

KENT ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY

NEWSLETTER



No. 10

Winter 1986

FIFTY YEARS OF SWANSCOMBE MAN

by P.J. Tester, F.S.A

On 29th June 1935, Alvan Theophilus Marston, a Clapham dentist and dedicated amateur prehistorian, discovered the first fragment of a human skull which has given the name of Swanscombe an international reputation. In his own account of the event, Marston has related how he had been working periodically during the winter of 1934-5 excavating in the gravel of the famous Barnfield pit where, ever since the last century, vast quantities of Clactonian and Acheulian flint implements have been collected by various investigators. The pit was still being worked commercially for sand and gravel in 1935, but the workmen had ceased their labour on that Saturday afternoon, leaving Marston to pursue his researches alone. Looking around the newly exposed faces of the pit, he noticed what he at first thought was a ball of brown clay, but which to his astonishment turned out on closer inspection to be the back part of a human skull. The pit engineer, who was still on the site, was called as a witness of the undisturbed position of the bone, and careful measurements were taken to record the exact find-spot.

Information of the discovery was at once communicated to the Geological Museum and Sir John Flett and Henry Dewey inspected the site on 1st July following.

For nine months Marston patiently followed the seam of gravel which produced the skull fragment, and he was rewarded on 16th March 1936 by finding another piece which actually fitted on to the first.

Yet a third piece of the same skull was found in excavations conducted in 1955 by Mr. B.O. Wymer of Kew, assisted by his son John (who has since gained an international reputation in the field of prehistoric archaeology) and a friend, Mr. A. Gibson.

Undoubtedly, these skull fragments are the earliest remains of man so far discovered in Britain and are among the oldest in Europe. They have stood up to all the scientific tests to which they have been subjected and their authenticity is not in question. A remarkable feature is that they closely resemble the equivalent bones of modern man except that they are thicker. Unfortunately, the frontal bones are missing so that the facial features are unknown. It is estimated that the age of the skull is probably a quarter of a million years and it belonged to a young woman; so feminists may be justified in objecting to the term Swanscombe Man!

Just exactly fifty years after the first discovery, on 29th June 1985, a celebration of the event was held in the remains of the Barnfield pit, now a Nature Reserve. The



From left to right: Mr Magnus Magnusson Mr. William Wilkinson (National Chairman of the Nature Conservancy), and Dr Christopher Stringer (British Museum, (Natural History)) examine Swanscombe skull fragments. Photograph: D.D.A.G.

Leisure Services Department of Dartford Borough Council joined with the Nature Conservancy Council to organise the celebration at a cost of £5,000. A commemorative plaque to mark the precise spot where the first find was made was unveiled by the TV personality, Mr. Magnus Magnusson. Exhibitions were on display in two large tents and a group of experts gave a demonstration of the ancient art of flint-knapping. The skull itself was on view, lent under close guard by the British Museum (Natural History), and a neat section has been cut to expose the sandy context in which the skull had been found. During the three days of the event it received not less than five thousand visitors.

Great credit is due to all who were responsible for this celebration of what must be regarded as one of the most important discoveries in British archaeology. The odds against finding three widely separated pieces of the same skull in the area of a gravel pit are a million to one. Clearly an element of good luck which attends so many scientific discoveries played a large part in the finding of the Swanscombe skull, a fact that in no way detracts from the credit due to Marston and later researchers whose persistent efforts were so amply rewarded.

ARCHAEOLOGY AT WORK 1985

by Ted Connell

For the third year in succession, the Archaeology at Work Meeting took place in September. This year it was held at Sevenoaks Girls School and like the previous two events was well attended and much enjoyed by all.

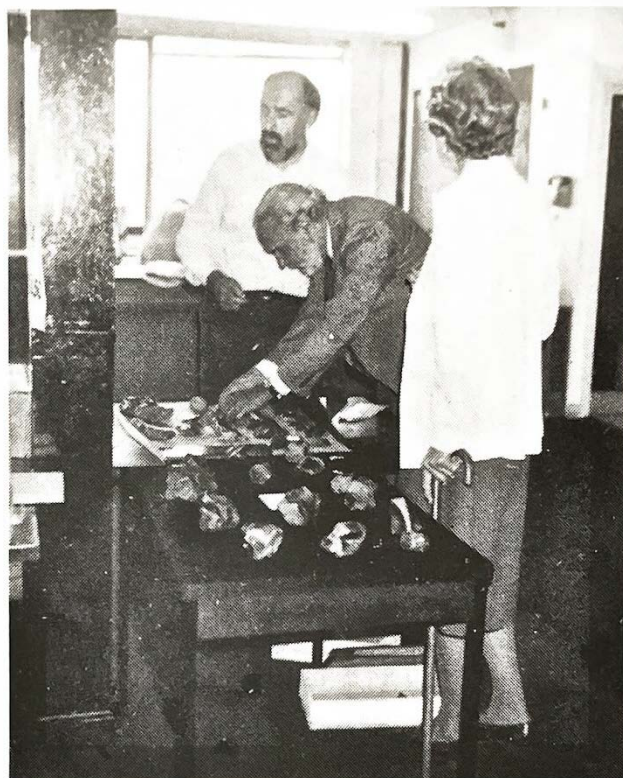
Throughout the day members had an opportunity to study the various displays and to discuss them with the exhibitors. There were at least 50 people contributing to the day, and it is impossible to mention all of them by name, but special mention should be made of the impressive display by the County Museum Service on various conservation techniques.

