



Archaeological Investigations at Maydensole, Near Dover 1996-1999

Introduction

Since 1996 an integrated programme of archaeological field survey and excavation has been undertaken across a sample section of the North Downs dip slope, about two kilometres north-east of Whitfield, near Dover.

Air photographs have revealed that the North Downs across this area was intensively occupied during the late prehistoric and Roman periods, evidenced by such features as enclosures, track ways, field systems and ring-ditches, representing a dense, widespread pattern of both nucleated and dispersed multi-period settlement. Few of these rural settlement sites have been subject to archaeological excavation. Fewer still have been subject to detailed field survey and study within their geographic context. The present work has been carried out with the objective of examining in detail the landscape setting, morphology, date and character of one of these settlements. The work has also been undertaken with a view to placing the results within a wider regional framework whilst, at the same time, endeavouring to further understanding of the pattern and development of rural settlement within east Kent between the Late Iron Age and Roman periods. The fieldwork was undertaken with the co-operation of the landowner and the enthusiastic assistance of the Dover Archaeological Group, led by Keith Parfitt, who carried out the greater part of the excavation.

The archaeological investigations presently described have focused on a well defined sample group of air photographic features located immediately north of

Maydensole Farm and have consisted of an initial phase of non-invasive field survey, followed by evaluation and limited open area excavation. The air photographic evidence for early settlement north of Maydensole Farm (centred on TR 31404795) consists principally of enclosures, tracks and field systems. Taken together these form a large, complex settlement

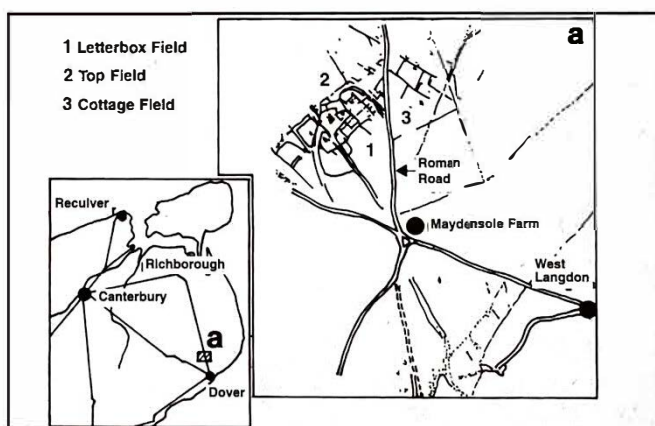


Fig. 1 Location of Maydensole Farm showing air photographic features

occupying an area of over 12ha located across the ridge and south-facing slopes of one of the many east-west valleys which here combine to form the characteristic rolling chalk Downland landscape.

To place the site within its modern setting, the features can be seen to extend across Letterbox Field and Top Field, to the north-west of Maydensole Farm, and Cottage Field to the north-east (Fig 1). Although to date the investigations have concentrated on these settlement features the air photographs record other equally substantial settlements in the locality, but of different character and possibly, date, as at Broome Bungalows to the north. Cutting across the grain of the landscape is the former alignment of the Roman *via strata* connecting *Portus Dubris* (Dover) to *Rutupae*

(Richborough), now delineated in part by the present alignment of the lane known as Roman Road. From a point on the northern ridge of the valley, immediately to the north of the settlement at Maydensole, there is a clear panoramic view encompassing both of these major Roman military centres.

Previous Discoveries

Prior to the commencement of the recent investigations the area to the north of Maydensole Farm had produced a few archaeological finds indicating that the settlement was occupied during the

Roman period. The earliest documented finds are those made by Captain Charles Newington, whose field notebooks record details of an early Roman cremation burial found in February 1911 just north of Maydensole Farm. The burial group, consisting of a cinerary urn and accessory vessels, including two Samian ware dishes, was found by workmen during the cutting of trenches for a new water main along the line of Roman Road just north of Maydensole Farm (Payne 1911, lxxxiii). At the same time, during a frosty early morning site visit, Newington observed and sketched a regular pattern of linear features visible as

