KENT ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY

NEWSLETTER



No. 18 Spring 1991

THE WOOLWICH KILN

Greenwich Borough Museum has recently undertaken the move of the earliest salt-glazed stoneware kiln yet found in

te kiln, dated to the period 1610 - 1640/60 was found during an excavation in 1974 of a site intended for redevelopment, close to the Thames in Woolwich. The project had originally intended to look for phases of early occupation of Woolwich and had planned six weeks of work. Following discovery of the kiln sites, the excavation, sponsored jointly by the Borough of Greenwich and the then Dept. of the Environment, was extended to four months. The site was flanked on its northern side by the River Thames and enclosed by the High Street to the south, with Bell Water Gate on the east and Surgeon Street to the west. The site is now occupied by the Council's 'Waterside Leisure Centre'. Grid reference is TQ 433 793.

Despite wells, cesspits and deep nineteenth century basements which had cut through most traces of any earlier occupation, the excavators uncovered the remains of two kilns and an earlier 'clay settling-pit'.

Although the Plumstead/Woolwich area had a well documented pottery industry through the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the existence of this early group of kilns was unsuspected.

The square clay pit was clay lined and revetted with timbers. It is suggested by the excavators to predate both kilns. Its fill dumped material was interpreted as waste from an earlier adiscovered kiln. The remains of two kilns were located. The first was found below the nineteenth century houses fronting Surgeon Street. It was a round, brick-built structure with twin flues, used for the prodution of both glazed and unglazed red earthenware of a type common in London in the seventeenth century. It was dated by clay pipes in the demolition layer to 1640-1680. The internal diameter was 2.50m; part was lost due to later cess-pits and a sewer. A possible roadway was associated. Two brick walls, one found by each stoke hole were interpreted as 'Wind baffles'.

The second kiln is unique. It is the only kiln producing saltglazed stoneware of this period yet found in Europe. This is the kiln which has recently been moved for the second time since its discovery. It lay to the north of the earthenware kiln and was sealed by its north east stoke hole and possible 'fuel storage area'. The brick built remains survived to just above floor level, complete with three internal flues. The external diameter measured 2.25m., the internal diameter 1.60m. Much of the western outer wall had been lost due to sinking of later cess-pits. The stoke hole and fire box area were below the ground surface and had been sunk into the natural of Thanet Sand. No wood was found but timber revetting was suggested by staining on the sand. The only structures associated were a chalk footed wall to the east, which was probably added at a later stage and which may have enclosed the kiln in a yard. To the east of the wall was a clinker and ash path.

Large amounts of pottery were found associated with this kiln, the majority being Bellarmine jugs, but also found were Westerwald wares. Both these ceramic types were originally produced on the continent from the sixteenth century onwards and were imported into Britain. This kiln is important,

being the first to produce salt-glazed stoneware in Britain. Previously, John Dwight's pottery in Fulham had been considered the earliest, with its patent dating from 1672.

The kiln is suggested to have had only a short life or to have perhaps been in production experimentally. The large amount of fused waste and unsuccessful products and the fact that the Woolwich pottery was never mentioned by Dwight may support this theory.

Due to its good state of preservation and associated range of pottery, it was decided at the conclusion of the excavation that the kiln should be lifted and retained as a whole. Along with conservation experts from the British Museum, the Dept. of the Environment took charge of lifting the kiln, enclosed in a specially designed support. It weighed in for the lift at c.40 tons and was deposited in one of the Council's depots for storage.

When the Council recently undertook a reorganisation of its work depots, the local museum was asked to arrange removal of the kiln to an alternative site. With the help of a grant of £1,000 from the Area Museum Service for South East England the kiln was again lifted. This time it topped 43 tons after being sprayed with water for a week prior to its journey. The move was made using a low loader and with a police escort. The kiln was wrapped in the Museum's banner for its journey through Woolwich and is now redeposited in a secure location. The finds from the excavation and the associated archive are available for study through Greenwich Borough Museum. Finds include both the products from the stoneware kiln and from the later earthenware kiln. Videos of both the 1974 and the 1990 move may also be viewed by prior arrangement.

