for London, which he knew from a pre-war visit, intending to meet there and board a neutral ship in the port to seek their freedom, but his fellow escapee was soon captured. Plüschow stayed in London a day and a night but then changed his strategy. He was now intent on hastening down to Tilbury and Gravesend, where Dutch steamers left for Holland every day. This was a tempting way out for a return to Germany, but news of his escape from Donnington Hall and his description had by now appeared in the press.

In a summarised way, this article narrates what happened as told by Plüschow himself, partly in his report to his superiors in the German navy and, more expansively, in his post-war memoir (*My Escape from Donnington Hall* (1922). The latter vividly described how he suffered a sequence of obstacles, dangers, failures, risks of recapture at Gravesend and threats to life that might easily have defeated someone with a lesser determination. Five extraordinary escape attempts ensued, the last of which was brilliantly successful.

Above
Fig 1: Gunther Plüschow in full uniform and wearing his Iron Cross

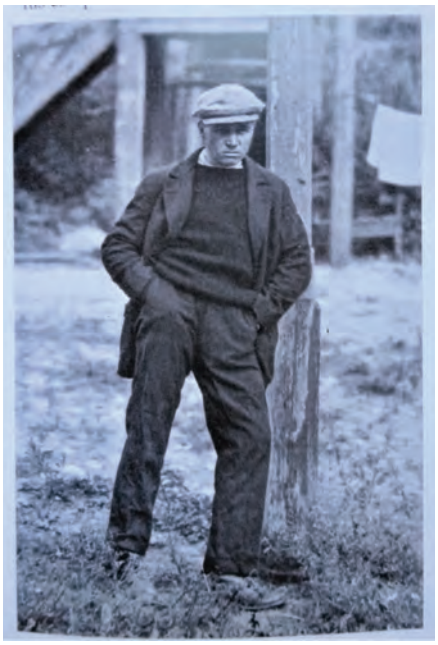
Below
Fig 2: Gravesend’s promenade showing dinghies of a type Plüschow sought for boarding a Dutch ferry

THE FIRST ATTEMPT

He reached Tilbury from London where, pretending to be an American seaman, he enjoyed a meal in an 'eating house frequented by dock labourers'. His spirits rose when he saw the moored Dutch steamer, *Mecklenburg*, in the river. He then crossed the Thames to Gravesend and hid under some timber and rubbish at an unknown location but possibly at or near the Canal Basin to bide his time. He then emerged at night, intending to swim out to the steamer. Unfortunately, it was low tide. In desperation, he tried to reach a dinghy floating in the nearest water but got stuck in the ooze. Only with the greatest difficulty did he manage to return to the shore, retreating to his hiding place. In the morning, he sat on a bench in what he described as 'Gravesend Park'. This was in a riverside location, perhaps the Gordon Pleasure Gardens in the rear of the promenade or the latter itself. Dismayed, he saw his ship sail out of the river. He then journeyed back to London.

THE SECOND ATTEMPT

Returning to Gravesend, the Dutch steamer, *Princess Juliana*, beckoned. Plüschow again ventured into the water towards a moored dinghy but was swept away by a strong current. He recorded that he soon lost consciousness and awoke well downstream 'where the river makes a sharp bend', which must have been somewhere at Higham Bight. He was lucky not to have drowned. After walking back to Gravesend – which would have taken him close to military-controlled areas – he travelled again to London, roaming the streets and visiting what seems to have been an astonishing number of attractions, including picture galleries, music halls, churches and the British Museum, delightedly turning down an invitation from a recruiter to join the British Army along the way. Back in Gravesend in the evening, his thoughts were firmly on the Dutch steamer, tantalisingly moored in the river.



Top
Fig 3: Plüschow posing in the clothes he wore during his escape from London
Bottom
Fig 4: Ferry and ferry station at Gravesend used by Plüschow, shown before the Great War

THE THIRD ATTEMPT

Plüschow again rested 'in the little park which overlooked the Thames, and listened quietly for hours' to a military band, probably playing in the bandstand on the promenade. He then spotted another dinghy moored to a wharf guarded by a sentry. Although we cannot be sure, this was perhaps not far from the canal basin lock. Under cover of darkness and, at about midnight, and 'with the stealth of an Indian, he jumped over an embankment and into the dinghy and rowed off. Unfortunately, the boat leaked and filled with water, stranding him on the mud with the receding tide. With great difficulty, he got back across the mud, onto the land and back into a park area where he cleaned himself up. Pretending to be a drunk and bluffing his way past a sentry on a little bridge, perhaps over the lock gates at the entrance to the Canal Basin, he moved on.

THE FOURTH ATTEMPT

About 2pm, he tried again, jumping into the water, and was 'seized by the current', yet sequentially climbed into no fewer than five moored dinghies, hoping to find one he could use for his escape, but they were all empty of oars or any means of propelling them. Once again, he retreated to the shore and back into a hiding place. As was now routine, he then went up to London; on this occasion, he asserted 'on foot' to seek entertainment in a music hall.

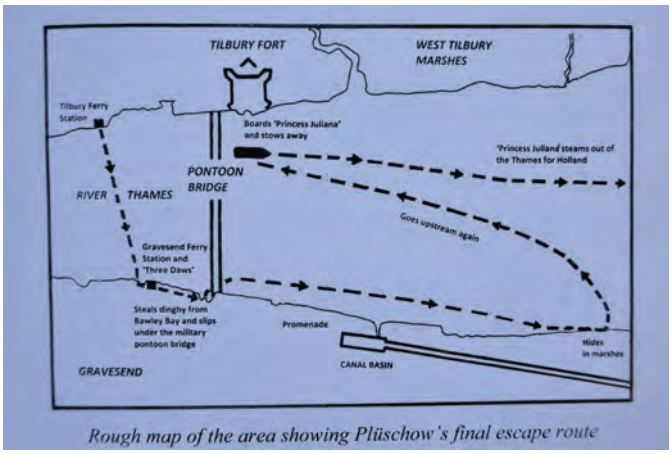
THE FIFTH AND SUCCESSFUL ATTEMPT

Plüschow returned from London on the last train to Tilbury and crossed by ferry back to Gravesend, still determined to escape. Passing some fishermen's dwellings, he slipped down to the water's edge, from his description probably at Bawley Bay and, seeing a young fisherman distracted in kissing his sweetheart on a bench, stole his dinghy. Striking out past a cluster of fishing boats where a woman nursed her baby, he shot under a military pontoon bridge, ignoring the challenge of sentries, only to be stopped by a collision with the anchor chain of a coal tender, and almost capsized. A little later, he slid downstream again and 'pulled up' on the shore at a 'crumbling old bridge' (probably a jetty) to hide in nearby long grass, presumably at the edge of the marshes.

Undaunted by seeing his intended vessel, the *Mecklenburg*, steam out of the Thames at 8am, some 12 hours later, he regained his dinghy, and the incoming tide took him upstream where he attached it by line to the same coal tender where he had been stranded the night before. The *Princess Juliana* had now come back again. Waiting

Above, left
Fig 5: Gravesend promenade, which became familiar to Plüschow, with bandstand in view
Above, right
Fig 6: Peter Torode standing on the modern lock gate bridge of the Canal Basin in Gravesend. Plüschow likely walked on its predecessor

Below, left
Fig 7: Historical view of Bawley Bay area from which Plüschow stole a dinghy
Below, right
Fig 8: The pontoon bridge with military guards in 1915



Rough map of the area showing Plüschow's final escape route

Above, left
Fig 9: Peter Torode pointing to where the pontoon bridge would have been, under which Plüschow escaped in a stolen dinghy

Above, right
Fig 10: Map of the area showing Plüschow's final escape route, the position of the Princess Juliana being suggested by a local maritime historian

until the ebb tide, at midnight, he floated to the buoy of this steamer on which he sat. Kicking away the boat in the first few minutes of the 11th July, he climbed aboard with as he described, 'iron composure – at this time like a cat' up the cable and on to the deck where he found a place to stow away, avoiding being seen by two sentries. Awoken by the ship's siren when she docked at Flushing, he slipped down the gangway with the other passengers and, he recorded, passed through a door marked to forbid entry and into neutral Holland, for the final stage of his journey to freedom. He was back in Germany in a short time where he received the Iron Cross, promotion to Lieutenant-Commander and command of a naval air station in the Baltic.

Plüschow's other adventures are for another place, but after the war and a succession of unfulfilling jobs, a sense of adventure drew him to South America about which he had dreamed since childhood. There, from 1928, he began an amazing sequence of risk-taking flights to explore, film and map remote lands in Chile and Argentina, surmounting all manner of obstacles and hardships. But he was killed in an air accident in Patagonia in 1931, just nine days before his 45th birthday.

Plüschow has been seen as something of a self-publicist, and it is not beyond possibility that his memoir embellished at least some details of his escape. Moreover, it contains gaps, is a far from clear narrative of dates and timings, with the meaning of a few descriptions and some exact locations uncertain. As a result, his account may, in places, be subject to differing interpretations. There may also have been other dimensions to his escape of which we are not aware. Plüschow's account was questioned post-war in a critique by Sir Basil Thomson, who transposed the escape scene from Gravesend to Greenwich.

Whatever the whole story, Plüschow's escape was real and remarkable. Indeed, if his account is followed, his route in the lower Thames area can still be walked and sailed if you had a boat. Being able still to see the setting of the escape, can with a bit of imagination, bring alive this unique occurrence. Plüschow's fame was celebrated in Germany in his lifetime, but, in time, a national memory there gradually faded. Unsullied by any association with the Nazi movement, he was rediscovered there in 2000 with the formation of the Circle of Friends of Gunther Plüschow, which researches his life and achievements. In England, he had already been discovered in 1980 by Lynda Smith, who wrote about him in *Bygone Kent* in 1997 and again by Anton Rippon (*Gunther Plüschow – airman, escaper, explorer* (2009)). The writer wrote an account of his escape in *Historic Gravesham*, No. 62 (2016), which this article slightly revises. To paraphrase the words of the Circle of Friends, Plüschow was no ice-cold warrior nor an enthusiast for war, but a larger than life boys own hero. He sought adventure wherever he could find it. Clever, determined, with a smile on his face, he made his way through his heroic tale with a twinkle in his eye. In these terms, he is of enduring international appeal.

The commemoration in 2015, attended by Commander Jan Hackstein, Naval Attaché at the German Embassy, as well as by the German Circle of Friends, took place on both sides of the Thames at Gravesend and Tilbury, with the unveiling of plaques at both places, and the addition of a photographic panel at Gravesend. There was even a costumed re-enactment of Plüschow crossing the Thames in a ferry. The event at Gravesend in 2021 had a broader international attendance, with not only Captain Matthias Schmidt, the Naval Attaché

from the German Embassy, but service representatives of the Netherlands and of Chile and Argentina too, the latter two countries being those which Plüschow had explored by air in the 1920s. Both occasions were made possible through the organisational elan of Peter Torode (currently Chief Executive of Consilium Dare and the Gravesham Heritage Forum).

PHOTO CREDITS:

Images and photographs are courtesy of Peter Torode, Victor Smith and Gravesend Historical Society.

Above
Fig 11: Commemorative event in Gravesend held in July 2021

FAGG LEGACY
THANK YOU FOR THE OPPORTUNITY

By Pete Joyce

Thanks to the generosity of the Fagg bequest and Allen Grove Fund, the research I am undertaking will predominantly look at poverty in the Medway Valley in the long eighteenth century and carry on where my master's research on the Reverend Caleb Parfect concluded. During my master's, I uncovered the lost vestry book from St Nicholas, Strood, which means for the first time since Smetham reported it was lost in 1899, academia has a chance to explore the financial situation of the town that the Rev Parfect and the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge (SPCK) chose for the first workhouse. This discovery of unknown data of considerable importance drove the initial conceptual idea of this research.

This original contribution to scholarship will examine the written records and allow me to explore a neglected aspect of Medway's rich history. The period under consideration is also crucial in understanding the transition from a predominantly agrarian to an industrial society. The research will mainly be carried out in the Medway Archive Centre, which again is an underutilised resource and always at threat from local authority funding cuts without use. While it is possible to construct an argument that the whole of the workhouse movement, spurred on by the SPCK and the Anglican Church, started in Strood. With its historical connections to St Claire's, Strood may have always been a place of charity; both hypotheses remain unexplored.

When Dickens wrote *The Seven Poor Travelers*, he was directly referring to the Watts Charity of Rochester, set up on the death of Richard Watts in 1579 to help with societal problems. When Knatchball launched the Test Act, he had been MP for Rochester. Equally, when the slave trader Sir John Hawkins set up his charity or Sir Joseph Williamson set up his school, they both would have known of the social and economic hardships facing a population that survived mainly agriculture and fishing. These themes, central to this research, raise important academic and social questions about the Medway valley as a whole. Yet to date, little or no research has been found to explore why this may be the case.

Without the substantial funding that has been generously awarded, it would not be possible to undertake this research. This study must be undertaken now, given the threat to the collections in Medway Archives and the number of documents from the period that are becoming unfit for production. Their condition makes it vital that they are considered seriously before it is too late. The potential data will be lost, and the benefits to the academic debate on poverty, Medway valley, and north Kent's local history will be missed. Thank you to all involved, and I look forward to sharing the research with you all as it evolves.