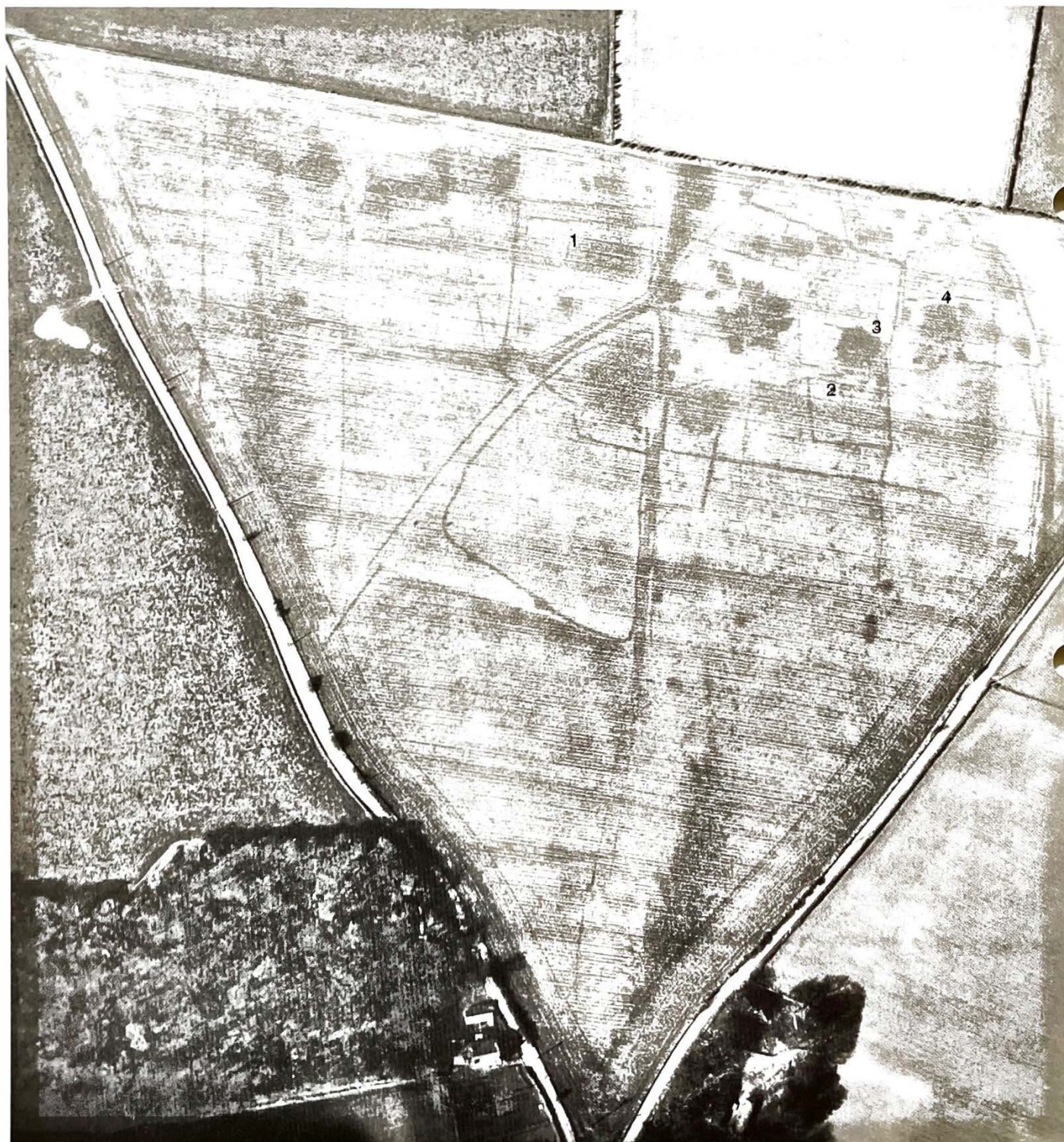


Plate 1 : Roman settlement immediately north of Maydensole Farm visible as air photographic features. The modern lane forming the eastern field boundary marks the alignment of the former Roman road (source: NMR908/202 dated 2.3.76). Numbers 1 and 2 mark the rectangular enclosures, number 3 and 4 mark the positions of the large anomalous features identified for investigation.

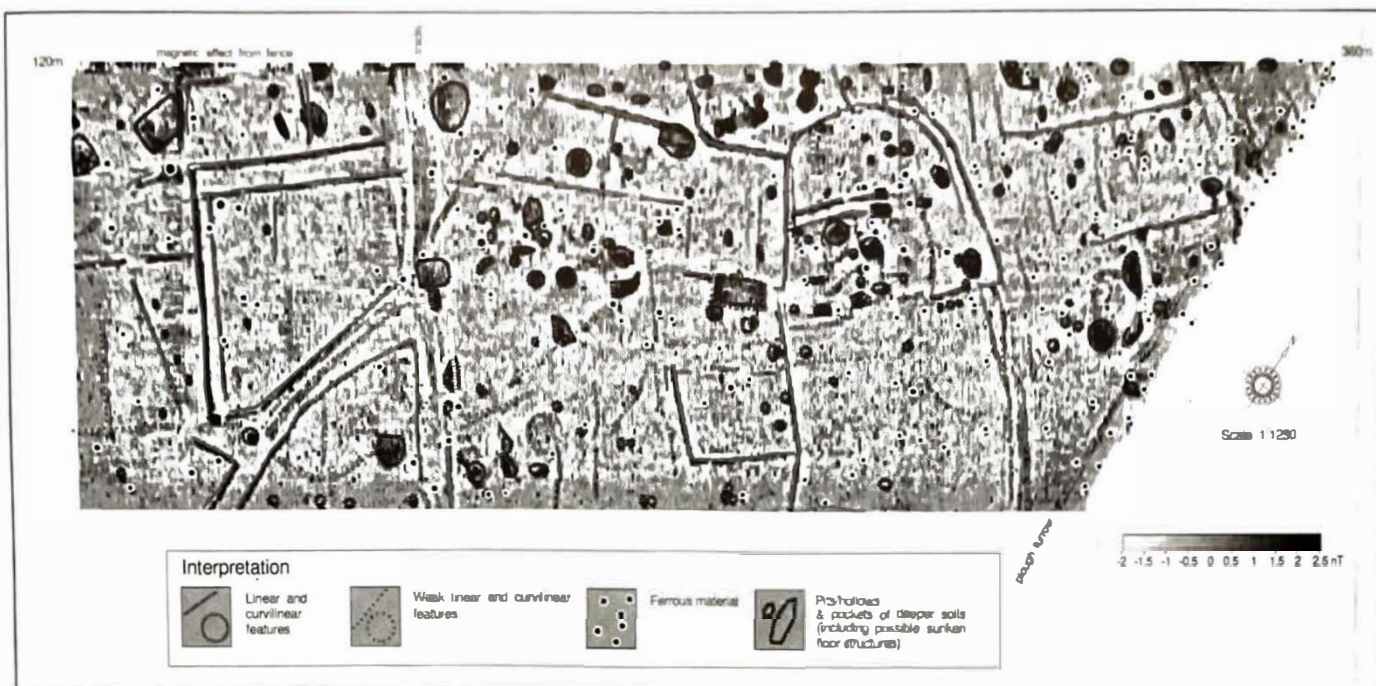


Plate 2 : Grey shade plot of settlement features across Letterbox Field recorded during magnetometric survey undertaken in 1996-97

a result of differential growth in the crop across Cottage Field, abutting the eastern side of Roman Road. Newington also recorded the presence of a similar pattern of features across Letterbox field on the western side of the lane, and note the frequent finding of Roman coins across Cottage Field.

An apparently more significant discovery was made in August 1949 by M. P. Dare, who reported and published the finding of an inscribed Roman domestic portable altar from a point along the line of the former Roman road just south of Maydensole Farm (Dare 1949). Subsequently, a detailed study of the find concluded that although the altar was genuine the inscription was modern (Wright 1951; Anon. 1954). To this day, the reasons for this archaeological hoax remain a mystery.

Following these earlier discoveries, archaeological air photographic survey (carried out during 1976-77) revealed for the first time a substantial part of the layout of the settlement, confirming in part the observations made by Newington some 65 years previously (Plate 1). These photographs show that the settlement consists of a number of components: a principle central track or hollow way, other subsidiary track ways, a series of rectangular enclosures, some sub-divided, and ditch alignments probably forming part of the outlying field system. On the west, the overall pattern of the track ways and enclosures indicates a direct and presumably contemporary relationship between the two, whilst to the east, the ditch alignments define a system of small rectangular fields, abutting and related to another major track way. The track ways clearly converge on Maydensole following alignments to the north-west and north-east.