Barbara Wood Assistant Curator, Greenwich Borough Museum

Excavations at the Manor Gatehouse, Dartford

The Dartford Group has been investigating small areas close to the surviving portion of Henry VIII's Manor House in Priory Road, Dartford. The Manor Gatehouse, as it is now known, served as the West Gate to a Manor House which was built in 1541-c1544 on the site of the demolished Dartford Priory. Anne of Cleves lived there following her divorce from Henry. It later passed to Queen Mary (1553-4) who returned it to the Dominican Sisters. It was unlikely that the sisters were able to re-establish themselves as Elizabeth I reclaimed the Manor House and they were again forced to leave. During Elizabeth's reign (1558 - 1603) large areas of the Manor House were demolished so that today only the West Gate and a boundary wall remains.

Dartford Borough Council now own the building following its purchase last year. They kindly gave the Group permission to carry out work on this important site. Our work has revealed details of its construction including a section of rammed chalk which served as a courtyard surfacing on which a layer of gravel was spread over to form the final surface. Evidence

has come to light concerning the possible re-use of medieval wall foundations to form the base to the later Tudor walls.

Elsewhere in Dartford on the south-side of the High Street an office development site has produced a quantity of 18th. century wine bottles as well as fragments of post-medieval pottery. These include salt-glazed stoneware and tin-glazed earthenware (Delft). Foreign imports are represented by Westerwald, a German stoneware in grey and blue. Group members were called in to assist in cleaning and restoring the shattered vessels and examples of various types of pottery sherds were kept by the Group to add to our fabric bank.

Of particular interest was the discovery of fruit pips and stones in sediment left in the wine bottles. These were identified by Royal Botanic Gardens, as belonging to cherry, grape and blackberry. One unusual "ingredient" of this sediment was what appears to be lead shot! I am reliably informed that the addition of lead to drink is not unknown as the lead salts tended to sweeten the resultant drink. Of course, the side-effect of lead poisoning was unfortunately overlooked.

This material was rescued by local builder, Dave Miller, and handed over to the Group. It is now in the Dartford Borough Museum. The site is to the rear of Bank House (now called Home House) on what was the site of the former Council Chamber next to the Woolworths building which, in 1959, produced the impressive "Knights Jug" (13th century Scarborough Ware) thanks to the hard work of K.A.S. member Mr. L. C. Dale.

Chris Baker Dartford District Archaeological Group

Archaeologists' Health and Safety

For some time now I have been concerned over the number of diseases to which archaeologists can be exposed.

Do archaeologists receive adequate medical advice during their course work? Can the microbiologists really confirm that there is no danger in handling decaying tissue and bone? Most archaeologists on their own volition arrange for tetanus injections, particularly if working in fen conditions, but that is about the limit of their care or concern.

What is the length of time microbes survive in the ground? Anthrax — how many farmers actually make a note of where they bury a contaminated horse or cow? The authorities should be notified, but who keeps these records anyway? The writer made inquiries, it seems records began in 1886 but are only kept for up to ten years from the present, and the exact burial spot is not formally noted - so up and down the country we have these concealed animal graves. There was certainly confusion in Cambridge in 1982 between the University and the City Council as to the whereabouts of an unmarked area used to bury the carcasses of twelve horses involved in anthrax experiments during the last war. If it was not for the fact that the piece of land was likely to be built on the burial site would have probably disappeared "in the mists of time". The City Council only learned of these burials when a member of the public telephoned a Council official. In October this year a new 'scare' was reported when one of the series of soil tests on the same site contained traces of anthrax and further tests have been ordered. The developers assured the public 'we are perfectly satisfied there is no health risk. We would not build and sell houses if there was'. I know of one estate owner, now deceased, who arranged for an anthrax contaminated cow to be placed in an ice-pit, then it was covered with quick lime, (which the Ministry says does not kill the spores) and the whole buried. The locality of this pit is now lost but it is situated somewhere in the grounds of a school. Long may it remain undisturbed.

How long do anthrax spores last? It seems for hundreds of years. A Ministry of Agriculture Veterinary Surgeon maintains archaeologists take considerable risks in excavating unknown sites and coming across animal bones.

