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INTERIM REPORTS ON RECENT WORK CARRIED OUT BY THE CANTERBURY ARCHAEOLOGICAL TRUST

1. Whitefriars, Canterbury (TR 151 576)

Between April 2001 and April 2003, excavations continued on a number of sites lying within ground bordered by St George's Street, St George's Lane, Watling Street and Rose Lane.

The earliest deposits encountered were thought to have been plough soils, probably related to agricultural activity taking place on the fringes of the town. Rubbish pits, clay quarries and a possible lime kiln were also identified, but no structural occupation was present during the early years of Roman rule.

The earliest structures date to the second century AD. A road, thought to have been constructed in the first half of this century, crossed the Gravel Walk excavations, together with a lane angled at about 80 degrees to the road, leading off to the west. Within the western angles created by these features, development occurred in the form of timber structures, whilst timber buildings were also identified on the St George's Street site and south of the line of Gravel Walk. Probably in the third century, these timber structures were replaced in masonry, whilst new buildings also appeared as the Roman town prospered and expanded. A particularly fine example lay on the Gravel Walk site, comprising a house of 'winged corridor' design complete with hypocausted rooms and a corridor containing an expanse of tessellated flooring. Also on the Gravel Walk site, a curious seven-sided structure, built from large ragstone blocks and tufa, was located adjacent to a rectangular building, divided into two, constructed with thick walls and deep foundations. It is thought that these structures could represent a fountain adjacent to a water tower.

Anglo-Saxon activity was identified across the project area. One of the most exciting features was a length of N-S aligned road, comprising flint nodules and Roman tile and brick. The dating of the road, which was eventually to become St George's Lane, is of great interest as its construction is closely linked with the development of the post-Roman street grid in the area. If eighth or ninth century in

origin, it could well predate St George's Street, and as such represent the remnant of an earlier network of street alignments.

Another Anglo-Saxon discovery of great importance was identified on the St George's Street site, where a complex of wall fragments, floor surfaces and layers dense in carbonised grain marked the location of a possible granary building. Five further Anglo-Saxon structures were also excavated, one on the St George's Street site, the others on Gravel Walk. Of these, three had well-defined edges and an array of post- and stake-holes cutting through the edges of their bases, indicating the arrangement of a wooden superstructure.

Excavations across the Whitefriars area revealed ranges of medieval structures, both on the St George's Street site and fronting Gravel Walk. These were represented by wall footings, clay floors, hearths and occupation horizons. Into this medieval landscape came the Austin friars, in 1324, significant portions of their establishment being uncovered during excavations. On the St George's Street site, the north side of the church was revealed, on Gravel Walk parts of the southern range, including the dormitory, a possible warming room, and the kitchen range with extensive occupation deposits intact. The east end of the latter, set down into the ground, was remarkably well preserved, with elements of window tracery and a fireplace surviving *in situ*.

2. *The campanile of Christ Church, Canterbury (TR 1512 5788)*

As part of work for a new Education Centre in the Cathedral Precincts, in 2000-02 two small trenches were cut on the summit of the campanile mound and its southern revetment exposed. To the west, another revetment and an ambulatory wall were identified, as was an early ramp later replaced with stone steps. The steps were probably removed c.1475-1550, consistent with documentary evidence suggesting the campanile survived the earthquake of 1382 and was pulled down c.1540.

3. *Cobden Place, The Borough, Canterbury (TR 1503 5817)*

Further excavation took place in October 2001 and January 2002.¹ A late fourteenth-century timber-framed building with masonry dwarf walls was recorded aligned parallel to the modern street frontage; gravel surfaces abutting the external walls confirmed that the street alignment into Cobden Place had been laid out by this time. At the northern end of the building was a series of hearths and a possible oven base probably the remains of a service range, typical of an 'open hall' house. Pottery recovered from destruction levels suggests that

the building remained in use into the sixteenth century. A probable medieval boundary wall was also located. No datable material was located associated with this wall, but its quality and size would suggest either an important boundary or substantial building range extending to the west of the excavation. A post-built timber-framed structure was erected on the site later in the post-medieval period. A considerable scatter of copper alloy pins, including wire waste, suggests that small scale manufacturing took place. In the early nineteenth century a terrace of nine dwellings was constructed, one of three parallel tenement blocks. These were demolished during slum clearance in the 1930s.

