

KENT ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY

NEWSLETTER



No. 41

Summer 1998

Dedicated to the Memory of Arthur Harrison

The Roman South Gate, Rochester

In March 1998 the Canterbury Archaeological Trust at the invitation of the then Rochester upon Medway City Council (now Medway Council) began an archaeological watching brief on a large scale repaving project along Boley Hill and adjacent roads to the west and south of Rochester Cathedral.

KAS members are probably aware that Arthur Harrison basically re-founded the study of archaeology in Rochester in the Late 1960's, after a fifty year period when hardly any archaeological work was undertaken in the city. It is primarily his efforts that have provided us with much of the information about the development of the defences of the town. Just two weeks after his death in April the Roman South Gate was uncovered during the above project. He would have loved to have seen it.

I came into 'digging' archaeology very late in life and missed most of Arthur's excavations within the city. I never dug with him, but once 'CAT' began excavating in the area he readily gave his advice whenever asked. To the larger projects he also paid visits. When I was working on the city wall in 1994 he asked me to stand for the KAS Council, I declined saying that I had always visualised myself standing for council when I was old and grey. My helper on-site (an infamous character by the name of Crispin Jarman) shouted out, 'You are old and grey !'. Hence (with just enough votes) I am on the KAS Council. Arthur Harrison was the archaeology of Rochester to whom I always 'ran' for help. I will miss his advice, comments and criticisms.

The South Gate.

The following short article and the drawings have been hurriedly put together and the statements made below have to be considered provisional. The interpretation offered may alter in the light of further work.

Whilst watching a JCB machine away the modern asphalt road, to the surprise, consternation and delight of myself, just 30 cm. below the surface *in situ*, classic 'salmon pink', *opus signinum* Roman concrete appeared about 10 m. to the north of South Gate House in Boley Hill road. In 1891 two parallel walls each about five feet wide had been noted in the area extending back at right angles from the line of the town wall (Payne 1895, p.6). Unfortunately no plan had been made and the text



implies that the walls, if they survived, would be about 60 to 90 cm. below the modern ground surface. A drain trench (probably Victorian in date) had been cut along Boley Hill road destroying the archaeological deposits on the roadway (west) side of this Roman wall and its underlying foundation. The damage to the stratigraphic sequence bedevils any attempt at interpretation, but the excavation of the disturbed material from the trench did allow a view of four masonry structural phases.

Only two courses of small neatly laid ragstone blocks of the north-south aligned *op. sig.* wall survived, these had been topped by a course of Roman brick. Although courses of brick had been noted in other areas (Arnold 1889, p.194; Payne 1895, p.8; 1915, p.285; V.C.H. 1974, p.82) this is the only portion of the defences, known to the writer, where they definitely survive *in situ*. The length of surviving wall was only 2.25 m. and this, along with other hints, suggests that the wall had been cut back by the insertion of the masonry forming the town defences. The lower 85 cm. of the *op.sig.* masonry observed was originally the below ground foundation.

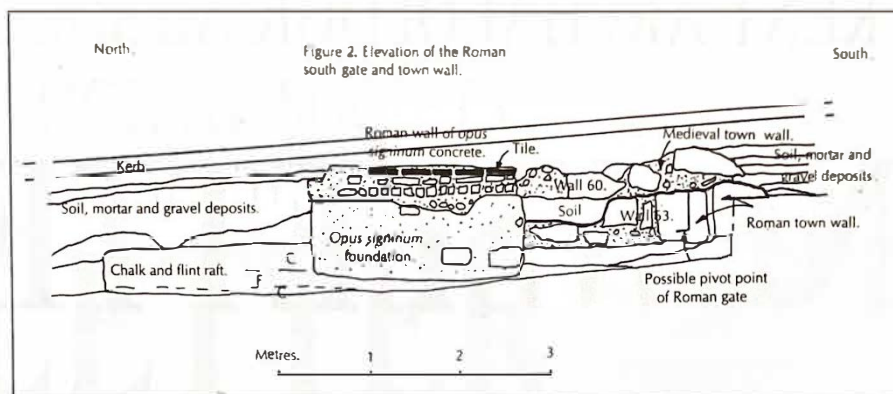
Although other interpretations are possible, the *op.sig.* wall is regarded as being a retaining wall to keep the late second century earthen rampart from falling into the line of the road. The masonry lay upon a 'sandwiched' foundation of chalk and flint at the front (south) of which there was a 90 cm. wide protrusion to the west. It is assumed that this protrusion continues across the road

to join with further foundation material on the west; a small part of the *op.sig.* wall forming this side of the gate passage was also seen. It is possible that such a 'tie' foundation across the road would provide support for an arch, preventing inward movement of the base of the jambs. As no tie foundation aligned with the north end of the *op.sig.* wall it is assumed that no tower straddled the carriageway.

The identification of the *op.sig.* 'wing walls' increases the possibility that a more prestigious gate, as proposed by Alec Detsicas (1972 p.132) (of which up until now the present writer had been extremely sceptical), would have existed at the East Gate. As suggested for Silchester (Wacher 1983, p.265), a masonry gate at this entrance would perhaps have been more likely constructed at the time of the earthwork defences rather than belonging to the third century wall phase.