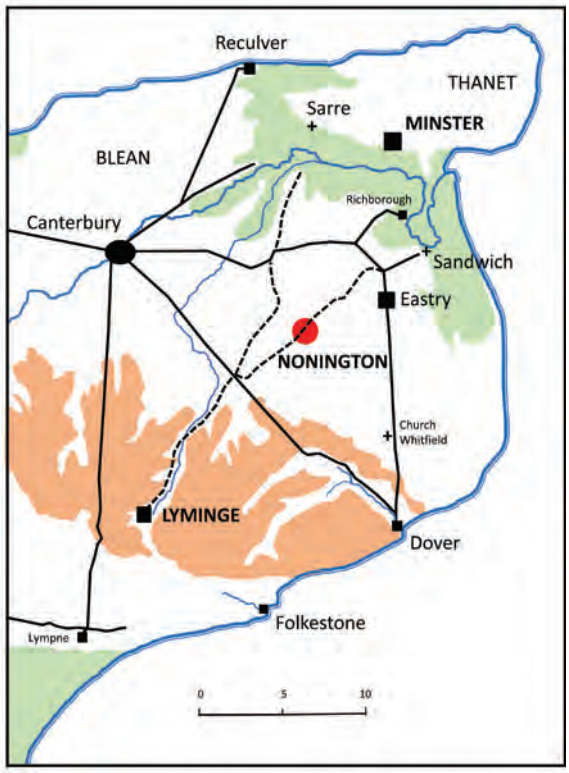
Pete Joyce is a KAS scholar at CKHH and supported by the Ian Coulsdon Memorial Fund. This research has been supported by the Allen Grove Local History Fund.

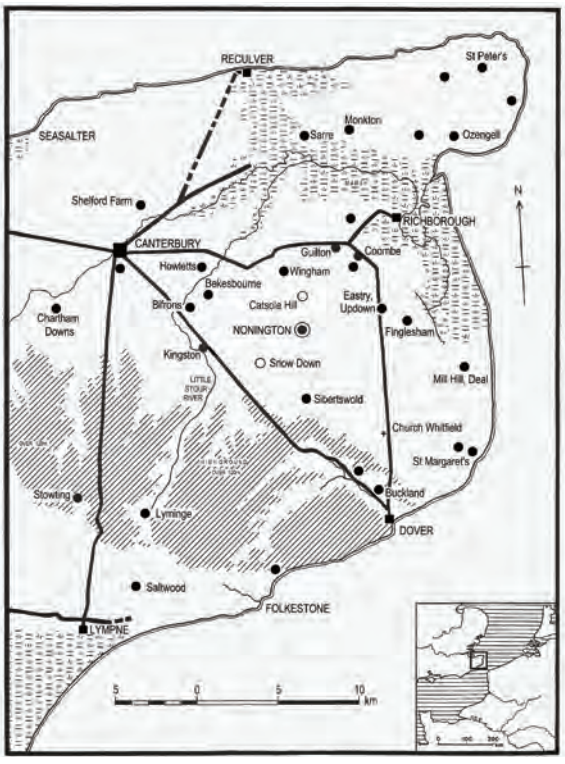
ANGLO-SAXON NUNS AND NONINGTON

By Peter Hobbs

Nonington is a rural parish in East Kent about two miles East of the A2 and broadly equidistant from Canterbury, Dover and Sandwich. Formerly some 4000 acres in extent, the mining village of Aylesham and the site of Snowdown Colliery were removed in 1951 to form a separate parish. The underlying geology is chalk of the Seaford Formation overlain by a thick deposit of brickearth. Hasted[1] described the land as "fine, open champaign country, exceedingly dry and healthy…"

Much is known about the parish of Nonington in Anglo-Saxon times, both from Anglo-Saxon charters and from the Domesday Book. Here, we focus on Anglo-Saxon Oeswalum, an estate of no more and probably less than about 1200 acres, relatively small by the standards of the time. All authorities[2] link it to Easole, one of the three hamlets that now make up the parish of Nonington. Therefore it perhaps covered an area roughly from near Chillenden in the East to Butter Street/ Nightingale Lane to the West and bounded approximately to the North by what is now Church Lane, Pinners Lane and Beauchamps Lane but then following near or to the North of the ancient roadway[3]. On the other hand, Clive Webb believes Oeswalum lies broadly to the North West of the old road as far as the Wingham – Barham road, a pre-Roman ridgeway[4]. There are plans for the Dover Archaeological Group and Clive Webb[5] to walk the area to see if there are still any natural landmarks, but until that happens, as a general indicator, this note based on philology will assume the former definition, which means that we are writing about an area where, by the





Above
Fig 1: Map of East Kent showing major routes and POIs

early 1000s, the original estate had become two. Broadly, one became the St Albans Court estate (Eswalt), formerly belonging to the Abbey of St Albans and then to the Hammond family. The other was the Fredville Estate (Eswelle), now belonging to the Plumptre family. The alternative would take in Womenswold, Ackholt and North and South Nonington.

Oeswalum was the subject of two court cases in the 820s[6] between the daughter of Coenwulf King of Mercia and Kent and Wulfred, Archbishop of Canterbury from 805 to 832 AD. She lost and agreed to give up substantial lands and rents and this estate, and he made sure the records were written afterwards so that nobody could doubt how just the decisions were to put right the great wrong that he maintained had been done to him by her father.

We need to go back at least thirty years to understand what was happening. Oeswalum was then owned by Ealdberht and Selethryth, brother and sister[7]. The brother was one of Offa of Mercia's top thegns. His sister had been appointed Abbess of two major but possibly run down royal monastic sites, Minster in Thanet and Lyminge, both of which needed some reformation. This was a political appointment, not a sinecure. Given the significance of women both in Mercia and later Wessex in those times[8], one must assume Selethryth was not a figurehead but an able and influential woman.

Offa King of Mercia (broadly the Midlands then and the largest and most important of the kingdoms within the British Isles) was regaining control of Kent, having defeated the Kentish forces in battle. Offa and his successor Coenwulf seem to have retained their supremacy in Kent not by soldiers on the ground but by the proxy use of trusted supporters[9]. This brother and sister were part of Offa's plans to exercise influence and regain control over his new territory, particularly with Selethryth, to boost royal monastic revenues. Selethryth's name may be West Saxon in origin or even Mercian, but the speculation is that she and her brother were perhaps family members of one of the junior Kent kings who had thrown their lot in with Mercia and then remained loyal to that line[10].

Above
Fig 2: Coenwulf Coin

Offa lavished land grants on them, but it looks a though they already owned Oeswalum in their own right, possibly as a family inheritance.

These were difficult times: Offa took back Kent by force of arms, and at his death, there was a rising put down by his successor Coenwulf who then ruled, initially via his brother Cuthred, until his unexpected death in 820 AD. Another threat was the start of the Danish coastal raids – Thanet had already been attacked, and Lyminge was threatened – as well as the menace of the Kingdom of Wessex, growing into the power which in turn would take over Mercia and Kent from 825 AD.

Selethryth was Abbess of Lyminge and Minster, royal foundations with finances not in the control of the ecclesiastical authorities (i.e. the Archbishop). Her job was to ensure that both establishments were revived to maximise income and support for the crown. Archbishop Aethelheardus, by his support, enabled her on this process, whereas his successor Wulfred was wholly opposed. Lyminge had been founded by Queen Aethelburh[11], the daughter of King Aethelbert (who welcomed St Augustine) and was the wife of King Edwin of Northumbria, who was killed in battle with the pagans. She then fled back to Kent and was set up in Lyminge by her brother. Lyminge appears to have been the site of one of the Kent Kings' palaces[12], probably occupied once or twice a year as the King made his royal progress around his kingdom. Either within or alongside the complex, Aethelburh set up a monastic community. She was well regarded locally but was not a proper saint with a shrine that could attract a wider circle of donors. There is some evidence that the community was in decline in the mid 700s[13]. A factor might have been that unlike all the other known monastic institutions at that time in Kent, the nearest access to the sea or a navigable waterway was some 7 miles away and then via the steep escarpment of the Downs.

Despite being vulnerable to Danish sea raids, Minster was a thriving trading monastery in the then separate Isle of Thanet, owning at least three ships in the 700s and with toll-free access to various ports, including London[14]. As part of its religious attractions, Minster had St Mildrith, a popular cult figure, and St Eadburh (successor to Mildreth as Abbess), who had a lesser but still significant reputation[15]. One expression of royal authority and probably also a demonstration of episcopal authority was the agreement for Abbess Selethryth to capitalise on St Eadburgh by moving her relics to Lyminge (where indeed she became a good earner for that Abbey.) However, this was no theft in the night business as happened two centuries later when the local inhabitants pursued the monks of St Augustines' in Canterbury as they took away the relics of St Mildreth from Minster[16]. We know little if anything about Anglo-Saxon

ceremonial practices, but we do know that saints produced pilgrims with donations. Selethryth was a well-favoured political appointee and carried a responsibility to enhance the reputation and revenues of her royal masters. This move was both a marketing and a propaganda project, as much political as religious, so potential new customers would have been an important consideration as well as the avoidance of any mishap in the transfer which might have reflected on the competence of the regime or the religious power of the Archbishop.

On that basis, the Abbess would not have undertaken the route by sea to Folkestone or Lympne and then by land, nor would she have crossed the Wantsum at Sarre with her holy burden. Although this was the main route to Canterbury, that was too far North and would entail a much longer sea crossing, probably to Wingham with exposure to Danish attack. Initially, that route would also have taken her through settlements that were the economic losers from the move. However, to go South[17] and then through Ebbsfleet, Richborough / Stonar would mean only a very short exposed ferry crossing to the Sandwich area, and then to Woodnesborough, Eastry perhaps, and on to the security of her estate at Oeswalum: then, after joining the Roman Dover to Canterbury road via Womenswold or perhaps by the Barham ridgeway, on to Lyminge. This could have taken in the congregations of the chapel at Richborough, the minster at Eastry and an area of relatively high occupation[18]. Either land route could, if necessary, have been covered easily in less than a couple of days, but the latter allowed greater security and stops where there were significant settlements and the relics could be displayed. The Abbess herself would undoubtedly have been aware of the added value to her estate of having the holy relics stop there overnight to allow visitors from further afield. She, after all, was the boss of the entire process and could have set up a temporary shrine for pilgrims – publicity was the key to future income from the faithful and allowing others to make a signal of their public support for the regime. We know at least two existing settlements on her estate because

Above, top
Fig 3: Interpretation of a Danish Raid
Above, bottom
Fig 4: Wulfred Penny

their burial grounds had been excavated[19]. The resting place would not necessarily have been where Nonington church now is: although the church is probably an Anglo-Saxon foundation, not this early, and the site of the present church is believed on the boundary of but not in Oeswalum itself[20] (although Clive Webb disagrees). The route itself was probably the main and customary route for travellers between the two monasteries under Selethryth's aegis because of the security it offered with the relative density of the population, the Abbess' estate and the short sea crossing.

This visitation could explain a puzzle: the importance attached to the estate of Oeswalum in the written records of the period. After the death of Selethryth, probably in 814 AD, and then of her brother about 820 AD, the deeds (landbok) for the land were taken by a kinsman and senior thegn Oswulf[21] and delivered to the daughter of King Coenwulf, Cwoenthryh. She had succeeded as Abbess at Minster[22] and was being prepared after the earlier murder of her brother to succeed her father on the throne. Archbishop Wulfred argued he was entitled to the estate because the Abbess sister and her thegn brother had agreed that after their demise, it should pay for a safe residence inside the walls of Canterbury for Selethyrth's nuns (the monks had to look after themselves) from Lyminge in the event of a Danish raid. There is a deed to this effect[23] dated 804 AD in which it is clear that St Eadburh was already enshrined at Lyminge, and this had been carried out under Aethelheardus' jurisdiction, as was this deed as well. Archbishop Wulfred was installed in 805 AD. Shortly afterwards, Selethryth appears to have wrested back various Minster revenues, which would not have been

in accord with his desire to restore all church revenues to his control. However, in 820 AD, he was not politically strong enough to press his case because he had just had to make up with King Coenwulf after a monumental dispute[24]. He failed to secure support from the Pope or Charlemagne's successor. Coenwuf later attributed some responsibility to Wulfred for the murder of his son and heir, Kenelm. To avoid banishment, Wulfred reluctantly paid a fine of the equivalent of about £1million today as well as handing over vast tracts of his land holdings[25], all of which confirm that the controversy was about more than the allocation of church revenues by a reforming Archbishop.

However, by 824 AD, Coenwulf unexpectedly died in the Welsh Marches; his daughter had been beaten to the crown by his brother, who in turn was then ousted by a cousin. Politically, Cwoenthryth was still important but now vulnerable, and Wulfred, with the support of the new King, went to court to recover the rentals of Reculver and Minster, restitution of his lost estates, and Oeswalum. Cwoenthryth lost the case and committed to handing over Oeswalum, but it seems she then endeavoured to hold onto it, offering other lands instead[26]. She may have succeeded, although the last mention we have of Oeswalum is in the will of Wulfred's kinsman whom he had promoted to a senior position in the church[27].

The King's daughter, the Archbishop and then Werhard attached importance to Oeswalum, of which we now have no record. Was it because some religious event took place at Oeswalum during the presence there of the relics of St Eadburgh? Without being cynical, it was in the apparent interests of Abbess Selethryth, the King and Archbishop Aethelheardus that the saintliness of St Eadburgh should be scattered far and wide by whatever means. So was this the significance of Oeswalum? St Eadburgh was revered then, and nearly 300 years later, Lanfranc thought her sufficiently important to move her from Lyminge to his new foundation of St Gregory's around 1085 AD[28]. But in later times, she was forgotten, even by her church at Lyminge. After the translation of the Saint, in 804 AD, Selethryth had a charter to convey Oeswalum to Christchurch following the death of herself and her brother, perhaps reinforcing the concept that it had a significance beyond just a movement of property capital.