4. *St Peter's Methodist Church, St Peter's Street (TR 1470 5793)*

Traces of a late medieval building were partially exposed during evaluation work adjacent to St Peter's Methodist church hall. Two chalk-block walls and internal floors, probably dating between the late fifteenth and mid sixteenth century were recorded parallel and close to the Greyfriars precinct boundary. By the late sixteenth century the building had been demolished and dark loamy soils and rubbish pits suggest the area had become gardens, probably for properties fronting St Peter's Street.

5. *No. 9A Best Lane (TR 1481 5795)*

Masonry walls and mortared floors recorded in two trenches excavated to the rear of nos 8-10 Best Lane, were considered likely to represent traces of two buildings depicted on Thomas Langdon's bird's eye view of the area c.1595. Demolition debris covered the structural features; seventeenth-century maps depict the area as open land.

6. *St Dunstan's Terrace (TR 1410 5820)*

Twenty-three inhumation burials and ninety-two cremation burials, all dating to the Roman period, were recorded during excavation. Three inhumations were aligned N-S, the remaining twenty were E-W, but bone survival was very poor. Some of the inhumations included grave goods in the form of pottery vessels and a number had the remains of hob-nailed shoes (*caligae*). Coffin nails were present in some inhumations and sometimes the outline of a coffin could be traced. The cremations generally consisted of a cinerary urn and one or more other vessels, though some cremations were aceramic and two consisted of wooden caskets. One amphora burial was present. A

boundary ditch crossed the excavation, roughly parallel with present day London Road and all the burials lay to the north of the ditch.

7. *Barton Court Grammar School, Longport (TR 1560 5750)*

Further evidence for medieval activity, in the form of a large pit or series of pits, was observed during a watching brief in November 2001.²

8. *St Martin's Priory (TR 1591 5776)*

During a watching brief maintained over the summer of 2001 a number of shallow rectangular features were observed suggesting the presence of an inhumation cemetery perhaps roughly contemporary with early St Martin's Church. An Anglo-Saxon knife and human bones and teeth were recovered from these features. A number of pits of middle Anglo-Saxon date were presumably related to the ville surrounding the church in the eighth and ninth centuries and their discovery increases the known extent of this settlement. An extensive area of gravel and soil containing quantities of freshly broken Roman tile and brick, appeared to fill a scarp or lynchet crossing the northern end of the site. No occupation material was found within these gravels and they are presumed to have been brought from elsewhere and dumped on the area as a levelling deposit.

9. *St Anselm's School, Old Dover Road (TR 1640 5605)*

During a watching brief maintained on terraces being cut during construction of a new sports facility, two small shallow hollows containing several fragments of flint-tempered pottery were recorded. These were the bases of features unfortunately machined away before commencement of the watching brief. A third, deeper, feature contained fragmented, but near complete, pottery vessels of mid Iron Age date (c.600–350 BC), comparable to known cremation groups of the period. No carbon or bone fragments were recovered.

10. *Hope Cottage, No. 240 Wincheap (TR 1399 5695)*

An excavation in November and December 2001 (following evaluation of the site in May) uncovered pits, ditches and gullies of medieval and post-medieval date together with an early post-medieval boundary wall with an adjacent metalled pathway. A series of rubbish pits of late twelfth- to fourteenth-century date was recorded and the bulk of the pottery recovered from the excavation

dates to this period. This implies significant activity in the area at this time, possibly connected with the hospital of St Jacob (St James) known to have been located in the near vicinity. There was later evidence for clay quarrying taking place on the site before a series of boundary ditches and the wall already mentioned subdivided the area into smaller plots.