The east-west aligned town wall showed two distinct structural phases (walls 60 and 63), separated by a layer of soil. It should be noted that there is a complete lack of dating evidence to provide 'absolute' dates. The most simple sequence is to assume that the lower wall is the Roman third century defence which was added to the front of the late second century earthen bank, and at this point, cut away the front of the *op.sig.* wall, destroying the conjectured arch in the process. The higher wall (60) is assumed to be of medieval date, but whether it is a repair of c.1100 or c.1225, representing scenarios B and A, as proposed by Colin Flight and Arthur Harrison (1986) respectively we have no way of knowing. To add to the problems a further wall, aligned east to west crosses the line of the thoroughfare. This wall is also assumed to be of medieval date and is presumably a blocking wall constructed during a time of emergency; the events of 1215 most readily spring to mind.

There is no reason to believe that a tower was constructed when the masonry wall was first added.



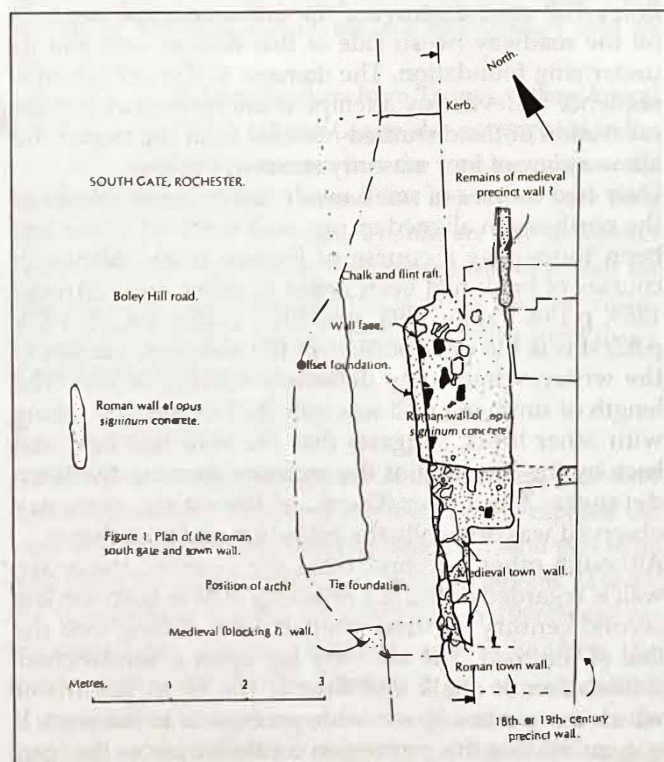
Indeed as it appears that the road deposits within the gate passage were truncated, thereby exposing the *op.sig.* foundation, any tower constructed in this phase would be in a perilous state from the outset. This suggested lack of a tower for the third century wall is mirrored at the North Gate (Harrison 1968, p. 70; 1981, p.99) and also (surprisingly) at the south-east angle of the defences (Harrison 1968, 76 and Fig. 3). We have no way of knowing whether or not an arch existed across the gate passage in this, or in the succeeding, structural phase. The Roman town wall was itself 'robbed' at an unknown date and eventually replaced by a new wall (presumably) in the medieval period. There is no evidence for a tower in this latter phase even though the ground surface had by this time risen to its original height or beyond.

Thanks are extended to Medway Council for allowing this short work to be published along with plan, elevation and photograph prior to their having had any archive report from myself. They have generously funded the archaeological work. Also thanked are the many would-be volunteers who have offered their help; unfortunately due to the nature of the site we have not been able to use volunteer labour on this occasion. Thanks are also extended to Paul Ritson and David Tucker of Medway Council, Liz Dyson of KCC, Peter Kendall of English Heritage and lastly the long suffering Mark Gibson and John Santer, respectively project manager and site agent of the repaving project, who have provided every assistance throughout.

Alan Ward Project manager 'CAT'

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New President

Our Society was founded in the nineteenth century, has flourished in the twentieth but the world is changing, not least the world of archaeology, history and heritage. The approach of the twenty first century and of a new Presidency, however, require a fundamental review of the role of our Society in that changing world. As our rules give responsibility to the President, in consultation with Council, for initiating new policies, I will be inviting Council to start the review. I will also be inviting Council to consider how to involve members in that process by consultation, debate and consideration of emerging conclusions. It will be important to consult other organisations in Kent and elsewhere to obtain ideas, perspective, goodwill and co-operation.

Our Society is challenged by the increasing specialisation of interests in the study of the past, resulting in isolation in research, fragmentation of resources, diversity of organisations and inadequate advocacy of our discipline. Co-operation must be the way forward and, in this, our Society must lead by example. The strength of our generalist approach is reflected in the use, in our title, of the word *archaeology* in the traditional sense, covering all aspects of the study of the past. We exist to serve, represent and include all, reconciling different interests wherever possible.

