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INVESTIGATIONS AND EXCAVATIONS DURING THE YEAR

I. REPORTS ON EXCAVATIONS SUPPORTED BY THE SOCIETY

Interim Report by Mr. A. P. Detsicas, M.A., F.S.A., on the Excavations at the Eccles Roman Villa

The eighth season of work was carried out by the Eccles Excavation Committee, on a week-end basis between Easter and October 1969, at the site of the large Romano-British villa at Eccles, near Aylesford.

The work was financially supported by the Kent Archaeological Society, the British Academy, the Society of Antiquaries of London and the Haverfield Bequest of the University of Oxford. This year's work was again concentrated in the area of the villa's living accommodation and results may provisionally be summarized as follows:

(i) Further trenches, cut across the line of the early Ditch VI, have shown that it continued, to north and south of the villa, well beyond the points reached in 1968; pottery recovered from its filling, including a *terra nigra* platter stamped ANDOR, confirmed its dating to Periods II-III of the site's occupation (to c. A.D. 65).

(ii) Further examination in the central range of rooms has added five more rooms to the plan of the original dwelling-house of Period IV (c. A.D. 65-120); the walls had again been robbed but not quite to the same extent as in previous years, and several lengths were recovered intact.

(iii) Fresh trenching across the line of the villa's fronting corridor added in Period V (c. A.D. 120-180) has extended its length for 80 ft. south-east of the 1968 point, and there are indications that this corridor will turn to south-west on reaching the villa's south-east wing within the next 40 ft. or so.

(iv) The rear corridor of the house, constructed in Period VI (c. A.D. 180-290), was also extended for the same length as the fronting corridor. Evidence was recovered that it had been paved with tiles, and this strongly supports the possibility that such tiling had been laid in the fronting corridor where only mortar underfloors survived deep ploughing.

(v) A second apsidal recess was recovered alongside the first one found in 1968; it had clearly been used as a latrine and was constructed in Period VII (c. A.D. 290-400). More evidence was secured for further partitioning of the rear corridor and of at least one of the main rooms in this period.

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(vi) Immediately beyond the north-east wall of the villa, several trenches were cut across a ditch which had been cut through a mass of demolition débris and filled with building materials and pottery of the third century A.D. and later. Two infant burials were also found in the area to the north of this ditch.

Training Course

A training course in Romano-British archaeology was conducted between 26th July and 9th August, 1969, at the site of the Roman villa at Eccles; it was jointly organized by the Kent Archaeological Society and the Eccles Excavation Committee, under the direction of Mr. A. P. Detsicas, M.A., F.S.A., assisted by Mr. A. C. Harrison, B.A., F.S.A., and Mr. I. J. Bissett. The course was officially recognized by the Kent Education Committee for the training of teachers serving under the authority.

Over 45 applicants, from a total again in excess of 100, could be accommodated locally; amongst these were three members of last year's training course. Training consisted of practical experience in the field in excavation techniques and recording of the evidence coupled with background talks at noon and in the evenings on archaeological surveying, electric resistivity surveying, site photography, coarse pottery and samian ware, small finds, prehistoric and Iron Age Kent, Kent after the Romans, the Lullingstone Roman villa, Roman Canterbury, Roman and medieval Rochester, Romano-British Kent and the Eccles Roman villa. Two conducted tours were also included, visiting Richborough Roman fort and Canterbury, the Roman villa at Lullingstone and the city of Rochester; a whole afternoon was also devoted to practical work on pottery at Maidstone Museum.

Both the Kent Archaeological Society and the Eccles Excavation Committee are grateful for the combined efforts and unstinted co-operation of the many people who contributed to the outstanding success of this course, and in particular to Lt.-Col. G. W. Meates, F.S.A.; Mr. J. E. L. Caiger; Mr. R. G. Foord; Mr. L. R. A. Grove, B.A., F.S.A., F.M.A., F.R.E.S.; Mr. F. Jenkins, M.A., F.S.A.; Mr. D. B. Kelly, B.A., A.M.A.; and Mr. P. J. Tester, F.S.A. It is hoped to organize a further Training School in the summer of 1970.

Springhead Romano-British Town

Mr. S. R. Harker reports:

The excavations initiated in 1968 have been extended in depth and in extent. The road R1 has been sectioned, showing that the earliest road was laid on an *agger* of clay topped with rammed chalk blocks 14 in. thick. Then followed at least three levels of packed gravel with

a total thickness of 22 in. At the verges and gradually encroaching on the road width, was a succession of floors and make-up of chalk, clay and flint with numerous post-holes and hearths. Extensive burning in some of the layers suggests that some of the earlier constructions may have been destroyed by fire.