In contrast, the field system appears to be cut by the former alignment of the Roman road, indicating either that the fields formed part of a Late Iron Age/early Roman phase of the settlement or that the road was laid out late in the Roman period.

The discoveries recorded by Newington in 1911 indicated that the settlement was occupied during the early Roman period. Over the past twenty years, a substantial corpus of finds has been recovered from the general area of the fields surrounding Maydensole Farm as a result of systematic and continuing amateur metal detecting. These finds have comprised a few Late Iron Age coins and a large number of Roman coins, as well as Roman dress accessories and other artefacts including lead weights, a possible lead seal and quernstone fragments. Overall, the pattern of coin loss, with the bulk of the Roman coins dating to the late 3rd to mid 4th centuries AD, is typical for a Roman period rural settlement (Esmonde Cleary 1997, 453).

Field and Magnetometric Survey 1996-1997

Following cataloguing of this assemblage of metal detected finds, a programme of fieldwork began in August 1996 with a gridded surface field survey. Analysis of the finds recovered, which consisted largely of pottery, has indicated that the main period of settlement occurred between the 1st to 2nd century AD. The date range of the bulk of the pottery recovered contrasts with the quantity and date range of the coin evidence previously recorded, although there was a significant amount of pottery recovered to suggest clearly continuity of settlement into the late Roman period. The gridded field survey was

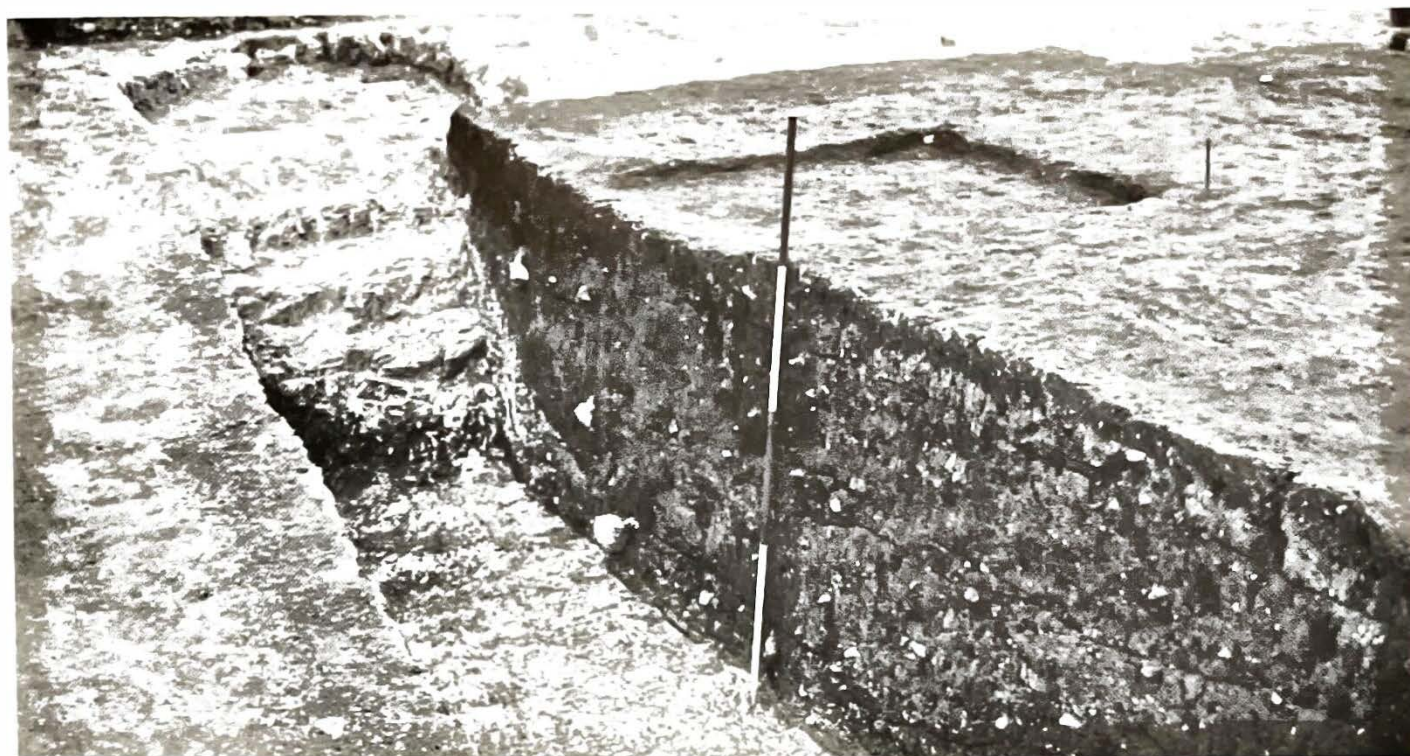


Plate 3 : Top Field 1997 : Rectangular building, showing position of oven (top, centre) and flint wall foundations.

complimented by a magnetometric evaluation, undertaken in September 1996 and again in September 1997 across 4ha of Letterbox Field (Johnson 1996; 1997). This aimed to enhanced the detail visible on the air photographs and provide further information on the internal morphology and character of the settlement. A

complex pattern of small sub-divided rectangular enclosures was revealed, some containing large anomalous features which may possibly be quarries, whilst the presence of possible hearths indicates that some may contain buildings or industrial features (Plate 2).

Excavations 1997-1999

Evaluation excavations were undertaken between May and September 1997 along the southern edge of Top Field, adjacent to Letterbox Field. The evaluation comprised a 150m long machine cut trench which revealed the principal south-east to north-west aligned central hollow way previously referred to, which was found to have a width and depth of 15m and 2m respectively. In addition, a number of lesser track ways, intersecting and re-cut boundary ditches defining field systems and enclosures and a number of small quarry pits were recorded, many of the features dating to the 1st to 2nd centuries AD.

