



<http://kentarchaeology.org.uk/research/archaeologia-cantiana/>

Kent Archaeological Society is a registered charity number 223382

© 2017 Kent Archaeological Society

REPORTS.

The following notes have been received on local or more general activities :

REPORT OF THE CANTERBURY ARCHÆOLOGICAL SOCIETY.

THE Society has again to record an increase of membership ; there are now 230 names on the roll and 832 members in all have been enrolled since the opening session. The summer excursions, particularly an all-day outing to Rochester (a new departure) under Canon Livett's guidance, were much appreciated and well attended ; the winter's lecture-season has begun with a lecture on " Ightham " by Sir Edward Harrison, when the audience numbered over a hundred.

The excavations under the City Wall at No. 15 Precincts have been filled in, after no very decisive results. The removal of the carpenter's shop which covered the Queningate arch in the east wall of the city has revealed considerably more extensive remains of the gate than were previously visible. Canon Livett notes that " the two uppermost stones (large blocks of Kentish rag) of the right hand (Northern) jamb of the original arch remain ; the upper one forming the impost from which the remains of the arch of Roman brick spring. The removal of the shop has disclosed a single large stone which may well have been one of the stones of the opposite jamb ; that below the impost stone which has disappeared. It yields a width between the jambs varying from my calculated width by only three inches." Some protection from the weather may be necessary if there is any indication of decay.

The adaptation of Meister Omer's to the purposes of a boarding-house for the King's School has led to some interesting discoveries. A Tudor fireplace, together with a door, and some fine timber-work were found behind modern wall-coverings, as well as a painted frieze in the drawing

room on the first floor. This consists of a Latin Grace, transcribed as follows :

"[Quae] nunck cememus membris alimenta caducis
hec deus imperio sint benedicta tuo, bona fides." Above
the lettering is a band of figures, possibly singing boys, and
a gabled house.

In the city itself, the gateway of the White Friars
has been completed and provided with iron gates, and
the restoration certainly adds a decorative feature to the
street. The memorial to King George V is to take the form
of the acquisition of Babs Hill for the use of the citizens
for all time. The hill is a historic site ; for some two
centuries the mustering place of the city archers and their
successors, the militia. At the foot are the springs from
which the earliest water supply was conducted by elm
pipes into Canterbury. It is a matter of real satisfaction
that the site should be preserved from a threatened develop-
ment by local builders. It affords a fine view of the
Cathedral.

DOROTHY GARDINER.

MAJOR TEICHMAN DERVILLE, the local Hon. Secretary for
Romney Marsh, reports the discovery in February 1936
of two silver pennies, dug up at Hammonds Corner on the
Rhee Wall, near where in the 14th century the Channel
debouched into Romney Haven. They have been iden-
tified by the British Museum, as an Edward 1st Irish penny
struck at the Waterford Mint, and a Henry VIth penny
struck at York.

DEMOLITION OF OLD HOUSES IN TONBRIDGE

A NUMBER of ancient houses have disappeared from the
High Street of Tonbridge during recent months. Some
have been acquired by the County Council and demolished
in the interests of Highway widening ; others have been
sacrificed for commercial reasons and pulled down to make
room for more modern shops. In all cases the buildings,
with judicious repair, were good for many years of extra

life ; and in all cases they were prominent in local history. It seems undesirable that they should be allowed to vanish without the tribute of a fugitive note.

It should be observed that the Act of Parliament of 1739, authorizing the canalization of the river Medway above Maidstone, gave a new impetus to commercial Tonbridge, caused many private houses to be erected in residential quarters, and brought about the enlargement and alteration of domestic buildings and their conversion into business premises. Numbers 1 and 2 of the houses mentioned below fall within the latter category, number 3 became commercialized much later and number 4 was apparently always a shop.