The depressions noted in 1968 proved on investigation to be the result of subsidence. The larger was due to a circular pit 8 feet in diameter, dug through the brick-earth subsoil down to the underlying gravel, now 12 feet below existing ground level. The original depth is estimated at 5 ft. 6 in. The lower fill consisted mainly of brick-earth with layers of peaty material but only a few sherds of heavy coarse gritted pottery. The upper layers, which were mainly the result of subsidence, yielded a number of interesting items including a coin of Domitian and a number of broken but complete pottery vessels, including two samian platters (Form 18).

A small area within the temple *temenos* has also been examined and previous findings largely confirmed. There is evidence of the lower foundations of a substantial building underlying both Temples I and III (*Arch. Cant.*, lxxiii (1959), and lxxiv (1960)), which was almost completely destroyed in the building of these later structures which almost entirely cover the original building so that the plan cannot be established. So far there is no direct evidence that it had any religious significance.

No final conclusions can yet be drawn regarding the "working area" previously reported, but it seems clear that iron-working (as distinct from smelting) was carried out on a considerable scale.

An exploratory trench, dug with a view to establishing the precise limit of the temple *temenos* on its western side has revealed the corner of a well-made mortared flint wall which will be examined as part of next year's operations.

Tonbridge, Castle Hill Iron Age Hill-Forts

Mr. A. P. Detsicas, M.A., F.S.A., reports:

From August to October 1969, there was a first season of work, under the direction of Mr. J. H. Money, M.A., F.S.A., in one of the Iron Age hill-forts at Castle Hill, near Tonbridge. The plan published by S. E. Winbolt in *Arch. Cant.*, xli (1929), which shows a single fort, is largely inaccurate. There are, in fact, two separate forts side by side, of which the smaller (about three acres) was tackled this summer. Two sections were dug through the defences, one on the north-west, where the hill slopes steeply downwards, and the other on the north-east, where the ground is flat. The former section produced evidence of a main rampart with palisade and timber revetment; a steep-sided V-shaped ditch cut from the natural rock, which here lies just below the modern surface; and a small counter-scarp bank beyond the ditch.

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The other section showed that the rampart had been almost entirely flattened by modern agriculture, much of the demolished material having been pushed into the hollow of the ditch, which was of similar shape, but wider and deeper. No outer work was found in this section.

The Ordnance Survey map shows traces of an entrance on the north-east side of the fort. Extensive trenching, however, proved conclusively that no entrance existed at this point or near it. It must lie elsewhere, possibly where the modern track enters the fort. Apart from the defences themselves, very little evidence of occupation came to light. In both the main sections small hearths were found on the old land surface under the rampart and, near one hearth, were a few sherds of rough hand-made pottery; these remains, no doubt, belonged to the builders of the fort. Flints were found at many points. These included implements of Mesolithic type, and pebbles which may have been sling stones. Some slag of ancient type was found in the south-east corner of the fort.

In 1970, it is planned to section the much larger defences (double banks and ditches) of the other hill-fort and to establish whether it was unfinished or, like the smaller fort, completed but partly demolished in modern times. The search for the entrance of the smaller fort will be renewed and, if time allows, there will be some exploration in the area where slag was found.

II. REPORTS FROM LOCAL SECRETARIES AND GROUPS

Ashford

Ashford and Area Archaeological Group. Mr. J. Bradshaw reports:

Aldington. Thanks to the continued interest taken in this parish by Mr. Frank Newington, the following sites have yielded material evidence for recording:

Falconhurst (TR 07803440). Broken *tegulae*, bricks, sherds of Romano-British coarse wares and the broken base of a samian bowl. A broken *tegula* with partial inscription will be the subject of a note in *J.R.S.* for 1970. TR 07603455. This reference is centred on St. Leonard's Church site and broken *tegulae* are to be found in the surrounding fields, and in the church area.

Clap Hill (TR 06203680). Late third-century coins of Allectus, Claudius II, Carausius, and Constantine I were found by Messrs. Long, small-holders in this area. The soil is partly composed of the overlay removed from a quarry north of the site, the working of which destroyed foundations, burials, etc. Coins in possession of finders.

Barham. During the laying of a gas pipeline in September 1969, it was reported that bones and sherds had been found in Broome Park at TR 22204880, 384 ft. south of the crematorium fence. From photographs and a description from Mr. K. Beeching of Elham it was evident that five inhumation burials had been disturbed at a depth of 2 ft. in the chalk, which at this point was overlaid by 9 in. of soil. From a rim-sherd and bead retained by the workmen, the site contains Anglo-Saxon burials.

Goodnestone. Probable bowl barrow. This symmetrical mound is situated in a piece of woodland known as Rough Grass in Knowlton Park, TR 27355285. Forty feet in diameter and almost 4 ft. high, there do not appear to be any traces of a surrounding ditch. A second mound of indefinite shape 200 ft. to the south-west across the tarmac road appears to be a piled overlay from the nearby quarry. These sites were identified from a note made by Dr. J. D. Ogilvie, F.S.A., and sent to the writer by Mr. Nigel Macpherson-Grant.

