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

CANTERBURY CITY SITES

1. *Nos 6-8 Rose Lane (TR 1495 5770)*

Excavation was undertaken through the winter of 2004 in advance of the redevelopment of properties built in an area first investigated by the Canterbury Excavations Committee between 1946-8¹ and therefore known to overly a deep sequence of stratigraphy. In the main, excavation was restricted to the formation level for the new building; lower levels were only explored in new service trenches or where previous drains or structures were removed. Despite these limitations, a potentially pre-Roman ditch was observed and elements of various Roman buildings. *Opus signinum* and plaster floors were observed in section and isolated structural features, floors and demolition debris indicated Roman features elsewhere on the site, the majority in small trenches in the south-west corner. Metallings for a Roman street, also recorded during the Marlowe excavations were observed.

During the medieval period the site appeared to have been a back yard area occupied by small structures. Furnaces and bread ovens indicate small scale industrial activity. The area remained much the same in character in the post-medieval period, with cellars, small structures and rubbish pits recorded and indications that much of the area continued in use as back gardens. No remains of earlier street frontage buildings survived since the line of Rose Lane has shifted westwards in recent times.

2. *No. 8 Palace Street (TR 14955 57997)*

Evaluation prior to extension of the property revealed post-medieval features relating to this historic building. In one trench a structure was most likely the remains of a brick-lined earth closet, though an industrial function was also postulated, perhaps part of a clay-pipe kiln. In the second trench, the earliest exposed deposit comprised a loam soil

intermixed with rubble and pottery dated to between 1650 and 1725. This deposit may have been contemporary with construction of a documented late seventeenth-century extension to the building.

3. *No. 30 King's Street (TR 15005 58124)*

A small evaluation trench was excavated prior to redevelopment of the site which uncovered late medieval deposits (1475-1550) attributed to the demolition of a building either located in the development area or very close by. This was covered by garden or horticultural soil, cut by a number of rubbish pits containing pottery dated to the period 1500-1575. These were overlain by a possible mortar floor, perhaps part of a structure fronting King's Street. However any evidence for occupation during the early post-medieval period appears to have been removed by the construction of a bakery shown on the 1912 Goad insurance map. The evaluation identified the brick floor of an oven, as well as a partition wall separating the oven from the baker's shop.

4. *New Grange House, King's School, St Augustine's Abbey (TR 1558 5782)*

Excavation and assessment was undertaken prior to construction of a new building in order to reduce any potential impact the development might have on the buried archaeological resource. Earlier geophysical survey, conducted by GSB Prospection, and archaeological evaluation, had confirmed the presence of buried remains which it was largely possible to preserve *in situ*. However some further excavation proved necessary in order to fully understand the extent and importance of those observed remains.

Eleventh-century pits and a ditch indicated that the abbey had not yet expanded into this area, but twelfth-century masonry recorded above the ditch at the western end of the excavation area might represent the eastern end of the abbey's reredorter. The full extent of the remains was masked by later post-medieval demolition rubble, but exposed walls were formed of randomly-coursed chalk blocks with internal faces of rendered flint. Three buttresses were identified against the southern wall of the structure and another against its northern. Two below ground 'rooms' may have functioned as part of the drainage system for the reredorter, if this was the building's function, but no firm evidence was recovered for this. Part of the northern precinct wall abutted the north-eastern corner of the building.

A second building was recorded in the eastern part of the excavation area. This appeared to have been constructed in the later medieval period on former cultivated land and three structural elements of it were excavated: the main building; an attached extension to the west; and a

walled courtyard adjoining the north-eastern range of the infirmary to the south. The main structure might be contemporary with a range of early fourteenth-century buildings known as Peter of Dene's lodgings,² which were located just to the south. The extension was constructed by the early fifteenth century. The walled courtyard may have been formed at the same time as the extension. A drain crossed the courtyard and extended beyond its southern boundary wall via a wide culvert.