One whole room was given over to a workshop on ceramic building materials. Members brought along samples of tiles and bricks, of roman and medieval origin, from excavations throughout the county, and various talks took place on methods of studying and recording them.

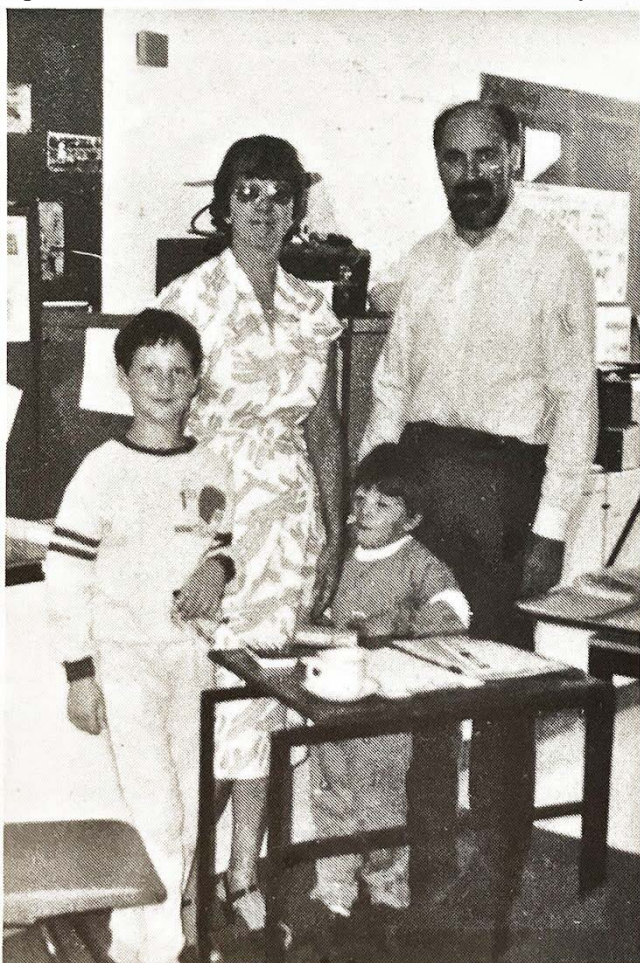
Other talks took place in the main hall and in a separate lecture theatre, where members could learn about the Sevenoaks area, Otford Palace, Lullingstone Park and Oldbury Hillfort; or about scientific techniques in archaeology, doing aerial surveys, or surveying domestic buildings.

Throughout the day tea and coffee were available and special thanks must go to Mr & Mrs Jim Colyer and Mrs Irene Spencer for all their hard work in keeping us all refreshed.

I should like to take this opportunity to thank all those who participated in the "Archaeology at work" and once again made it such a successful and memorable day.



Two photographs taken by Mrs Nesta Caiger (who spoke on and showed post medieval pottery) of Mr & Mrs Peter Tester with a harrassed Ted Connell in the background.



Mr & Mrs Connell manned, as ever, the bookstall this year assisted by Andrew and Nicholas

Are you interested in the history and archaeology of the County of Kent?

The Kent Archaeological Society was founded in 1857 "to promote the study of archaeology in all its branches, especially within the County of Kent". Membership is open to anyone who has an interest in the local history of Kent, in its churches, in the recording and preservation of its ancient buildings, in the lives and achievements of its men and women, and in the study and publication of its records.

Of all its activities the most important has always been, and continues to be that of publication. Every year the Society publishes and issues free to members, *Archaeologia Cantiana*, an attractively bound volume of some 300 pages, reporting on the activities of the year and containing papers, many of them illustrated, upon a wide variety of Kentish subjects. To maintain contact with members a Newsletter is also issued giving details of activities within the County.

The annual subscriptions is £7 (£3 for persons under 21) and Joint Subscription (Husband and Wife) £9. Institutional membership is £10. Write now to Mr A. C. Harrison, B.A., F.S.A., Honorary General Secretary.

Neither the Council nor the Editor is answerable for the opinions or views which contributors may express in the course of their signed articles. Each author is alone responsible for the contents and substance of their items or papers.

Illustrating Archaeology

by R.F. Le Gear A.A.I.S

During the past decade archaeological draughtsmanship has become a sophisticated and demanding discipline, and the need for a vehicle for the interchange of ideas and queries has become more acute. The Association of Archaeological Illustrators and Surveyors was established in 1978 to provide solutions, through discussion, training and publication, to these problems.

