

# KENT ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY

# NEWSLETTER



No. 14

Autumn 1989

## TONBRIDGE CASTLE

Tonbridge castle is an early Norman conquest Motte and Bailey, covering one of the few Medway crossings. Its history and development into a strong 13th. Century fortress and subsequent decline is described by Wadmore in Arch. Cant. XVI.

The ruins of the curtain walls, motte, splendid sandstone Gatehouse of the highest quality workmanship were bought by the Tonbridge Urban District Council in 1898 and at about ten year intervals until the outbreak of the second world war waterproofing and repairs were carried out where thought necessary. By 1952 stones were falling from the walls which were decaying and dangerous and vegetation had a strong grip on the fabric. From 1954 until 1966 the Urban Council took down most of the walls, stabilized the core and masonry and repointed and waterproofed the structure.

From 1966 until 1979 day to day preventative maintenance was carried out promptly on a 'stitch-in-time' principle. From 1979 until the end of 1985 despite pressure from inside and outside the new Tonbridge and Malling Council about vegetation, falling stones, vandalism and dangerous decay no proper maintenance was done.

Early in 1986 as a result of press, radio and television stories of Tonbridge's 'crumbling castle' six groups of architects were asked to submit schemes for the castle; as a result Peter Beake and Partners were elected to prepare a feasibility study on the lines of a brief given them. In November 1986 they proposed to roof and floor the Gatehouse and presented a first class report on the state of the stonework, its preservation and maintenance and estimates of its costs. English Heritage required the roof and floors to be a removable free-standing structure and this was to be done with tubular steel columns and cantilevered floors and roof.

The Tonbridge Civic Society and the Tonbridge Historical Society were kept fully informed by the Council and the Architects, who had been greatly helped by the latter; the Civic Society thought the only way to get money for the castle was to support the scheme whereas the Historical Society thought the 'honest ruin' principle was more helpful to an understanding of the castle and that the scheme was a 'bad buy'. Both Societies urged action on repairs and maintenance. The Council did not know what they would use the 'Enhanced' castle for but after a site meeting put a sum in excess of half a million pounds in the Capital Budget for both 'Enhancement' and 'Preservation' although neither project was fully priced.

In July 1988 the tenders for 'Enhancement' and the preservation of the curtain walls came in well over the estimated costs. It was decided to put aside £20,000 for additional consultants 'to progress the scheme'. The Tonbridge Civic Society then supported the view that the 'Enhancement' scheme should be abandoned in favour of maintaining the castle as an 'honest ruin'. New tenders were sought.

In September 1988 the additional consultants, Heritage Projects, were appointed to advise on what use could be made of the Gatehouse. Szerelmey were appointed to carry out work to the curtain walls and started in the first week of November 1988. With the mild weather and the good summer so far they have made excellent progress on clearing and destroying deep rooted vegetation, stabilising and pointing the corework, the ashlar of the South-East isolated wall and part of the South wall and the remains of the shell keep. Thought is being given to the stability and access to the Motte and the structural engineers are to report on ways of stabilising the exposed shallow footings of the curtain wall between the Gatehouse and the Motte exposed by erosion and children sliding down the slope. No information is available about arrangements for the other remedial works to the gatehouse nor for specialised day to day inspections and specialist maintenance.

In June 1989 the report from Heritage Projects was presented to the Council's Castle Committee. A highly professional and comprehensive report on tourism and marketing it suggested roofing and flooring the Gatehouse but to a very different design than the removable structure previously insisted upon by English Heritage and on which tenders were originally sought and set aside.

Attention is drawn to the interesting light which might be thrown on the castle by archaeological investigations of the buildings known to have been built inside the South curtain wall and now beneath the Bailey lawn and the Shell Keep foundations on the Motte.

The structure would house static displays of living conditions and historic events connected with the castle. Some suggestions are good and some, such as dividing up the single large top floor room with its noble proportions and perfect symmetry into a banquetting and sleeping chamber are sad.

The estimated costs are about £1,600,000. Heritage Projects are unable to invest their own money in the project.

At the time of writing the Council's decision on the report is not known but the Officers have clearly indicated that the sums of money involved are at present outside the Capital Budget and that other works would be necessary outside the castle grounds to meet the forecast increased traffic envisaged in the Consultants cash flow calculations.

The Council's intention is clearly to continue with putting right all the damage caused by past omissions but the problem of keeping in sight the dangers of neglecting simple maintenance in a situation where re-organisations and changes of personnel are frequent remain as a constant shadow.