But there may be other faint echoes of events of those times. Oeswalum had been split into probably two estates by the 1000s. In 1070 AD, we had the first appearance of Nunnyngitun as a name[29]. Dr F.W. Hardman proposed, with Gordon Ward, an idea to Kent Archaeological Society members during the 1936 86th Excursion to Nonington. His fifty-page first draft of a History of Early Nonington[30] argues his belief that Selethryth brought to Oeswalum not her nuns from Lyminge, but those from Minster, devastated by Danish raids[31] and set them up in some settlement which Cwoenthryth then had no choice but to maintain[32]. By then, the Danish raids had made an establishment of nuns at Minster unsustainable, and Oeswalum had the advantage of not being on the direct attack route from Thanet to Canterbury[33]. Hardman argues that the site was called Bedesham in the Domesday Book, meaning "the house of prayer, the prayed for home" and that Hasted correctly identified the estate with the later Beachams or Beauchamps (named probably from Sir John de Beauchamp)[34]. He laments the Victoria County History for attributing the name to Betteshanger.

Interestingly, Paul Cullen agrees with him[35]. Hardman also translated Nunyngton as "the tun or homestead of the nuns", whereas all other authorities, including Paul Cullen, assert that it is equally straightforwardly the "homestead of Nunna."[36] Since then, Clive Webb has unearthed an earlier version as Nuningitun and points out that Paul Cullen and his fellow professionals did not know of the potential ecclesiastical presence. Hardman's other thought was that it could be significant that Nonington Church was dedicated to St Mary, as was Minster, Lyminge and the Abbey of Winchcombe[37], the place where Cwoenthryth's murdered brother (later Saint) Kenelm was buried, and she was the first Abbess[38]. Finally, he refers to the existing ruins at Nonington as a possible home for the nuns. The Dover Archaeological Group have now excavated there and as yet found no evidence of any church or indeed of an Anglo Saxon presence of any kind. However, a burial site dating to this period lies within 0.5 kilometres to the North, the inhabitants of which demonstrate elements of wealth and status[39]. A further site about 0.5 kilometres to the South has also just been excavated of a broadly similar date.

There may be one further clue. Clive Webb points out that at Domesday, the estates comprising Eswalt and Esswelle are a pocket of Crown territory surrounded by Christchurch and archepiscopal lands. However, the court cases ruled[40] that Oeswalum should be handed over to Wulfred. But we know Cwoenthryth did not do so immediately: perhaps she never did so, and therefore, at her death, Oeswalum remained part of the Mercian patrimony and continued as Crown land after that. Maybe there were nuns there, a relatively safe refuge in a dangerous sea of Danish incursions, sustained in part by the legend of St Eadburh and ministering to a wide area so thus deserving charitable support once Wulfred was near the end of his life? There was some folk history of nuns on the site borne out by John Harris in his History of Kent in 1719, who links Beachams and a nunnery, as does the owner of St Albans Court, William Hammond talking to Boteler for Hasted in 1789[41]. Later accounts link a chapel there to the monks of St Albans Abbey who had been given the estate in 1096, but these are without substance[42].

It is far from impossible that some nuns were established on the site and that St Eadburgh did rest there en route to Lyminge. There is no material evidence so far for either event, but both seem plausible.

FOOTNOTES

[1] E.Hasted: The History and Topographical Survey of the County of Kent ed, ix (1797-1801) 251

[2] Mawer; Wallenberg; Hardman; Ekberg; Cameron; Smith; Mills; Watts; and Cullen. All are absolute that the linguistic case that Oeswalum is the source of Easole, Esswell and Eswalt,

and Witney for example and Brooks accept this unquestioningly. There is however considerable interest in the translation of Oeswalum as either a geographic feature or a pagan site.

[3] Stuart Brookes: Walking with Anglo-Saxons: Landscapes of the Dead in Early Anglo-Saxon Kent, Anglo-Saxon Studies in Archaeology and History 14, 2007. Economics and Social Change in Anglo-Saxon Kent AD 400-900, BAR British Series 431 2007 57 Fig 24. The importance of this very old route, still partly recognised as late as 1915 in the Invasion Evacuation Plan from the Sandwich area, has been forgotten in the succeeding century. The Anglo-Saxon route identified by Stuart Brookes is still distinguishable on the roads and tracks shown in the Ordnance Survey map of 1801 leading from the Roman Dover to Canterbury road through Womenswold, Nonington and Chillenden.

[4] I Margary: Notes on Roman Roads in East Kent. Arch Cant 61 (1948)129.

[5] Clive Webb is the author of most of the information on the Nonington Village website.

[6] NP Brooks & SE Kelly ed: Charters of Christchurch Canterbury, Anglo-Saxon Charters (British Academy) 2O13. 1 . Charters 59 and 59A with critical appraisal and commentary. This comprehensive publication subsumes and scholarly evaluates most of earlier writing around all the Christchurch Charters.

[7] Ibid: 1. 403,469.

[8] P. Stafford: Political Women in Mercia Eighth to Early Tenth Centuries, 3/41, in Gender, family and the legitimization of power: England from the ninth to the early twelfth century (ed) P Stafford, Ashgate 2006

[9] MP Brown & CA Farr: Mercia, an Anglo-Saxon Kingdom in Europe, Continuous Studies in Medieval History, Leicester University 2001.

[10] Brooks & Kelly: 1. 31,403

[11] R Baldwin: Antiquarians, Victorian Parsons and Re-Writing the Past. How Lyminge Parish Church acquired an invented dedication. Arch Cant 138 (2017). Brooks & Kelly: 1. 28-9;465.

[12] G.Thomas: Life before the Minster: the Social Dynamics of Monastic Foundation at Anglo-Saxon Lyminge, Kent. Kent Antiquarian Journal 93 (2013) 69-145.

[13] Brooks & Kelly: 1. 31.

[14] Ibid: 1 465.

[15] R.Baldwin op cit; Brooks & Kelly: 1. 465. Eadburh was the only daughter of King Centwine of Wessex and was Abbess from 733 until 751. She is credited with building a new church to house the shrine of St Mildrith perhaps enabled by her negotiation of reduced tolls on trade with London and the purchase of an additional ship for the Abbey trading fleet. S.Leslie: Dictionary of National Biography Smith & Elder 1888. The attribution of her substantial correspondence with St Boniface and St Lullus seems now erroneous. Baldwin op cit.

[16] A.Thacker The Making of a Local Saint, 45-73, in A.Thacker & R.Sharpe (ed): Local Saints and Local Churches in the early Medieval West, Oxford 2002

[17] H.Clarke, S.Pearson, M.Mate and K.Parfitt: Sandwich the 'completist medieval town in England' Oxbow 2010 13 .The difference in distance between the two routes is at most perhaps 3 km (over a maximum of perhaps 34 km) with the latter being the longer and almost entirely on land. Both routes could have used Oeswalum as a central staging point.

[18] The minster at Northbourne is also nearby so that there are three accessible congregations at least in the area.

[19] K.Parfitt: Anglo-Saxon cemetery at Nonington, Kent Archaeological Review 147 (2002) 154 -159. Nonington and some other AngloSaxon cemeteries on the east Kent downs in I. Riddler, J. Soulat and L. Keys (eds) The Evidence of Material Culture; Studies in Honour of Professor Vera Evison, Europe Medievale /1o. 2016;. Since this report, further burial grounds, so far unreported, have been excavated approximately 1.5 kilometres to the South of this site at Easole, and at Aylesham about 2.5 kilometres to the West.

[20] That the nearest Christian burials of that period are not around the church but sited in groups elsewhere suggests that at that time there was no church there.

[21] J. Crick: Church, Land and Local Nobility in Early C9th Kent: the case of Earldorman Oswulf. Bulletin of the Institute of Historical Research LX1 146 Oct 1988. Brooks & Kelly 1. 13,403,583.

[22] Brooks & Kelly 1. 13,33.

[23] Ibid: 1 . 32,,403,583.This seems anomalous when Minster would have been more at risk than Lyminge. But we know nothing of the detail of the Danish threat then other than it was clearly perceived to be very real. The charter is witnessed by Coenwulf, his brother Cuthred and Archbishop Aethelheardus so was no lightweight decision. See also Note 33 below.

[24] R. North: Revenue and Real Estate: Archbishop Wulfred and the Strange Case of Cynhelm; J.Roberts & L.Webster (Ed) Anglo-Saxon traces, Essays in AngloSaxon Studies 4, Medieval and Renaissance Texts & Studies 405, University of Tempe, Arizona 2011.

[25] Brooks & Kelly: 1.13.

[26] Ibid: 1. 583, 602-3.

[27] Ibid: 1. 584, 629.

[28] R.Baldwin op cit; Brooks & Kelly: 1. 465.

[29] Clive Webb op cit.

[30] P. Hobbs: Dr Hardman and the Ghostly Nun, KAS Newsletter 97 Summer 2013 4-5.

[31] Whatever the impact of the Danes, the rentals and income from Minster were worth wresting from Wulfred by Selethryth about 805 and then for Wulfred to go to court to retrieve them from Cwoenthryth in 820.

[32] F. W. Hardman; An History of early Nonington. Written on the backs of paper from various sources,

full of corrections and additions, the historical account includes translations of all the Anglo-Saxon charters concerned with the events under scrutiny as well as detailed linguistic identifications of Oeswalum with Esswelle and Eswale, of Bedesham and of Nonington.

[33] Recorded big Danish raids in 842 and 851 but smaller and earlier exploratory forays must have occurred.

[34] Lyminge disappears from the record after 844 and Minster by 857. S.Brooks and S.Harrington: The Kingdom and People of Kent AD 400-1066 History Press 2010 121

[35] Pers com.

[36] There is a West Saxon King Nunna in the 600s.

[37] But so were Sandwich and Reculver from earlier dates.

[38] R.Baldwin op cit; Brooks & Kelly 1. 446; E.S.Hartland The legend of St Kenelm, 13-65, Transactions of the Bristol and Gloucestershire Archaeological Society 39 (1916) . Cwoenthryth's later vilification seems to have been propagated as the result of much later medieval monkish politics although Wulfred might not have demurred.

[39] K. Parfitt op cit.

[40] Brooks & Kelly: 1 Charter 59A.

[41] Boteler to Hasted 7 Sept 1789 Canterbury Cathedral Archives, U11/433/289.

[42] D.Knowles and R.N.Hadcock, Medieval Religious Houses, England and Wales, 2nd ed Harlow, 1971. P.Hobbs, Old St Albans Court, Nonington, Arch. Cant.125 (2005) 285.

BOOKS

ARCHAEOLOGY ON THE FRONT LINE: 70 YEARS OF RESCUE 1952-2022 ACROSS KENT AND S.E.LONDON

By Brian Philp

This much-awaited book is a second edition covering the first 50 years recorded in the (sold-out) first edition but adding another 20 years of Events and Sites up until 2022. With 300 pages, it has 350 illustrations, the great majority colour. It describes the battles, strategies and victories over this long period with sites saved by instant recording or preservation, often in the face of severe problems. These include the Roman Forum in London, the Royal Abbey at Faversham, four Roman forts at Dover and Reculver, six Roman villas, two Saxon cemeteries, three palaces and four manor-houses. It also lists the many published reports that are an unmatched record of publication across the country, now totalling over 400. Many awards have followed this uniquely Kentish progress.

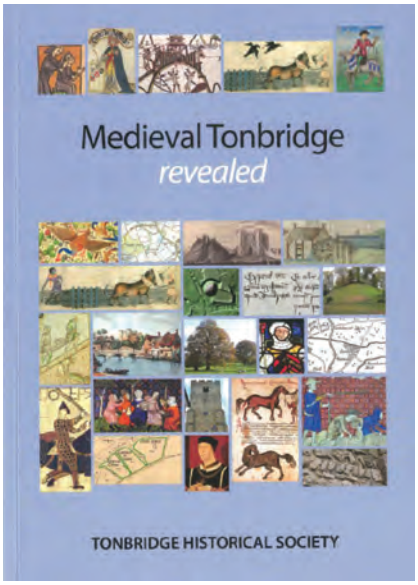
Whilst often amusing but sometimes hard-hitting, an important feature is the acknowledgement by name of over 240 key team-members of the 2,000 who joined in the numerous training, excavation, presentation and reporting events. Nor are the cringe-worthy Gremlins left out!

The slightly anonymous character of this epic Kentish tale is the author, who started his archaeological career on 6th February 1952 whilst at Bromley Grammar School. That day the head declared, "The King has died" and closed the school. Instead of leaving, Brian slipped into the library to discover a book on the Roman shore-forts. That began his long career with 40 years of excavation on the lost fort at Dover, his 18 years of excavation on the eroding fort at Reculver and 700 other projects. Hence Archaeology on the Front Line! Inevitably, our gracious Queen Elizabeth II became our monarch on the same day!

MEDIEVAL TONBRIDGE REVEALED

By Deborah Cole, with the Medieval Research Group of Tonbridge Historical Society and Bridgett Jones, Translator

This book examines medieval Tonbridge, researching numerous documents, writing papers that cover many aspects of everyday life from local people to royalty. 173 pages of detail, accompanied by 180 colour illustrations, chart Tonbridge's growth from the Norman invasion to the Dissolution of the Monasteries. A fabulous 4-page Walk Around Medieval Tonbridge in One Hour



guide can be found toward the end of the book...and is well worth undertaking, as I have already done.

Copies can be obtained from the Tonbridge Historical Society at http://www.tonbridgehistory.org.uk

DISCOVERING KENT'S WARTIME AIRFIELDS THAT NEVER WERE

By Paul Tritton

Eighty years ago, Kent's RAF fighter stations remained on constant standby for Luftwaffe raids, even though in late 1940 Reichsmarschall Hermann Göring had conceded defeat in his efforts to destroy them to gain air superiority as a prelude to the invasion of southern England ('Operation Seelöwe') that Hitler craved. Göring's next targets were farther inland, and by the end of 1941, much of London's East End and vast swaths of many provincial industrial cities and ports had been devastated.