The investigations also revealed the greater part of a building, occupied through to the late 4th century AD, with substantial flint wall foundations, internal partitions of different periods and an oven. Infant burials were also found, interred tight up against the wall foundations (Plate 3). To the north of the building, a deep oval pit of much earlier date contained possible ritual deposits, the fills incorporating the carefully deposited remains of a chicken, directly overlying a separate deposit containing the skull of a large dog. The excavations

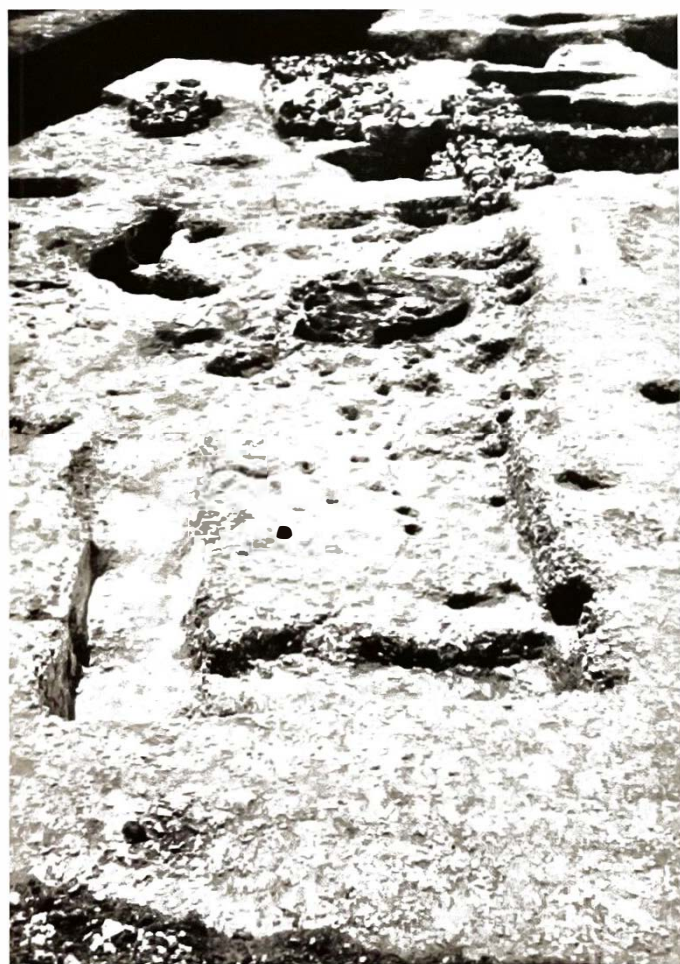


Plate 4 : Letterbox Field 1998 : Section across quarry feature showing southern stepped edge and fills. The associated sunken-featured building is visible in the background.

also produced a significant assemblage of pottery, including one large early-mid 1st century AD group in association with a Late Iron Age coin of Sego, circa 1BC-AD10. The fills of some of the ditch and pit features, as well as some of the later structural features of the building, contained late Roman pottery and coins, showing the settlement was occupied through to the latter decades of the 4th century AD.

Further open area excavations were undertaken between August 1998 and February 1999 across a central section of Letterbox Field within the area previously subject to magnetometric survey. The primary aim was to examine a representative area of the settlement to obtain information on its chronological development, status and function. The excavation revealed the greater part of the layout of one of the enclosures and the relationship to adjoining enclosures, together with short lengths of ditches of different character and date. Investigation of the large anomalous features on the magnetometric survey revealed that these probably represented deep linear quarries located at the corners of the enclosures. Abutting the southern edge of one of the features the complete plan of a sunken featured building was recorded (Plate 4).

The final infilling of the quarry features consisted of a dark loam soil containing quantities of ash and a considerable quantity of artefacts and coins including some dating to the late 4th century AD. The latest features recorded comprised a series of substantial flint packed postholes cutting the final fills of the quarry features, probably representing part of a large late or post-Roman timber building.

Post excavation study and analysis of the results of the various phases of field investigations is now well advanced with the results for work undertaken to 1998 largely complete. Publication of the final results is planned for 2001/2. Further episodes of field investigation are also being considered.

Richard Cross and Tony Redding
February 2000
e-mail: trspr@trspr.co.uk

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The Isle of Thanet Archaeological Society

would like to thank the KAS for the grant that has enabled them to buy a new computer for the use of their newly formed Young Archaeologists Club. The Society had run a youth section for many years from the mid 1980's and has always encouraged the active involvement of children and teenagers in its activities. Unfortunately, the club folded a couple of years ago, but has recently re-started with a new leader. It will be affiliated to the national YAC and its leaders vetted. Meetings will be once a month on a Saturday mornings at the Society's headquarters in Broadstairs. All 9-16 year olds are welcome, as are older people who would like to help!

Further details are available from the YAC leader,

Thanet Archaeological Society.
Crampton Tower Yard,
High St.
Broadstairs CT10 2AB.

CHRISTMAS LUNCH

The Christmas lunch held at the Hop Farm Country Park, Paddock Wood attracted some eighty members who enjoyed a splendid meal. They were entertained by the vivacious Tonbridge Mummers. This was followed in the afternoon by a guided tour of Roydon Hall at East Peckham, home of the Twysden family until 1835. Members also enjoyed the splendid tea provided by our hosts.

By popular opinion White's Restaurant has already been booked for this years Christmas lunch for 9th December 2000.

Reminder Allington Castle May 27th Social evening, Fork supper. Please telephone Margaret Lawrence for tickets.

KAS LIBRARY - VARIATIONS TO OPENING HOURS

Maidstone Museum have notified the Society that the Museum (and hence the KAS Library) will not open until 11.30 am on one Thursday of every month throughout this year.

This is to allow for Museum staff training. The dates affected are 11th May, 15th June, 13th July, 10th August, 14th September, 12th October, 16th November and 14th December.

CHURCHES COMMITTEE

The Churches committee of the KAS exists to promote more widely the appreciation of our heritage. Accordingly we wish to encourage the writing and publication of up to date guides to places of worship. The Committee is prepared to help the authors of such guides with guidelines for content and assistance in locating study resources. Financial help is also available for approved projects. These should aim at making the features of the buildings and the artefacts contained in them as accessible as possible to the general public. In the first instance a telephone enquiry is suggested.

INTERESTED MEMBER?

A KAS member with clerical skills and an interest in churches is required for minimal but interesting correspondence work as Hon. Secretary of the Churches Committee. Minute taking and agenda preparation is already covered. Please contact Mr. P. Lawrence.

KAS LECTURES - Lecture Theatre, County Hall, Maidstone 23rd June 2000

Free admission to each lecture to the capacity of the theatre.