Sydney Simmons.  
Tonbridge Historical Society



## County Archaeologist Appointed

Members will undoubtedly be pleased to know that the County Council has appointed Dr. John Williams, M.A., Ph.D., F.S.A., as County Archaeological Officer from September. He is presently at Lancaster University where he also acts as Director of the Cumbria and Lancashire Archaeological Unit. Previously he was head of the Archaeological Unit of Northampton Development Unit. Earlier still he excavated in Canterbury.

K.A.S. President K. Gravett, Hon. Secretary A. Harrison and Librarian P. Draper attended a meeting with him on June 13th. on behalf of the Society.

Representatives of other County bodies, District Planning Officers and English Heritage were also present. The last are partly funding the post.

The majority of those attending, including your representatives, expressed warm support for this initiative which is a logical culmination of the efforts of the K.A.S. begun a few years ago. John Williams specific duties include the evolution of a county-wide strategy for all aspects of archaeology, a list of priorities, fieldwork and the provision of advice, education and publicity. He emphasised that rescue fieldwork was essentially a confession of the lack of an adequate sites and monuments record and that his first tasks would be to seek to meet with all significant parties and to produce a comprehensive such record, freely available for public inspection.

Your representatives expressed great pleasure at his appointment and our willingness to help, based upon the Society's long history and the accumulated knowledge possessed by our membership.

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*K.A.S. Hon. Librarian, Dr. P. Draper  
has sent the following communication:*

## Library and Muniments Committee Questionnaire

The Committee would like to express its grateful thanks to all those who took the trouble to reply. About 200 replies were received (but 12 from Council/Officers!). Many of these also were from joint members and we estimate about a quarter of the membership participated. Some were from overseas and many sent detailed and constructive comments which must have taken some time to produce. Those requiring action by other officers will doubtless be dealt with in due course. As well as some respondents, the Strategy Committee also has asked that details of current purchasing policies, stock, etc. be publicized. an author/subject catalogue based on Decimal Classification system is now up-to-date. Brief details of the stock and purchasing policies etc. are contained in the current Report. Those not at the A.G.M. who would like a copy are asked to write to the Secretary to the Library Committee, The Museum, St. Faith's Street, Maidstone. ME14 1LH. enclosing a self-addressed, stamped envelope 4 x 9 inches, please.

Not surprisingly, the most common major interest was by far Local History, followed by Architecture. Then Field Archaeology and Church and Ecclesiastical History virtually equivalent. Family History and Genealogy also attracted considerable support and other added categories were Nautical History, Military History, Photography and Palaeopathology. The principal source of information, understandably, was the County Library Local Branch collections.

Transport difficulties were cited by many as the reason why they would not be able to attend lectures held centrally at Maidstone.

There was considerable support for the idea of a series of prizes for written work. Most thought that entries should be submitted and not Commissioned. The idea that prize-winners would be expected to deliver a lecture based on their work was not supported as a general pre-requisite.

K.A.S. Members are reminded that the Library can be visited for research during Museum opening hours. Members wishing to use the Library will be asked to show their K.A.S. official membership card and to sign the Museum Visitors' book. Anyone wishing to consult the Society's rare and valuable books must make a prior arrangement with the Hon. Librarian. Dr. Peter Draper.

## Thanet Developments

Early last year the now defunct Archaeological Unit negotiated with the Thanet District for the purpose of setting up a Trust for Thanet Archaeology, and this body was inaugurated last July with the appointment of Mr. D. R. J. Perkins B.Sc. A.I.F.A. as Director.

Since that date a number of 'Developer Funded' contracts have been negotiated with the Kent County Council and private developers and this has made it possible to put a small workforce in the field, and to date a number of significant archaeological sites have been either evaluated or excavated prior to development. In all cases, except where specialist reports are awaited, published reports have kept abreast of excavations.

Two sites at St. Mildred's Bay Westgate, are of more than local interest. The sites were originally revealed by the hurricane force winds of the Autumn of 1987, and suffered some damage during the gales of early 1988. They are of Middle Bronze Age date, c.1250 b.c. while the other quite nearby is of the Late Bronze Age/Early Iron Age c.700-600 b.c.

In the first instance, a hoard of 10 bronze palstaves were found. This is the third known hoard of these implements in this part of Thanet.

The later site yielded large quantities of pottery and animal bones, while from the black silt of a presumed ancient stream bed a great deal of pollen rich organic material was recovered, marvellously preserved, cut timbers still retaining the clearly identifiable bark of silver birch, even leaves and blades of grass surviving intact.

The Trust team were able to investigate and sample what appears to be a large circular storage pit with surviving wattle lining still in situ!