SITES OUTSIDE CANTERBURY CITY

11. *Shelford Farm Estate, Broad Oak (TR 1655 6015, TR 1650 6015)*

Excavation took place from July-October 2001 prior to construction of two (east and west) surface water ponds. Earlier work in the area of the western pond had suggested the presence of Late Neolithic or Early Bronze Age features with associated occupation represented by a substantial assemblage of worked flint and though no significant archaeological features were revealed in the present work, a sizeable flint assemblage was recovered. At the eastern pond, activity dating back to the Neolithic period (c.4250-2100 BC) was similarly represented by an assemblage of worked flints, though no pottery or features dated specifically to that period. There was some evidence for pre-Roman activity on the site.

However the majority of the excavated features dated to the later first and second centuries AD. Extensive metallised surfaces and at least two buildings with flint and stone foundations were identified and a large corpus of Roman pottery including imported finewares from Gaul and Italian amphorae was recovered. A small bath- or steam-house with a furnace pit and flue and the remains of a hot tank attached to an apsidal-ended room was also excavated. No evidence for a bath survived. The site appeared to have been abandoned in the mid to late third century.

12. *Horton pipe-line, Chartham (TR 116 553 to 117 550)*

An intermittent watching brief maintained from May to July 2001 during the excavation of a water main trench revealed the remains of a previously unknown Anglo-Saxon cemetery and traces of medieval and later settlement. Six graves were identified, three of which were excavated and found to contain a range of grave goods typical of the early Anglo-Saxon period. An early medieval building truncated at least two of the graves. Pottery from the floor suggested abandonment in the eleventh or twelfth century. This building lay only 200m east of the known settlement of Horton, today represented by the chapel,

farm and manor house close to the River Stour. The discovery of this building and of a previously unknown Anglo-Saxon cemetery suggests that the settlement had earlier Anglo-Saxon origins and had perhaps extended uphill in the medieval period.

13. *St Mary's Church, Chartham (TR 1067 5508)*

A watching brief was maintained during building work and repairs to the church in September 2001. The earliest remains identified were located against the north door, close to the west end of the present church. A wide foundation of rammed chalk and gravel, set on an E-W axis, ran parallel to the north wall of the existing nave, formed a corner to the west with a return foundation running southwards beneath the present church. There was no direct dating evidence for this wall, but it probably represents remains of the late Anglo-Saxon church. A row of three E-W aligned infant burials was located immediately north of this early foundation. Elsewhere, a drainage trench excavated parallel to and north of the north wall, cut two N-S aligned foundations in large chalk-blockwork, possibly representing the creation of a small side room in the twelfth century. Between 1294 and 1315 the church was substantially rebuilt and the foundations for this rebuild were observed along the inside of the north wall during reflooring work. The foundations of the original north porch (demolished shortly after c.1500) were also observed during the watching brief. A near-complete cooking pot of Canterbury Tyler Hill ware (c.1300-1350/75) was found encased within the mortar foundations. The date for the rebuild (1294-1315) falls early within this range, and gave a *terminus post quem* of c.1300 to the vessel.

14. *Church Lane Meadows, Seasalter (TR 0950 6458, centred)*

In April and May 2001 excavation was undertaken to investigate an Anglo-Saxon hollow way, identified by earlier evaluation when several sherds of the relatively rare Anglo-Saxon Ipswich ware were also recovered. The first use of the route (from the Seasalter levels and the road to Canterbury) may have been as a drove road as early as the fifth century, with, on the basis of finds evidence, a second phase of use from c.750-850/75. The route later shifted to a slightly different alignment further up the slope to the east. Finds dated the formation of this hollow to c.1050-1350.