1pm **The Archbishop's Palace Maidstone** by Sarah Pearson

Sarah Pearson worked for the Royal Commission on the Historical Monuments of England (now English Heritage) from 1969-1996, specialising in research in vernacular buildings. Her publications include *The Medieval Houses of Kent* (1994). Since 1996 she has been working on medieval Kentish towns and their buildings and the 1664 hearth tax in Kent.

The palace is one of several between London and Canterbury. The surviving ranges date largely from fourteenth century, with later additions and alterations undertaken before and after the Reformation. The lecture will discuss the buildings in the light of a survey undertaken by the Royal Commission on the Historical Monuments of England (now English Heritage) and place it in the wider context of archiepiscopal palaces.

3pm **Rochester Cathedral; a Study in transition** by Alan Stevens, B.A.

Alan Stevens was born in Brighton, where he studied architecture at a time when good design was discouraged, and in a place which lacks good or interesting buildings. Then having taken his B.A. degree in International Politics at Lancaster, he became a part-time lecturer in the University of Kent, teaching the architecture, archaeology, history, and politics of the early middle ages.

Kent was the only Anglo-Saxon kingdom to start with two cathedrals, but Rochester was always more like a suffragan than a separate diocese. Its ensuing poverty is apparent in the building, but herein lies its charm

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and its source of continuing controversy.

Parts are left unfinished: other parts have been poorly adapted; yet it manages to convey an impression of supreme elegance. Its story is one of frequent, and self-evident transition.

This event is part of Kent County Council's Kentweek Festival - the Country-wide celebration of Kent!

KENT HISTORY FUND

The Kent Archaeological Society has established a Local History Fund Sub-Committee of the Publications Committee, with representatives from the Kent History Federation, to award grants twice a year in the spring and autumn to assist serious research leading to publication.

Applications are now invited from Local History Societies affiliated to K.H.F. or K.A.S. and from individuals who are either members of K.A.S. or a Local History Society affiliated to either K.H.F. or K.A.S.

Professional historians or postgraduate students are not eligible to apply. Anyone wishing to apply should write to the Sub-Committee's secretary requesting an application form. The Sub-Committee will be the panel judging applications received.

Please apply to Miss E. Melling.

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Courses, Events, Teaching Aids

Isle of Thanet Archaeological Society

A series of lectures on Thanet 2000BC to 2000AD to mark the 25th anniversary of the Society.

Wednesday 5th July Dark Age Archaeology of Thanet - the problem of the settlement sites and Thanet's great Jutish cemeteries.

Thursday 28th September Medieval and post-medieval archaeology in and around Thanet including the Church of All Saints, Stuart.

Monday 6th November Marine Archaeology - diving the wreck of the HMS Stirling Castle, lost in the Great Storm of 1703.

All lectures held at St. George's School, Westwood Road, Broadstairs, commencing at 8pm. Doors open at 7-15pm.

Ample free parking. Small exhibition on display. Admission £3.50 at the Door, £3.00 in advance.

Saturday 13th May The Society in association with the KAS presents an exhibition and illustrated lectures on the excavation of and finds from the Roman Villa site at Abbey Farm, Minster. To be held at Minster Village Hall, Minster-in-Thamet, nr Ramsgate. Free exhibition 10am-12 noon. Lectures 2pm to 5pm. The Development of Roman Villas by Keith Parfitt. The Roman Villa at Abbey Farm by David Perkins. Admission £5.00 at the door, £4.50 in advance. For further details and advance ticket sales please write to Events Secretary, Isle of Thanet Archaeological Society, Crampton Tower Yard, High Street, Broadstairs CT10 2AB. Cheques should be made payable to Thanet Archaeological Society and a sae enclosed. Please indicate if you would like a map for either venue.

Kent Archaeological Field School

Forthcoming Saturday and Sunday School for the public held at Faversham.

Further details from KAFS, School Farm Oast, Graveney Road, Faversham ME13 8UP. Tel: 0208 987 8827 or 0585 700 112.

20th to 29th May Excavation of a Medieval Palace, the Archbishop of Canterbury's summer palace at Teynham.

3rd June The Romans in Kent including an half day visit to Richborough Fort.

10th and 11th June Place names and the Landscape.

17th June Coins and the Archaeologist.

1st July Saxon Boat Building and the Graveney Boat.

8th July How to identify prehistoric flints.

15th July The Roman Villa, including a visit to Lullingstone.

22nd July to 6th August Excavation of a Roman Villa.

19th, 20th August Post Excavation Analysis.

The Prehistoric Society

Saturday 3rd June The Prehistoric Archaeology of Kent: recent discoveries.

10.30am-5.30pm. Gustave Tuck Lecture theatre, University College London, Gower Street, London. Speakers will include John Williams, County Archaeologist, representatives of the Canterbury Archaeological Trust. Trust for Thanet Archaeology, Museum of London.

Tickets must be booked in advance, price £15, (£10 for members of the Prehistoric Society).

Please apply for tickets and send cheques (payable to The Prehistoric Society) to Tessa Machling, Prehistoric Society, Institute of Archaeology, 31-34 Gordon Square, London WC1H 0PY.

St. Paul's Church, Rusthall, Tunbridge Wells.

St. Paul's Rusthall - Church, parish and people.

An exhibition to mark the 150th anniversary of the building of St. Paul's will be held in the Church Centre from

Friday 16th June to Sunday 18th June. 10am to 7pm on the Friday and Saturday and 2pm to 6pm on the Sunday. There will also be a Flower Festival in the church itself. This will be open from *Thursday 15th June through to Sunday 18th June*.

Opening times are Thursday 2pm to 7pm, Friday 11am to 7pm, Saturday 11am to 1pm and Sunday 2pm to 6pm.

Admission is free.

University of Kent at Tonbridge and Canterbury

It is possible to study archaeology at the UKC on either a full-time or part-time basis. Degree programmes are run on the University's Canterbury Campus in both Classical & Archaeological Studies and History & Archaeological Studies. Candidates can apply to follow the programmes on either a full or a part-time basis. Students choose combinations of courses drawn from the archaeology of Europe and the Mediterranean, and Ancient and Medieval History. These courses are usually held in the daytime.