There are a number of organisms that can affect animals and humans which can survive in the ground for many years. For example, Histoplasmosis infects people and bats by both the minute spore and sections of the mycellum known as Histoplasma Capsulatum. The spore grows mainly in the

droppings of bats and birds, though the latter do not become infected. Bats are an endangered species and European countries are trying to increase their numbers. This will in turn increase the likely amount of guano. It is in the interests of all archaeologists, especially those who work on subterranean excavations, not to introduce this infection into underground space. All should be aware of the dangers of carrying bacteria or spores of disease on our clothes and in particular, on our boots. I always advise colleagues to disinfect their archaeological working clothes after use in suspect conditions.

In the West country there is the hazard of Radon. This is a radioactive gas which seeps up through the earth and accumulates in confined spaces. It has been known to cause certain forms of cancer. In November 1990, the National Radiological Protection Board published its survey on the effects of widespread Radon gas in Devon and Cornwall. In the report it was suggested that 60,000 houses, ancient and new, needed attention to reduce the risks of contamination. Then there is the little matter of the disposal of small quantities of radio-active material (not of course, the large highly contaminated material from reactors etc.) Where are these buried? The contamination may not last long but how long? Before 1960 research workers did not have to keep records of such minor burials. Old wells have often been used in the past for disposal of rubbish, which was generally made up domestic refuse, however, today they have become, in son cases, the receptacles of discarded farm chemicals.

Some archaeologists are becoming more aware of possible dangers. Masks and gowns were donned for the unwrapping of H7386, the 3000 year old mummy in 1981 at Bristol. Masks and protective clothing were worn against the "Bath Bug", a deadly meningitis producing amoeba that had been found in the Roman Bath site in 1979.

In the splendid television programme on this excavation we were shown an attendant, unmasked, hosing down the contaminated clothing etc.

Finally, my last question, where did this water go?

Sylvia Beamon

Annual General Meeting - 1890 Style

Now that the Society's Council is trying to make Annual General Meetings more attractive to members, it is interesting to note what happened in the 1890s. The Rules at that time stated: 'A General Meeting of the Society shall be held . . . at some place rendered interesting by its antiquities or historic associations, in the eastern and western divisions of the County alternately . . . At the said General Meeting, antiquities shall be exhibited, and papers read on subjects of archaeological interest.'

The meetings were very different to present day A.G.M.s as the following extracts from the Society's Proceedings for 1890 (Arch. Cant. vol.XIX) shows:

Annual report read by Hon. Secretary.

'During the past year death has removed from the County the Earl Sydney, who for five years was President of the Society ... The Council will ever remember with pleasure the kindly hospitality accorded them by the late President and the Countess Sydney, on various occasions when they met in London or at Deal Castle. Nor can members ever forget their reception at the sumptuous entertainment provided for them, by the late Earl and Countess of Sydney when they invited the Society to Frognal, during the Annual meeting in 1878 . . . Many other valuable members have been withdrawn from our ranks but our numbers are still well maintained, standing at the present time at 871, while 12 candidates await election at your hands today . . Since the last Annual meeting, the 18th, Volume of Arch. Cant. was issued to members, early in 1890 . . . The total cost of Vol. XVIII was £597.10s. 2d. yet in spite of so large an outlay there still remains a balance to the Society's credit, at the Bankers, of £580.19s. 4d. . . . The Council appeals to members to do all in their power to further the interests of the Society, and of Archaeology generally, by reporting to the Hon. Secretary any discoveries which may come under their notice, or any act of vandalism about to be committed. In the one case it would ensure every discovery being properly recorded, and in the other it might be the means of saving from destruction many interesting monuments.

After the business meeting was concluded some four hundred ladies and gentlemen went on a tour of the churches, 'a perambulation of the Cathedral' and listened to a number of 'papers' before partaking of tea on the lawn of Mr & Mrs. Mapleton Chapman. Later on came the 'annual dinner' followed by the 'evening meeting' and yet more papers were read. The following day held another strenuous programme of visits and lectures.

One can only admire the stamina of our Victorian counterparts.

Andrew Moffat

New Books

'The Encircling Hop. A History of Hops and Brewing.' by Margaret Lawrence.

The author has aimed at and succeeded in recording, how, for centuries, the lives of Kentish people were encircled by the hop and how the growers and brewers were dependent on each other to meet the demands of the market.