Although Germany was now preoccupied with its invasion of Russia ('Operation Barbarossa'), its future intentions vis-à-vis Britain were unpredictable, and it could not be assumed that Hitler had shelved Seelöwe for good. Sporadic and heavy raids continued, and in the spring and early summer of 1942, the 'Baedeker raids' on historic English cities of no military importance would be launched.

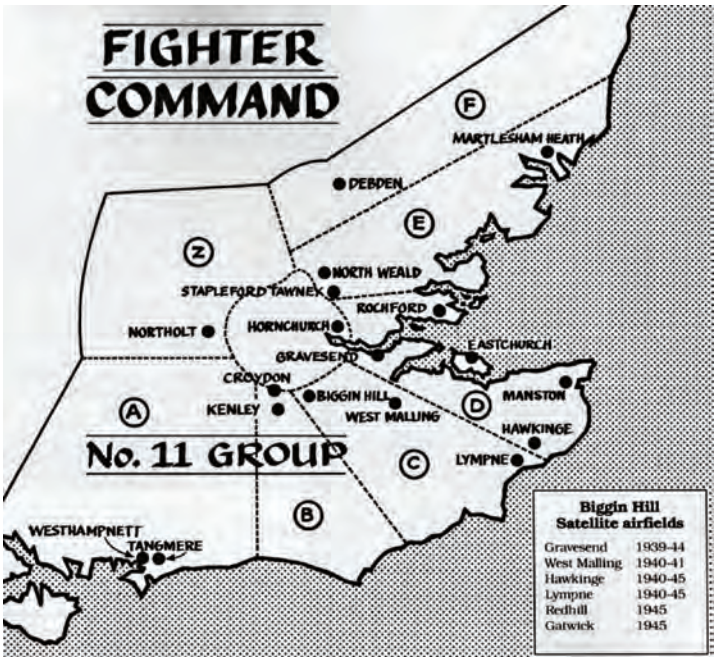
On 1 June, Canterbury became the campaign's fourth target; 43 people were killed, nearly 100 were injured, and 1,800 buildings in the medieval city centre were destroyed or seriously damaged. 'Hit and run' attacks later that summer caused more casualties.

Throughout the war, 11 Group Fighter Command's squadrons were ready to be scrambled to intercept formations of bombers approaching from bases less than an hour's flying time from the Kent coast. One effective counter-measure to protect the stations was the construction of decoy airfields to lure the He-111s, Ju-88s and Do-17s into dropping their bombs harmlessly over open countryside. In Kent, the stations defended by this ploy were at Biggin Hill, Eastchurch, Gravesend, Hawkinge, Lympne, Manston, West Malling and Detling (the last of these was transferred to Fighter Command from Coastal Command in 1943). Built under the supervision of Colonel John Turner of the Royal Engineers, most of the decoys were for night time use. Named 'Q' sites, nearly 150 were built across southern and eastern England. They were so realistic that they had been hit by 859.65 tonnes of bombs during 521 attacks by the end of the war, proving the most successful of all the Air Ministry's various types of bombing decoys. The number of lives saved is incalculable but substantial.

From bombing altitude (21,300 to 29,500 ft), the sites appeared at night to be genuine fighter bases. Their main feature was

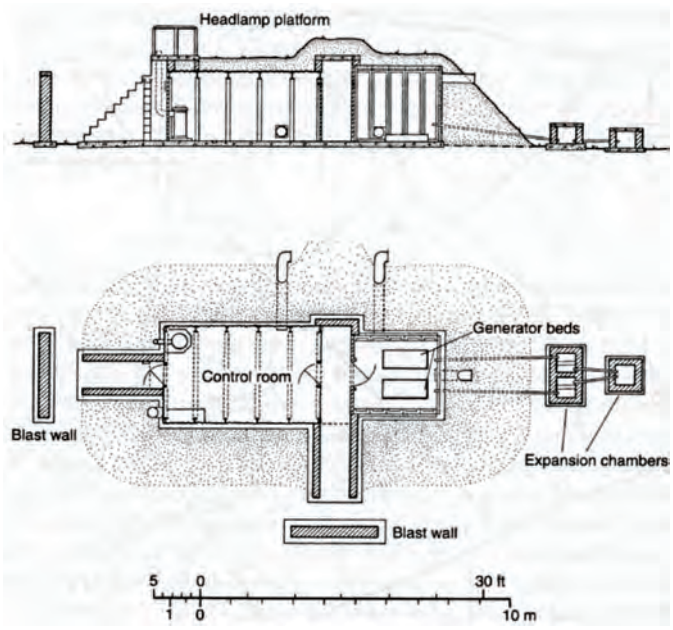
Below, left
Fig 1: Derelict control shelter for RAF Manston's Q50B bombing decoy airfield on Ash Level

Below, right
Fig 2: Fighter Command 11 Group stations in the Second World War. (© Froglet Publications. Drawn by Alison Stammers for Biggin on the Bump by Bob Ogley



four ‘wind Ts’ - arrays of yellow lights, each forming a cruciform, the array switched on any one time indicating the wind direction. Flare paths, landing lights and other features were convincingly simulated. Car headlamps or ‘Chance lights’ (small searchlights) imitated aircraft taxiing lights; red lamps mimicked obstruction lights on high buildings. The entire contrivance was brought alive by two aircraftmen (‘erks’ in RAF slang) in a blast-proof control shelter next door to a generator room. They received instructions by telephone from the parent airfield. Their cold and lonely vigil was boring on quiet nights, terrifying when summoned to action stations. Who else was under orders to entice someone to drop bombs on them?

Because their control shelters and access roads were their only substantial structures, finding traces of ‘Q’ sites presents a challenge to today’s military archaeologists and war historians. Nevertheless, four members of the KAS Kent Defence Research Group have had a degree of success. While exploring Ash Level, near Sandwich, at various times over the past 13 years, Clive Holden, John Guy and Paul Tritton discovered the shell of the control shelter for Q50B, located a few metres off Potts Farm Drove on what is still known locally as ‘Air Force Marsh’ (NGR TR 299 621) This is all that remains of two decoy airfields for RAF Manston, three miles to the north-east. (The other decoy was on Monkton Marshes, also three miles from Manston). John Guy was accompanied by a water company official who pointed out a concrete bridge built across a ditch to allow a bowser of diesel fuel from Manston, driven by two ‘Waafs’, to deliver fuel once a week for its generators. Timber beams over other ditches supported electrical cables for the dummy lighting system. At least one friendly aircraft is reputed to have been duped into landing there. John was also told there was a farmhouse on the site, from which chinks of light were momentarily allowed to escape to represent a door being opened and hurriedly closed in defiance of the black-out. This feature was more common to Starfish decoys, which imitated towns ablaze in



Top
Fig 3: Drem Q367/41 control shelter on RAF Manston’s Q50B decoy airfield. Structures are (from the left) blast protection walls at the entrance, site of the control room, a passage between generator room and control room, generator room and three expansion chamber bases
Middle
Fig 4: Air Ministry drawing CTD 367/41 of a Drem-type control shelter
Bottom, left
Fig 5: Air inlet for generator
Bottom, right
Fig 6: Interior of generator room showing exhaust aperture

night raids, and was intended to suggest people fleeing from their homes to their air-raid shelters.

The main structure of Q50B's shelter was a combination of pre-cast and site-cast concrete. When last inspected the blast walls outside its two entrances/exits, a short covered passage between the site of the control room and its generator room was still partially intact. Outside were 15-inch air inlet ducts for the generators and the foundations of the expansion chambers, which muffled the noise of the generators. These features confirm that the shelter is a 'Drem Q 367/41' (see Fig 4), a design introduced in September 1941. This type had curved walls and arched roofs, whereas other shelters that have been found in Kent had vertical brick walls and flat reinforced concrete roofs.

As Fighter Command's most easterly station, Manston was a key target, and on 12 August 1940, a heavy daylight raid left it unserviceable. This attack occurred on the day before Adlertag ('Eagle Day'), the prelude to Unternehmen Adlerangriff ('Operation Eagle Attack'), the Luftwaffe's attempt to destroy the RAF. Air Ministry order AIR 14/3340 gave instructions on the procedure to be followed by decoy airfield crews when an air raid warning was imminent.

'The operations staff at the parent station will ring up the night 'dummy'. Here there will be two men ... taking alternate watches. The man on watch wakes his companion and starts up the generator ... one man goes to the control panel and switches on the correct [wind] T, the obstruction light and headlamp. The two men take it in turns to operate the headlamp ... until an aircraft is heard approaching near enough to pick up the landing T.'

'They will then switch if out and stand on watch. If the aircraft is a friend and signals by a Very light he wants to land (i.e. mistakes the Q lighting for a real aerodrome), the lights are switched off. If it is an enemy who starts to attack, the obstruction lights only are switched off and the flare path is left on because station and satellite [airfields] cannot be extinguished in a sudden attack without great risk to personnel. The two men then take cover and report'.

The headlamp, mounted on a platform, was first rotated through 90 degrees in five seconds, switched off for 40 seconds, then pointed in a different direction and switched on again to repeat the five-second sweep. All this gave the impression of a taxiing aircraft pivoting on one wheel as it turned. In 2010, former Aircraftman Eric Lever was interviewed by author Robin J Brooks about his experiences while on duty at a 'Q' site, RAF Biggin Hill's dummy at Lullingstone (TQ 526 648). The site was alerted at 20.32 hours on 13 February 1944, during a resurgence in night raids on London known as 'The Little Blitz'. Eric said:

'It was a lovely clear night and we somehow knew that it was going to be a night for enemy attacks. By 20.51hrs the decoy was well lit and minutes later about 20 to 30 aircraft were heard overhead. Suddenly they dropped flares which lit up the entire area. Looking out from our control shelter we could see right down the valley.'

'Minutes later we heard the whistle of bombs and saw what turned out to be high explosive bombs dropped north-east of the site. The noise of the explosions was deafening but they landed some way from the decoy. Minutes later several other explosions were heard as further bombs landed, again some distance away.'

'To most of us this was our first baptism of fire and it certainly was frightening as trees and bushes within the area burst into flame. We were then told to extinguish the flare-path lights, leaving just the bad black-out ones on to confuse the enemy. Several aircraft appeared to fly low over the site, but no further bombs fell.'

'Once the aircraft had gone Biggin Hill instructed us to switch the lights on again. Nothing else happened and we switched all the lights off at 21.55hrs. It was quite a night'.

Above
Fig 7: The control shelter, pictured from one of the ditches spanned by timber beams to support cables for the lighting array

This was the last and final use of the Lullingstone 'Q' site. No features survive, and the site is now part of a golf course.

RAF HAWKINGE

This famous station's decoy, Q147A, was between Woolage Green and Wootton, at TR 238 481, close to the A2 Canterbury – Dover road and about six miles north-west of its parent airfield. Colin Welch visited its site while seeking evidence of a V-1 ('doodlebug') flying bomb crater at West Court Farm, Shepherdswell. Jim Weir, the farm owner, showed Colin one of his fields, still called 'Air Force Field', covering 33 acres, where the control shelter and its generator were installed. In those days, one of the farm's cowsheds was only a short distance away. Jim said:

'This wasn't much fun for my grandfather, his sons and employees who had to milk the cows in there twice a day knowing

Above
Fig 8: 'Air Force Field', site of decoy airfield Q147A at West Court Farm. (Colin Welch)

that they were intended to be a prime target for enemy bombing. However it didn't fool the Germans and they didn't suffer attacks. 'We still occasionally plough up sheathed copper wire for the lights that were placed on the airfield.'

'After the war the generator was purchased by my family and moved to our cattle yard and used as a power-cut backup supply for the cowshed, farm buildings and house'.

In the 1970s, the generator was sold to the Graves brothers, who ran a grain haulage business in Goodnestone and had a private collection of old farm and other machinery. A subsequent owner used it to power a steam organ that travelled around steam-engine fairs. Its current owner is believed to live in the West Country. Colin heard of another 'Q' site in the area while writing a booklet on the history of Wootton.

'I interviewed Tom Gibson at Tappington Cottage. He told me that the top half of Gatteridge Farm south of Stockhill Wood at TR 204 449 was requisitioned by the military to construct a dummy airfield with landing lights which would be put on at night, but surprisingly the German aircraft took no notice.'

'The officer in charge was a Captain Pearsey, who was billeted with the Gibson family at Tappington Hall Farm. Power for the site came from a generator at Rakeshole Farm (TR201 442)'.

Like Manston, Hawkinge was heavily bombed the day before Adlertag. Five people were killed. The base received a direct hit in later attacks, and a stray bomb killed six people in a nearby village.

RAF GRAVESEND

Two 'Q' sites were built to defend RAF Gravesend – Q96B at Luddesdown (TQ 688 662) and Q96A on Cliffe Marshes (TQ 727 778). Clive Holden discovered structures of both sites and wrote:

'The Luddesdown decoy bunker is in Longbottom Wood, Upper Bush. I visited it in 2017 and 2019. It consists of two rooms, the generator room and the control room, separated by a short corridor. The entrance is protected by blast walls and there is an escape hatch in the roof of the control room accessed via a short, fixed steel ladder which is still there. The hatch lid is missing.'

'The interior was fairly clean with just some accumulated rubbish from the surrounding vegetation and very little modern graffiti on the walls. The structure appeared to be very sound with little sign of serious damage. Outside to the right of the generator room there were also the remains of a brick expansion chamber.'

'The Cliffe Marsh decoy bunker is just off the Mead Wall track across the marshes. I last visited it in 2017. It is exactly the same design as the Luddesdown bunker but not in such good condition. There was a lot more modern graffiti on the walls. The escape hatch ladder is missing but it appeared to be fairly structurally sound'.