Part-time programmes in Archaeological Studies specifically for mature students are also run at Certificate, Diploma and Degree level in the evenings, at both the University's Canterbury campus and its centre in Tonbridge. Students usually start with the certificate, then progress to diploma and finally degree level study. Courses range from prehistoric studies, the archaeology of ancient civilisations to that of the medieval world. There will be intakes in September 2000 to the Certificate at Tonbridge and to the Diploma and Degree at both Tonbridge and Canterbury.

Applications are welcome from anyone who wishes to study archaeology at university level. Mature students need not have formal academic qualifications to be admitted to any of the programmes if the candidate can demonstrate commitment to the discipline and the aptitude to study at the appropriate level.

For further information, please contact the Unit for Regional Learning, Keynes College, University of Kent, Canterbury CT2 7NP Tel: 01227 823507 E-mail: part-time@ukc.ac.uk

GCSE ARCHAEOLOGY IN ADULT EDUCATION

Introduction:

For nearly four years the present writer has been teaching GCSE Archaeology at the Medway Adult Education Centre, where a 100% pass rate has been achieved. It is hoped (and expected) that present students, taking the exam in June, will keep up this tradition. Although at the time of writing a final decision has not been made, it is hoped that in the new academic year (beginning September 2000) the subject will also be offered with the Canterbury and Swale Adult Education Service.

With programmes such as *The Time Team* and *Meet the Ancestors* being shown on television archaeology has recently been enjoying a renaissance in its popularity. Twenty years excavation experience as both a part-time and full-time archaeologist on a wide variety of sites, dating from the Neolithic to the Second World War, has shown the present writer that archaeology is *not* as easy as its made to appear on these programmes. This is true whether the work is undertaken on-site or in the classroom. Also what is not emphasised on television is that most archaeology is very mundane and is one of the factors that leads to a very high site drop out rate. This factor is something that again the present writer puts great stress upon.

This one-year course can be undertaken as a non-exam adult education class, but for those students who intend to undertake the exam *commitment* to, as well as enthusiasm for, the subject is required. The course is open to everyone over the age of 15 and no previous detailed knowledge is expected.

The syllabus is divided into three papers:

Paper 1. Archaeological skills and techniques. Five questions to be answered of which two are compulsory. For this paper we will look at the different ways that archaeologists might go about examining a site, from small 'watching briefs' up to large scale open area excavations covering many tens of acres. Non-excavation techniques, the best known of which is aerial photography will also be studied. As most of the exam questions are based upon illustrations great emphasis is put upon study photographs, plans and section drawings.

Paper 2. Archaeology of the British Isles, divided into four sections: Prehistory; Roman; migration and Medieval; Post-medieval. Three questions to be answered. We only look at the first two sections in the classroom, but students are free to follow any interests they may have within the other two periods.

Paper 3. Individual projects. Two assignments each of about 2000 words.

a. Basic survey of a monument: As in previous years it is hoped to obtain permission to survey Little Kits Coty near Maidstone. This project will involve detailed measuring of the stones with a 1:50 plan being drawn by each student. A text description is also undertaken along with the placing of the monument into the wider scene (geographical, geological, social and economic).

b. Experimental Archaeology: making and firing of a 'prehistoric' Beaker pot. As well as describing and discussing the actual pot making and firing process and the problems attached, students will again be expected to discuss the wider archaeological scene.

The course:

A series of slide based lectures are interspersed with informal discussion. As the course progresses photocopied handouts of sites and monuments will be used to test the knowledge of students. Two out-of-county field trips are undertaken. The first of which is the tutor's annual ten-mile hike around the Neolithic and Early Bronze Age monuments of the Avebury area. This usually sorts the men from the boys and the women from the girls - unlike with other tutors there is no pub-crawl on my field trips - archaeology is about 'doing' not talking or (despite rumours to the contrary) drinking. The second trip when we visit Butser Experimental Iron Age Farm and Bignor Roman Villa is more easy going. There are also a couple of local walks around Kentish sites.

For more information about GCSE Archaeology in each area contact:

For MEDWAY area:

Joan Wheddon
Medway Adult Education Centre
Eastgate Rochester, Kent
(01634) 845359

For CANTERBURY AND SWALE area:

Richard Dunn.
Kent Adult Education
Canterbury Centre
St. John's Place
Canterbury, Kent.
(01227) 451017

Note: GCE A Level Medieval History is also undertaken in one year at Medway. We concentrate on the Anglo-Saxon period for this country and the development of the Kingdom of France for European history. Again no previous detailed knowledge is assumed. Students usually learn some of the 'naughty bits' in the class as well as the 'blood and guts'. The workload for this course is *horrendous* but as with the archaeology it can be undertaken as a non-exam adult education course. GCE A Level Ancient History has previously been undertaken in one year and achieved a 100% pass rate and I fully expect all present students undertaking this Medieval course exam to pass. If they do they all get taken out to a Chinese meal. If they don't we all go and get drunk.

The Documents of the Manor of Rusthall

We were very pleased to be asked by Roger Farthing (well-known as a local expert and author of an excellent book on Tunbridge Wells) if we would like to assist him in sorting and cataloguing the remaining records of the Manor of Rusthall. Ibbett Mosely, the Agents to the Manor (which included much of present-day Tunbridge Wells), were moving office and would not have space to house the collection in their new building. The listing and sorting proved to be a formidable task because of the enormous number of documents, and the limited time available before the entire collection was to be deposited at the Centre for Kentish Studies, Maidstone.

This residual collection proved to be by far the largest and most varied of any we have encountered, relating to a Manor at such a late period. Perhaps the most important documents are the records of the Manorial Courts - the Courts Leet or Views of Frankpledge still held in the early 19th century, and the Courts Baron, which were held up to 1917, when the typed account of the proceedings ran to 48 pages. Other items such as rentals, lists of Quitrents due and received, claims as Freehold tenants and so on are there in abundance. Among unusual records are perambulations of the bounds of the Manor, the last of which took place as late as 1919, while because the Manor has such extensive Commons there is much correspondence about encroachments, whether or not licensed by the Lord and the freehold Tenants.

It must be said that Frank Osborne Baird, the reclusive bachelor Scot living in Hove who was the Lord of the Manor as Tenant for life for almost 50 years until his death at the age of 94 in 1949, was a remarkable man who would not let anything pass which might be taken as weakening his legal position. The yearly bundles of correspondence bear eloquent witness to the close interest he took in everything to do with the Manor and the town, particularly the Pantiles, much of which he owned. It is clear, for example, that he scanned the local press every week to see if any Manorial Tenants had died, writing to mention this to the Agents so that they could pursue the matter of a Heriot. Naturally he preferred a live beast, because the alternative 'dead' Heriot if the Tenant had no live animal was a small cash payment which had not been adjusted in line with inflation since the Middle Ages.