The Association has published several technical papers on different aspects of archaeological illustrating and surveying, and a newsletter is sent to all members.

Day-schools and practical weekend schools and courses are held in different parts of the country. These are open to non-members.

The AAI&S Conference and A.G.M. are held annually and in the past have been held in Manchester, York, London, Portsmouth and Chester. The Conference and A.G.M. are open to non-members and feature exhibitions, site visits, lectures and informal discussions.

There are three grades of membership,

Member

Full membership is conditional upon the examination of a portfolio of work by a panel of judges drawn from the Association, and external assessors, plus an interview when the candidates will be questioned on techniques etc. . Successful candidates are entitled to the affix AAIS. All Members are included in the Association's Register of Archaeological Illustrators and Surveyors. (Annual Subscription £10).

Licentiate

Licentiate membership is open to all those who work in the fields of archaeological illustrating or surveying and carries the entitlement for inclusion in the Register.

Licentiate membership is conditional upon the taking up of two referees by the Association or the production of published work. (Annual Subscription £8).

Associate

Associate membership is open to those who are interested in the activities of the Association but do not have the experience required for other grades of membership. Associate members are not included in the Register, and do not have voting rights. Referees are not required. (Annual Subscription £5).

Any K.A.S. member who would like to apply for membership or to obtain further information, please contact the Hon. Secretary:

Amanda Balfour,

Estate Map of the Manor of Tremworth

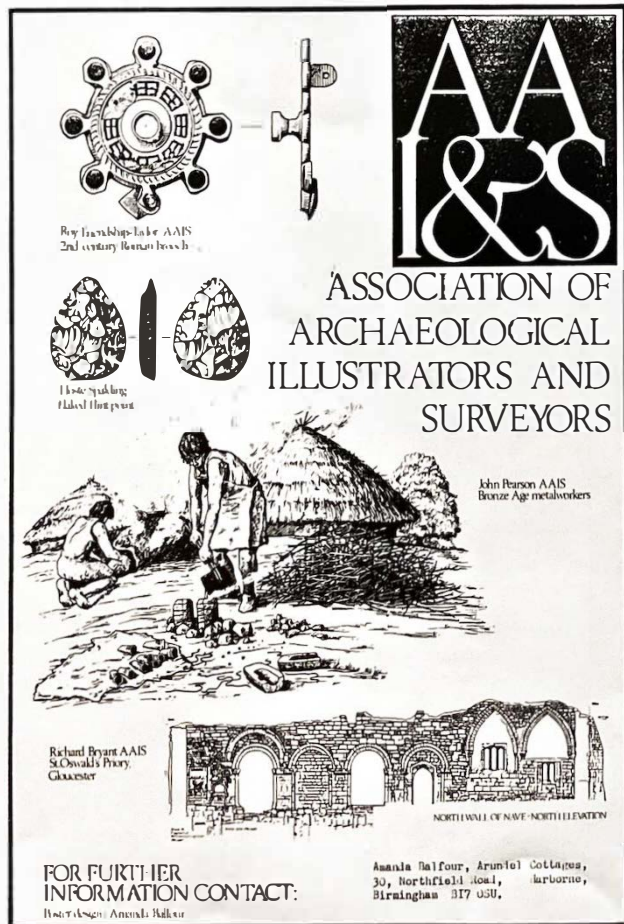
by Tim Tatton-Brown

The estate map of the Manor of Tremworth (or Trimworth) in the parish of Crundale (now KAO U2678) rescued by the Dartford District Archaeological Group illustrated in the last Newsletter, in fact shows the estate owned by Sir Edward Filmer, Bart. who succeeded in 1720 (the map must therefore date from a little after that, *pace* Kathleen Topping). The area of the manor shown on the map is virtually identical with the area owned by his descendant Sir Edmund Filmer, Bart. and shown on the 1839 tithe map.¹

This is a typical medieval manor and covers a similar geographical area (and acreage) to the neighbouring demesne manor of Godmersham. The medieval timber-framed manor house still survives in part in the north-west corner of the estate (near the river Stour) and this was rebuilt in c.1600 by Sir Thomas Kempe whose arms are still on the very fine porch. Hasted (2nd edition) VII,369 tells us that there was "formerly a domestic chapel belonging to it, some of the walls of which are still standing." Behind the house are also the earthwork remains of perhaps the mill dam. Around the manor house, in the Stour flood plain, is the pasture area belonging to the manor, while further east are a series of arable fields. Beyond this to the east and south-east the estate owned higher ground (Trimworth Downs) which in places is still densely wooded. On the right top of Trimworth Downs, the Canterbury Archaeological Trust have recently excavated the remains of a late Ironage and Roman settlement and cemetery. More of this cemetery was excavated in the 18th century², and it seems likely that this settlement was the forerunner to the later (and perhaps Late Anglo-Saxon in origin) manorial site to the west. Fieldwork by the Trust is continuing in the area.