Our membership list testifies to the tradition of open recruitment of amateurs and professionals, forming a meeting place for mutual involvement and support. We must promote access to our discipline through information, training, facilities, advice, contacts and encouragement. Participation in our affairs must be promoted for another reason: the expertise, time and contacts of our members are our greatest strength. We are totally dependent on voluntary effort and the amount of member participation is the only limit on our activities. Of course, the income from our inherited assets maintains our independence and finances desirable projects, particularly publications.

Access through publication has always been the backbone of our Society, whether the long series of *Archaeologia Cantiana*, our research reports or our records series. However, the future of publication nationally is facing great change due to the volume of new material, advances in technology, greater specialisation and differing user requirements. What needs publishing and how information should be distributed has been the subject of intense debate, not least for excavation reports. The future of publication is a great opportunity for our Society to develop the traditional role but it is also a danger, given the importance to us of the activity. We must take care how we respond, as respond we must, to the modernisation of information distribution.

Our Society derives new responsibilities from the greater involvement of public institutions, universities, local government, national quangos and archaeological units in our discipline. We must be alert to pioneer new ideas or activities that public institutions do not find convenient at the time, we must use our independence to act as cheerleader and champion for the interests of archaeology, history and heritage within and without those organisations and we must be the critical friend seeking improvement, a protector of the public interest. Given the diversity of organisations and interests, the

Society is well placed to promote a research agenda for Kentish studies through consultation, review, advocacy and activities. Research priorities and requirements should be identified, co-ordination between studies assisted, new or neglected areas of research highlighted. As a learned society we must be committed to research and publication, or we are nothing. We are also the County society, covering the historic county of Kent not just the current administrative unit, and, as such, the guardians of the Kentish dimension to the study of archaeology. Kent has had a distinctive past but its Kentish character is under threat. We must ensure that our inherited traditions, adapted as necessary to meet modern requirements, are passed on to future generations.

Thus the future role of our Society, and the consequent changes in our objectives and activities, will be the theme of my Presidency. I look forward to your help.



PAUL OLDHAM

Paul Oldham joined the Society in 1960, becoming a Council member in 1971 as Membership Secretary. He is a member of the Churches, Fieldwork, Finance and Publication Committees of the Society.

With the late Allen Grove, a former President of the Society, he founded the Maidstone Area Archaeological Group after obtaining a Modern History Degree from Oxford University. After twelve years as Honorary Treasurer of the Council for British Archaeology, he was elected a Vice President.

Paul Oldham is a Kent County Councillor and Maidstone Borough Councillor, as well as a former Mayor of Maidstone. He is also a Warden of Rochester Bridge, a President of the New College at Cobham and a Governor of the University of Greenwich.

1998 Annual General Meeting Report

Friendly hosts and fine weather welcomed the Society for its Annual General Meeting in the ancient town of Queenborough. The quiet but ancient town proved to be an ideal place to visit and meet.

Before the meeting members were able to talk and enjoy refreshments provided by members of the Sheppey Local History Society and look at bookstalls and displays by Archaeology South East, John Gardner the bookbinder and others.

The meeting marked the retirement of Kenneth Gravett as President. After noting the sad death of Arthur Harrison, who had been Hon. General Secretary for twenty five years, he picked out some highlights from his ten years as President and expressed satisfaction at the increasing number of activities provided for members. Our Hon. Membership Secretary, Margaret Lawrence paid tribute to his achievements and presented him with a gift subscribed by members of the Society.

Paul Oldham, on taking office as President, spoke about his proposal to ask the Council to re-examine the Society's role in consultation with members and others. His remarks are reported elsewhere. Other changes were the election of Dr Michael Still as Hon. Curator, Michael Nightingale of Cromarty as a Vice President and Dr Paul Cullen, Terry Lawson and Peter Leach as new members of the Council.

After the formal business Brian Philp presented the President with a collection of letters of A. A. Arnold (a former officer of the Society) going back to 1881 which he had found inserted in his set of *Archaeologia Cantiana*, Simon Pratt of Canterbury Archaeological Trust described excavations at the nearby site at Halfway which had produced material from the mesolithic to medieval periods and Jonathan Fryer welcomed the members to Queenborough and spoke about its history.

In the afternoon members of the Sheppey Local History Society conducted parties of members around the town, its church and the Guildhall (which contains a small museum) where they provided further refreshments to round off a very enjoyable and interesting day.

PRESENTATION TO THE KENT ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY

At the 1998 Annual General Meeting of the K.A.S., held at Queenborough in May, Brian Philp presented an important collection of letters to the Society. These had been written from about 1881 to 1930 and related to matters of archaeological interest, mostly in the Rochester and Gravesend areas. Many were signed by early officers of the K.A.S. and leading Kent archaeologists. Together they form a unique insight into a period of about 50 years.

Brian Philp explained how the letters had come into his possession and how he thought the presentation to be appropriate on such an auspicious occasion, with the election of a new President (Councillor Paul Oldham) and also the approach of the new Millennium.