A late medieval well, backfilled after the Dissolution, was located between the eastern and western buildings. The northern wall of a third building was recorded just inside the southern extent of the excavated area and appeared to align with walls recorded during the geophysical survey to the south of the site and with a plan of the infirmary range.³

Following dissolution in 1538, St Augustine's Abbey was systematically demolished. There is no documentary evidence for when the buildings discussed here were demolished, but none of them were retained for use in the King's New Lodgings. Those 'lodgings' were later leased as a private home and from 1615 under the Wooton family became famous for gardens designed by John Tradescant. Some garden features and a wall might have been associated with the Tradescant layout.

5. *No. 20 Love Lane (Holter's Mews, Ivy Lane) (TR 15365 57635)*

Two small evaluation trenches, cut prior to residential development to the rear of 20 Love Lane, provided interesting glimpses of both Roman and Anglo-Saxon activity. In both trenches earlier levels were considerably disturbed by later activity, but isolated islands of early stratigraphy survived. Roman deposits dating to the late second or third century were recorded in the base of a shallow pit-like feature in one trench, and in the other the possible remains of an Anglo-Saxon sunken-featured structure, or cellar. Very little survived of medieval date as the site was severely truncated in the post-medieval period. There was a complex sequence of brick structures, possibly rear outhouses and associated floors and external hard standing and a possible lane which might be that shown running parallel to Love Lane on Doige's map of 1752.

6. *Barton Mill and Barton Mill Road (TR 1560 5885, centred)*

Prior to redevelopment of land against Sturry Road and Barton Mill Road associated with residential development and the conversion of mill buildings, evaluation trenches were excavated over an area of approximately 3.5ha. The earliest datable deposit was a buried land surface tentatively dated to the early Neolithic period (c. 4000-3000 BC) which contained a small corpus of flint flakes concentrated in a small

area. The material appeared to represent the discarded remnants of flint-working and the finds and their context are both rare in the area. Later prehistoric and earlier Roman features were found to the south-west on slightly higher ground. These consisted of a N-S aligned ditch and a number of pits, perhaps of Late Iron Age date. Roman activity was clearly present nearby, if not on site, evidenced by stray Roman sherds and tile.

There was no evidence for Anglo-Saxon activity on site, nor any conclusively medieval. A wide, linear feature sloping towards the river, perhaps the remains of an old watercourse could equally well have been an early trackway leading to a river crossing point. A possible clay quarry might also have been of medieval date.

A trench excavated on the island north of the mill complex revealed a completely different sequence of levels. The earlier deposits were all derived from a fluvial, post-glacial environment, of about 12,000 years ago. Peat later developed over the alluvium to form a swampy environment. There was no indication of any occupation during the early stages of deposition. The deposit above the peat contained seventeenth- and early eighteenth-century material, all showing signs of being immersed in water for some time, so indicating that the island may have been submerged at some point in the post-medieval period. Cartographic evidence suggests that the island remained as water meadow up to recent times, when a thick deposit of colliery waste was laid to support a modern industrial warehouse.

SITES OUTSIDE CANTERBURY

7. Island Road, Hersden (TR 2132 6230)

Earlier discoveries relating to the development of Lakeview Business Park have been reported previously.⁴ Two more phases of work took place in August 2004 and August 2005. The first uncovered the eastern extent of the Late Iron Age enclosure recorded in 2000 and 2002 and an associated rectangular enclosure containing groups of post-holes and features that might represent internal structures. There was tentative evidence for metalworking provided by traces of possible reverberation furnaces. A pit contained fragments of a sword, which may have been deliberately broken before deposition and many of the features contained large amounts of pottery. The function of the enclosure remains uncertain, but the excavators of the site postulated that it may have served a 'cultic' or communal purpose.⁵ A number of Roman cremations were recorded in the same area.