Historic England's Heritage Gateway website states that Q96A was built on the site of Curtis and Harvey Ltd's explosives factory. The control shelter is off-site, south of Boatrick House and nearly 200m from the decoy flare path, on the eastern side of a lane leading to The Poplars. Typically it is placed in the hedge adjacent to the lane and built above ground to avoid flooding. Several fighter squadrons operated from RAF Gravesend during the war. The airfield was attacked only a few times, perhaps because of the effectiveness of the decoys.

Researchers have considerable scope for seeking traces of other Second World War 'fields of deception'. Their extant structures are too small to be seen on Google Earth, and being concealed among foliage, are likely unrecognisable from the nearest public road or right of way. Nevertheless, field walks (with landowners' permission) might yield some surprises:

Top
Fig 9: Q96B (Luddesdown) control shelter showing (right) the platform above the control room, accessed via an escape hatch, on which a lamp mimicking an aircraft taxiing was installed

Bottom
Fig 10: Q96A (Cliffe Marshes) control room and exit (minus ladder) to the escape hatch and headlamp platform

- **RAF West Malling** had decoys at Hammer Dyke, Capel (TQ 642 463) & Collier Street (TQ 700 464).

- **RAF Detling**'s dummy at Wichling (TQ 920 534) near Lenham operated as 'Q' and 'K' (daylight bombing) decoys. A Starfish decoy was also built on the site to protect Maidstone. Two surviving buildings and an access road were recorded in 2010 near Little Pivington Farm.

- **RAF Eastchurch** (TQ 982 695) became a temporary decoy after a severe raid in 1940 until it became operational again in mid-1942.

- **RAF Lympne** (TQ 113 355) was also used as a temporary decoy after suffering one of the worst airfield bombing attacks in the Battle of Britain. It did not operate at full strength again until June 1942.

- **RAF New Romney** opened as an advanced landing ground for Hawker Typhoon ground-attack aircraft in July 1943 and was mimicked by decoy Q187A at

- **Midley**, near Lydd and Q188A on nearby Romney Salts.

PHOTO CREDITS:

Manston decoy Clive Holden (Fig 1), Paul Tritton; Hawkinge decoy Colin Welch; Gravesend and Cliffe Marshes decoys Clive Holden.

RECOMMENDED FURTHER READING:

Fields of Deception, Colin Dobinson, Methuen 2013.

USEFUL WEBSITES:

https://www.aviationmuseum.net/AirfieldDecoys.htm

https://www.greatbritishlife.co.uk/people/the-lullingstone-decoy-7086692

https://www.abct.org.uk/airfields/search-results/?area=Kent

https://www.battleofbritain1940.net/0006.html

https://www.blighty-at-war.net/decoy-ql-sites.htm

https://www.heritagegateway.org.uk/gateway

THE SOCIETY FOR THE PROTECTION OF ANCIENT BUILDINGS (SPAB) OLD HOUSE PROJECT AT ST ANDREWS AND THE HOSPITIUM AT BOXLEY ABBEY, KENT

The Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings (SPAB) Old House Project site is a Grade II* 'building at risk' near Maidstone - St Andrews (former) Chapel. When the SPAB bought the building in November 2018, it was hidden behind an overgrown garden; vandal damage had left the site vulnerable; parts of the roof were leaking. The five-year repair project aims to showcase the best in building conservation whilst providing a live training site for volunteers passionate about old buildings, apprentices and local students.

In 2018 and early 2019, emergency work to the roof and windows was carried out, and a security system was installed. In 2020 bespoke scaffolding was in place, allowing socially-distanced access to the roof so the SPAB could carry out vital roof repairs to the characterful 20th-century post office extension. The SPAB also embarked on extensive archaeological work, with the help of KAS, HAARG, MAAG and KURG, to help them understand the story of St Andrews' story and how it relates to the nearby Boxley Abbey and much more. In 2021 the Old House Project was named as joint winner of the Museums + Heritage Award for Restoration or Conservation Project of the Year.

Whilst working on nearby St Andrews, the SPAB has held annual working parties at Boxley Abbey. SPAB volunteers and experts have taken on a range of works, including repairing the abbey boundary wall and timber repairs at the hospitium. Working parties give those new to hands-on conservation the opportunity to learn from skilled practitioners in a relaxed setting.

Following the SPAB's acquisition of St Andrews and the initial invitation to the KAS and MAAG to participate in a shared project, KAS Historic Buildings Group members have contributed to the enhanced understanding of the building and the essential associated local history and documentary research, using estate maps and rentals in Kent History and Library Centre especially. Research has been facilitated by invaluable input from Dr Elizabeth Eastlake. Her 2014 PhD thesis on Boxley Abbey (and generously proffered associated documentary translations) is continuing to aid interpretation of the abbey site, local landscape, and related buildings. With the benefit of skills and knowledge of the local history and archaeology, local input by members of MAAG and KAS has included study and review of relevant and essential KAS

Top
Fig 1: View looking west, St Andrews Chapel in the background. SPAB volunteers working on test pits

records associated with past KAS excavations led by Peter Tester in the early 1970s at Boxley Abbey, published in *Archaeologia Cantiana* (Tester, P.J., 1973, "Excavations at Boxley Abbey", in *Archaeologia Cantiana* Vol. 88, 129-158)."

HISTORY OF ST ANDREWS CHAPEL AND WIDER SITE

by Graham Keevil

The Cistercian abbey of Boxley was founded in 1143/46 as a daughter house of Clairvaux. It thus took its allegiance directly from France rather than any of the English Cistercian houses. Boxley was closed in 1538 as part of Henry VIII's Dissolution of the Monasteries. Parts of the cloister were converted into a mansion house, but the church was ruinated to prevent re-occupation should the Catholic faith mount a successful revival after the king's demise. No such reversion took place despite Queen Mary's efforts, and Boxley has remained in private, secular hands since the middle of the 16th century. Perhaps unsurprisingly, the site today owes most of its appearance to these centuries of domestic use and landscaping – but its monastic origin and history can still be appreciated readily, not least because of its enclosing precinct walls and the great barn-like hospitium.

St Andrews is of 15th-century origin and lays outside the abbey's precinct wall. It must have been a late afterthought for the monks and may have originated as a chantry or reliquary chapel – perhaps sponsored by a patron who wanted a close association with the abbey. The chapel then passed into secular use after the Dissolution and has been a house for much longer than it was a chapel. The building reflects this history, and we have spent much time untangling how this is represented above and below ground. A dozen test pits have been excavated, a watching brief was maintained when new access was created off Grange Lane to the south, and of course, the building itself has been recorded. We cannot claim a definitive understanding of how the chapel developed yet, but we know a lot more about it than we did three years ago. Here are a few of our insights.

Top
Fig 2: The brick drain curving away to the northwest. Note the standing water to the east (right) of the masonry, with some present to the left
Bottom
Fig 3: Test pit 3

Our first test pits were dug in July 2019 to examine the foundations of the building, which were of interest to the project engineer and the archaeology team. The chapel itself was built of good quality masonry, with a large offset plinth at the base of its walls. Its foundations continued for just over a metre below the current ground level, and we found late medieval pottery in the trench dug to build them. Much has changed above-ground, but several original doors are still evident (two still in use and one blocked), along with squints – small square windows – which provided a view of the altar (and perhaps a relic displayed on it)

for pilgrims on the outside. The medieval east window can also be seen, blocked up with brick, and smaller windows cut through this to light the ground and first floors of the post-medieval residence.

Other pits had surprises in store. The foundations on the west and part of the south sides, for example, appeared to be almost non-existent. The rest of the south wall and the 'priest's house' to its east were more substantial – albeit of inferior quality to the chapel. However, the two seemed to be bonded together (as do the walls above), which was unexpected. The south wall and west end had been thought of as an addition, probably post-dating the Dissolution. The test pit results, and the dendrochronology, are now calling that into question. It is at least possible that the entire building is, in fact, of late medieval origin (except, of course, for the late 19th-century post office extension on its northwest corner and the inserted first floor).

We have also been excavating in the chapel's grounds to see whether any archaeology survives there, whether of medieval or later date. Again, this has presented us with a few surprises – pleasant ones for the most part. For instance, we have found a flint-cobbled surface over much of the area to the east and southeast of the chapel, suggesting that much of this ground was a courtyard. While we were digging this summer, the reason became apparent when severe overnight rain turned the clayey soil into a quagmire. A cobbled surface would have been beneficial in those conditions – no doubt that was the case in the 15th and later centuries as well. We can't be sure that the cobbles we found were of late medieval date, but this seems likely.

Our best find came from just above the cobbles, where an intact medieval encaustic tile was found in March 2021. This is a much smaller tile than the usual patterned tiles, but it probably dates to the 13th-century. It is a mosaic tile, which relies more on the geometric layout of the tiles than the patterns on them to provide the overall design. Our example is a hybrid, though, because it does feature a simple star on its surface. Remarkably, Peter Tester found an identical tile during his excavations at Boxley Abbey in the early 1970s (published in *Archaeologia Cantiana* 88 – figure 5, tile 3). Our tile is in excellent condition, with its original glaze intact. It shows no sign of wear, and there are no traces

Top, left
Fig 4: Foundations quarry stone
Top, right
Fig 5: Foundations ragstone
Bottom
Fig 6: Medieval tile St Andrews

of mortar on its base or sides. Perhaps it had never been used in a floor, and of course, the tile pre-dates the chapel by around 200 years – but the tile is a tantalising hint of what other discoveries we might make onsite or nearby.

Intriguingly, a tile kiln that had probably been the source of our tile and the one found by Tester was excavated in the 1920s. This seems to have been at Abbey Farm, a short distance to the north of the chapel. The kiln was probably the source of the abbey's 13th-century tiles and might well have been a profitable enterprise for the abbey: Tester suggested that Boxley was the source for similar tiles at Rochester and Canterbury Cathedrals, as well as Leeds Priory. Geophysical survey in July 2021 located two kiln-like anomalies in the grounds of Abbey Farm. Is this the same site excavated in the 1920s? It would be exciting to find out.

BOXLEY AND ST ANDREWS SURVEY WORK

by Kevin and Lynn Cornwell of Hastings Area Archaeological Research Group (HAARG)

The geophysical surveys of these sites were undertaken by Hastings Area Archaeological Research Group (HAARG) and Maidstone Area Archaeological Group (MAAG).

St Andrews Chapel

A detailed survey using Geoscan RM15 Advanced resistivity equipment was undertaken with recordings at 0.5m intervals on 0.5m traverses in a 'zig-zag' recording mode. The survey totalled 6,312 readings, covering 0.16 hectares was undertaken on 25 & 27 May 2020. The readings were processed using Geoplot version 4.01. The ground conditions were very dry, much disturbed, with significant amounts of modern debris on the ground surface. Modern structures included a concrete block outhouse and drain to a culvert/ tank located by a metal drain cover. High resistivity readings identified an area of clay extraction which had been backfilled. Readings were high around the edge of the chapel caused by building debris. The line

Top
Fig 7: Grey-scale resistivity survey results within St Andrew's Chapel curtilage overlaid on a Google Earth image
Bottom
Fig 8: Grey-scale resistivity survey results within Boxley Abbey inner precinct overlaid on a Google Earth image

of a high-pressure gas pipeline is present in the results. Due to modern ground disturbance and contamination, a magnetometer survey was not conducted.

Boxley Abbey

Both resistivity and magnetometer surveys were conducted in all suitable open areas. Both survey types were detailed totalling: -

Magnetometer – 6 days – 700,000 readings – 4.41 hectares.

Resistivity – 35 days – 230,000 readings – 5.77 hectares.

Previous investigations projected the floor plan of the main abbey buildings. Resistivity confirmed the layout plus additional buildings and features previously unrecorded. In the north of the main abbey complex, several features suggestive of buildings, enclosures, water courses, and trackways lie within the inner abbey precinct wall. The results suggest that buildings had been built up against the wall.

The results for the field to the west of the main abbey buildings (south of the gatehouse) shows a complex overlaying of structures and buildings on differing alignments, which suggests multiperiod occupation and redevelopment. There were additional buildings/rooms attached to the gatehouse. There is a probable wall that is contemporary with these buildings, which crosses the field. A shallow lynchet is apparent at ground level. The footprints of buildings not represented on any old maps are north and south of this probable wall. There is a circular 24m diameter feature present that lies under or overlaps a building. The purpose of this circular feature is unknown; however, it is not present in the magnetometer results. Structures present on the estate map by John Smith (1801), since demolished, close to the hospitium (barn), have been identified on the resistivity results.

Results for the final field to the south-west of the site (south and east of the hospitium) show a series of buildings plus features associated with water management.

Above
Fig 9: Martin Bridge at work

DENDROCHRONOLOGICAL INVESTIGATION AT ST ANDREW'S CHAPEL

by Dr Martin Bridge, Oxford Dendrochronology Laboratory

The first investigation established a date for the chapel's roof, with one timber retaining complete sapwood from a tree felled in the spring of 1484. Other timbers have a similar likely felling date, estimated from their incomplete sapwood. The western extension to this roof was made from trees felled not long after, in the period 1482–1514.

Later investigations made possible as roofs were opened up established that the southeast wing adjacent to the chapel used timbers from trees felled in a slightly earlier period, perhaps a couple of decades earlier, but it isn't easy to draw firm conclusions from just two dated timbers. However, what was most surprising was that what had been referred to as the extension to the southeast wing contained the earliest felled trees on the site (felled in the period 1418–50).

This throws into doubt the build sequence of the various elements making up the site and requires careful interpretation. Could it be that this southeast extension has used recycled timbers from another building? No evidence of this was seen at the time of sampling, but it remains a possibility.

A single floor beam was the only candidate to date the insertion of the floor into the chapel, but the 74-year long ring sequence obtained failed to date using standard dendrochronology. This has been sent for radiocarbon analysis, establishing a date for this significant change to the building. The bar diagram (overleaf) shows the dates obtained for various elements of the building to date.