Over a ton of environmental evidence from pit, post hole and ditch sections was obtained and sent to English Heritage for analysis.

Lower down the beach near the low tide mark, the fragmentary remains of a badly sea damaged dug out canoe was discovered, although too far gone for effective conservation, the dimensions were recorded and a tree ring date from the timber may be possible.

Although an uncomfortable and difficult site, time available for investigation is determined by the tides, it is hoped that when English Heritage have completed their analyses further work here will be supported into what is undoubtedly another important estuarine site probably involved in the traffic of bronzes to and from Europe.

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## Trier and Luxembourg 1989

On Spring Bank Holiday Monday our group set sail from Dover on "The Pride of Kent" and came back from Calais on Friday afternoon on "The Pride of Calais" after a five days' venture as far as Germany. We returned via Luxembourg with greater knowledge of majestic Trier and its fine art and that of Luxembourg with its romantic scenery. Interspersed with museum visiting, we enjoyed a trip on the River Mosel and a late evening drive through wooded country to La Rochette with its chateau, unexpectedly on practice night of the town brass band.

We stayed at two hotels: in Trier at the Hotel Dorint in the heart of the city and by contrast at Luxembourg at the Hotel Parc (a Novotel) some way out of town. Staying at two places makes two mini visits with the anticipation of more to come.

Last year's visit had a general theme of the architecture and history of Belgium, when for most the highlight was a tour of the battlefield of Waterloo (almost on the mid-June date of the battle of 1815) with an excellent English lady guide.

The 1987 trail of Normandy marked the 900th. anniversary celebrations of Duke William combined, by some, with a nostalgic interest in Caen, Avranches and the Normandy beaches.

Much depends on the detailed planning of these expeditions and/or adventures. Thank you again Mr. Crane.

K. M. Roome.




## Bexley Archaeological Group

### Recent activities

Site watching during redevelopment at the entrance to Academic Press, Footscray, identified intersection cobbled yard surface associated with Tiger's Head Inn, (Circa 1650), other features were recorded, notably a corbel built beehive structure cutting the yard surface, now some 1.5m below modern ground level.

As part of the group's school work projects a series of Italianate gardens designed by Thomas Mawes were rediscovered and recorded by Sixth Form pupils from Borough schools. The site is in scrub land 33m. to the N. E. of a now demolished Palladian Mansion (1754). Foots Cray Estate. It is expected that this site will be restored as a landscape feature and incorporated in the Borough's Heritage Trail.

The opportunity was taken to survey and trial excavate the site of caves marked in the grounds of the Old Rectory on an 1840's Tithe map and the first series O/S 6in. map of 1862. During the course of the excavation four of the five entrances were found but all the caves had collapsed. The purpose of the caves is not known but the most likely notion is that they were a folly constructed by the owner of Rokesley Rectory in 1824.

 Finds of Roman pottery and tile, including a box flue tile was found during the Group's field programme, adding more evidence for a long suspected Roman occupation site in the area of Stable Meadows, North Cray.

A training excavation on a water cistern (Circa 1760) was undertaken by pupils from local schools. The cistern is sited at O/D 147 overlooking the Cray Valley. It has been demonstrated that the original roof was replaced in about 1920 by a tunnel-vaulted roof incorporating earlier materials. It is proposed that this site is conserved and also incorporated in the Heritage Trail.

A site-watching brief on a mains service trench being dug across Civic Gardens, Footscray High Street, produced evidence for five main phases of occupation until the late 17th. Century when it appears that this area was raised by dumped deposits.

A limited excavation was conducted to establish the earliest date of a former estate road on the Footscray Place Estate. This road went out of use in the first quarter of the century. Evidence was found for many repairs and consistent use until 1683 but firm dating for the earliest phases of this route could not be established.

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## Sedgebrook Roman Villa at Plaxtol

The 1989 excavation season began on Sunday 2nd. April under the direction of Roger Cockett, assisted by Sarah Bishop. It was hoped that the digging would be completed by the end of June but work continued for several more weeks in order to answer some archaeological questions left unanswered from the previous year.

Investigations included ascertaining the extent of the roof-tile fall and emptying a short length of the perimeter ditch. Small finds included coins, a glass flagon handle and more fragments of a roof-ventilator or chimney pot.

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## A. G. M.

At the A.G.M. on May 20th. all the returning Officers were re-elected and there were two new members of Council. Mr. H. G. B. Coast and Mr. M. H. Peters. Messrs Reeves and Naylor of Canterbury were appointed as Auditors. The report of the Strategy Committee was discussed and its suggestions were generally approved. In the afternoon members enjoyed a most interesting conducted tour of Maidstone organised by Mr. L. R. A. Grove.