In 1970 a Col. R. C. M. Arnold, then of Swerford but earlier of Kent, had died and his widow had asked Ronald Jessup, a K.A.S. Vice President, to find a young

member of the Society who was deeply involved in Kent archaeology who would make good use of her late husbands complete set of *Archaeologia Cantiana*. Ronald nominated Brian who then travelled to Northants one cold November day and picked up the books. On examining the early volumes he found they contained some 60 letters neatly filed between the pages!

A closer inspection showed that the early volumes also had the book-plate of Augustus Arnold, to whom the letters had been written. He was a well-known solicitor at Rochester, from an important local family, a great scholar and a contributor to *Archaeologia Cantiana*. He had been born in 1835 and had joined the K.A.S. in 1860, becoming a Council member in 1882, a Vice President in 1912 and also a Fellow of the Society of Antiquaries in 1891. He died in 1932, aged 97, having been a K.A.S. member for 72 years.

Mr. Philp explained to the A.G.M. that Augustus Arnold must have collected Vols. I (1858) - XLIII (1931) and on his death they had been inherited by Col. Arnold (his Grandson) who added Vols. XLIV (1932) - LXXXIV (1969), having joined the K.A.S. in 1933. Brian Philp had himself joined the K.A.S. in 1954, as a very keen schoolboy, and has added Vols. LXXXV (1970) - CXVI (1996) to the set, hence some 120 volumes in all. In 1971 he had then given all his own volumes (from 1939) to the Bromley & West Kent Group in the spirit of the original generous donation. - The letters filed in the books had, interestingly, been preserved by Col. Arnold for 28 years (1932-70) and by Brian Philp also for 28 years (1970-1998).

After the A.G.M. Brian Philp consulted with Viscount Monckton of Brenchley, a former K.A.S. President and Richard Ansell, a former K.A.S. officer and agreed that he would arrange for the total collection to be passed on (eventually) to another keen young member of the K.A.S. to perpetuate the tradition started by Augustus Arnold. Mr. Philp added, that it might be additionally interesting if he also filed letters on K.A.S. matters in with the later volumes for discovery in years to come!

Kenneth Gravett Retirement of the President

The retirement of the President was marked by the presentation of a cheque with a list of members who had subscribed to it. Mr. Gravett was thanked for the ten precious years which he had given to the Society and for being a most active president involving himself in all aspects of its work. Added to this had been his personal interest in, and encouragement of, those who sought his advice. He was also thanked for being willing to share his inexhaustible knowledge of Kent buildings and for continuing with Building Records Conferences and his work with the Historic Buildings Committee.

MESSAGE FROM THE PAST PRESIDENT:

I would like to thank members for their kind comments upon my retirement and for their most generous present. In my anticipated extra spare time (which I haven't seen yet!) I hope to recommence photography and have spent the major part of my present on a new exposure meter, which determines paper grade as well as exposure, for use with my enlarger. I shall think kindly of the K.A.S. when I use it. I have also started to buy some books.

Kenneth Gravett

K.A.S. Excursions 1998.

1. The **Annual Summer Excursion in May**, attended by 37 members, was based for a week in Fontainebleau to enable us to examine Kentish links with the Ile de France. At Malmaison, particularly, we appreciated the connection between the Empress Josephine and Camden Place, Chislehurst through her grandson, the Prince Louis Napoleon later Emperor Napoleon III. As a young man, he stayed at the house in the 1930s; as the exiled Emperor, he died there in 1873.

The high point of the whole week was a candle-lit visit to Vaux le Vicompte, the chateau which illustrates, in bricks and mortar, the divergent paths of English and French history after our 17th. century revolution: a

jealous French king (Louis XIV), could imprison his finance minister for life for building too grand a home. The English establishment could force a too arbitrary king into exile and choose a successor more to their taste in 1688.

Joy Saynor

The Country Social Evening with sunshine and B.B.Q. supper in the grounds of Bradbourne House, East Malling was preceded by a conducted tour of the house to see the restoration now taking place. Especially appreciated was the opportunity to view the cellar and wine vaults.

Margaret Lawrence

Events, Outings, Lectures

K.A.S. Events

Christmas Buffet Lunch Saturday December 5th at the Hop Farm Country Park, Paddock Wood. See enclosed leaflet.

1999 Summer Excursion For details please send an S.A.E. to the Hon. Excursion Secretary. The programme will be circulated before Christmas.

Saturday 12th September. Afternoon visit to *St Nicholas at Wade*. Places are still available for this last summer visit, which includes the undercroft in the village and an opportunity to explore Sarre windmill where we shall have tea.

Conference of Building Recorders The 35th Conference of Building Recorders will be held at the Barn Hall, Charing on Saturday 10th October 1998, commencing at 2.15 pm. A detailed programme will be sent with the tickets, but it is hoped to include contributions on the North Door of Aldington Church, Medieval Tiles at Great Chart and Hollingbourne, The Hearth Tax in Kent and Stock Bricks in Gravesend and Northfleet. It is hoped that the ladies from Charing Church will provide their usual cup of tea and home-made biscuits. Tickets (at £1 for members and £2 for visitors, tea extra) are available from Terry Lawson, the Hon. Assistant Secretary in advance or at the door.