The dendrochronological investigations at the chapel were funded by Historic England.

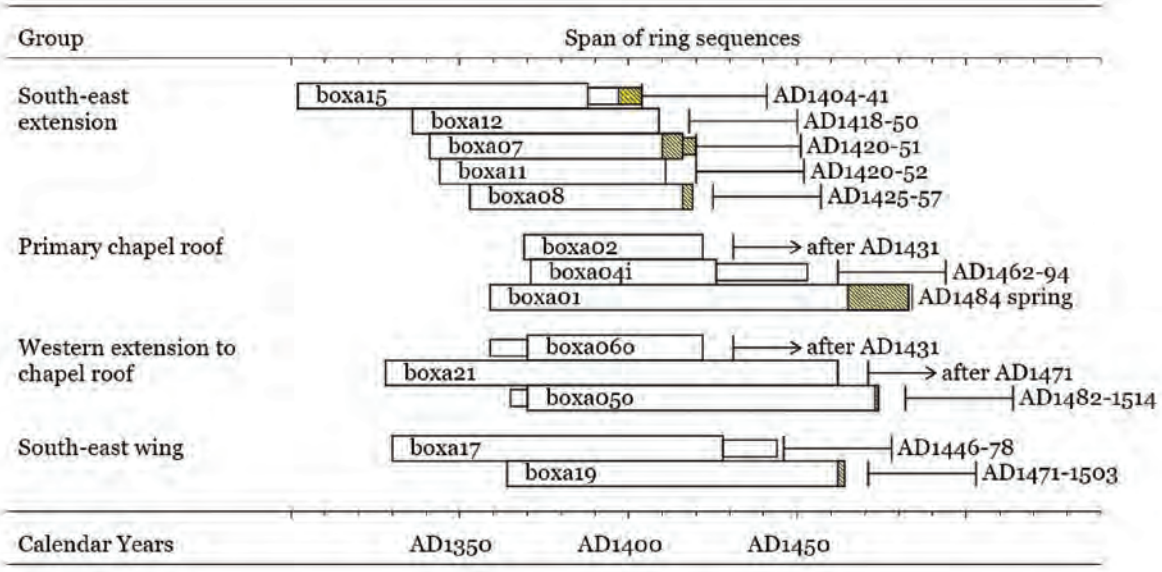


Figure 1. Bar diagram showing the relative positions of overlap of the dated ring sequences. White bars represent measured heartwood rings; white narrow bars represent unmeasured heartwood rings; yellow hatched sections represent measured sapwood rings

INVESTIGATING THE CISTERCIAN DRAINAGE

by Robert Hall, Kent Underground Research Group (KURG)

Particulars for the Boxley Abbey Estate produced in advance of it being auctioned in the late 19th century contain a tantalising description of extensive tunnelling:

"*In the Abbey Wall, on the north side of this [Kitchen] Garden, are Two Entrances to Underground Passages, which are said to lead to Boxley Church on the east, and to Allington Castle on the south west.*"

The estate agent somehow omits to mention here that these entrances were probably actually constructed to allow gongfermors to "muck out" the drainage channel under the reredorter – or communal monastic latrine – of the Cistercian monastery. If, however, the writer was correct in his assertions about the extent of the tunnels, then the current august owner of Allington Castle might be startled to learn that his home was at the wrong end of an implied 2.6 km medieval pipeline of ecclesiastical excrement from Boxley Abbey and Boxley Church.

KURG is somewhat sceptical of such stories and so went to Boxley equipped merely to investigate the few tens of metres of passage that could be directly inspected by the Mk 1 human eyeball, augmented by an assortment of endoscopes, wide-angle video cameras and radio sondes secured on drain rods.

Comparative research was also undertaken at other monasteries and priories: their custodians aghast at our avoidance of the monumental masonry of the abbeys and claustral buildings in preference for the muddy ditches and culverts that formed the remains of the latrines and the associated drainage channels. The usual Cistercian arrangement was for monks to access the first-floor level directly from their "dorter", or dormitory, into the reredorter to apply their rears to what might be delicately referred to as "drop zones" depositing into the drainage channel perhaps 3 or 4 metres below. The upper level of the reredorters typically seem to be spacious and capable of multiple occupancies with little privacy – perhaps to diminish the risk of dirty habits. Little appears to be known about the function of the ground floor of the reredorters, nor the use of latrines by day or by lay brothers, although in some cases it does seem that corrodians and other more exalted occupants of the monastery had their own latrines also feeding into the same drainage system.

Above
Fig 10: SPAB bar diagram

In the case of Boxley, the paper by Tester in *Archaeologia Cantiana* LXXXVIII described the remains of the reredorter with much focus on the stonework forming a sluice gate. This comprises a rare survival for a reredorter in such a complete form. Tester also proposed that the drainage channel ran from east to west before turning abruptly south and into a pond. In a pleasing demonstration of inertia, the modern septic tank arrangements seem to have a nearby parallel southern run into the same pond. Based on calcified deposits on stonework, we concur that the most likely direction of flow in the drainage channel was from east to west. However, whereas Tester proposes that the sluice gate was upstream of the "drop zones" with a relatively small reredorter at the end of the east range of buildings, we believe that the visible sluice gate is downstream of the "drop zones" and that the reredorter was a substantial building running east at right angles to the dormitory, similar to that at Cleeve.

The north side of the Boxley Abbey complex is provided with ample water from springs rising on the nearby North Downs. The south side is not so blessed. In winter, surface water run-off might have been an adequate supply to flush the drainage channel when needed, but summer flows are more limited. Rainwater run-off from roofs of buildings might have been used or an engineered channel to direct water from the north to the south side of the complex, but this has yet to be identified.

Above
Fig 11: Jonny SPAB

FUTURE PLANS

Following the comprehensive survey work in and around Boxley Abbey, a full report of the findings will be submitted to Historic England in due course. It is hoped that the strong results will help local groups make a case for limited archaeological investigations to assist with understanding the site. The strong team of professionals and volunteers that the SPAB assembled for the project has enabled local archaeology groups to demonstrate their commitment. MAAG and HAARG have a special connection to Boxley Abbey as the late Albert Daniels was part of the Tester excavations in the 1970s, and of course, he was an important member of both groups, as well as KAS, so it seems fitting that we should be continuing to investigate the site.

The SPAB's Old House Project at St Andrews will continue until 2024, when the newly-repaired home is put on the market. Find out more about the St Andrews Old House Project: www.spab.org.uk/old-house-project Find out about the SPAB's working parties and how you can volunteer: www.spab.org.uk/learning/working-parties

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS:

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PHOTO CREDITS:

Figs 1–6 courtesy of Graham Keevil

Figs 7–8 courtesy of Hastings Area Archaeological Research Group (HAARG)

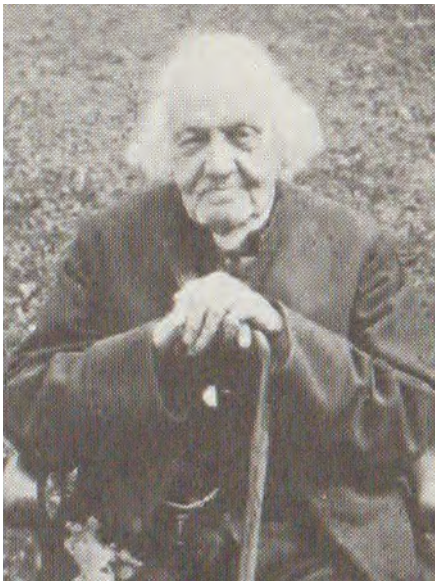
Figs 9–10 courtesy of Martin Bridge

Fig 11 courtesy of SPAB

THE LOWER PALAEOLITHIC MATERIAL FROM RANSCOMBE FARM HOP GARDENS, CUXTON, KENT

By Frank Beresford

On the 24th August 1889, George Payne visited Rev. Canon Charles Colson at the Rectory in Cuxton. As he entered the gate, he noticed and recovered a Palaeolithic handaxe lying on the bank by the side of the path (Payne, 1893.) Payne was later able to record three further Palaeolithic handaxes found within two or three yards of the spot over a period of seven years, including one found by workmen laying a drain on the driveway a few feet away from the gate (Payne 1902.) The initial and subsequent finds, one of which was found by a member of the Colson family, were donated to the Rochester Museum, now the Guildhall Museum, of which George Payne was the curator. He listed these handaxes as items 26 to 29 in the new Museum Inventory. In 1962 Peter Tester returned to the site and found one of Britain's most significant 'in situ' Palaeolithic assemblages (Tester 1965.) His work was supplemented by two subsequent excavations across the road from the Rectory grounds (Cruse 1987, Wenban-Smith 2006.)



Above
Fig 1: George Payne (left)] & The Rev. Canon Charles Colson (right)]

The Rev. Canon Charles Colson (1818 – 1901) was an antiquarian and a member of the Kent Archaeological Society. When at Cambridge in 1839, he helped to found the Cambridge Camden Society as a club for Cambridge undergraduates who shared a common interest in Gothic church design. The society took its name from the 16th-century antiquary and historian William Camden. He moved to Cuxton in 1874 with his large family of sons and daughters, his wife having died in 1859. *'Although he subsequently passed his life in the quiet labours of a village clergyman, he was a man of great intellectual distinction. His mental activity and love of knowledge never ceased and he was always eager to read all new books of importance'* (Obituary: The Guardian 8th May 1901.)

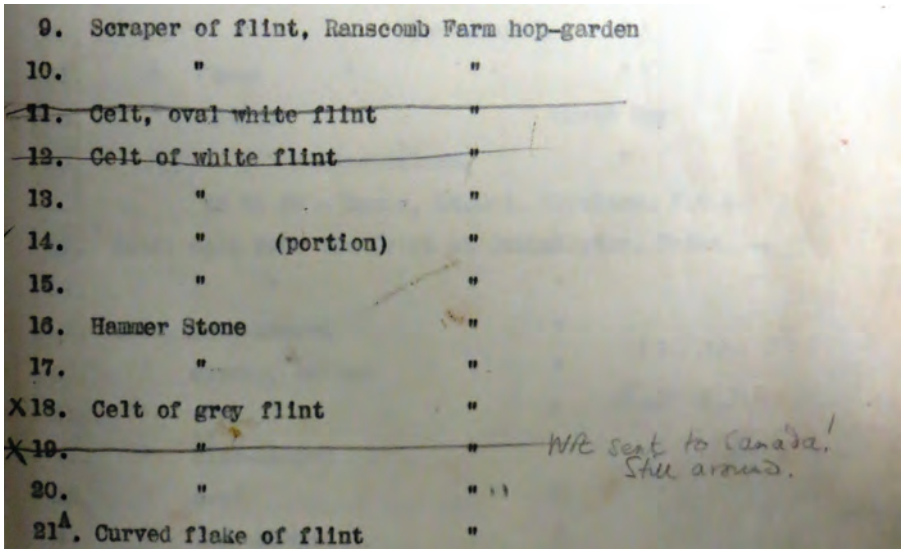
He and his family would have examined Payne's first Palaeolithic find from the Rectory drive, carefully noting its distinctive attributes. During the later 1890s, a member of the Colson Family identified other Palaeolithic material found in the Ranscombe Farm Hop Gardens (Figure Two) on the North Downs to the northwest of Cuxton Rectory. Some items were given initially to George Payne, but all eventually joined the collections in the Rochester Museum. Payne listed 13 items found in the Ranscombe Farm Hop Gardens in his new Museum Inventory, numbering them as items 9 to 21 (Fig 3). Further down, the inventory confirms that items 9 to 13 and 17 to 18 were donated by George Payne while R. Colson donated items 14 to 16 and 19 to 21.

Payne described five 'celts of white flint' and three 'celts of grey flint.' He also listed two scrapers, a curved flake and two hammerstones. The 'celts' or handaxes are typologically Palaeolithic, but less certainty is attached to the other artefacts found. George Payne also used the term 'celt' for many Palaeolithic handaxes in the Guildhall Museum from the Twydall Chalk Pit. Only two white 'celts' or handaxes from the Ranscombe Farm Hop Gardens (11 & 14) and the two hammer stones can now be traced in the museum. They are described in Table One. The writing on the flints confirms the links with the Colson Family and the dates of the finds. One white 'celt' (11, Fig 4) is marked '*2 CF 1895*' and the other (14 Fig 5) is marked '*August 19/95 R.C. R. Colson*'. As the two remaining handaxes (11 & 14) with white patination are both marked 1895, it is probable that the three missing

white patinated handaxes (12, 13 & 15) were also found in this year and that together all five represent an associated assemblage. One hammer stone (17) is marked Sept 1898 R Colson (Table 1).

The Hop Gardens where the Palaeolithic material was found were situated in the northwest of the area at Ranscombe Farm. They then covered what are now the fields stretching up as far as Kitchen Field, which is at the bottom of the wooded hill that leads up to the Cobham Park (Fig 6). Derek Church notes that during the hop-picking season each year, the hop-pickers at Ranscombe mainly came from Strood. If picking continued until late in the evening in Kitchen Field, they would have had to walk home through the woods in the dark (Church 1976, 104.) The three dates that are written on the remaining artefacts are August 1895, 1895 and September 1898. During July and August, when the hop plants have reached their full height, and the hops develop, the growers are vigilant to ensure the crop is disease-free and increase their activity in the hop gardens. The harvest usually starts in early September.