15. *The Old Customs House, Sandwich (TR 3326 5815)*

A watching brief maintained in June 2001 during the construction of

a rear extension recorded fragmentary evidence for two successive early post-medieval buildings, the earliest of which could have been built no earlier than the late sixteenth century. It is not clear whether either ancillary structure was attached to the main building. The earliest recorded features were two rubbish pits containing medieval pottery pre-dating the adjacent fifteenth-century hall house. However, the bulk of the recovered pottery dated to the post-medieval period, with a range of Continental wares reflecting the port status of Sandwich.

16. *Ringlemere Farm, Woodnesborough (TR 2939 5698)*

In March 2003 excavation of a third trench was funded by grants from the KAS, the BBC and the British Museum. As a result the diameter of the great ditch around the barrow was found to be 41.50m and the ditch was over 2m deep. In wet weather it would have sometimes held water and by the Roman period was probably completely silted up and invisible. The mound might have stood to a height of around 5m (16 ft). Such dimensions would have made the barrow one of the largest in southern Britain.

17. *Deal-Dover bulk supply water-main (Site 5: TR 3611 4649)*

A watching brief was maintained from August to October 2001 during the creation of a 5.5km length of new water main between Ringwould and St Margaret's at Cliffe. The most significant group of features recorded was on the ploughed downland north of East Valley Farm and was first located during the initial machine clearance of ploughsoil. A special arrangement with the contractors allowed a three-week excavation to take place, which revealed the well-preserved remains of a Bronze Age round-house and its associated pits, ditches and gullies.³

18. *Laureston Place, Dover (TR 3220 4170)*

In April 2001 a watching brief was maintained during construction work at St Mary's Primary School. A ditch, pits and two shallow terraces, all cut into the natural chalk and sealed by a deposit of hillwash were recorded under a thick layer of garden soil. No dating evidence was recovered from the ditch or the terrace fills; the pits were all medieval, seemingly filled during the late twelfth or early thirteenth century. The corpus of pottery consisted of fabrics and forms paralleled in the assemblages recovered from the early medieval occupation site off Townwall Street, 300m to the south.

19. *Crabble Paper Mill, Dover (centred TR 2995 4311)*

Evaluation trenching in February 2001, prior to redevelopment of the site, revealed pits and ditches of prehistoric, Roman and medieval date. A subsequent excavation revealed eight prehistoric pits cutting into a brickearth spur, all characterised by a distinctive fill of dark soil with much carbon, very large quantities of fragmented calcined flint and some struck flint. The spur occupied by the pits was surrounded on the downhill side by an 'apron' of similar dumped ashy soil, again containing abundant carbon fragments and very frequent quantities of calcined flint fragments and a few very small fragments of flint-tempered pottery. The entire complex is reminiscent of 'burnt-mound' sites known elsewhere in the country and generally dated to the Bronze Age. The same elevated position, overlooking the river, was occupied in the medieval period. A series of deposits, features and structures were located, most significant of which was the remains of a masonry building probably of thirteenth-century date. Situated too far from the river to be considered an early mill, the substantial masonry construction indicates that the building was of some status, possibly a chapel associated with a manor house complex.

20. *Hawkinge County Primary School (TR 2135 3950)*

A watching brief during preliminary groundwork for a new school building on a former aerodrome was undertaken from July to September 2001. A Romano-British settlement had been previously identified covering a large area of the aerodrome, but much of this had been removed during a munitions search prior to redevelopment taking place. Despite this, a Romano-British ditch, a group of Roman cremation burials of second-century date and a wide shallow feature, also of Roman date, all suggestive of a Romano-British farmstead, were recorded during the watching brief.

21. *Plot 4, Dykeside Farm, West Hythe (TR 1213 3386)*

An intermittent watching brief was maintained through 2000 and 2001 during construction of a house on part of an extensive sandbank once known as *Sandtun*.⁴ Most of the plot remained unaffected by the development and the foundations and service trenches penetrated only 0.3m into a ground surface resulting from the quarrying and levelling of the sandbar. However, a deep excavation for a septic tank resulted in a number of unstratified Roman finds being recovered, mainly water worn pottery and tile, together with one fragment of an eighth- to tenth-century Anglo-Saxon shelly ware jar.