There is ample evidence of original research at the Public Record Office, West Kent Archives Office, the Drapers' empany and Whitbread papers at their Paddock Wood hop m, which in total presents much needed new material for students at all levels as well as for the general reader. The author leaves the two industries facing the many dilemmas resulting from the 1989 Mergers and Monopoly Commission's report on 'The Supply of Beer'. Published by SAWD Publications, Placketts Hole, Bicknor, Sittingbourne, Kent. Price £7.95 from bookshops throughout the country.

ON HASTED'S HEELS

The following information about the progress of the new history of Kent has been provided by Nigel Yates, following a promise made at a recent Council meeting that K.A.S. members

should be fully apprised of the present position.
"The Kent Archives Service has, with the approval of the County Council, commissioned a new history of Kent, which will be the first authoritative history of the County since Hasted's History was published at the end of the Eighteenth Century. The new history will be part of the Kent History Project under the direction of the County Archivist, Nigel Yates.

The main history will consist of eight volumes. (Names of

Editors in brackets).

Kentish Society before 800 (Alec Detsicas) Early Medieval Kent 800-1200 (Richard Eales) Late Medieval Kent 1200-1540 (Nigel Ramsay)

4. Early Modern Kent 1540-1640 (Michael Zell)

- 5. The Government of Kent 1640-1914 (Fred Lansberry)
- 6. The Economy of Kent. 1640-1914 (Alan Armstrong)
- 7. Religion and Society in Kent 1640-1914 (Nigel Yates)

8. Kent since 1914 (Alan Armstrong and Nigel Yates)

Most volumes will include a number of other contributors in addition to the editor and the project will involve all those historians currently working on Kentish topics. In addition the project will include two specialist volumes of essays.

1. A History of Rochester Bridge.

2. A History of Rochester Cathedral.

It is likely that these two specialist volumes will appear first, hopefully in 1992-3, but the main volumes should appear at

regular intervals from 1994.

The project is being supervised by an editorial board which reports to the County Council. It will be funded by the Archives Service with financial support from other bodies and negotiations are proceeding with a reputable academic publisher for the production of volumes.'

Fieldwork Grants

Are you planning an excavation or fieldwork within the county of Kent during 1992? Grants are available from the K.A.S. to assist with work carried out by Affiliated Societies or individual members. Applications on appropriate form (obtainable from Hon. General Secretary, Mr A. C. Harrison,

Events, Outings, Lectures

K.A.S. EXCURSIONS, 1991

Monday May 27th to May 31st, inclusive. Coach visit to Northumberland and Durham. We will visit Beamish Heritage Museum, Jarrow, Hadrian's Wall and the coastal Northumberland castles and Lindisfarne. Further details from Joy Saynor, 28 High Street, Shoreham, Sevenoaks, TN14 7TD. S.A.E. please. A deposit of £50 (only refundable up to one month before departure), to be sent to H.G.B. Coast, 127 Snodhurst Avenue, Chatham, ME5 0TH. by 8th, Feb. 1991,. Estimated cost of trip £200. (Single rooms extra).

Saturday 20th April. Spring evening Barbecue at the Museum of Kent Rural Life. The Membership and Publicity Committee invite members and families for a social evening. See enclosed

Saturday June 8th., One day visit to the Pas de Calais by coach with pick-up points within the county. (Crayford, Maidstone, Canterbury). Cost, (to include restaurant lunch in Boulogne) about £35. Names to Joy Saynor, address as above. S.A.E. please.

Saturday June 29th. St. Clere, Kemsing. Visit restricted to 25 members to the Inigo Jones house, home for many years of the Norman family. This house is never open to the public. Own car required. Enquiries to Maurice Crane, Dane Court, The Street, Adisham, Canterbury, CT3 3LA. S.A.E. please.

Saturday July 6th. Garden Party at Cooling Castle. There will be an opportunity to view the private grounds by kind permission of the owner. Many other features indicate that this will be a major event. Own car required. Please book the date. Full details in April Newsletter.