Old Romney. The partial clearing away of a piece of raised ground at TR 03722571 disturbed inhumation burials on the north and west and sides, and after consultation with the owner, Mr. Graham Hardy, Miss Anne Roper, M.B.E., F.S.A., it was agreed that the Ashford Archaeological Society should conduct a limited excavation. The object was to establish whether or not a building had occupied part of the area and if it might be the site of the alleged St. Michael's Church reputed to be at TR 03722571. A single trench was cut through the overlying soil, which was a sandy loam of the Snargate-Finn complex. At a depth of 12 in. a chalk floor of irregular thickness underlaid 12 in. of mixed soil, flints, mortar, broken tiles and beech pebbles. Despite the partial destruction of the chalk floor by an intruded coffin burial at the northern edge, and the absence of clearly defined foundation trenches, the revealed area appeared to be the south-east corner of a building. There was no evidence that could be regarded as indicative of its nature, ecclesiastical or secular. Nine sherds of coarse pottery came from the rubble *strata*. Two were rim fragments of cooking-pots and a third the lip of an unglazed jug, all late thirteenth century. The burials to the north of the mound were coffered, and, with one exception, no indication of this practice was found in the southern disturbed area. All were laid on an approximate east-west axis with the head to the west.

Stone-in-Oxney. During the period 1966-69, Roman coins of various types, ranging from a first-century *quadrans* of Antioch to a fifth-century half-*siliqua* of Valentinian III, were found in the garden of Knock Farm, TQ 94482652. Thirty-four in number, the dissimilarity of their condition and the lack of contemporary material from a burial trench

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cut in the area suggest introduction from another source. Proton-magnetometer readings of the surrounding area gave no indication of soil disturbance or foundations.

The London Borough of Bexley

Mr. P. J. Tester, F.S.A., reports:

Hall Place has recently undergone extensive restoration and is now being used as administrative offices and storage accommodation by Bexley Libraries Department. The seventeenth-century red-brick tower, containing a contemporary wooden stair, has had to be completely rebuilt, and in the course of the work the date 1653 was found inscribed on lead covering the lantern surmounting the tower. This probably indicates the period at which the whole of the brick extension was added to the Tudor house. (See plan and notes in *Arch. Cant.*, lxxi (1957), 153-61.)

The mill in Bexley High Street, burnt down in 1966, and described by Messrs. B. D. and A. J. Stoyel in the last volume of *Arch. Cant.*, lxxxiii (1968), 105-10, is to be rebuilt in its original form. The new owners are a firm of brewers who intend using the place as a public house and restaurant. A local architect has deposited with Bexley Library a set of detailed drawings of the mill made a few years before the fire, and these provide a most valuable record of the old building.

Road-widening through North Cray has at last swept away the almshouses, and the hall-house, dismantled last year, still awaits reconstruction in the grounds of Hall Place.

Bexley Council is making application to the Minister of Housing and Local Government for permission to demolish the Georgian stables in Danson Park. This destruction has been threatened for many years, and it is now proposed to replace the stables with a building of utilitarian design comprising a garage, storage for use of the Parks Department and a public convenience. Vigorous objections to the demolition of the stables have been lodged by local societies and some individuals, as this is listed as a Grade II building.

C.B.A. Mesolithic Survey

The Council for British Archaeology is at present collecting information from which it is hoped to publish eventually a Gazetteer of Mesolithic sites in the whole of Britain and Ireland. To facilitate this work, the area has been divided into regions, of which London, Middlesex, Surrey and Kent form one. Mr. John Wymer is the organizer for this region and Mr. P. J. Tester is assisting by collecting details relating to Kent. Cards have been printed and are being distributed to museums and persons likely to be able to help, and these cards are set out so as to make recording as concise but informative as possible. Each card

contains sections for insertion by the compiler of essential details of the site and the nature of the material found. Microliths, small blades, picks, tranchet axes and pebble mace-heads are among the categories of artifacts to be recorded.

It is hoped to make the Survey as comprehensive as possible, and for this purpose it is particularly desirable to contact collectors and field-workers who may know of unpublished sites or material in private collections. The local organizers would be most grateful for the assistance of anyone who has such information, and so far as Kent is concerned they are asked to communicate with Mr. Tester whose address is: 2 Willow Close, Bexley, Kent.

Council for Kentish Archaeology.

Mr. P. E. Oldham, B.A., Hon. Secretary, reports:

The Council for Kentish Archaeology continues to expand its services to member Groups which now number eighteen. The Council has instituted a public liability insurance scheme to cover excavations conducted by Groups. The pool of archaeological equipment available on loan has been augmented by the purchase of a pump for use on waterlogged sites. The differential proton-magnetometer has been used to provide instruction and to conduct larger-scale surveys. The instrument is particularly useful for emergency operations and regional surveys where total excavation is either impossible or undesirable. The Emergency Operations scheme continues to operate efficiently, but further improvements to meet the threats of destruction to archaeological sites are envisaged.