This suggests that the finds were made during this busy season, possibly during a visit by the

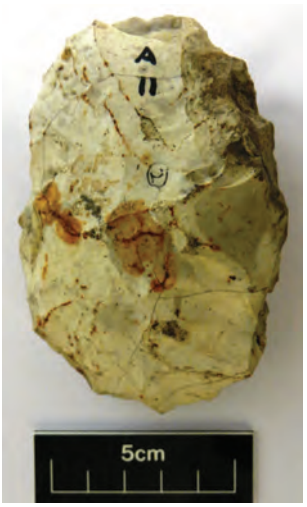


Top
Fig 2: Square Oasts at Ranscombe Farm, Cuxton, Kent in 2009. They replaced three round Oasts that served the Ranscombe Farm Hop Gardens in the 1890s but were demolished by a V1 flying bomb on 14th November 1944. Photo © Oast House Archive (cc-by-sa/2.0)

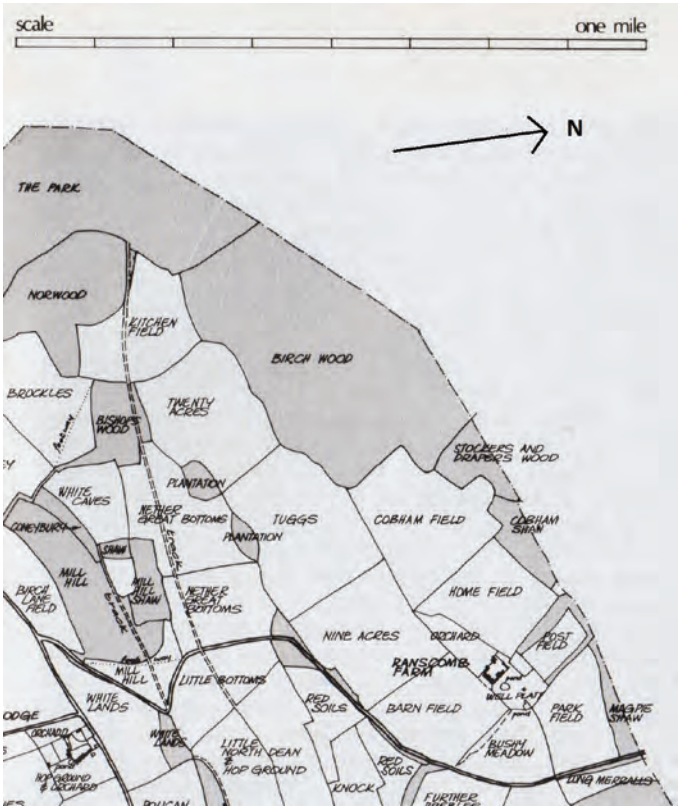
Bottom
Fig 3: The entries in the Rochester Museum Inventory that list all the artefacts found in the Ranscombe Farm Hop Gardens 1895 – 1901

Original Collection Number	Description	Staining/ Patination/ condition	Inscriptions	Length mm	Width mm	Thickness mm	Weight gms
A11	Ovate handaxe Small flake removal on each face and around edges Carefully made Small break at one end.	White patina. Brown red on ridges/ good	A11 2 CF 1895 Ranscombe	92.9	65.0	29.5	197
A14	Biface/hand axe with clear base or platform. Small flake removal on each face	White patina with blue-grey at working end Brown red on ridges /good	A14 Ranscombe August 19/95 R.C. R. Colson	90.4	51.4	24.0	152
A16	Rounded hammer stone with clear pitting on working end and most of the cortex removed before use.	Grey white patina	A86/1 Ranscombe	59.8	66.7	60.5	328
A17	Rounded hammer stone with clear pitting on working end and most of the cortex removed before use.	Grey patina	A86/2 Ranscombe Sept 1898 R Colson Hammerstone	65.4	62.8	52.9	300

Table 1
Description of the artefacts remaining in the Guildhall Museum, Rochester that were found in the Ranscombe Farm Hop Gardens 1895 – 1901



Top (L, R)
Fig 4: A11 – one of the two remaining Palaeolithic hand axes found in the Ranscombe Farm Hop Gardens in 1895. Both faces are shown
Bottom (L, R)
Fig 5: A14 – the other remaining Palaeolithic hand axe found in the Ranscombe Farm Hop Gardens 19th August 1895. Both faces are shown



Above
Fig 6: The Field Names at Ranscombe Farm in 1839 based upon the map prepared by James Renshaw for the Tithe Commissioners and redrawn by Derek Church in 1970 (Church 1976, 119.)

Canon or by another member of his family. It is possible that one of the hop workers made the initial finds in 1895, which the Canon or a family member then identified. George Payne would also have been informed, and the workers would then have been encouraged to look for more. The search continued during hop picking over the next few years. As only thirteen items were found during this period, the handaxes and other artefacts must have been difficult to locate. However, a similar artefact has recently been found in the Ranscombe area by Dave May (pers. comm.) The last hops were grown at Ranscombe Farm in 1958. It is now Plantlife's largest Nature Reserve.

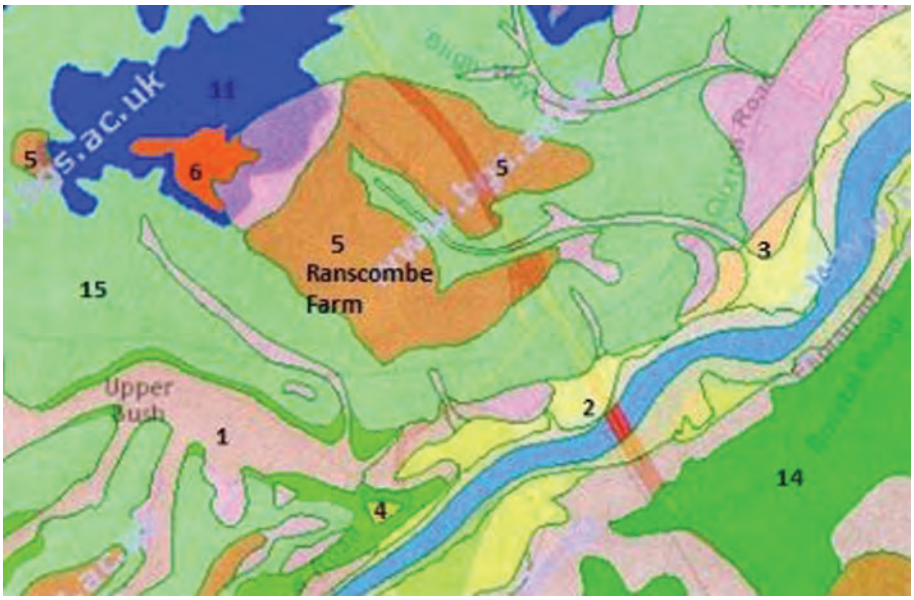
George Clinch, writing in 1919, noted that "experience has proved that land with a rocky subsoil, such as is found in the valley of the Medway, is particularly suitable for hops" (Clinch 1919,23.) The Ranscombe Farm Hop Gardens were located on a superficial deposit of the Clay-with-Flints Formation, which provided a rocky subsoil. This overlies the Lewes Nodular Chalk Formation. The Clay-with-Flints Formation has a dominant lithology of orange-brown and red-brown sandy clay with abundant nodules and rounded pebbles of flint. Angular flints are derived from the Chalk Formations from the Cretaceous Period and rounded flints, sand and clay from the Palaeogene formations. It is a residual deposit formed during the Pleistocene period from the dissolution, decalcification and cryoturbation of bedrock strata of the Chalk Group and the formerly overlying Palaeogene formations. It is unbedded and heterogeneous. (Source British Geological Survey © 2021; Fig 7)

In the Medway Valley Palaeolithic Project report, Frances Wenban-Smith noted that several handaxes with shapes varying from pointed/sub-cordate to cordate had been found near Ranscombe Farm.

He suggested that none of these handaxes could have moved far from where they were initially discarded (Wenban-Smith et al., 2007, 32.) Most of the superficial deposits mapped as Clay-with-flints cap the highest levels on the Chalk Downlands of Southern Britain. Many Palaeolithic artefacts have been retrieved from these deposits, including many sites in Kent (Scott-Jackson, 2000, 27.) Stratigraphically, these Palaeolithic finds form part of a mixture of material still bearing some evidence of its former form. All Palaeolithic finds from the last 600,000 years, or more are combined into a single horizon. Consequently, although they represent Palaeolithic activity on the Clay-with-flints plateau, this activity cannot be confidently linked to a specific interglacial or glacial period known as Marine Isotope Stages (See Fig 3).

Despite the Clay-with-flints plateau at Ranscombe Farm rising to 80m to 90m OD, it is not on the highest level of the Downs at this point. It is below the hill to Cobham and Shorne, which rises to 130m OD but above Mill Hill that leads down to the Luddesdown Valley at 20m OD and then down to the current path of the Medway. The river now occupies a narrow, steep-sided valley through the chalk of the North Downs. During the Pleistocene Epoch, also known as the Ice Ages, this path has evolved through eastward and downward movement. Interestingly, two gravel deposits associated with former courses of the Medway and known as river terraces have been identified both above and below the Ranscombe Clay-with-flints plateau.

The Medway, which had been in existence for over two million years, drained northward from the centre of the Weald and was confluent with the Thames in eastern Essex until about half a million years ago. Its early local path is indicated by a gravel deposit or on the hill above Ranscombe by what was initially described as the oldest Medway deposit or terrace: the Cobham Park Gravel – now thought to be the second oldest. This caps a Thanet Sand Formation outlier in Cobham Park (TQ 700 683), at over 130 m OD. David Bridgland tentatively suggested the age for this gravel



Above
Fig 7: The Geology of the Ranscombe Farm Hop Gardens and the surrounding area. (Contains British Geological Survey materials © 2021)

Number on map	Description
Superficial deposits from the Pleistocene / Quaternary Period	
1	Alluvium – Clay, Silt, Sand And Gravel
2	Beach And Tidal Flat Deposits (Undifferentiated) – Clay, Silt And Sand
3	River Terrace Deposits, 1 – Clay And Silt
4	River Terrace Deposits, 3 – Sand And Gravel
5	Clay-with-flints Formation – Clay, Silt, Sand And Gravel
Bedrock geology – Palaeogene Formations	
6	Lenham Formation – Sand And Gravel
7	Harwich Formation – Sand And Gravel
8	London Clay Formation – Clay And Silt
9	Lambeth Group – Sand, Silt And Clay
10	Thanet Formation – Sand
11	Thanet Formation – Sand, Silt And Clay
Bedrock geology – Cretaceous Formations	
12	Seaford Chalk Formation – Chalk
13	Seaford Chalk Formation And Newhaven Chalk Formation (Undifferentiated) – Chalk
14	Lewes Nodular Chalk Formation – Chalk
15	Lewes Nodular Chalk Formation, Seaford Chalk Formation And Newhaven Chalk Formation (Undifferentiated) – Chalk
16	New Pit Chalk Formation – Chalk
17	Holywell Nodular Chalk Formation – Chalk

Table 2
Key to Fig 7. The Geology of the Ranscombe Farm Hop Gardens and the surrounding area

in the Early Pleistocene circa 1.85 million years ago (see Table 3.) The Medway subsequently moved eastwards from the Cobham Park area before cutting the gap through the Chalk. This lateral migration was possible while it still flowed on the Thanet Sand Formation, and this also preserved the evidence for its earlier path (Bridgland, 2003)

The lower gravel deposit evidence is the site at Cuxton Rectory, situated on a Chalk spur between the Medway and the south bank of the now dry Luddesdown northwest tributary valley. The excavations by Tester (1965) established the presence of a thin body of fluvial gravel lying on a Chalk terrace bench at c. 17m OD. In 1996, Bridgland, after examining several possible projections of the Medway River Terraces, decided that Cuxton lies on Medway river terrace 3, which he suggested may correlate with either the Lynch Hill/ Corbets Tey or Taplow/Mucking Terrace Formations of the Thames, which are linked to MIS 10/9/8 or MIS 8/7/6, respectively (see Table 3.) The dating of this fluvial gravel following the 2006 excavations placed it in early MIS 7, or right at the end of MIS 8 (Wenban-Smith et al. 2007, 31.) This would make it the youngest Acheulian site in Britain. This dating is being reviewed.

The imprecise dating of these two deposits only hints at the possible date range for the Palaeolithic material found at Ranscombe Farm Hop Gardens.

Epoch	Age in years before present (BP)	Marine Isotope Stage (MIS)	British Stage Name	Climate
Holocene	Present to 11,700	1	Holocene	Warm – full interglacial
Late Pleistocene	25,000	2	Devensian	Mainly cold; coldest in Marine Isotope Stage 2 when Britain depopulated and maximum advance of Devensian ice sheets; occasional short-lived periods of relative warmth ("interstadials"), and more prolonged warmth in Marine Isotope Stage 3
	50,000	3		
	70,000	4		
	110,000	5a–d		
	125,000	5e	Ipswichian	Warm – full interglacial
Middle Pleistocene	190,000	6	Saalian	Alternating periods of cold and warmth; recently recognised that this period includes more than one glacial-interglacial cycle; changes in faunal evolution and Assemblage associations through the period help distinguish its different stages.
	240,000	7		
	300,000	8		
	340,000	9		
	380,000	10		
	425,000	11	Hoxnian	Warm – full interglacial
	480,000	12	Anglian	Cold – maximum extent southward of glacial ice in Britain; may incorporate interstadials that have been confused with Cromerian complex interglacials
	620,000	13–16	Cromerian complex	Cycles of cold and warmth; still poorly understood due to obliteration of sediments by subsequent events
	780,000	17–19		
Early Pleistocene	1,800,000	20–64		Cycles of cool and warmth, but generally not sufficiently cold for glaciation in Britain

Table 3
Quaternary (Ice Age) epochs and the Marine Isotope Stage framework showing the cycles of warm and cold periods (based on Wenban-Smith et al. 2010, revised 2019)]

However, it allows space for the possibility that many of these higher-level Palaeolithic finds on the Chalk Downlands are from a period that is possibly post-Anglian (such as MIS 11) but could also be earlier (such as MIS 13-16.) The probability that none of these handaxes has moved far from where they were initially discarded supports this suggestion. Clearly, further research is needed here.