Monday 14th January at 7.30 pm. Joint meeting with the Gravesend Historical Society at the Central Library, Gravesend, Kenneth Gravett will speak on The Architectural Implications of

JOINT K.A.S. ONE DAY SCHOOL with Crayford Manor House Centre. Saturday March 2nd. 10.15 am to 4.30 pm. To be part of the memorial to our late member, L. G. H. Porteus, the Dartford historian. Speakers will include K. Gravett, P. Lawrence and G. Cramp, Bookstall, Light refreshments included in the fee of £3.50. Tickets from Crayford Manor House, Mayplace Road East, Crayford, DA1 4HB. Tel. Crayford 521463.

K.A.S. COLLOQUIUM on Recent Discoveries on Stonework on Saturday March 9th, commencing at 2.15 pm at the Post-Graduate Medical Centre, Canterbury, Speakers: Mr. Bernard Worssam on The Geology of the Anglo-Saxon Sculptures, and Mr. Nicholas Durnan on A Romanesque Arcade at Canterbury Cathedral. For further details, see enclosed leaflet.

EVENTS & LECTURES (other societies)

COUNCIL FOR KENTISH ARCHAEOLOGY. Archaeology in Kent. A Spring Conference for 1991. To be held on Saturday 9th March 1991 at Maidstone Grammar School, Barton Road, Maidstone. Speakers will include: Dr. J. Williams on Planning and Archaeology. Mr. A. Daniels on Recent Excavations by the Maidstone Arch. Group. Mr. M. Sasfery on the Periwinkle Watermill Project and Mr. B. Philp on Archaeology in Kent in the 80's. Tickets. Whole day £2.50. Half day £1.50. S.A.E. please.

Friday 5th April. Romney Marsh Research Trust Spring Lecture. To be held at Tenterden Town Hall at 7.30 pm.

Dr. Anthony Gross on The Monks and the Marsh. Dr. Gross is working on Medieval archives of Canterbury Cathedral Priory. His lecture will focus on life of Canterbury's marshland manors especially Appledore and Ebony, and the effects of the great storms of 1287/88. Tickets, to include a glass of wine: £3 for Friends of the Trust, £5 for non-members from Mrs. Sue Carrel, Mittell House, Church Road, New Romney, Kent, TN28 8TU.

EXHIBITIONS at Museums

Greenwich Borough Museum Dec. 1990 to March 1991. Royal Arsenal. 23rd March to 21st April 1991. Boomerangs May to 31st July 1991 The Co-operative Society.

Dartford Museum. From Thursday 17th January 1991. *Keeping in Touch* Communications from early times to present day.

Museum of London Images of the London Blitz.

Photographic exhibition to mark the 50th anniversary of the London blitz. Until May 6th 1991.

Letters

I read your contributer Mr Aldridge's piece on the Earthworks at Kenardington (see Newsletter No. 17) with considerable interest as it brought to mind one of my last conversations with the late Prof. McN.Dodgson over lunch at my College. It is not my wish to steal his thunder, particularly as he is so sorely missed by me among so many, but I think he would like me to say that he was at the time working on an entirely different approach to the whereabouts of Eorpeburnan and with his usual charm revealed that it would cause a stir in the dovecots of the K.A.S.

He was going back to first principles in his reading of the Burghal Hidage and stressed it was a small fortified site somewhere on a line between Southwark and Hastings. After all it only enclosed two to two-and-a-half acres in total and was the fourth smallest *burgh* in the list.

We picked out several possible sites, some turning on the meaning of "Eorpeburnan" and one in particular showed promise as the new interpretation.

Zena Bamping, BA.

The Geoff Porteus Memorial Appeal

Society members will be pleased to learn that the appeal mentioned in K.A.S. Newsletter No. 16 and launched by the then Mayor of Dartford, Cllr. Keith Thurlow at the start of Dartford Environment Week 1990, (Saturday 28th April) has now (October) reached the sum of £1,824. Arrangements are in hand for a stained glass panel to be constructed by the Stained Glass Workshop in Staplehurst from a design produced by Derek Hicks, a local artist.

It is intended that the finished panel be installed and dedicated at the Holy Trinity Church in Dartford as part of Environment Week 1992. Continued efforts with fund raising are being organised with the aim of raising £3,500. If further members wish to contribute to the Appeal donations can be made to the Manager, Lloyds Bank, 55 High Street, Dartford, DA1 1DJ making cheques payable to Geoff Porteus Memorial Appeal.