Council for Kentish Archaeology Annual Conference. 'Aspects of Prehistory in South East England'. Saturday 14th November 1998, 2pm. to 5.30 pm. at Christ Church College, Canterbury. Illustrated lectures include, Retrieving London's Prehistory, The Butser Ancient Farm Project and The earliest occupation of Britain. Tickets: £3.00 (payable C.K.A.) Available from C.K.A. (S.A.E. please)

Sheppey Town Walks Monthly strolls through Sheppey's history with a leader from the Sheppey Local History Society. Each walk will last about two and a half hours - depending on the weather and will include light refreshments and visits. Sheerness on Wednesday 30th September, starting at 2pm at Sheerness Station.

Queenborough on Saturday 31st October, starting at 2pm at Queenborough Station. All walks are £1.20 which includes admissions and refreshments. There is no need to book just turn up.

College Certificate Courses Canterbury: Certificate in Pre-historic and Experimental Archaeology. Christ Church College, North Holmes Road, Canterbury. Saturdays 10 am to noon, from 3rd October for 20 weeks. Details from 'Admissions' (01227) 767700 ext 2492.

WEA Courses Dover: Britannia: A History of Roman Britain. The history and archaeology of Britain from 100 BC TO 450 AD. Wednesdays 7.00 to 9.00 pm from 23rd September for 20 weeks at Dover Girls Grammar School.

Gravesend: Britannia: A History of Roman Britain. The history and archaeology of Britain from 100 BC to 450 AD. Thursdays 7.30 to 9.30 pm from 1st October for 20 weeks at Victoria Adult Education Centre.

Sittingbourne: Christianity to Conquest. The history and archaeology of Britain from AD 597 to c.1066. Mondays 7.30 to 9.30 pm from 28th September for 20 weeks at Sittingbourne Adult Education College, College Road. Details of all these courses from the WEA Head Office (01634) 842140.

GCSE AND GCE Courses Rochester: GCSE Archaeology (Archaeological methods; Pre-historic and Roman Britain). Tuesdays 7 to 9 pm from 22nd September for 27 weeks at Medway (Eastgate) Adult Education Centre.

Rochester: GCE A Level Ancient History (Greek 650-404 BC Roman 70 BC to AD 96). Fridays 7 to 9 pm from 25th September for 27 weeks. Medway (Eastgate) Adult Education Centre. Details of both courses (01634) 845359.

University of Sussex - Centre for Continuing Education Certificate in Practical Archaeology. In 1998/9 modules for this 2 year part-time course are available at Brighton, Crawley, Crowborough, Hastings, Lewes and other venues. Various courses can be taken as 'stand-alone modules'. Further details from Yvonne Barnes, Centre for Continuing Education, Education Development Building, University of Sussex, Falmer, Brighton BR1 9RG, Tel: (01273) 678537. The range of courses includes: Archaeological survey; the Study of Artifacts; Historical sources for archaeologists; Archaeological illustration; Recording Churchyards and many more.

The Impenetrable Forest? Pre-historic and Romano-British Settlement in the Weald, an account of some recent Fieldwork.

INTRODUCTION

During the last five years a programme of fieldwork has been undertaken across a transect of the Weald between Ulcombe and Frittenden. The underlying geology is principally a heavy clay in the flood plain of the River Beult. There are, however, a number of ridges created by outcrops of freshwater limestone and iron bearing shale-like rock. This part of the county has previously received little archaeological attention. It has only proved possible to carry out this survey over an extended period through the goodwill and co-operation of a number of landowners. Ploughland has been walked, often repeatedly, in varying soil conditions. This has resulted in the recording and recovery of a considerable quantity of archaeological material.

RESULTS OF FIELDWORK SURVEY.

Virtually every arable field produced pre-historic flint material, including low lying areas that seemed less obvious sites for early activity. Two extensive flint working sites, both on south-west facing slopes, may indicate more permanent settlement. The Bronze Age is represented by the find of a single palstave axe, (published in Arch Cant, Vol. CXV, 1995). Iron Age pottery has been found in five locations in the survey area. Two sites have provided evidence to date them to the Middle Iron Age, (c5th century B.C.), the pottery is some of the earliest yet found in the Weald. From the spoil of a recently dug ditch in Headcorn came an assemblage of pre-historic sherds. Amongst these were a number with combed decoration found in association with fired clay and iron slag. Similar material had been found earlier at a site 800 metres away during the excavation of a pond. As well as pottery this site contained at least one contemporary iron smelting furnace. This furnace has been dated from ceramic evidence to c500 B.C. and may possibly be some of the earliest evidence for iron working in the county. The process is thought to have arrived here from Continental Europe around 800 B.C. A further furnace, identical in form, was found during a fieldwalking survey 1 kilometre away in Ulcombe. It possibly dates from the 1st century B.C. When excavated it was found that a small cremation cemetery had been sited above it fairly soon after its last use. Three of the burials had been inserted into the upper part of the furnace and one of these contained a brooch identical to one found in a cremation at the Swarling Farm Belgic cemetery. This was investigated by J. P. Bushe-Fox in 1921 and also produced evidence for iron smelting in close proximity to the burials. The stratification there though had been somewhat disturbed by a later gravel quarry. Together with the 'Aylesford Cemetery', which was examined in 1886 by Arthur Evans, these cemeteries form the type-sites for the 'Aylesford Swarling' culture. Three Romano-British sites have also been discovered in the parishes of Headcorn and Ulcombe and their excavation has formed a major part of the survey. Two of the sites are in close