The Kent Archaeological Review, a news and instruction magazine published quarterly and available by subscription, has expanded its circulation to five thousand a year and its size to thirty-two pages. In February, the fifth annual conference was held at Maidstone and was attended by two hundred people from all parts of Kent. After Mr. L. R. A. Grove, B.A., F.M.A., F.S.A., F.R.E.S., had opened the proceedings, speakers from various Groups described their recent work. A Young Archaeologist Award Scheme has been established to encourage archaeological work among young people.

Dartford Historical and Antiquarian Society. Mr. H. J. Balls reports:

In *Arch. Cant.*, xxii (1897), 49 ff., George Payne wrote an account of his excavation of the Roman Villa at Darenth, 1894-95. In this he stated that there were further foundations in the neighbouring field which was under different ownership. He suggested that they were in all probability remains of farm buildings, walled cattle yards, etc. This field has been acquired for ballast and so an emergency dig was

made this summer, and it amply confirmed George Payne's suggestion.

Dr. P. H. G. Draper, a member of the Society, has acquired a copy of John Thorpe's *Registrum Roffense* (1769) in three full leather-bound volumes with the arms and motto (*Patriis Virtutibus*) of Henry J. B. Clements. It is interleaved throughout and partially annotated with notes initialled L.B.L., presumably Lambert Blackwell Larking, first Secretary and the force behind the founding of the Kent Archaeological Society (see *Arch. Cant.*, lxx (1956), 1-43). Volume III includes the only ink and wash sketch, of Ryarsh Church, dated 1834, of which Larking was incumbent, 1830-68. The addenda are notes from the Churchwardens' Accounts of Allhallows, Hoo; the muniments of Viscount Torrington of Yotes; of Charles Milner, Esq., of Preston Hall, etc.; and particularly from the Surrenden Dering Collection. An index to the parishes and additions to the main index are also included—an example is in vol. III, *Monumental Inscriptions*:

'Oct. 24, 1844 At Surrenden, I, this day found a large quantity of loose sheets containing Church Notes in the handwriting of the first Sir Edward Dering who had evidently collected an immense quantity of original matter, as a foundation of County History (. . .). I can then note the corrections which they supply (. . .). Sir Edward's notes I distinguished by the letters E.D.—L.B.L.'

Edenbridge and Westerham. Mr. J. C. Irwin reports:

During the past year, Edenbridge and District Historical Society have extended their survey of historic buildings in the area to include the parishes of Cowden, Chiddingstone and Hever. Their proposal for the revision of the current list of scheduled buildings has been sent to the Chief Inspector, Historic Monuments (Ministry of Public Building and Works), who is now considering it as a basis for a fresh official survey.

Faversham—Barnfield, Oare. Mr. A. V. Gidlow reports:

During the autumn of 1968 limited trial trenching was carried out by the Faversham Archaeological Research Group at Barnfield, Oare, TR 00806336. A V-shaped ditch, 5 ft. wide and 3 ft. deep, was traced for 20 ft. in an east-west direction. Unfortunately, in the easterly direction ploughing had altered the fall of the ground, and the ditch appeared to have been ploughed away. It is hoped to trace the progress of the ditch in the westerly direction later this year.

There appeared to be little or no silt in the ditch, which had been filled with oyster shells to a depth of 3 ft. Among these shells were potsherds and animal bones. The sherds have been identified as being of Gallo-Belgic and Belgic types, tentatively dated at not later than A.D. 20.

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Colonel A. A. Johnson reports that the excellent work of the Faversham Society continues, and that the restoration of the Chart Gunpowder Mills will, it is hoped, be completed in 1970.

High Weald and Rother Area. Mrs. M. C. Lebon, M.A., reports:
Benenden

Half a mile north of the Iden Green Roman Ford the old road was sectioned at two points, 8 yards apart, by trenches measuring 17 ft. by 3 ft. and 18 ft. by 3 ft. 6 in., hedges preventing further lengthening of the trenches. Originally a slag road, it had been topped up by other stones until the eighteenth century, after which it became overgrown. It is now a pedestrian right-of-way passing between the grounds of private houses and fenced off both at the road frontage and at the rear where it begins to descend into a gully between fields leading down to the Ford.

It appears to have been laid on a terrace made by cutting into the higher land on the west side, so that the ditch on that side has a high outer bank which is now surmounted by a hedge. Much the same preparatory levelling was observed in the Roman road underlying the Mill Lane, St. Michael's, Tenterden, excavated the previous season. The Benenden excavation revealed a well-cambered track only 7 ft. 8 in. wide and located towards the west end of both trenches. There was a pronounced ditch between the road and the west side bank, and a shallower channel on the east side of the road. As the east ends of both trenches contained a buried scatter of stones and slag, and in one of them there remained a belt of compacted hard core extending to a width of nearly 3 ft., it was thought possible that a second track, parallel with the remaining one and separated from it by a drainage channel about 3 ft. wide, had been ploughed up some centuries ago.