¹ Kent Archives Office also has another estate map (U442AO) of the manor in 1688 by Robert Spillett. This shows the Tremworth estate as owned by Sir Edward's father, Sir Robert Filmer.

² see C.Roach Smith(ed) **Inventorium Sepulcrare** (1856), 177-198.



THE ROYAL COMMISSION ON HISTORICAL MONUMENTS IN KENT

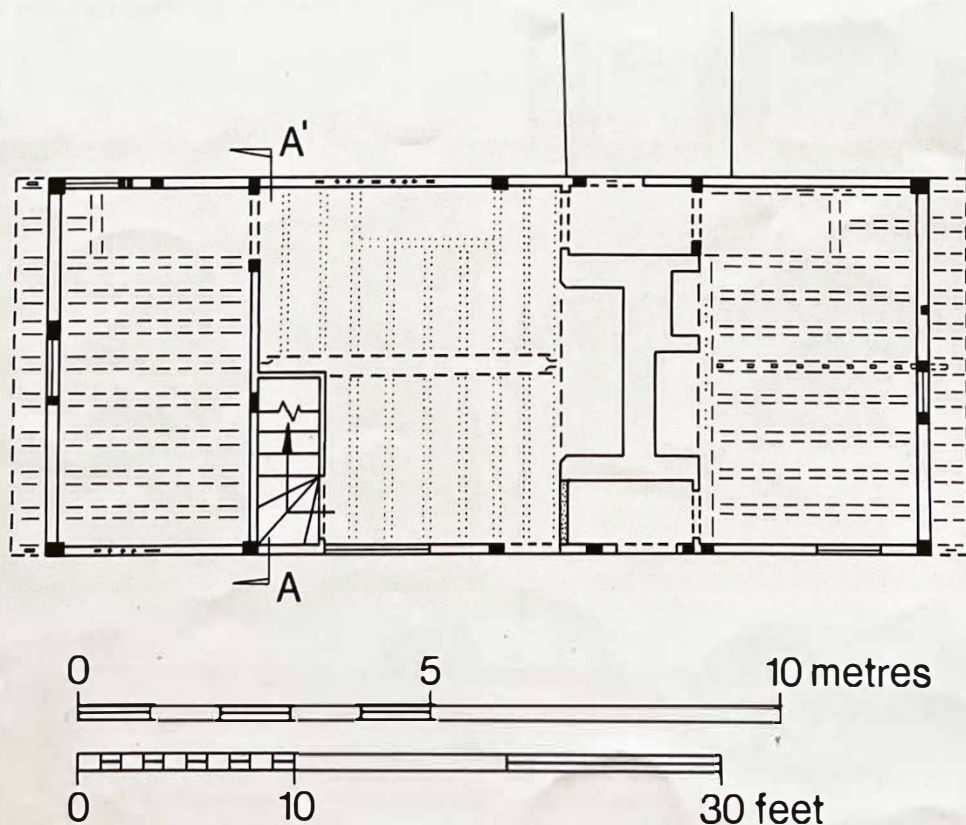
The Royal Commission was created by Royal Warrant in 1908 "to make an inventory of the Ancient and Historical Monuments and constructions connected with or illustrative of the contemporary culture, civilisation and conditions of life of the people of England." This step indicated a growing awareness of and concern about the destruction of Britain's heritage, and of the need for a well-informed national assessment. Until recently investigation proceeded on a county and parish basis, and the results were published summarily in Parliamentary white papers, and more fully in scholarly *Inventories* through H M Stationery Office. But no one appreciated at that time the enormity of the task in so rich a historical landscape as exists in England. The resources of the Commission have never been sufficient for the increasingly demanding task as knowledge has grown while the architectural and archaeological evidence supporting it has been progressively eroded. Part of the problem has been eased by the Department of the Environment's programme of listing buildings of architectural and historical interest, now carried on by the recently created Historic Buildings and Monuments Commission. However, the speed with which listing has to be conducted, often from the exterior of buildings only, means there is still a need for more detailed analysis. This is particularly obvious in Kent where so many medieval buildings hide behind later facades.

RCHM formerly fought shy of tackling the architecture of Kent because of the numbers of its historic buildings. But in recent years the Commission has recognised that the task of covering England with parish-by-parish surveys is impossible. With the small resources available selection of some kind is inevitable, and so projects are now thematic and closely defined, concerned with questions and problems raised by particular types of building and by the historical background

of particular areas. In this way it is hoped to contribute towards a greater understanding of our national heritage and the role that buildings play. Each project should be completed and published, not necessarily as lavishly as in the past, within a limited period of time, usually varying between 3-5 years. In these circumstances the richness of Kent becomes an exciting challenge rather than an impossible and never-ending task.

The topic of the first project has yet to be decided, but Commissioners have expressed the desire that it should concern the wealth of medieval domestic building in the county. Kent is uniquely rich in this class of building and although much work has been, and is being, done locally the subject is so large that it is hoped that the resources of RCHM can help to clarify some of the broader questions concerning construction, plans, types, sizes, dates and numbers of buildings, and their relation to the history of the county. The team will consist of two architectural investigators and one graphics officer. During the autumn they have been acquainting themselves with the history and topography of Kent, the wide variety of its buildings, and the many interested people who are already active in recording buildings in the county. Project work should begin early in the New Year.