proximity to the pre-historic iron working areas and this suggests a continuity of occupation. Site 1 consisted of a rectangular structure, of timber construction, (Fig 1). Excavation revealed the ground plan of the building in the form of postholes and sill beam outlines. It measured 9m X 4m, with an annexe and porch on the east side 6m X 3m. The internal floors were overlain with domestic debris particularly the annexe area where the material included waste pieces of animal horn used for implement handles. Iron tools included knife blades, and a sickle. An oven and a large domestic hearth as well as evidence for internal room division were also found within this structure. Beneath this building lay a ditch containing Flavian pottery, late 1st century. A sherd of Samian ware had part of a Latin personal name scratched into its surface and a large yellow and white glass bead from the porch area is of the Iron Age tradition. A second century date for the building would though seem probable from ceramic and coinage evidence. Site 2 adjoined Site 1 and consisted of a sunken floored domestic structure, (Fig 2), dating to the mid to later 1st century A.D. It was not possible to ascertain the length of the complete building as it had been disturbed by the later structure at Site 1 lying immediately to the east. However, it measured 4m in width with an internal entrance ramp. The interior contained a well preserved clay oven, a fragment of window glass, and a considerable quantity of pottery. Similar Flavian period ceramics link this building to the ditch found beneath Site 1. Comparison can be made with this structure and the sunken floored houses found recently at Monkton on the Isle of Thanet. During the drought conditions experienced during the early summer of 1997 some of the survey area was photographed from the air by helicopter. Two of the photographs indicated a possible early field system situated on the hillslope directly above the Romano-British sites 1 and 2. The features appeared as a series of