The final phase of excavation took place between August and September 2005 and as elsewhere uncovered further elements of previously recorded features. The eastern side of a long-lived rectangular enclosure was

recorded and further east another set of N-S ditches, apparently forming one of the main boundaries to the settlement. East of this boundary there were few features, but 'inside' a great many pits and post-holes were recorded, together with ditches forming a rectangular enclosure. A large round-house was the dominant feature of this enclosure,⁶ with associated working hollows, burnt and pot-filled features. A second, rectangular, structure defined by a series of post- and stake-holes, was possibly associated with a later enclosure. Other structures may have existed along the eastern boundary of this later enclosure together with a number of hearths or fire-pits and cremation burials.

8. *Sewer pipelines south of Island Road, Westbere (TR 2015 6123)*

A series of test-pits dug to evaluate the route of two proposed sewer pipelines, identified different landscape zones along the proposed route. The northernmost test-pits on a relatively high plateau showed the gravel subsoil was covered by between c.0.13 and 0.36m of gravel soils, probably disturbed subsoil, with a shallow cover of humic topsoil and turf. These deposits sealed cut features of possible Iron Age or Early Roman date, that were the only evidence for occupation along the route.

Below the plateau the route continued down a steep south-facing escarpment which had undergone considerable erosion, possibly the result of over cultivation or grazing of its upper slopes. Artefactual material in colluvial layers recorded at the escarpment base indicated that the colluviation was, in part at least, coeval with/or later than occupation on the plateau.

The third landscape zone equated to the floodplain of the River Stour where the London Clay subsoil was increasingly deeply buried by colluvial deposits towards the river where test-pits showed increasing interdigitation of alluvial and colluvial sedimentation.

A fourth zone, identified south-west of 'Haseden Lane' where the subsoil is primarily Head Brickearth, was characterised by deposits strongly indicative of brickearth quarrying.

The identification of a possible Iron Age settlement led to more extensive evaluation of the plateau area. A large, subrectangular ditched enclosure, with its long axis aligned approximately parallel to the crest of the escarpment to the south and the line of the Roman road to the north, was recorded. The ditches were large, between 3-4m wide and up to 1.20m deep. Flint-tempered pottery was recovered from them. A second enclosure was indicated by a recut of the ditch, with pottery dating up to Early Roman times and some Roman tile. The two enclosures together with a scatter of other features, mostly ditches, suggest a Late Iron Age settlement that survived into the very early Roman period.

9. *Bullockstone Road, Herne Bay (TR 1078 6624)*

Sixty-four trenches (each on average 20m long and 1.90m wide) were cut to evaluate a 5.2ha area prior to the construction of an attenuation pond. Over 300 features were identified. Many of these (151) were pits and large post-holes; only eleven smaller post-holes were recorded, possibly because they were more difficult to identify. Some seventy-three ditches or gullies were recorded, along with two possible hollow ways. Nine hearths and pits containing redeposited hearth material were observed. Thirty-nine ill-defined areas of dark fill were interpreted as intercutting pits and another twenty-five areas of soil discolouration may represent human activity. A large modern disturbance, thought to be a Second World War bomb crater, was also observed.

Little cultural material was recovered, but sufficient pottery was collected to suggest a Late Bronze Age/Early Iron Age date for much of the activity on the site. A large Romano-British pit, or pit complex, was identified in the easternmost evaluation trench.

10. *Tothill Street, Minster (TR 3123 6562)*

Between January and May 2005 excavation in advance of new roadside services at the A253 Minster roundabout revealed funerary remains from the Bronze Age, Iron Age and Roman periods and an extensive long-lived Iron Age settlement. A crouched inhumation dating to the Early Bronze Age was excavated and a jet bracelet was recovered from the elbow of the poorly preserved skeleton. An amber bead was also found within the grave and another bead fashioned from a polished fossil sponge found with a tusk shell (*Dentalium*) placed through it. A second inhumation was recorded beneath the chalk backfill of a large Late Bronze Age or Early Iron Age quarry pit. A Bronze Age barrow was also identified, but not excavated during this phase of work.