Current evidence suggests that the Cuxton and Cobham area has been attractive to earlier populations of humans at several periods in deep history. The artefacts found in the Ranscombe Farm Hop Gardens would represent the earliest occupation in the area. These hilltop sites are important as they add potentially significant locations in the landscape to the more securely dated Palaeolithic sites that usually occur at lower levels, such as the Cuxton Rectory site. The current difficulties with dating and reconstructing the associated environment and climate relating to the makers of the artefacts found in deposits mapped as clay-with-flints make such sites challenging to utilise. Despite this, the Ranscombe Farm Hop Gardens site is another significant site for those wishing to understand the nature and extent of the earliest human occupation of Kent

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The author would like to thank Steve Nye of the Guildhall Museum, Rochester, for his help and access to the artefacts. He would also like to thank Stan Mathews for his helpful comments and suggestions on an earlier draft. This research was undertaken as part of the Cobham Landscape Detectives Project.

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CHART SUTTON ROMAN SITE REVISITED – EXTRA FINDS

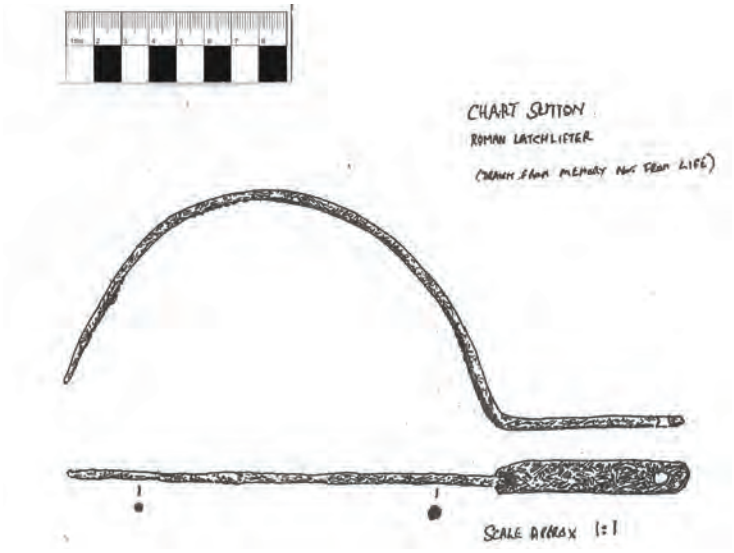
By Deborah Goacher

Within days of the article "The Roman Building at Chart Sutton Revisited" appearing in the latest volume of *Archaeologia Cantiana* (Vol. 142, 2021, pp 253-272), contact was made with the author through the KAS regarding a small collection of pottery in possession of long-standing KAS member, Graeme Horner. He had been a former pupil of Sutton Valence School, where items associated with the original Chart Sutton excavations had been part of a classroom display in the 1950s. Some of these items had then been passed over to the young Mr Horner in recognition of his enthusiasm and early involvement in local archaeology.

By an extraordinary coincidence, at the time of reading the above article in June of this year, Mr Horner had been preparing to offer the collection of pottery to Maidstone Museum, but then recognised that it could now present an unexpected opportunity for a further study concerning the Chart Sutton Roman site, especially as the pottery appears to be additional to those fragments illustrated by Mr V.J. Newbury in his surviving records. These paper records formed the basis of the recently published write-up concerning the Chart Sutton Roman Building situated to the north of Court Farm (KCC HER Monument TQ 84 NW 6).

The current writer would be delighted to learn if, by any further remote chance, there was anyone else with extra information, records, or finds relating to the 1950s excavations at Chart Sutton, which had involved both staff and pupils of the nearby Sutton Valence School. It is intended that the physical archive relating to these Chart Sutton excavations should be lodged with the KAS to be available in the future for reference or study.

The writer is indebted to the late Albert Daniels for supplying the records and encouragement that led to this site's details coming to publication.



Top
Fig 1: Chart Sutton Roman Latchlifter – Drawn by Graeme Horner
Middle and bottom
Figs 2 and 3: Roman Pottery Assemblages

RICHBOROUGH PORT ARCHAEOLOGY

By Colin Varrall

In KAS Magazine No.116, Summer 2021, an article was written by Phil Hodges about the discovery of Moir Pillbox blocks at Botany, near Broadstairs in Kent.

Above
Fig 1: One of the Winget system concrete block yards

The blocks were initially cast at Richborough Port, a military site developed by the Royal Engineers during the First World. Richborough Port was initially developed originally for as a military stores site on exposed marshland at Richborough and Stonar, but it would eventually become a vast network of different areas, with huge stores, warehouses, workshops, and even necessary accommodation camps capable of providing shelter and living conditions for 16,000 men and women, with the whole complex covering at least 2,000 acres.

The Royal Engineers first arrived at Richborough in the spring of 1916 and soon constructed the first of five accommodation camps. The camps consisted of buildings that were only built as temporary structures, with the exterior walls constructed from concrete blocks cast using the Winget system. The Winget system was a method of using machine casting to mould the concrete blocks. Living accommodation had double-skinned cavity walls, while most other buildings, such as the workshops and warehouses, were built with single walls. The camps were built since the first soldiers who arrived at Richborough had initially lived in military tents and constantly feared mosquitoes that swarmed around the flat marshland, where Saltpans had previously existed at Richborough and the River Stour. Sites for casting the Winget blocks alone covered 17 acres, and at least 1.5 million Winget concrete blocks were manufactured by German Prisoners of War and British soldiers. Additionally, a drainage system was built and incorporated into the developments since the whole area had an average general surface level of 8 feet above mean sea level (O.D.), which afforded no means of natural drainage.

Plans were soon devised to construct purpose-built slipways on the banks of the River Stour at a location known as Bloody Point (Bloody Point is believed to have been the site of a vicious battle as recorded in the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle in 851). Specially designed barges were assembled on the new slipways, which would eventually be loaded and be towed across the Channel to France and Belgium with cargoes of vital military supplies for the war effort. Also in 1916 was the development of a massive New

Wharf that extended a distance of 2,213 feet across the marshland of Richborough, reaching in a north to south direction. The wall of the New Wharf initially involved the use of 1,853 sections of large metal sheets being driven to an average of 22.5 feet into the ground, with the use of steam-driven rams. The land to the east side of the sheeting was being excavated by July 1916 to eventually provide a new flow of water from the sea, redirecting the River Stour from its entrance at Pegwell Bay. Thousands of sandbags had been used to block a section of the River Stour and divert the flow of the river, which would reduce the distance from the entrance of the river to the New Wharf by half a mile and improve navigation along the river. A concrete wall was formed on top of the sheet piling. The lower walling consisted of a tie rod secured and tied back to a continuous concrete wall anchorage.

Continuous dredging went with large land dredgers and floating dredgers excavating thousands of tons of ground material. One dredger, named Orkney, began work excavating

Above, left
Fig 2: Placement of metal sheeting for the New Wharf – all land to right was excavated
Above, right
Fig 3: Land dredging the east side of the New Wharf
Below, left
Fig 4: Construction of the warehouses and workshops
Below, right
Fig 5: Progress being made on the dredging and development of the New Wharf

the east side of the metal sheeting for the New Wharf on 24th August 1916, and with the assistance of four steam-driven grab machines, excavated 85,728 cubic yards of material. Much of the excavated material was loaded onto barges and taken out to sea. At the same time, a further idea involved using a pipeline pumping out excavated material on the northwest side of Pegwell Bay, much of which is now occupied by the Bird Sanctuary and land maintained by the Kent Wildlife Trust. Records state that many of the men and soldiers involved with the construction and development of Richborough Port were often those that had already served on the Frontline and were considered unable to return to France and Belgium.

As the New Wharf rapidly reached its completion just nine months later, a railway network was built to link the New Wharf to other sites across Richborough Port, with an estimated 55 to 60 miles of track having been laid. The railway included sections of sidings and a direct link to the South Eastern & Chatham Railway mainline, connected from the Minister B junction, between Ramsgate and Minster. The New Wharf would be used as a quayside to load military supplies onto the Cross Channel barges, built at Richborough. The function of loading the barges consisted of using some of the first known electric gantry cranes in this country. By 1917, the decision had been made to increase the supplies to France and Belgium, which led to plans being devised to design purpose-built Cross Channel train ferries and a specially designed train ferry terminal where the train ferries could take moorings.

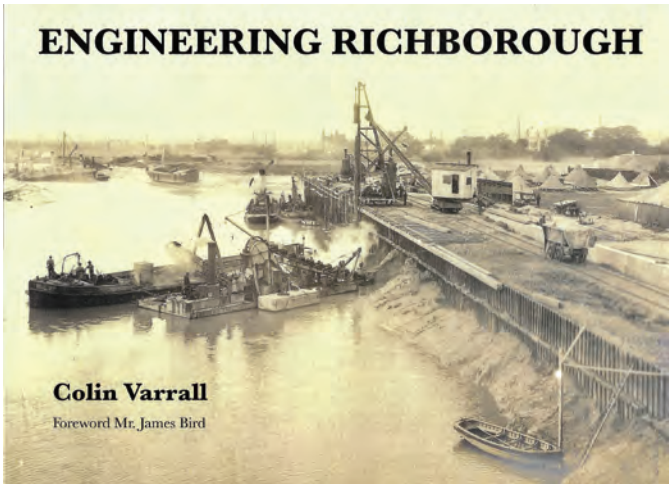
Today, all that appears to remain of Richborough Port is the crumbling remains of the Cross Channel train ferry terminal, which is now half a mile inland from the sea. The New Wharf is steadily becoming corroded and enveloped by the ever-increasing silting of the river running alongside it. Much of the exposed metal sheeting is rapidly corroding from the constant exposure to the passing seawater. There are also just a few of the original hospital buildings, now occupied by Eagle Sheds, and the solitary Detention Centre building

Top
Fig 6: Construction of the Cross Channel train ferry terminal
Bottom
Fig 7: Cross Channel barges being assembled at Richborough

that is located near to Richborough Fort, now with only a few parts of its original roof remaining and it is often used more recently as a shelter for cattle in the surrounding field.

Colin has written and self-published a 178-page book titled Engineering Richborough, *which explains the history and development of Richborough and Stonar and concentrates mainly on the history and development of Richborough Port, built as a military site by the Royal Engineers during the First World War. The book also gives information for the use of Richbrough Port during the interwar years, also during the Second World, and chapters about Richborough Power Station and Pegwell Bay Hoverport. Copies of the book will be available to purchase on eBay or by contacting Colin at* addelambooks@outlook.com. *The book is priced at £20 plus £3.30 for First Class Royal Mail postage and packing (total £23.30).*

Above, top
Fig 8: Remains of the train ferry terminal looking south
Above, borttom
Fig 9: Remains of the ferry terminal looking north
Below
Engineering Richborough by Colin Varrall



NOTICES

Medieval Canterbury Weekend 2022

Friday 29 April – Sunday 1 May
Powell Lecture Theatre &
St Gregory's Centre

The Medieval Canterbury Weekend returns for 22 with a programme 18 talks and its hallmark guided visits. Among the speakers coming to Canterbury for the May Day weekend are Dr Tracy Borman, Dr Marc Morris, Professor Caroline Barron and Professor Mark Bailey. Audiences will be able to hear from experts about a wide range of topics including who took part in the Peasants' Revolt, what houses were like in medieval towns, why medieval monsters are exciting and what do we know about the iconic Gough map.

As before, the organisers' intention is to raise money for the Ian Coulson Memorial Postgraduate Award fund the continues to support postgraduates studying Kent history and archaeology projects. Tickets can be purchased for individual talks and at discount for bulk purchases. For those unable to attend in person, tickets are available to buy for the livestreamed talks, but again we will NOT be recording lectures. The popular school/sixth-form college ticket is available for MCW 2022.

Details are on the CCCU Centre for Kent History and Heritage web pages and can be reached using: **www.canterbury.ac.uk/medieval-canterbury**.
For assistance please email: **artsandculture@canterbury.ac.uk** or phone during office hours Monday to Thursday 01227 923690.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

You may remember that I sent a query in a previous edition of the Magazine about possible uses for hop bines after harvesting. I've been working for some time on the wider aspects of hop growing in Essex, which was second only in production to Kent in the mid-seventeenth century. Apart from a short-lived post-WWII plantation, the last Essex hop was picked in the late 1880s, the acreage grown here having dwindled relentlessly from the early eighteenth century. Almost no traditional hop drying kilns have survived in the Essex landscape, and, if they do, they are difficult to distinguish from malt or grain drying kilns, of which there are some actual examples to be found. The few survivors have been considerably modified and repurposed since hop growing and small farm maltings disappeared by the nineteenth century.

I'm hoping there might be someone in KAS with a particular interest in the history of hop growing in Kent with whom I could communicate to exchange information and ideas. Anthony Cronk provided two articles on Kent oasts for Arch Cant in the late 1970s. Still, I assume he is unlikely to be around now, and I've not been able to identify anyone else, apart from Patrick Grattan, whose book on oasts is about to be published.

Any suggestions will be very gratefully received.

Best wishes,
Michael Leach

The article 'Lenham Camp' in the magazine's summer 2021 edition mentioned the much better known camp at Coxheath, with its associated frivolous and scandalous goings-on, inspiring a novel and performances in London's theatreland and elsewhere. Attached to this email [shown below] is a photograph of the tune selection dial of a musical clock made, or more probably retailed, in Deptford in the early 19th century. In addition to the celebratory 'Rule Britannia' and 'Nelson's Waltz' is a tune with the title 'Trip to Coxheath', perhaps initially written for the theatre. There is also one called 'Stour Lodge'. What, and where, was Stour Lodge at that time?

Ted Parker,
Canterbury