1. Now known as 111 High Street, this was prior to 1740 a private residence standing well back from the main road. The site is in the centre of old Tonbridge (which lay between Bordyke and the river) ; and the house was always occupied by one of the principal families of the neighbourhood. It belonged, with adjacent property, to the Woodgates of Somerhill one of whom (Henry) lived two doors above, and his sister Ann next door. The Misses Jordan resided in the house in question, which was of Tudor architecture with gables and tiled roofs with deep valleys. Until a few weeks ago portions of this Elizabethan work still stood and formed the back of the premises. The boom at the close of the eighteenth century caused sad alterations in this picturesque residence. The gabled front was pulled down and the building brought forward to abut immediately on the street, and a plain, flat, ugly Georgian front was erected. The foundations of the extension were carried ten feet down and a large stone-walled cellar was constructed. The stones for this work (exposed recently, when the demolition took place) were evidently brought from the ruins of Tonbridge Castle, a few yards away. At the outbreak of the Civil War the Castle was held on lease by one Thomas Weller, a lawyer, whose sympathies were with the Parliament ; and on Monday, July 24th, 1643, Royalist forces marched into the town with the

obvious intention of seizing the Castle. They were defeated and scattered and did not further trouble Tonbridge and on June 4th, 1646 the County Committee sitting at Maidstone ordered Mr. Weller on behalf of the Parliament to dismantle the Castle and "slight" the fortifications. The work was done thoroughly and the fortress lay in ruins (except the towers which are still standing) never again to be occupied for military purposes. Thomas Hooker in 1793 built the present dwelling-house adjoining the towers and gateway, but in the meantime anyone in Tonbridge who wanted to erect a new house or to enlarge an old one found a generous supply of tooled stone ready to hand. This is what happened at 111 High street. After the death of the Misses Jordan, Mr. Newington, Solicitor, occupied the property and was joined in 1831 as a partner by George Stenning. From that day to this successive partners in the same firm have practised on the same spot, and in the new house, now just completed, the old name and the old traditions will continue.

2. The second of the houses above mentioned was situated at the corner of East Street, a few yards to the north of Messrs. Stenning and Co.'s offices just described. It was known as No. 119 High Street, and was probably a little earlier in date than No. 111. Standing as it did in a prominent corner position, facing the market place and close to the stopping place of all the coaches, it was one of the first (if not actually the first) of the private dwelling-houses to be commercialized. Architecturally the alteration was no improvement, for the picturesque Tudor front gave way to a long flat Georgian face. Even to the last however the sixteenth century roof, with its tiled gables, was plainly to be seen from the street over and behind the straight parapet of the newer front, and on the centre dormer was a weather-vane (a sportsman shooting at a flying bird) which has achieved more than local fame. Prior to the changes which followed the canalization of the Medway the property formed one of the most important private residences in the old market town, and since its

conversion to business purposes it has been used as an ironmonger's shop and tenanted by firm after firm in unbroken succession until the present year.

The demolition of these old buildings, regrettable as it is on many grounds, may perhaps be regarded as settling a question which has been discussed for many years. Some local antiquarians have thought that the house which has now disappeared, or its immediate predecessor, was the Old Swan Inn which gave its name to Swan Lane (now known as East Street). Others have contended that the old Portreeve's House, still standing a few yards further along East Street, was formerly the Swan Inn. Careful search was made to find any traces pointing to the occupation of the site of 119 as a hostelry, but the evidence was entirely negative and the claim of the Portreeve's House must be regarded as correspondingly strengthened.

3. The above two instances show how the march of commerce has decreed the destruction of ancient houses, but during the last few weeks, higher up the High Street, Nos. 166, 168, 168a, 170 and 170a have disappeared at the behest of the County Council in the interests of street widening. These were originally three cottages and were of equal date with the premises above mentioned. Later on they were used by the occupiers for businesses of the smaller sort, and in Mid-Victorian times were tenanted by Messrs. Turner, Shorter and How, the last named being a working watchmaker. In the closing years of the nineteenth century the floors were lowered and the four or five stone steps, which led up to each front door and which projected into the street, were cleared away and modern shop fronts were inserted. Mostly of wattle and daub construction they were never architecturally important and their removal was amply justified by the great street improvement now apparent.