Pottery from the ditches of a large subrectangular enclosure was dated to the Middle Iron Age (c.600-350 BC). Amongst the many pits and post-holes in the interior two buildings were identified, one a post-built rectangular structure and the other a sunken-floored structure of a type increasingly recognised on Thanet sites. The enclosure had a wide entrance on the southern side and a second, later blocked, entrance on the north-west. A pit just outside this entrance contained a skull and other human bone and human remains were found in the enclosure ditches. A second smaller subcircular enclosure with internal pits and post-holes and a south-west facing entrance was also provisionally dated to the Middle Iron Age.

Outside the enclosures, post-hole alignments indicated further buildings and fence lines. The partial remains of a posted structure, which encircled

a flint surface containing pottery, quern fragments and burnt stone, may have had an industrial function. Other features included a range of pits containing refuse matter, and some fragments of possible sword moulds. Three small pits contained 'placed' deposits, including a copper alloy brooch, partial deer skulls with antler still attached, and a near-complete pottery vessel.

An inhumation cemetery at the Tothill Street end of the site was provisionally dated to the Late Iron Age or Early Roman period. Eleven graves were excavated, ten of which lay perpendicular to a low chalk ridge that appeared to form a boundary to the cemetery. One grave retained the outline of a coffin with iron nails.

11. Downlands, Walmer (TR 3677 4970)

Excavation in advance of residential development recorded traces of activity on the site from the Late Bronze Age/Early Iron Age (900-600 BC) through to the Roman period. The prehistoric features were concentrated on the southern side of a ditch and gully which may have represented a settlement boundary. There was a large flint-filled hollow, of uncertain function, and many pits, two of which yielded fragments of human skull deposited in such a manner as to suggest a symbolic or ritual purpose. A possible crude trackway against the southern edge of the excavation was considered to be associated with these early features. A small cluster of pits to the north of the 'boundary' contained animal bone, quern fragments and domestic pottery and further east, on an adjacent building plot, a possible cremation vessel of Late Bronze Age/Early Iron Age date was uncovered.

Pottery from several pits was dated to the Late Iron Age or early Romano-British period and two brooches were recovered with a similar Late Iron Age or post-Conquest date. A number of ditches and pits (one containing a horse burial) and the grave of a child were also considered to belong to this phase of occupation. These early Romano-British features were covered by a horizon of mixed deposits. In its north-west part the horizon yielded a significant quantity of pottery of early to mid Roman date including fine wares and some Roman glass. At the southern end of the site elements of a large building cut the same horizon. The lower courses of its wall foundations survived and two pairs of post-pads or post-holes placed to suggest an aisled structure, c.13m wide. The northern end of the building (some 7-8m) was recorded, the rest extended beneath the excavation boundary. A ditch was located some 3m east of the building and ran north-east for a distance of c.15m before turning south-east, and forming a partial alignment with the earlier Romano-British ditches.

No deposits were identified relating to the occupation of the building

which was sealed by a layer of colluvium which survived undisturbed until the late nineteenth or early twentieth century.

12. St Nicholas Church, Barfrestone (TR 2642 5011)

An evaluation and subsequent watching brief connected with reconstruction of the churchyard wall revealed some evidence for activity on the site predating the present stone church. Pottery dating to the period 1075-1125 was recovered from a ditch or beam slot cutting an artificial terrace. There was also large amounts of daub and carbon, suggesting the presence of a timber structure predating the present church. A number of burials, uncovered during the reduction of the churchyard, prior to reconstruction of the wall, were removed.

13. 'Eden Roc', Bay Hill, St Margarets at Cliffe (TR 3642 4448)

Anglo-Saxon burials and an earlier ditch which probably related to a known round barrow,⁷ were discovered at Bay Hill in 2003.⁸ Consequently a large scale excavation was mounted in May and June 2004 prior to construction work at the site. Almost the complete eastern half of the barrow's ring-ditch was exposed, estimated to have been about 22m in diameter. A significant quantity of prehistoric struck flint, pottery, animal bone and marine shell was recovered from the upper fills of the ditch. Eight Anglo-Saxon graves were revealed outside the barrow ditch, each containing an extended inhumation aligned E-W. Anglo-Saxon iron knives were recovered from four of the graves. Small ring-gullies surrounding two of the graves suggest these may once have been covered by small barrows. An unexpected discovery was a group of six inhumations, all in a contracted position and all either cut into the fill of the ring-ditch or just outside it. None were accompanied by datable grave goods, though they were clearly of Bronze Age, or perhaps Iron Age, date.