Despite mutterings about 'the shackles of feudalism' in the local press, Mr. Baird was successful in claiming live Heriots down to the mid-twenties. In 1908, for example, Heriots including a Yeomanry NCO's charger, a pony, a sow and three young pigs were reluctantly yielded up in respect of three different properties in Rusthall. In one exchange Mr. Baird was seriously contemplating claiming a fox terrier, and only desisted when the dead Tenant's housekeeper insisted that the animal was hers, not her master's.

As we listed the documents we became quite attached to Mr. Baird; definitely not a lovable man, but what a

character - "Disgusted of Tunbridge Wells" personified. Basically, he was opposed to change, but if it was inevitable then his guiding principle was to make a reasonable profit and to maintain the legal standing of the Manor. On the other hand, he could be enterprising in seeking ways of exploiting his ownership of Tunbridge Wells and Rusthall Commons, exploring for example the possibility of excavating and selling sand, and also of boring for coal, although fortunately both these ideas proved unfruitful. He was ready to go to law at the drop of a hat, and there are many opinions of Counsel on all sorts of topics, and huge bundles of printed legal papers. The influence he maintained over Tunbridge Wells and district in so many ways was exerted from a distance, and through his Agents and the other manorial officials, but it was nevertheless real and, generally speaking, for the good of the town.

In the very limited time available to make even the basic 30 page catalogues which we and Roger Farthing each produced, it was not possible to look in detail at more than a small selection of documents, but we had great pleasure in putting in a thumb and pulling out a plum here and there. As an example, we found the bundle of correspondence about opposition to the Tunbridge Wells Gas Bill in 1874 most entertaining. It had apparently been proposed that the new gas works should be situated on land at High Rocks, the property of Lord Abergavenny who - as he wrote frostily from the safe distance of Eridge Castle - was quite happy with the proposed transaction. Residents of the expensive houses in Nevill Park, Hungershall Park and nearby objected vigorously to the way in which the "noxious fumes" would affect them, and circulated a petition. In the true spirit of "not in my back yard" they suggested that a far more suitable site would be near the brickworks at High Brooms. Such was the strength of the opposition that the gas works were eventually built in that area.

Although F.O. Baird is the person who dominates the Manorial records for over fifty years - even before coming onto the property he had sued the previous Lady of the Manor for having allegedly prejudiced his position as the next Tenant for life - there are interesting figures in the earlier period. Colonel T.M.M. Weller was the Lord for many years, and he too was distinctly litigious; unlike Mr. Baird, he did live in the town, and took a leading part in local activities. He also owned Kingsgate and other property at Rolvenden, hence some interesting papers about a dispute over the Faculty for re-pewing Rolvenden Church in 1899/1900. We felt quite bereft as we saw the hardworking Archives staff taking the documents down several flights of narrow stairs, on their way to Maidstone; the collection - some in their original deed boxes, some in new cardboard boxes - filled a large van. However, it was very satisfactory that Ibbett Moseley, with the consent of the Trustees of the Manor have deposited the entire collection. For our part, helping to list the documents was a time consuming, cold, dirty, dusty job, but a most enjoyable one - an episode to which we look back with great pleasure.

Geoffrey and Brenda Copus

February 2000

BOOK REVIEW

Sittingbourne & Milton Regis, Past and Present by John Clancy. ISBN 0-7509-2297-4 pp. 128. £9.99.

This recent volume by Sutton Publishing in their Britain in Old Photographs will be of great interest to many. I was interested to read in the introduction how the picture postcard changed in style and evolved to allow the address to be written on the same side as the message so that by 1902 the cards were in their current format.

John Clancy is to be commended for putting against many of the old photographs the modern view. This vividly shows how the area has changed so dramatically in the last 50 years. The author is to be congratulated in capturing these 200 plus photographs for posterity and with them such a wealth of history. The book also demonstrates that even within very recent times enormous changes have taken place to some areas of the town. Milton once a thriving port and noted for its oysters lost both important industries with the introduction of a thriving paper industry. Silt clogged the port and fine paper particles killed off the young oysters.

As we look back over the last 1000 years of history the author has brought together many of the salient points of history in the development of the region and brought to life many of the photographs with lucid captions. Clancy remarks about Milton Creek, "Very little is now left of this once lively area; only tantalising glimpses remain if you know what to look for and where it is." He has helped us in this quest.

Duncan Harrington.

LETTERS

1 March 2000

Dear Editor

I thank you and the many members who have taken the trouble to express their regrets and appreciation on hearing of my resignation as Librarian after some 30 years working for it.

Our collections represent a vast source of information on Kent built up since 1857. Our room has been attractively rebuilt after the disastrous arson of 1977 and efforts to move us elsewhere thwarted. We now have a separate storage facility and office in Maidstone and another has been negotiated over several years in Bradbourne House where hang our restored portraits of the Twisden Family. Substantial strides have been achieved in rebinding, replacing gaps expanding exchange with other Societies and making the collection more comprehensive. We now have TWO computers and both the collection of prints, photographs etc. and of books are painstakingly being described, augmented and catalogued. All this needs the time of dedicated knowledgeable volunteers of which we now have a good team. What is more, the flow of enquiries has formed ample evidence that we have thereby greatly enhanced the reputation of the Society as a source of accurate information. One of my best moments was when the British Library requested sight of a slim 17th century volume which appears unique.

As requested by several, the reasons for my resignation are given below:-

(1) The Library Committee was refused a representative on the Finance etc Committee unlike others and the presence of even non-Council members on it.

(2) The last straw for me was the refusal to remit the (very modest) travel expenses of those who have volunteered to help in the Library, for example, to attend and give freely of their expertise.

Let us hope these and other obstructions can be overcome so that the enthusiasm and progress of the recent past are not thwarted.

Peter Draper

NOTE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Council place on record their appreciation of the work of Dr Peter Draper as Hon. Librarian for 25 years, regretting his sudden resignation after the last Annual General Meeting. The Finance and Investment Committee has included several members of the Library and Muniments Committee. Tight control is exercised over claims for reimbursement of travel expenses.