4. Since these notes were commenced another shop and dwelling-house of about the same period, No. 150 High Street, has been pulled down for rebuilding. The owners, Messrs. Baker and Co. Motor Engineers, always pointed

with pride to the enormous untrimmed oak beams which formed the framework of the more ancient portions of the buildings. More recent additions are framed in ship's timbers, traditionally used when many ships were broken up at Chatham Dockyard after the Napoleonic Wars. An interesting feature is a well about five feet in diameter, simply covered and not filled in and with the steening still in an excellent state of preservation. The water remains plentiful and pure. The well is fed by adequate springs and the overflow appears to go by underground channels to the River Medway about two hundred yards farther south.

ARTHUR H. NEVE

Local Secretary.

SEVENOAKS REPORT FOR 1936.

THERE is not much to report from the Sevenoaks district this year. The excavations on the Roman site at Otford (see Vol. XLVII, pp. 236-7) are still held up owing to the use of the ground as pasture, but several Sevenoaks members, with the kind permission and co-operation of the owner, Mr. E. D. McDowall, are exploring the stone enclosure adjoining "Becket's Well" in the hope of finding out the purpose for which it was used—laundry, bath, fulling place or what-not. There seems to be no doubt that, like the well, it was re-fashioned in Tudor times, but much fallen stonework and other debris must be removed before its plan, general structure and meaning can be made clear.

Mr. McDowall is now in habitation of the old farmhouse which embodies part of Otford Palace buildings, and he is to be congratulated on his work of reconstruction which has been carried out with taste and discretion. A wide Tudor sewer forming a tunnel under the lawn from the fishpond has been cleared out and some fine masons' work revealed. Gradually it is becoming apparent how beautiful and gracious the whole palace and its surroundings must have been. But much more money must be found before the remaining eyesores and the untidiness can be done away with, and the

rest of the site brought into line. Our member, Mr. Owen Fleming, who has done so much towards saving the palace, assisted by the generous aid of the Sevenoaks Rural District Council, and a band of subscribers, may, we are sure, be relied on to continue the good work.

F. GODWIN.

ARCHÆOLOGY IN KENT, 1936.

PALÆOLITHIC.

In March the left parietal bone of a fossil human skull was found at a depth of 24 feet below the surface, in the middle gravel of the 100 ft. terrace at Swanscombe, by Mr. A. T. Marston. It belongs to the same skull as the occipital bone found in June 1935, at the same depth in the same seam of gravel. This middle gravel at Swanscombe has been dated as early St. Acheul on the evidence of the numerous flint implements found there. (*Nature*, August 1st, 1936.)

NEOLITHIC.

A fine polished flint axe of the thin butted type was found in the garden of "Ecklingville," Mid Higham, by Mr. C. Kenworthy. From the same site comes a long knife (as opposed to the discoidal type) with a polished cutting edge. Similar implements have been found at Tichfield, Hants. (Dale Coll., Winchester Museum, *Proc. Soc. Ant.*, 2nd series, Vol. XXX, p. 24); West Kennet Avenue (Alexander Keiller Coll., from a Pre-Avenue occupation site) and several other sites in England.

A number of sherds were found by Mr. and Mrs. Stuart Piggott and Mr. and Mrs. Norman Cook on the surface of the field surrounding Kits Coty House. The sherds are very small and much worn, but there is no doubt that they belong either to the Neolithic or Beaker Periods.

ROMAN.

A pit containing charred wheat was found in a Ragstone quarry, just outside the walls of Surrenden Park, Little

Chart. Over the mouth of the pit was a Roman flanged tile. The grains were submitted to Professor John Percival who reported that they were mostly of the bread wheat, but contained also a few grains of oats and barley and the seed of a common cornfield weed *Bromus secalinus*. Two stones of some species of *Prunus*, perhaps cherry, were also found among the charred material. Kent 6" Maps, Sheet LIV, S.W. Lat. 51°, 11' 20". Long. 0°, 46' 39" approx.

ANGLO-SAXON.

In the same quarry at Little Chart, Dr. Littledale recovered the remains of at least three human skeletons, associated with an iron spearhead, a shield boss or umbo, three shield studs, two knives and a group of three hooks.

NORMAN COOK.

DISCOVERIES IN THE NEIGHBOURHOOD OF DEAL DURING 1936.

BRONZE AGE.