Two horse-shoes, much encrusted with slag, and several nails were found in the road. There was nothing by which the earliest date for use of the road could be determined; but certainly the slag or cinder was of the type produced at bloomery ironworks of the second century, such as Little Farningham Farm, a mile to the north. Damage by traffic and disturbances made by way of road repair in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries make it difficult to distinguish which features belong to the original road. The maximum thickness of iron slag found never amounted to more than four or five inches, and was often only one or two.

Cranbrook

At Little Farningham Farm clearance has begun preparatory to re-excavation of this Roman ironworking site next autumn. The work there

will be directed by Mr. H. F. Cleere, F.S.A., and supported by a newly formed local group, entitled the Wealden Archaeological Research Group.

Stone-in-Oxney

At Cliff Farm, Colonel Harcourt Wood kindly permitted a small-scale excavation at a spring site which had yielded Roman finds some years ago. Large stones had been placed as paving close to the water source, and a wooden barrier erected to control the outflow. These structures could not be precisely dated, and small finds of ancient date were not forthcoming.

The writer searched for remains described by Richard Kilburne in his *Topography or Survey of the County of Kent*, 1659, as follows: 'Near the side of the Marsh here, at a place called Abdale (alias Apdale) are the ruins of a great structure of Stone, supposed by some to have been a castle, but reported by others (and that more probably) to have been only storehouses for Merchants, when the sea came near the same (as anciently it did).'

Local inquiry pointed to a spot at TQ 92402660 on Great Prawls Farm, where the valley of a small stream, still called the Apdale, opens out on to the Marshes. The Abdale forms the north-west side of a moat enclosing a rectangular area, 150 long and 72 broad, measured in the writer's rather sub-standard paces. The uneven ground with'n hints that there are buried structures, and there is a curiously high mound immediately outside the moat at the north-east corner.

The owner of Great Prawls, Mr. Geoffrey Cook, related that some years ago he and others had dug up on the site some reddish-brown tiles, glazed and having a yellow pattern—a description which suggested medieval encaustic tiles. The tiles had been shown to a museum curator at Birmingham, who had pronounced them to be medieval. Unfortunately they had been subsequently lost.

W. H. Ireland in *A New and Complete History of the County of Kent*, 1828–30, noted: 'Apdale is a small manor in this parish; the stone mansion has long been in ruins, and the site, which is still remaining, appears large. The demesnes are now added to a farm called Prawls, situated about a mile westward from the Church. The only mention of the manor is in the Will of Mr Thomas Stace, who resided and died there in 1512, leaving it to his son, John . . .'

So it would seem that this was a medieval dwelling, whatever else it may have been. The site is similarly situated to Little Maytham and Bodiam Old Manor, both moated sites of twelfth- and thirteenth-century dates, higher up the Rother valley.

It is strange that the Ordnance Survey maps do not mark Apdale as a moated site, like the other sites just mentioned. Yet the electricity

grid line has been taken right across it, with one pylon planted beside the moat.

Lullingstone. Mr. G. K. Horner reports:

In September and October 1969, the Crayford Manor House Archaeological Group carried out its third and last season's work at the site in Lullingstone Park of the Iron Age farmstead, briefly reported in *Arch. Cant.*, lxxxi (1966) and lxxxii (1967). A large area was stripped by mechanical means down to the chalk, and further post-holes with three deep pits were found. These pits contained large fragments of clay and chalk loom-weights, the remains of a clay structure that had probably formed part of a corn-drying oven, and a quantity of pottery. The latter divides into Iron Age 'B' (of the Hulbury type—the Hulbury site is only 700 yds. north of the site), and Iron Age 'C' (with some Belgic material). The discovery of Iron Age 'B' pottery, of which two complete pots were recovered, one a miniature beaker only 2 in. high, puts back the date of occupation to perhaps c. 100 B.C. Two human infant burials were also found, one crouched in a shallow depression; these are unlikely to have had any ritual significance.

The kindness and help of Mr. F. Banfield, who farms the area, has been much appreciated. Though the extreme limits of the site, west and north, have not been reached, it is now possible to work out from the three Iron Age sites in Lullingstone Park the prologue to the Roman occupation at Lullingstone, and to assess the reorganization of farming here in the first century A.D. under Roman influence.