Tebbutt Research Fund

This fund was established as a tribute to the life and work of the late C. F. Tebbutt, OBE., FSA., and applications are invited from individuals and groups for grants towards research into the Wealden Iron Industry. It is anticipated that approximately £200 will be available from this fund and anyone interested should write a suitable letter of application giving details of themselves, together with relevant information concerning the research envisaged.

Details should be sent to me not later than the 31st March 1991 so that I can pass them to the Panel for their

SHIELA BROOMFIELD. Hon. Sec. Wealden Iron Research Group.

COUNCIL FOR BRITISH ARCHAEOLOGY MEETING, KAS REPRESENTED.

A meeting took place at the Institute of Archaeology, London, on 6th October 1990, between the President and Officers of the C.B.A. and representatives of C.B.A. Member Organizations in Kent, Surrey and Sussex.

Professor Rosemary Cramp opened the proceedings by explaining the reasons for the meeting. An entirely new structure was envisaged for the C.B.A. and it was hoped that the three counties, Kent, Surrey and Sussex, which at one time formed the C.B.A. 'Group 11' could be again united as an archaeological body representing the south-eastern counties. The K.A.S. was represented by two members of Council and there were three other representatives from local Kentish archaeological societies. It is unfortunate that the meeting was so poorly attended, there being only nineteen people in the audience. Another meeting was arranged for Saturday 2nd Feb. 1991 at Brighton, Sussex. The hope was expressed that this gathering would be more successful and result in a definite plan for the south-east and its connection with the C.B.A.

K.A.S. Outing. Stour Boat Trip.

On 22nd September last, well stocked with refreshments, "Rene Roy IV" left Grove Ferry for our three hour voyage, with at least fifty members and friends. We reached the junction of the Great Stour and Little Stour, and then back again through remote land not easily visible by rail and road. Hints and hopes of the Thames next year?

K. M. Roome

Sheppey Archaeological Society

Congratulations to The Sheppey Archaeological Society on receiving an award from the Lloyds Bank Independent Archaeology and Dating Fund. The judges who recommended the group for the award said that they were impressed with the high standard and sheer quality of their investigations—high praise for a group that has only been established for three years.

Building at risk in Greater London

The London Division of English Heritage has asked for our help in identifying historic buildings, whether listed or in conservation areas, or not, and which are known to be at risk from neglect. The London Boroughs of Bexley, Bromley, Greenwich and Lewisham are in the ancient County of Kent. If you have any information, please would you tell thonorary Secretary of the Kent Historic Buildings Committee Charles Friend. He would like to hear of any historic buildings in danger in the present administrative County. Our President, Kenneth Gravett, is also Chairman of the Kent Historic Buildings Committee.

For Sale

Set of ARCHAEOLOGIA CANTIANA

Volumes One to One hundred and One inclusive, including the Extra Volume (1907) and Volume Fifty two, the rare Index issue for 1939. In excellent condition apart from the usual fading of between the Wars volumes.

Price £350 or nearest thereto, buyer to collect near Canterbury. Correspondence care of the Hon. Librarian, Maidstone Museum, St. Faith's Street, Maidstone, Kent. ME14 1LM.

Greeting Cards

NEW for members. Pack of four with envelopes, featuring lesser known Kent churches: Godmersham, Kemsing, Lympne and Throwley, Blank for own message. Size 6 X 4 inches. Price 75p., obtainable at all KAS functions or £1 by post from Mr. G. B. Coast.

The Membership and Publicity Committee thank Commander J. Sympothe use of illustrations from his three volumes of Kent Country Churches.

Members are reminded that they can obtain K.A.S. 'Tote' bags, Tea cloths, Ties, (Navy blue, Green or Grey) and Knitting stitch-charts of KAS badge by post from Mrs. J. Saynor. Bags £6.

Tea Stitch-Chart £3. Ties £3.50. (please state colour required) 75p. Price includes p & p.

SUBSCRIPTIONS FOR 1991

These are now due, please use the enclosed form:

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 as requests for research information, finds books and related topics. Illustrations, if relevant, are 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 which contributers 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 March 1991 to Hon. Editor, Nesta Caiger.

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