In August workmen cutting a trench for a water main for two new bungalows on the chalk down half a mile S. of the Kingsdown Golf Club House, and 30 yards from the edge of the cliff, opened up a circular excavation 2 ft. 6 ins. deep and 2 ft. 3 ins. in diameter. In this hollow had been deposited a bucket urn, 18 ins. high, containing a cremated burial. No objects had been placed with the bones. The urn was ornamented with an applied flat cordon and the expanded flat-topped rim had a decoration of small finger tip impressions. (vide *The Antiquaries Journal*, Vol. XVII, No. 1, January, 1937.)

EARLY IRON AGE.

The housing site on Sholden Bank between Deal and Great Mongeham parishes, and referred to as in the latter parish in Vol. XLVII, p. 245, has now given evidence of occupation during this period. Workmen laying a water main along a new road cut into a cremation deposited in a large bucket urn. This was ornamented with two raised

cordons finger-impressed. Many missing fragments have unfortunately prevented exact measurements being taken.

A short section of a deep V-shaped trench has been opened up near the above burial but proved barren except for a few burnt flints.

LATER IRON AGE.

In November the Surveyor called the writer's attention to a quantity of sherds which were being turned out of a cutting for a drain which was to connect a new bungalow with the sewer in the road. The cutting has revealed a V-shaped pit running roughly N. and S. on the northern side of a road known as Cross Road, and about 100 yards W. of the Mill Hill-Waterworks Road crossing. Approximate dimensions are 11 ft. wide by 4 ft. 9 ins. deep. The bottom of the trench was filled with chalk rubble fallen from the sides, but above this the filling was dark soil. At 3 ft. from the surface was a narrow burnt layer, and on each side of this and at about the same level were food bones and a quantity of pot sherds. There are the remains of many domestic wheel-turned vessels of various sizes from a small cordoned cup, $2\frac{3}{4}$ ins. high, with an external mouth diameter of $4\frac{3}{4}$ ins. (Swarling Report (Deal), Pl. IV, 2), to a cooking pot with a heavy base, $4\frac{1}{2}$ ins. across. The finely gritted wares are mainly black, dark grey or buff. There are examples of polishing, a polished shallow moulding between rouletting, punch marking and scored latticing, but the characteristic feature is the variety of coarsely furrowed and finely combed wares—bowls with bead rims. One rim and shoulder shows some resemblance to the pedestal urn, Pl. VII, 5, in the Swarling Report. The sherds may be tentatively classed as La Tene III and to belong to the early years of the first century A.D.

ROMAN.

A segment of a curved trench of undefined date, which was cut through in putting down the foundations of the water-tower to the N. of the Deal Waterworks was found to

have been used to take the rubbish from some Romano-British villa. Many red-deer antlers with sherds of the first to the third centuries were found.

Further excavations for water mains on the Sholden Bank housing site exposed the upper part of a second late second century cremation burial to the S.W. of the one described in Vol. XLVII, p. 245. The two pieces recovered were a Samian dish Form 31 with the potter's mark BALBINVS F, and a small pale buff ware flagon, 6 ins. high, very like No. 148 in Richborough, III, p. 100.

The excavation of a trench for telephone cables in March along the E. side of the Deal-Sandwich Road immediately N. of the diagonal turn to Worth, and a few hundred yards S. of the Romano-British temple, cut through several third century cremation burials. About thirteen more or less fragmentary urns and dishes were recovered. They included a New Forest ware bowl and a colour-coated mortarium. The trench farther to the S. opened up sherds of second and third century wares and a small hand-made vase with graffito scratchings of Anglo-Saxon type. A fuller report of these finds will appear in *The Antiquaries Journal*.

MEDIEVAL.

The excavation for a main along the northern end of High Street, Deal, which was carried down to clean sand recovered resting almost on the sand a bronze spur, incomplete but with engraved sides. This has been dated fourteenth to fifteenth century.

Excavations into the upper part of the Stonor shingle bank have lately cut into a shallow earth-filled trench running in a southerly direction. This contains a quantity of sherds of medieval pitchers and other domestic wares, many with a bright green glaze. The ware has been dated thirteenth to fourteenth century and so would correspond with a pitcher buried outside the S. wall of the early fourteenth century church of the Whitefriars at Sandwich.

W. P. D. STEBBING.