In addition to project work RCHM records historic buildings which are the subject of applications to alter, restore or demolish. Most of this investigation is undertaken by a special team based in London, but work in Kent will now be done from the new office in Ashford. Already several buildings have been recorded, including the interesting hall house at Tolhurst Farm, Smarden, which is being restored by new owners. For further information contact Sarah Pearson, RCHM.

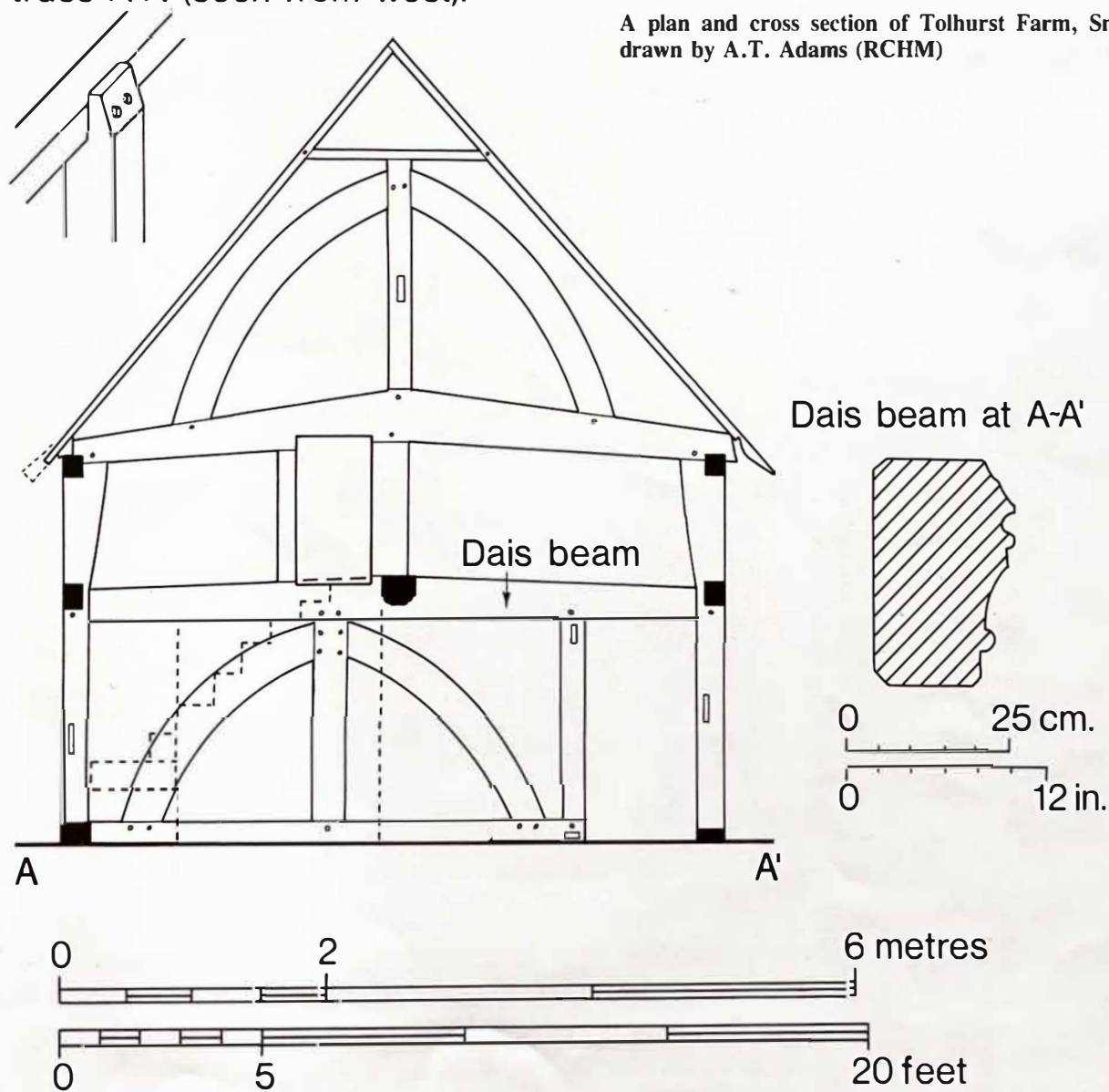




Joint of collar to crown strut,
truss A-A' (seen from west).

Tolhurst Farm, Smarden, stripped and ready for restoration.

A plan and cross section of Tolhurst Farm, Smarden,
drawn by A.T. Adams (RCHM)



EXCAVATIONS AT LULLINGSTONE ROMAN VILLA AND RICHBOROUGH CASTLE

by Peter Wilson

The Central Excavation Unit of English Heritage recently undertook two small-scale rescue excavations at Lullingstone and Richborough.