## Books

'OLD FAVERSHAM' by Arthur Percival. Meresborough Books. Price £4.95. 64pp. Collection of photographs of old Faversham with interesting historical notes.

'ST. AUGUSTINES ABBEY, CANTERBURY. A Resource book for Teachers'. English Heritage. This contains advice to teachers on how to plan a visit to the Abbey. Also contains a 'trail', classwork sheets and a crossword puzzle. 'BECKET' by Oliver Postgate. Kingfisher Books. Price £6.95 40pp. Subtitled 'An Illumination of the Life and Death of Thomas Becket' this is a charming book, illustrated in a Bayeux Tapestry style and aimed mainly at the childrens' book market.

'HISTORIC MEOPHAM' Meopham Parish Council. Price 50p. This excellent little booklet was prepared for the Kent History Federation Conference which was held at Meopham in May 1989.

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## Forthcoming Publications

'THE JOURNAL OF KENT LOCAL HISTORY' This is now the official publication of the Kent History Federation and appears bi-annually in March and September. The next issue contains articles on 'Questions on Tithing', 'Sevenoaks & District Architectural History Group', 'Chetney Marsh', 'On Writing a Parish History', 'Mary Kettle's Cough Syrup', 'Furnishings of the 16th. Century' and an account of the Fortieth Anniversary of the Wye Historical Society. There are book reviews and six pages of news and information from affiliated societies. Copies are available from affiliated societies. There is a mailing list and single copies can be sent by post. A subscription costs £3 for two years from: Mr A. W. Ruderman, Treasurer. Cheques to be made payable to 'Kent History Federation'.

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## 'A Victorian Parson'

Mr Gerald van Loo has completed research into the family history of the Reverend Thomas Prankherd Phelps, who was Rector for fifty three years of Ridley, a parish within Rochester Diocese. His book is to be published at the end of September and gives an account, not only of Phelps' family history but also of the inhabitants of Ridley and of the people with whom Phelps had dealings, against a background of the problems of the Church in the reign of Victoria. Any member interested can contact Mr van Loo.

'SHOREHAM, A VILLAGE IN KENT' by Malcolm White and Joy Saynor. This fully illustrated book will be published at the end of November by the Shoreham Society. From Prehistoric period to the 1950's. Approximate price: £8.95.

Kent Underground Research Group. hope to have their book on underground sites in Kent ready for distribution in December.

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## Events:

Shorne Local History Group Exhibition will be held on Friday 27th October to Sunday 29th October at Shorne Village Hall, The Street, Shorne, nr. Gravesend. Friday 7 to 10 pm. Saturday 10 am. to 8 pm. Sunday 12 noon to 4 pm. Admission £1. There will also be a bus service between Gravesend Road and the Village Hall.

Members of the Shorne Local History Group have visited every house in the village looking for documents or articles that might be suitable to put on display in this exhibition. The Parish Records go back to the late 16th Century.



## Conferences:

### Conference of Building Recorders

The twenty-sixth Annual Conference of Building Recorders will be held on Saturday, October 7th, 1989, at 2.15 pm. in the Barn, Charing. (The Barn is to the north-east of the Church, along a footpath from Market Place to the left of the Church Tower).

It will consist of a series of short talks, as follows:

Dr. D. Renn on *Tonbridge Castle and other Gatehouses*, Mr. A. Tomlin on *Maidstone Archbishop's Palace*, Mr. K. Gravett on *The High End arrangements at Croydon Palace* and Mrs. M. Lovering on *The use of Infra Red Photography to locate an early Seventeenth Century Inscription on a Beam and its subsequent cleaning*.

There will be an opportunity for discussion after each talk and the meeting will finish with a cup of tea. K.A.S. Members and their friends are invited to come. No tickets will be issued, but there will be a collection.

### Council For Kentish Archaeology

'URBAN ARCHAEOLOGY IN S.E. ENGLAND' on Saturday, 18th November, 1989. (2.15 to 5.30 pm.) at Christ Church College, North Holmes Road, Canterbury. A half-day Conference of talks, illustrated by colour slides, by leading archaeologists of recent discoveries and research in urban centres in S.E. England. Speakers include Brian Hopley of the Museum of London, Brian Philp, Kent Arch. Rescue Unit, and Paul Bennett, Canterbury Arch. Trust.

### Bookstall and Refreshments

Tickets: Price £1 (payable C.K.A.) from 5 Harvest Bank Road, West Wickham, Kent. BR4 9DL. (S.A.E. Please).