Council is confident that the Library will continue to make progress with Dr Frank Panton as Hon. Librarian and Mr Larry Illott as Chairman of the Library and Muniments Committee.

Paul Oldham

3 March 2000

Dear Editors

I am a member of KAS (though long resident in Essex) and wonder if I might use the Newsletter in the quest for information. I am writing a paper on the Rev. John Bedle, a 17th century rector of Barnston in Essex from 1632 to 1662. Archbishop Laud, reporting to Charles I in 1638, wrote "there is one Bedle, a minister from Essex, came into Canterbury diocese, and at Harbledown near Canterbury (the curate there being dead) preached very disorderly for three hours together at a time, and got himself many ignorant followers. But as soon as ever he was enquired after by my officers, he fled the country; and I purpose, God willing, to speak with the Chancellor of London concerning him". Most of Essex, at that time, was in the diocese of London.

There is ample evidence to show that Bedle was strongly puritan, and that he had already been in trouble with Laud (when he was bishop of London) over liturgical matters. He was a disciple of Thomas Hooker, the Chelmsford lecturer who had had to escape to Holland to avoid the Court of High Commission. Bedle remained rector of Barnston, in spite of his brushes with authority, until his ejection under the Act of Uniformity in 1662, and was buried five years later in that parish church.

I would be very interested to know how he came to be preaching at Harbledown, and whether this village had a reputation for Laudian dissent at this time - or, indeed, any other relevant background information.

Michael Leach

ARCHAEOLOGIA CANTIANA

A full set of Archaeologica Cantiana is for sale. Offers to Mrs

THE COFFIN STONE AND ITS CONTEMPORARIES

In order to appreciate the function of the Coffin Stone the whole remaining stones must be taken into account. Apparently the original Neolithic settlement ranged from to the west, Hale Farm and to the east Cossington, north to Kits Coty House and probably from there eastwards. They needed for their functions avenues or roads with either one or two rows of stones. Tottington had two rows of stones, down to the bottom of the field. Where junctions arise Monoliths were set up. The Monolith for the Kits Coty junction is found at the Lower Kits Coty House stones where it was towed down from above at an unknown date. The monolith for the Cossington Junction was the former White Horse Stone. The present White Horse Stone marked the start of their settlement with the Smythe Megalith nearby. These Monoliths appear to form a uniform pattern as the Coffin Stone is a larger replica of the one at Little Kits Coty House. Therefore we must expect that these thick pointed monsters formed a regular pattern. The Coffin Stone however was not at a known junction, but formed an astronomical function with the stones below. Several large stones were removed from here in the past. Tradition has it that Great Tottington was an experimental station before Stonehenge was planned. Stones lined the road between Hale Farm and Cossington also around Kits Coty House and down to Tottington. Lower Kits Coty House has never been fully understood due to faulty information given by an unnamed person to Dr Stukeley. A visitation in 1824 plus a useful print gives us enough clues to establish roughly its form. These stones, less a pointed endstone allow, using all the stones to form a burial chamber with re-tooled material. This structure, its sides slanting inwards with a capstone, resembled a large casket tomb. Mine appears to be the first serious attempt to solve these problems.

Alan McCreerie,

THE NATIONAL INVENTORY OF WAR MEMORIALS

Some years ago, an appeal was made to history societies and others to help record all War memorials on a national database when the National Inventory of War Memorials (NIWM), based at the Imperial War Museum, started work compiling information. There will be a re-launch by the NIWM during the summer of 1999 to try to gather all the information on those War Memorials which may have been missed first time around.

I am the voluntary co-ordinator for Kent, Sussex and Surrey and I am trying to enlist the help of other volunteers to seek out information and record the many memorials that have not yet been advised to the NIWM. There is a great assumption that "they must know about our war memorials etc". Why and how should they know? The NIWM is only an office based recording centre of just three people. They cannot check or visit locations and so have to rely on information from the public to complete their database.

If I mention by way of an example that their listing shows the whole area covered by Sevenoaks Council has 32 memorials, Dartford Council 7, Rochester/Chatham 18, Maidstone 34, and so on, you will realise that there may be many more in each location.

For example there would appear to be only three Post Offices in the county with a memorial; Ashford, Margate and Sevenoaks. There would seem to be only one Bank, the NatWest at Ashford, and only one Sports Club, Kent County Cricket Club at Canterbury, which have honoured members who lost their lives in wartime. Similarly, only two schools have plaques; Brent Primary in Dartford and Canterbury's Judd School. Surely, there must be many more which are not yet known to the NIWM.

I have a complete list of the information currently recorded on 695 Kent memorials, which I think is a tremendous under-reporting. When I say that I have been recording the memorials in the area covered by the London Borough of Bromley (admittedly with zeal), which includes Bromley, Beckenham, Orpington, Chislehurst, Penge and Anerley, and have so far discovered well over 200, I think readers will agree there must be many more than 695 in the rest of Kent.

You will all be aware that many memorials are lost over the years through decay caused by the weather, or are stolen or, sadly, vandalised. Some are lost through change of use of a building, as with redundant churches or factories, and some just get left behind when a firm or club moves to more high-tech premises.

It is important therefore that, as a social history project, the sacrifice of our forefathers is fully recorded and if possible saved, not only for the information but also for an understanding by future generations of this part of our history.

I therefore ask all readers to seek out war memorials in any form (including plaques, windows, gates, items of furniture in churches, or memorial buildings) using a very broad interpretation of a "War Memorial", concerned with ANY conflict, and to record as many details as they can (plus a photograph if possible) and send to The National Inventory of War Memorials, Imperial War Museum, Lambeth Road, London, or contact me at the above address or by e-mail or further details, or contact Margaret Lawrence for details of what still needs to be recorded.

Paul Rason

Newsletter Copy Deadlines

Spring issue - copy deadline is 1st March.

Summer issue - copy deadline is 1st July.

Winter issue - copy deadline is 1st November.

Editors Announcement

The Editors of the Newsletter welcome all letters, articles and communications, especially requests for research information, finds, books and other related topics. The Editors wish to draw the reader's 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 July 2000 to Newsletter Editors, Mr & Mrs L. E. Ilott.

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Tel: 020 8699 8759 Fax: 020 8699 8981 e-mail: sales@comolith.demon.co.uk