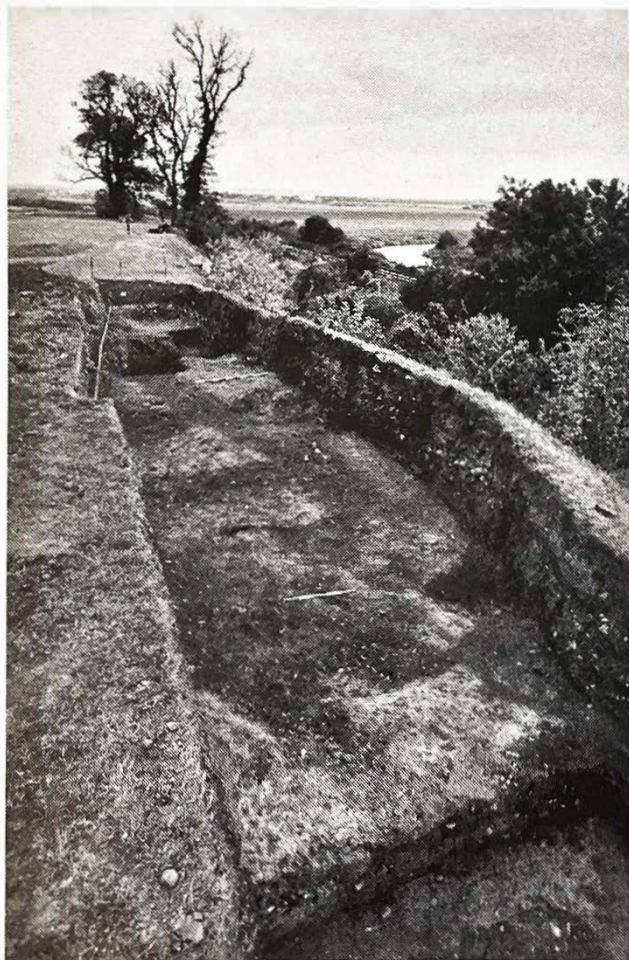
The construction by Thames Water of the Darent Valley Sewer necessitated the cutting of a trench some 4.40m wide across the public car park at Lullingstone Villa. Excavation in advance of the pipe-laying demonstrated that the area had been fairly low lying until well into this century. Prior to the construction of the car park the threatened area had been made up with soil from the original excavations and from other sources.

Once the modern overburden had been removed it was clear that the area had been within the bed of the river throughout the Roman and into the Medieval Period. The earliest levels encountered were a series of naturally deposited river gravels that contained Roman tile, presumably as a result of scouring of the river bottom in times of flood. These were sealed in part by a Roman Period layer of heavy flint cobbling that may have represented an attempt to produce a firm bottom to the river, perhaps for the watering of cattle etc? Away from the area occupied by the cobbling there was evidence for depositional islands within the area of the river, suggesting that the river was wider and more sluggish in the Roman period. The depositional islands and the flint cobbles were sealed by a silt deposit that

appeared to represent accumulation during the slow retreat of the river from the area, as it contained Roman material in its lowest levels and post-medieval stoneware sherd near its surface.

The excavation at Richborough took place in advance of a scheme to plant trees along the eastern edge of the site, to replace those that have died off in recent years. Three areas were excavated along the edge of the cliff, the northernmost one was located to the south-east of the Medieval chapel. There it was demonstrated that the area had been used by Bushe-Fox to dump some of his spoil, so explaining an anomaly between Bushe-Fox's plans and the present appearance of the site. The second area was located immediately to the north of the southern defences of the late third century earth fort, where it was discovered that no Roman period features survived, with the possible exception of a tiny patch of gravel surface. The major features recorded within the area were two dug-outs dating from, probably, the 1914-1918 war.

The third area was located immediately inside the southern wall of the Saxon Shore Fort. The top 0.50-0.60m consisted of modern deposits, including a well-made cobble surface that produced third and fourth century coins when first cleaned, but was shown to contain Bakelite and modern bolts on removal! The Roman deposits were not fully excavated, however, they were shown to be between 0.70m and 1m thick. In the light of the discoveries in this area, HBMC are reassessing their planting programme in the south-eastern corner of the site.

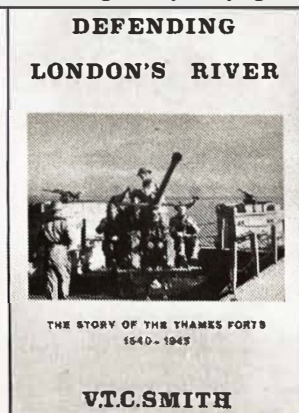


An exploratory trench at Richborough prior to tree planting. The features mentioned in the article can be clearly seen in this HBMC photograph taken in October 1985.