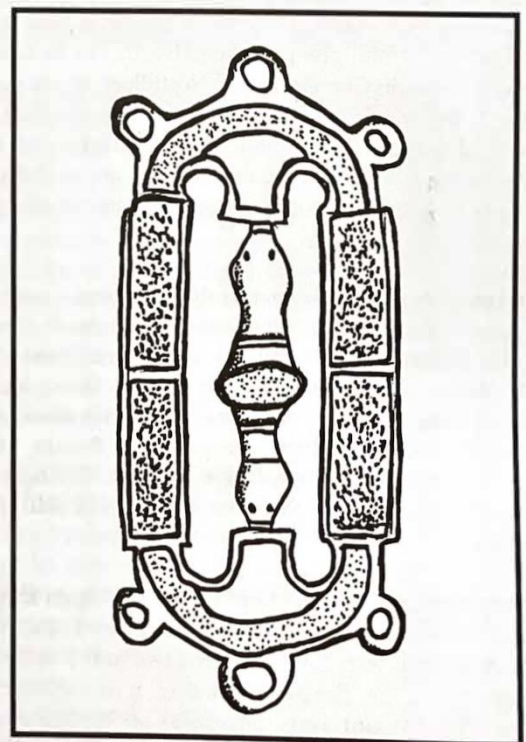


Fig. 3

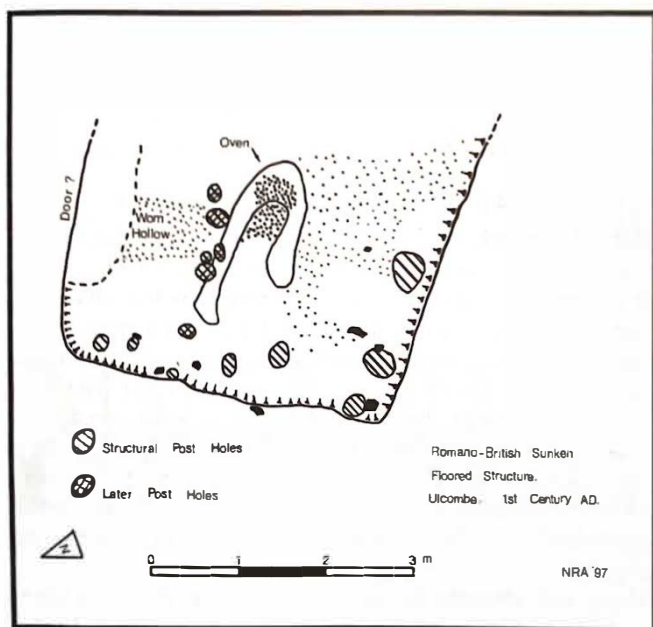


Fig. 2

interlocked sub-rectangular ditched enclosures in a field of wheat. During earlier fieldwalking across this area a number of abraded Iron Age and Romano-British sherds were found together with a fragment of a quernstone. The crop marks seemed to indicate that one of the field ditches coincided with that found earlier under the building at Site 1. It was sectioned by machine after the harvest and found to contain further Flavian pottery. The field system is therefore associated with the Romano-British sites and could perhaps contain elements of earlier enclosures. Waste industrial material in the form of iron slag is prevalent across both sites. Several probable hearths have been noted after ploughing. One has been excavated, but, consisted of little more than a circular patch of burnt clay with scattered pieces of furnace lining, together with charcoal and slag.

A few pieces of 1st-2nd century A.D. pottery confirmed a Roman date, however, any structure had been removed by ploughing. The sites seem to have been primarily agricultural with any iron smelting taking place on a fairly limited scale. On the assumed edge of the site was a cremation cemetery where three burials were excavated. A third Romano-British site was located to the south of Headcorn. Again, it lay on a south facing slope and was found by fieldwalking. A trial trench, laid out across the zone of greatest pottery density, located an occupation horizon and a small ditch. There were slight traces of a possible timber structure but the area has been subject to intensive agriculture and no building plan was discernible. A large quantity of stratified pottery was found together with coins, nails, a knife blade and a lead steelyard weight. However, the most surprising find came from the upper fill of the ditch. It is a decorated military belt plate dating from the early third century, (Fig 3). This type of belt fitting has been found across the Roman Empire from Vindolanda to Dura Europos in Syria usually on military sites. On either side are plates of yellow and black 'millefiori' inlay with a zoomorphic creature as the central bar. To the west of the site was a possible corn drying oven. When

excavated it was found to contain a number of fragments of quernstones together with a further lead steelyard weight. A substantial ditch was traced around two sides of the site by augering and selective excavation at several points. In one of the sections was a considerable deposit of burnt clay, iron slag and cinder. Just beyond the southern boundary was a small cremation cemetery, where 3 burials were recovered. Preliminary analysis of the pottery from this site, (around 1,100 sherds), shows that some 77% is grog tempered ware, ie, 'Patchgrove' native type material. The remainder is made up of sandy wares, North Kent material and Samian. The site is probably another farmstead, there is nothing to suggest a military connection despite the presence of the belt plate.

Summary:- This fieldwork has provided evidence for significant pre-historic occupation in this part of the Weald. Iron smelting was taking place as early as the Middle Iron Age and continued through the 1st and 2nd centuries A.D., despite the lack of significant geological deposits of iron bearing rocks as found farther west in the High Weald. The Greensand ridge to the north of the survey area has been assumed to represent the southern limit of occupation by the Belgic tribes in Kent, the archaeological evidence though appears to argue against this assumption. The known limits of Belgic influence have therefore been pushed significantly

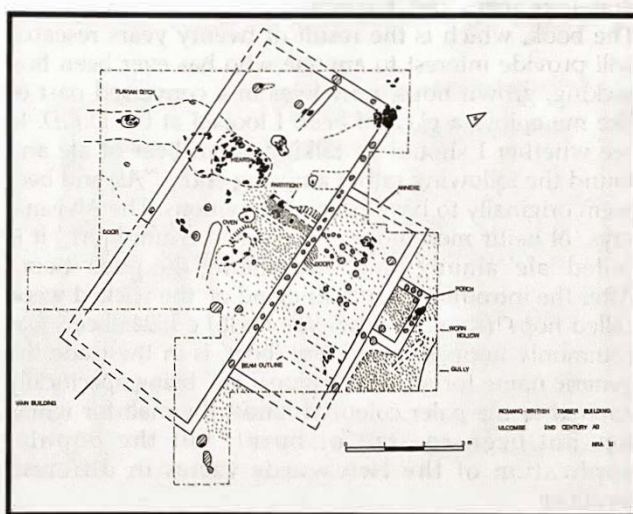


Fig. 1

farther south. The finding of three, probable agricultural, settlements dating from the mid 1st to early 3rd centuries A.D. is the first definite evidence for non-iron related exploitation of the Weald. Similar field systems with associated occupation sites have only been found at one other site in Kent at Highstead. These Romano-British sites may represent a continuance of settlement between the pre-conquest period and the post-conquest. Rural Settlements producing a preponderance of native type pottery wares appear to have been utilising rectangular timber dwellings from early on in the Roman occupation. Mixed agriculture was evidently possible even on the heavy clay soils of the Weald. There is a considerable amount of material from these sites to process and research before they are published in full, this account is therefore an interim report until then.

Neil Aldridge.

LETTER

Edward Hasted (1732 - 1812)

I should be most grateful to hear from anyone who possesses anything in the way of letters, diaries, or other MSS relating to the Kentish historian, for possible use, subject to acknowledgment, in my biography of him, now nearing completion.

Please write to: Dr. S. B. Black.