Maidstone Area—Headcorn. Mr. R. C. Stone reports:

The Old Cloth Hall, Headcorn, after lying empty for several years and visibly deteriorating, appears at last to have its future safeguarded. The County Planning Committee have approved applications for its use for business purposes. The Ministry of Housing and Local Government wish the 'Regency' shop front to be retained (this appears to have been added in 1836 or 1837, when the place was purchased from the parish, it having previously been used as a workhouse). The house is House No. 11 in H. S. Cowper's 'Two Headcorn Cloth Halls' (*Arch. Cant.*, xxxi (1915)). There had been a dispute over vehicular access which had held up planning consent, and this was endangering the whole future of the place. It is satisfactory to know that something will now be done to keep this very important late fifteenth- or early sixteenth-century house in decent condition. I am indebted to Mr. L. J. Daniels of Headcorn for some of this information, and who tells me that the Old Cloth Hall has been identified with 'Horchard Podsole', referred to as the residence of William Borden in his will of 1531.

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Maidstone Area Archaeological Group. Mr. P. E. Oldham, B.A., Hon. Secretary, reports:

The Maidstone Area Archaeological Group was formed as a result of a public meeting held at Maidstone Museum on April 16th. The Group, with a membership now exceeding fifty, will work in close collaboration with the staff of Maidstone Museum. Members of the Group will be trained in excavation techniques, carry out a comprehensive survey of possible archaeological sites, undertake projects in industrial archaeology, and review the list of scheduled buildings in the area. With the permission of the Ministry of Transport, the route of the M20 Motorway extension from Preston Hall, Aylesford, to Wrotham Heath has been surveyed.

Rochester. Mr. A. C. Harrison, B.A., F.S.A., reports:

An emergency excavation in advance of re-development was carried out over a period of four weeks in August by the writer on behalf of the Lower Medway Archaeological Research Group on the extensive site in Rochester High Street, previously occupied by Leonard's shop (TQ 74406840). Perhaps the most important discovery was the south side of the medieval East Gate. This was originally a rectangular structure projecting from the line of the city wall, but was later embellished with massive drum-towers, thought to be of fourteenth-century date. Indeed, the size and layout of the gateway are very similar to the West Gate at Canterbury, known to have been built between 1375 and 1381. The Priory wall of 1345 was also located as well as considerable fragments of the City wall in which both Roman and Medieval work was identified.

A complete section was cut behind the wall through the Roman wall-bank and the earlier rampart (see *Arch. Cant.*, lxxxiii (1968), 75) which was here nearly complete. An interesting point was that the ditch belonging to the rampart continued on below the medieval gate-house showing that the Roman Gate must have been further to the north, and that at this point the High Street does not coincide with the original Watling Street. Just inside the Priory precinct were the remains of two kilns for the production of loom-weights, one of which had clearly been abandoned after an unsuccessful firing, as it contained between 20 and 30 weights. From pottery incorporated in the structure of the kilns it was possible to date them to c. A.D. 1100. About 30 coins, a second-century brooch in the form of a duck and an early medieval spear-head were among the numerous small finds.

A small-scale investigation was also carried out at Nashenden Farm (TQ 73206590) by permission of the Bridge Wardens on the supposed site of the Chapel mentioned in the *Textus Roffensis* of c. A.D. 1115. This site was previously dug in 1875, but not published. The plan

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was recovered of approximately half of a building, which seems domestic rather than ecclesiastical in origin and may well have been the manor.

The bulk of the labour-force for both these excavations was provided by the boys and girls of Sir Joseph Williamson's Mathematical School and the Rochester Girls' Grammar School, whose hard work made them possible.

Romney Marsh Area. Miss Anne Roper, M.B.E., F.S.A., reports:

At the end of 1968, Mr. Graham Hardy of Lydd acquired a field in Five Wents Lane leading from Old Romney to Ivychurch. When this was ploughed up for cultivation, the tractor, on reaching the mound at the south-eastern corner of the field (TR 03722571), unearthed several bones, and later some skulls. These were taken to Maidstone Museum and pronounced to be human. Old maps of the area revealed the spot marked with a cross and the words 'Site of St. Michael's Church'. I got in touch with Mr. Bradshaw of the Ashford Archæological Society who visited the site with me, and after making a few preliminary probes, he hoped the digging of a trench might lead to establishing the former existence of a building here. He subsequently reported evidence of such a building (see under *Ashford—Old Romney*).

Several skeletons of men, women and children were revealed, but carefully covered again. An inquiry to the Ordnance Survey Department as to their evidence for marking this site as that of St. Michael's Church produced references only to Hasted's '*alleged* site of St. Michael's'. Canon Scott Robertson was of opinion that this was an error and doubted its existence as a church. The raised mound or platform was surrounded by a dry shallow ditch which compares in size and appearance with church sites on the Marsh.