Friends of the C.K.A. Free admission. Please apply to above address for pass ticket.

### Letters:

*Miss K. M. Roome has submitted the following interesting note:*

'I am studying a hatchment erected in 1727 as a memorial to Lady Austen who died in 1725, by her second husband, Mr Winde. It was noted by Canon Scott Robertson in A.C.XVIII (1899) and elsewhere. This hatchment is on metal (?copper) and the painting is above average quality. It may prove to be a rarity.

The maker's name 'Haacus Russell, Lond. mi.fecit' is engraved on the back and any information about him would be useful'

K. M. Roome.

In 1989 three members, Mr. F. R. Horton, Mr. J. Levett, and Ms. M. M. Sharp achieved fifty years of membership of the K.A.S.

*Ms. Sharp and Mr. Levett have sent their recollections of times past.*

After leaving school my working days were in London, attending some evening lectures on Mediaeval History — attracted to them as history had been a favourite subject at school — the development of Church Architecture fascinated me. In time our lecturer invited anyone interested to accompany him on a week-end walk in one of the Home Counties visiting some old churches. Among others I accepted. What a world of interest opened up to me. It became, roughly, once a month exercise. Walking, or by coach during the years 1931 to 1939 by the courtesy and guidance of Rectors and Vicars some 250 churches were studied. Architecture, Norman and fifteenth century — and excitement if some Roman bricks were found. Stained glass, Church furnishings, Brasses, Memorials. We learned history could be read by entering an old church. Several Cathedral cities were also visited, staying for long Easter weekend in several. Especially imprinted on memory is Lincoln Cathedral as there we were shown their copy — opened — of the Domesday Book.

On our doorstep, of course, was the City of London, Wren churches and the Halls of the City Guilds. What a fascinating study the latter proved. How much we owed to all those who gave of their time and expertise in opening the churches and Halls on a Saturday afternoon to a bunch of enthusiastic

amateurs — our own lecturer excluded; to whom we owed all the arrangements. I for one, can never be sufficiently grateful. In 1938, someone, identity regrettably forgotten suggested I join the Kent Archaeological Society. The late Rev. Herbert Dale, Vicar of St. Leonard's, Hythe, sponsored me, my application being accepted.

Returning to Hythe with its wealth of history as a Cinque Port, digging into its past became of absorbing interest. In the library there is a bequest by the late Mr. Fred Herton of the volumes of the K.A.S. from No. 1 to the date of his death. What interesting hours I spent searching out every mention of Hythe.

Outings with the Society have been so enjoyable and full of interest though I now find driving back from Canterbury after a long day out just too tiring to participate. However, each publication of the Arch. Cant. is eagerly opened. I never cease to be grateful to the unknown but not forgotten benefactor who suggested I join the Kent Archaeological Society'.

Muriel M. Sharp.

I have been closely connected with Rochester Cathedral for most of my life and was, in fact, born in John Jasper's Gateway (mentioned in Edwin Drood) in the Precinct of the Cathedral where my father was Head Verger for over twenty five years. I was a Cathedral Chorister and, subsequently Asst. Cathedral Organist for forty eight years, this long period being surpassed by only two other people in this County, far as I am aware.

I have seen many changes here — at least six Deans and four Bishops, not to mention crowds of Clergy. Many stories could be told. I have often been pressed to write my memoirs but at the present rate of proceedings I see little prospect of this being achieved'.

James Levett.

Members can now obtain K.A.S. 'Tote' bags, Tea Cloths, Ties, by post from Mrs J. Saynor, Bags £6. Tea Cloths. £3. Ties. £3.50, (includes p. & p.)

### K.A.S. Publicity Leaflet

Members will be interested to learn that a new leaflet publicising the Society has been designed and will shortly be available for distribution. Copies will be deposited in Libraries, Museums etc. and it is hoped that K.A.S. membership will be increased by this means.

The Hon. Editor of the Newsletter welcomes all letters, articles and communications and would particularly like to receive more from members and others, especially such

requests, illustrations, information, and always helpful and can assist readers in identifying objects, understanding points and following arguments.

The Editor, however wishes to draw the readers attention to the fact that neither the Council of the K.A.S. nor the Editor is answerable for the opinions, attitudes 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 letters, items or papers.

Material for the next Newsletter should be sent by 1st

November 1989 to Hon. Editor. Nesta Caiger,.

### Fieldwork Grants

Are you planning an excavation or fieldwork within the county of Kent during 1990? Grants are available from the K.A.S. to

assist with work carried out by Affiliated Societies or individual members

Applications on the appropriate form (obtainable from the Hon. General Secretary by 1st, October 1989).