BOOKS

(The need to publish the research report in honour of the late Arthur Harrison and the information from the Annual General Meeting have meant that, regrettably, many of the book reviews have been held over to the next issue. Eds).

Kentish Oasts, 16th - 20th Century, Their History, Construction and Equipment by Robin & Ivan Walton. (1998) ISBN 0-9506977-7X. Available from the publishers Christine Swift. £19.50 plus £2.50 postage & packing.

The oast houses of Kent for me provide both fascination and charm. Fascination in that there appears to be endless varieties and charm because their striking character adds to the rich tapestry of this part of the country. The book, 230 pages, clothbound hardback 250 mm x 175 mm has a marvellous full colour laminated dust jacket showing fourteen different types of oasts. It also includes 134 black and white photographs and 46 drawings, maps and diagrams.

The book, which is the result of twenty years research will provide interest to anyone who has ever been hop picking, grown hops, now lives in a converted oast or like me enjoys a glass of beer. I looked at the *O.E.D.* to see whether I should be talking about beer or ale and found the following rather amusing entry, "*Ale* and beer seem originally to have been synonymous. The *Alvismál* says 'öl heitir með mönnum, en með Ásum bjórr,' it is called 'ale' among men, and among the gods 'beer.' After the introduction into England of 'the wicked weed called hops' (Retn. to Edw. VI's Parlt.) c 1524, 'beer' was commonly hopped; at present 'beer' is in the trade the generic name for all malt liquors, 'ale' being specifically applied to the paler coloured kinds, the malt for which has not been roasted or burnt; but the popular application of the two words varies in different localities'.

The reader is treated to every delight in the construction of the oasts from the earliest printed plans so far located in 1574, varieties of different building materials, timber work, cowl designs and many more fascinating items. The machinery and equipment used, both old and modern, is discussed and explained. When Robin Walton published his first book on the Oast houses in Kent in 1985 production of hops had declined during the previous hundred year period from over 46,000 acres to just a few thousand acres. The decline has continued so that at the this time there are only about 3,000 acres of hops under cultivation in Kent with 72 working oasts. Many more have been converted to other uses, some, as the illustrations show, to attractive dwellings. The book provides for many oasts, some sadly now lost, detailed descriptions. The cover illustration and p. 101 shows an early black and white photograph of an oast at Meopham converted in 1903 incorporating a total of thirteen windows, of which ten were dormers or partial dormers, built into the roundel roof.

This stimulating and beautifully illustrated book will I am sure be of interest to many and I would urge you to

purchase a copy and discover more about these buildings dotted around the county. For visitors to our county here is an explanation of these strange buildings and for those with friends abroad perhaps an unusual gift that reflects part of the character of the county of Kent.

Robert Hiscock, *Gravesend and Northfleet Revisited*, (1998), 126 pages, card covers. ISBN 0-7509-1765-2 £9.99.

It is perhaps indicative of the interest in the changing pattern of this community that it has been possible to produce three marvellous photographic volumes recording aspects of the past now almost lost and forgotten. This is the third volume for the area in the series of 'Britain in Old Photographs'. In 1988 Robert Hiscock compiled a *Gravesend in Old Photographs* and in 1990 *Around Gravesham in Old Photographs* both published by Sutton Publishing; they are now sadly out of print.

Many will already be familiar with our Vice-President and know of his life-long residence and interest in the history and archaeology of the area. The author has been able to record for the reader detailed captions to the views, some of which it would appear are unique. These images show the many changes experienced by this once tiny community over the last two hundred years and evoke long-forgotten memories of this interesting and much altered region of Kent.

In the *Faversham Town Book* a series of accounts for 16th century record the cost of travelling by horse from Faversham to Gravesend and then on by boat to London. I was particularly interested to read in this volume that, "Travel by road was difficult and the long ferry between Billingsgate, London and Gravesend provided both an easier route for travellers and employment for men of the town. Their rights to carry passengers from Gravesend to London were conferred on 'the men of the town' by Royal Charters, the earliest of which dates from 1401 and which referred to the rights as 'having subsisted from the time where of the memory of man is not to the contrary! The ferry was at first a tide barge . . . sailing boats with a 'tilt' or awning were introduced in the sixteenth century . . ."

I would recommend this book to anyone who has an interest in Gravesham and to the changing face of Kent communities; there will be hours of pleasure pouring over these photographs.

Duncan Harrington

KAS Hon. Editor's Announcement

The Hon. Editors welcome all letters, articles and communications and would particularly like to receive more from members and others, especially requests for research information, finds, books and related topics. The Editors wish to draw readers' attention to the fact that neither the Council of the KAS, nor the Editors are answerable for opinions 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 1998 to Hon. Editors, Mr & Mrs L. E. Ilott.

Published by the Kent Archaeological Society, The Museum, St. Faith's Street, Maidstone, Kent. ME14 1LH.

Printed by Delta Press, Crayford Industrial Estate, Swaisland Drive, Crayford DA1 4HT. Typesetting and Design by Janset 0181-301 2856.