Thanet. Mr. D. G. Scurrall reports:

Both the Isle of Thanet and Broadstairs Archæological Societies have had a good year with interesting programmes of lectures and visits. The Isle of Thanet Society is at present surveying the island's footpaths. At All Saints Avenue, Margate, subsidence following heavy rain has exposed a series of small underground chambers which are still under investigation. At Broadstairs a Saxon cemetery, probably of the seventh century, was discovered near the town's refuse tip when topsoil was being mechanically removed. Some of the graves have been excavated, and later, when the finds have been more thoroughly examined, a further and fuller report will be made. The excavations are being directed by Mr. A. C. Hogarth.

The Civic Societies of Ramsgate and Margate continue to direct their attention to the preservation of their Georgian buildings. The

Margate Society has been instrumental in arranging for the business records and manuscripts from Cobbs Brewery being transferred to the County Archives Office. When these are catalogued this collection of banking, brewing and shipping agents' records will add considerably to the County's economic historical knowledge.

Tunbridge Wells. Mrs. M. E. Davies, B.A., reports:

The experiment of holding meetings on weekday evenings instead of Saturday afternoons has so far been justified. A lecture by Mr. A. P. Detsicas, M.A., F.S.A., in March, on the Roman Villa at Eccles was much appreciated by a large audience; and another in May, by Mr. J. H. Money, M.A., F.S.A., on Modern Archaeological Methods proved of interest and value to adults, and attracted—as was the intention—a number of young people from local schools.

The summer outing in June was to the Pennington Lane area of Southborough. The party was shown round Valley House (formerly White House Farm), the home of our member Mr. Ian B. Leslie, and Ivy House Farm (formerly Kipping Hall), owned by Mr. and Mrs. Hedley Board. Both these buildings are half-timbered and their history is the subject of current research by members of the Tunbridge Wells Branch. The tour ended with a visit to The Roundels, a most attractive house converted and rebuilt by the owners, Mr. and Mrs. R. Webster, from the ruins of a stables and two oasts. The methods used to construct the cones were of particular interest. Enjoying tea kindly provided by our member, Mrs. Joan Webster, in her garden, the party had the unique experience of watching a 'haystorm'—scores of bundles of hay caught up by a freak whirlwind and dropping out of a cloudless sky.

The Southborough Valley itself, seen from all three houses, has been explored by our member, Mr. D. H. Bennett, in a successful quest for traces of iron-working, of which he found abundant evidence, previously unrecorded and possibly dating back to at least medieval times. The Valley is threatened by a private building development which would endanger at least one of these iron-working sites, and members of the Branch, supported in various ways the Southborough Valley Association, formed in 1968 to resist the builder's application which was also opposed by the Kent County Council—the result of the Public Enquiry is still awaited. Mr. D. H. Bennett also prepared a short popular history of the area for an Open Day arranged by the Southborough Valley Association in June and attended by more than 300 people. He also, with some help from the Local Secretary, mounted an exhibition, 'Bygone Southborough', at The Roundels, for the same occasion. More than 150 maps, deeds, old photographs, pictures and other relics attracted so much interest that the display had to be

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retained for three months. As one direct result a number of new members were recruited for the Kent Archaeological Society and some offers of assistance have been forthcoming in the compilation of a full-scale history of Southborough now being prepared by Mr. Bennett; but more helpers are needed, especially if they are able occasionally to work in the Archives Room at Maidstone.

Meanwhile the Southborough Valley Association changed its name to the Southborough Society and became an amenity society covering the town and its environs. Some joint activities are planned, including lectures in Tunbridge Wells of interest to our Branch as well as to the Society's own members.

Late in the summer news reached the Local Secretary of what appears to be a rubbish dump of some antiquity adjoining Ivy House Farm, and a trial trench is being opened up in the hope that finds may supplement research into the history of the farm. The work will continue next year if it is found to be justified. No apology should be needed for concentrating so much effort in the Southborough area this year, partly because important sites and ancient buildings are in danger, but more especially since the district is a rich but hitherto virtually untapped field for archaeological and historical research and recording.

West Kent Border Archaeological Group. Mr. B. J. Philp reports:
Darenth

Urgent emergency excavations were carried out at Darenth in June and July, on behalf of the Ministry of Public Building and Works, under the direction of Mr. B. J. Philp, with the support of Mr. D. Garrod, Mr. R. Garnett and Mr. R. Cockett as site-supervisors. The work was supported by the Council for Kentish Archaeology, members including the Faversham, Fawkham, Otford, Lower Medway, Reculver, Ruxley, Sittingbourne, Springhead, Upchurch, and West Kent Groups. More than 100 volunteers were employed and a strong contingent came from Queen Elizabeth's Grammar School, Faversham, under the supervision of Mr. M. Montague. Work continued non-stop for 46 days and mechanical excavators and bull-dozers were employed at various times.