22. *Church Road, New Romney (TR 0670 2492)*

In April 2000 a watching brief maintained during the digging of foundations for a new house, revealed a sequence of medieval deposits and features. These included fragments of a stone building overlying a sequence of timber structures, built against Church Road. The clay floors of the earliest timber building were covered by a substantial deposit of beach sands, found across the entire site, clearly representing inundation by the sea, which probably caused the virtual destruction of the building. A replacement timber building was constructed in the same position, but the succeeding stone building was constructed on a slightly different alignment. This building also contained evidence of flooding by sea water at least once. A pit cutting early floors belonging to the stone building contained pottery dating to c.1475-1550.

23. *Abbey Fields, Graveney Road, Faversham (TR 0350 6150)*

In September 2000, evaluation prior to housing development took place on a site crossed by a railway line, so creating Area 1 to the north and Area 2 to the south. In Area 1 medieval occupation dating between the twelfth and fourteenth centuries and most probably associated with a small farmstead, was recorded. In Area 2 rare evidence for Late Mesolithic and Neolithic occupation was present in the form of flint debitage, reworked tools, blades and a number of finished scrapers, suggestive of an occupation site on which intensive or protracted flint tool production took place. A small amount of Neolithic pottery was also recovered. Flint material dating to the Bronze Age would suggest later tool production on the site and a curvilinear gully and two ditches containing lithic and ceramic material were also recorded, indicating settlement activity in the Middle Bronze Age to the Middle Iron Age (c.1500-400 BC). Further ditches and gullies were dated by associated ceramics to the Late Iron Age and the Romano-British period (c. 50 BC to AD 400).

24. *George Vaults, High Street, Rochester (TQ 7425 6867)*

An intermittent watching brief maintained throughout 2001 recorded part of a Roman masonry building probably constructed in the late third or early fourth century, and possibly part of the same structure observed by George Payne c. 1904.⁵

25. *Nos 178-184 High Street, Rochester (TQ 7450 6817)*

Evaluation trenching was undertaken in July 2001. Despite extensive

brickearth quarrying dating from the early post-medieval period, two small areas of intact deposits contained the remains of a medieval boundary ditch and at least two Roman inhumation burials. The burials are the first documented evidence for any cemetery on the eastern side of the Roman town.

26. *East Hill, Dartford (TQ 5476 7381)*

During evaluation in December 2001 a number of flint artefacts of Lower Palaeolithic date were recovered together with Late Neolithic to Mid Bronze Age 'Peterborough ware' and later prehistoric pottery. A large linear ditch, of Late Bronze Age/Early Iron Age date was also recorded and together the evidence suggested the possible existence of a previously unknown prehistoric hilltop enclosure. No trace of later prehistoric or early Roman occupation was found, but three graves were recorded that clearly related to a late Roman cemetery nearby.⁶

NOTES

¹ *Archaeologia Cantiana*, CXXIII (2003), 293-4.

² *Archaeologia Cantiana*, CXXIII, (2003), 297.

³ *Canterbury's Archaeology 2002-2003*, 35-6.

⁴ *Canterbury's Archaeology 2002-2003*, 40-41; Gardiner, M., Cross, R., Macpherson-Grant, N. and Riddler, I., 2001, 'Continental trade and non-urban ports in middle Anglo-Saxon England: Excavations at Sandtun, West Hythe, Kent', *Archaeological Journal*, 158, 161-290.

⁵ Payne, G., 1905, 'Researches and discoveries in Kent 1905-1907', *Archaeologia Cantiana*, xxvii, lxx-lxxx.

⁶ Dunkin, J., 1844, *The History and Antiquities of Dartford*.