NEW BOOKS

Defending London's River – The story of the Thames Forts 1540-1945 by V.T.C. Smith

It is always a great pleasure to notice new books by Members and to recognise their extensive research and industry in public. Mr. Victor Smith is one such long-time Member whose new book has just appeared. It is the result of his continuing work on the military history of N.W. Kent. Although only 48 pages long it contains,



however, 60 maps, plans, photographs and drawings. It is in essence exactly what the sub-title proclaims, as well as a list of all the main extant sites.

The book is now in print at all bookshops, price £1.95, or direct from the author, Mr. V.T.C. Smith, at £3 to include the cost of packing and postage.

K.A.S. Centenary Excursion 1986

As part of the Centenary of Arch Cant, the excursion for 1986 will take us, for the first time to the continent.

- (1) Place – HOLLAND
- (2) Date – TUES 1st April, WEDS 2nd, THURS. 3rd April.
- (3) Cost – £85
- (4) Deposit – £35, returnable, if 6 weeks notice of cancellation given.
- (5) Numbers – 38 seats available on 1st come 1st booked basis
- (6) Apply – Write please to me for *application form* a.s.a.p. to M.A. Crane, Dane Court, Adisham, Canterbury. Tel. 0304 840310.

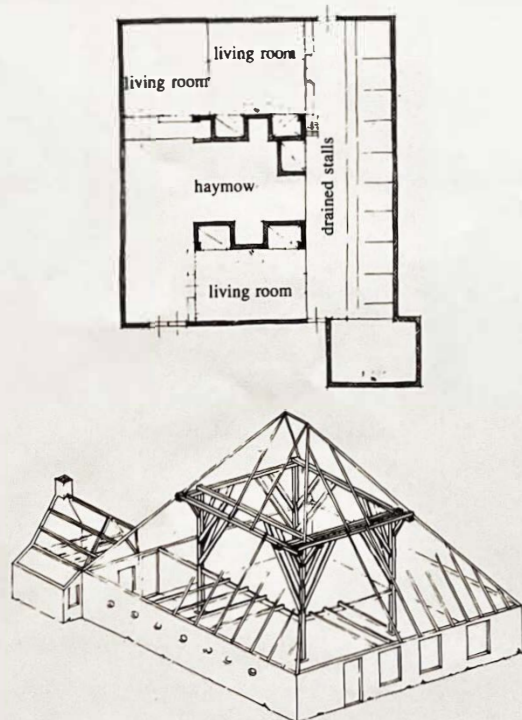
The party will be away for 3 days, 2 spent in Holland, visiting on Weds 2nd April for a whole day The Netherlands Open Air Museum just north of Arnhem. This is similar to our own Weald and Downland but 4 times larger and far more comprehensive.

On the return journey on Thursday we spend some 3 hours in the town of Delft.

The cost is inclusive of coach fare, ferry crossing and 2 nights bed and breakfast and evening meal in Holland and entry to Open Air Museum.

The coach will pick up on the Tuesday morning at Bexley Black Prince, Maidstone Lower Car Park Faith St. and Canterbury Coach & Horses and Dover. On return passengers may alight at any of these points.

For further details and times, please write to me, M.A. Crane, in the first instance. Do not delay, much interest has been expressed already in this venture.



FARMHOUSE WITH PYRAMID ROOF
FROM ZUID-SCHARWOUDE

- This building dates from 1745. It is virtually square in plan, with a square haymow (p. 59) in the centre, and has a more or less pyramidal roof. The roof is supported by a framework of timbers resting on four massive wooden posts (p. 21), one at each corner of the haymow.

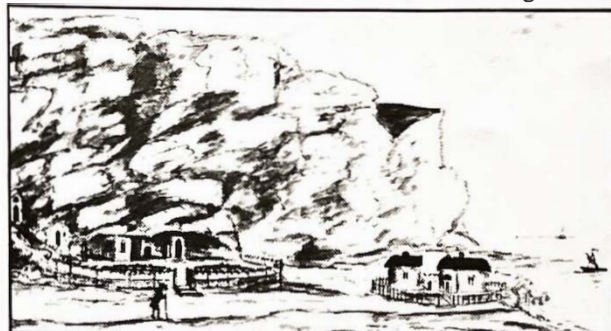
Letters

Boat Houses

Sir,

I write to you in the hope that one of your readers or a member of your Society might help with the identification and documentation of three topographical watercolours in my possession.

The first presents no particular problem as it is of Snargate Street and Dover Castle. The other two are of "Mr. Smith's Caves" and "Mr. Smith's Dwelling House"



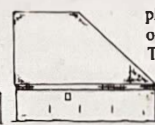
Mr Smith's Caves at Dover.



Mr Smith's Dwelling House at the Caves in Dover. The houses appear to have been constructed from up-turned boats and are situated under the Cliffs just above the H.W.L. I would estimate that they were not painted earlier than 1800 and they are not signed.

With grateful thanks in advance for any help proffered,

Yours faithfully
Mary Thomson



plan and elevations
of sheepcote from
Texel

A Brief Interim Report on the Excavations carried out for the Kent Archaeological Society at Godmersham Court Lodge – 1985.