The excavation, ahead of gravel-workings, revealed a very large Roman building, probably 200 ft. in length. It contained many rooms, a large central hall, corridors, ovens, drains and a large pit. The building clearly forms part of the very large villa complex centred on Darenth Wood and clearly the whole site must now be the largest villa so far found in Kent. A Roman burial and a detached bath-house were found nearby.

The help and interest of Mrs. P. Martin, Mr. F. Wiseman, Mr.

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Roger Walsh, Mr. C. Ward, Mr. J. Parsons, Mr. S. Harker, Mr. J. Caiger, Mr. J. Barrow, Mr. G. Cramp, Mr. J. Williams, and Mr. T. Itthell is gratefully acknowledged.

Reculver, Kent. Mr. B. J. Philp reports:

The eighteenth year of excavation at Reculver was completed by the Reculver Excavation Group in 1969 continuing work which started on the site in 1952. The work was directed by Mr. B. J. Philp and Mr. H. E. Gough who were assisted by Miss J. Banks, Mr. E. Connell, Mr. H. Davies and Mr. D. Ellwood as supervisors. More than 80 members took part in excavations over April, June, August, September and October, undertaken in close co-operation with the Ministry of Public Building and Works. The research centre remains a major factor in the success of the excavations, thanks largely to the efforts of Mrs. N. M. Roberts. More than 4,000 people visited the major August excavation and the newly established site museum.

For the first time the Group undertook preliminary excavations inside the Saxon church celebrating its 1,300th anniversary since its documented foundation in A.D. 669. These disclosed the superficial nature of the 1927 excavation, and it is now clear that several important features were missed. Stratified deposits were found beneath the floor of the church, though their extent was not determined.

Inside the Roman fort a large area and exploratory trenches were dug north of the *via principalis*. These revealed the mid-first-century defences, a timber building, and evidence of Iron Age and medieval occupation. A report on the work is being prepared for publication and an extensive programme of work is planned for 1970.

The Group gratefully acknowledges the loan of equipment from the Council for Kentish Archaeology and the interest and support of Mr. Norman Cook, Dr. H. Taylor, Mr. A. Gidlow and Mr. P. Mills.

Warbank, Keston, Kent. Miss E. M. Mynott reports:

The third season's work on the Roman Villa site at Lower Warbank, Keston, was completed by the West Kent Border Archaeological Group in 1969, thanks to the co-operation of Mr. Lockley Cook. The work was directed by Mr. B. J. Philp, with Miss E. Mynott, Mr. G. Clewley, Mr. D. Broadfoot and Mr. J. Willson as supervisors. This training excavation again attracted 100 students, some of whom are now in their second year, and was carried out in conjunction with the London Borough of Bromley.

In addition to the cemetery excavated by the Group in 1968, with its monumental tombs and adjacent burials, the recent excavations have disclosed three more Roman buildings. Despite earlier excavations, it is now clear that much was missed, and work will continue, as the

site is threatened by roadworks. Pits, ditches, gullies and a water-main of Roman date have also been located.

In four 'open-days' at the end of September nearly 4,000 people were given guided tours of the site and nearly 600 copies of the *Kent Archaeological Review* were sold. The Group gratefully acknowledges the help and interest of Mr. P. Oldham, Mr. M. Ocock, Mr. D. Jackson, Mr. and Mrs. M. Lennard, and Mr. G. Davies. The C.K.A. proton-magnetometer was used on the site in an initial survey, as was other equipment.

Woolwich and District. Mr. D. E. Wickham, M.A., reports:

As a tribute to its former President, the late Mr. F. C. Elliston-Erwood, F.S.A., the Woolwich and District Antiquarian Society commissioned a memorial tablet which has been erected on one of the nave pillars in the ruins of Lesnes Abbey, which he excavated and did so much to preserve. The inscription on the tablet is as follows:

REMEMBER

F. C. ELLISTON-ERWOOD, F.S.A.

1883-1968

Who helped to excavate this Abbey

Erected by the Woolwich and District
Antiquarian Society

Threats of ring roads and motorways throughout south-east London have turned popular attention in the area towards amenity societies and action groups, but archaeological studies continue. Excavation revealed a substantial portion of the main Roman road through Southwark and hence the position of the Roman London Bridge. This now seems to have been west of the present bridge, a site formerly considered unlikely. The Southwark and Lambeth Archaeological Society was closely involved with this dig as it was with the continued excavations at the Black Prince's palace in Kennington, and in Lambeth Road where its members claim to have established for the first time the ground plan of a British Delft ware kiln.

The Lewisham Natural History Society undertook several excavations of comparatively modern sites in Greenwich. Full reports are still being prepared, but one dig revealed late seventeenth-century brick walls, a pit and a chamber believed to be on or near the site of Westcombe House.

With the foundation of the Charlton Society, the Eltham Society is no longer the area's baby. Indeed, with its membership standing at over 1,000 and its five sections, including a recently founded Youth Section, it has grown into a very lusty toddler!