For exactly four weeks from 5th August to the 1st September 1985, the first season of a major new excavation and fieldwork project was carried out on the site of the 13th century Court Lodge at Godmersham which had been demolished in 1955. A rectangular area of about 102 feet by 47 feet was stripped in order to uncover all of the building that had been standing in 1955, and as expected (after the clearance of many saplings and much undergrowth) only the very lowest parts of the walls had survived.

Three main periods of walls were excavated: the original (13th century) 2½ feet wide coursed flint walls, the flint, brick and reused stone foundations of 18th century brick walls (including the main cellar walls), and a series of later (19th century) red brick walls for small later structures.

Using pre-1955 photographs and drawings as well as the excavation evidence, it was easy to relocate the main hall, screens passage and service block of the 13th century building. This had had exceptionally fine architectural details and quite a large number of architectural fragments in Caen stone and Purbeck marble were found. Virtually the whole of the floor area of the hall had been destroyed by 18th century cellars but enough survived in the north-east corner to show that there had probably been a clay floor (overlying chalk rubble foundations and natural chalk). To the south of the screens passage, a small fragment of the cross-wall for the buttery/pantry area survived, and in these two rooms there were again traces of a clay floor over chalk. On the south side of the western room was a contemporary half-cellar (cut into the natural Middle Chalk), and this connected with the room to the north by a flight of steps. South of the eastern service room was a chalk-block lined well which continued in use to the mid 20th century. To the south of this area was presumably the detached kitchen and we hope to excavate this next year. On the north side of the hall was originally the solar wing, and though this had been demolished in the 18th century, a very fine first floor fireplace and chimney had survived in the gable wall. An engraving of 1792 even showed the medieval stone chimney pot *in situ*. Remarkably, a large fragment of this chimney was found in the destruction levels. Our excavations also found the remains of a massive 3½ foot wide wall on the west side of the solar undercroft as well as the south wall (the party wall continuing eastwards beyond the line of the east wall of the hall). Excavations next year will hopefully uncover the rest of the foundations of the solar walls as well as the documented chapel, garderobe and oriel.

In the 18th century the solar block on the north was demolished and replaced by a small lean-to building with outside it on the north-east a pair of 18th/19th century earth closets. To the east of these was a 19th century brick-paved courtyard with a brick-lined cylindrical cistern in the middle. In the hall area a series of cellars was constructed and these had been filled full of rubble and waste metal, etc. Only the top of this fill was removed. The two rooms of the service block were converted into the dining room (on the east with a 19th century bay window and a sprung-floor) and the kitchen with a large brick chimney stack constructed to the south in the old filled-in half cellar. Beyond this to the south a new "double-pile" extension had been added which contained the well-head (with ? pump) and sink. On the

east side was a 19th century study (also on a sprung floor and connecting with the dining room), and to the south of this the back door. Most of the post-medieval levels were fully excavated and it is hoped that next year the remaining medieval levels can be excavated, and that the excavations can be extended to the north and south to locate more of the foundations of the Court Lodge buildings.

A start has also been made on the study of the very detailed documentary evidence for Christ Church Priory's (and later the Dean and Chapter's) Manor of Godmersham, and in the autumn we hope to start a detailed field survey of Godmersham parish (i.e. the Anglo-Saxon estate of Godmersham that was originally given to the Archbishop in the 9th century). Bronze age, Iron Age (and Belgic), Roman and Anglo-Saxon finds are already known from the parish, and on Godmersham Downs survives perhaps the best-preserved "Celtic" field-system remaining in the Court. Our excavation also located one pre-13th century east-west ditch cut into the natural chalk. This is probably also Roman in date.

Tim Tatton-Brown

(Ed. – A fuller interim report will be appearing in *Arch. Cant.* Volume 102).

Kent Archives Office – Searchroom Now Officially Open

The building work which necessitated practically the closure of the Kent Archives Office for nearly two years has now been completed. The new searchroom was officially opened by Philp Ziegler, on Monday 4th November.

Mr Ziegler is the author of at least eight historical works including *The Black Death* (1969) and the recently published and much acclaimed official biography of Mountbatten.

The new opening hours will be:

TUESDAY – FRIDAY 9.00 a.m. – 4.30 p.m.

It is also hoped that it may be possible to open on one Saturday morning per month.

The Archives Office will be closed to the public on Mondays, most Saturdays, Sundays, public holidays and on occasion at other times by prior notice.

If you wish to visit the searchroom, it will still be necessary to reserve a seat and the number to telephone is Maidstone (0622) 671411 extn. 3363.

A wide range of local history publications and a selection of gift items will be available for sale in the new Archives Office shop.

The Editor welcomes all letters and would particularly like to receive more, especially on subjects such as requests for research information, books and related topics. Illustrations, if relevant, are always helpful and can assist readers in identifying objects, understanding points and following arguments.

Hon. Editor:

Ted Connell

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