14. Old Park, Whitfield (TR 3054 4423)

Following the discovery of early Roman activity including a probable cremation burial in evaluation trenches, more extensive excavations were undertaken in the spring of 2004 ahead of building work. Pits and ditches containing Roman pottery were located together with another cremation burial. The features almost certainly related to a native farmstead, provided with ditched boundaries, pits for rubbish disposal or perhaps clay quarrying and a small cremation cemetery. Contemporary Roman occupation was recorded close by in 1998⁹ and 1999 and all the discoveries together might represent separate elements of a single, if somewhat dispersed Romano-British settlement.

15. St Nicholas Church, New Romney (TR 06535 24751)

A watching brief maintained during drainage works in the churchyard recorded a medieval Ragstone foundation perhaps for the wall of a building abutting the north aisle or for an earlier boundary to the churchyard. The remains of a brick-built post-medieval burial vault belonging to the Walter family, were recorded outside the chancel window. In one of the soakaway pits wall foundations relating to a masonry structure which once fronted Church Road was recorded. A sequence of clay floors survived with the interior faces of the walls covered with whitewashed fine lime mortar. No dating evidence was recovered from the building. The Magdalene College map of 1614¹⁰ shows buildings fronting Church Road along this side of the churchyard.

16. New Romney sewer scheme

Thirteen evaluation trenches were cut along the proposed route of the 'first-time' sewer scheme in New Romney. Trenches 1 and 2 in St Martin's Field contained features of the later twelfth to fifteenth century including two graves associated with the former church of St Martin. Seven trenches cut at various points on Church Lane contained no evidence for settlement, but all revealed a sequence of deposits relating to the estuarine history of the town, as did Trench 11, south of the town and Trench 12 in the north-west part of the town. Trench 13 however, at the extreme western end of the sewer route contained the unexpected remains of a gravel trackway, the disturbed footings of a stone wall with an associated floor and a large pit containing an oven or industrial feature. All of these features were suggestive of activity in the late medieval period. Further north-west, Trench 14, adjacent to Spitalfield Lane revealed a large ditch which may have been associated with a medieval lane to the former leper hospital which was derelict by 1363 and refounded then as an 'almshouse'.¹¹

17. St Margaret's Church, Hothfield (TQ 5969 4453)

During the course of a watching brief maintained during the cutting of drain trenches and a soakaway pit in the churchyard, a brief examination was made of the church spire, then under repair. Following a lightening strike in 1598 and a consequent devastating fire, the church nave and roof were refurbished at the patronage of Sir John Tufton in 1603 and it would appear that an earlier spire was completely replaced around this date. Redundant stone corbels project from the internal face of the tower beneath the level of the present day spire which is of lightweight construction compared to earlier examples and this, with its lack of medieval timber constructional techniques suggests an early post-medieval date for it.

There is no indication within the tower that the earlier spire was destroyed in the 1598 fire and it is therefore possible that the opportunity was taken at the time of Sir John Tufton's post-fire works to install a tall, slender spire in keeping with those refurbishments.

18. Mill House, Salter's Lane, Preston near Faversham (TR 0180 6040)

A watching brief maintained during the cutting of footings for a building extension uncovered human remains amongst soil and rubble filling both the earlier foundation trenches for nineteenth-century mill buildings and those for the new building. The remains clearly related to a Roman cemetery indicated by the discovery of four or five burials and several small silver coins during building work at Preston Mill c.1859-60.¹²

19. Dodd's Transport, Bonham Drive, Sittingbourne (TR 9163 6466)

The remains of a clamp-kiln were recorded during a watching brief maintained over the cutting of foundation trenches for new industrial buildings. The kiln was relatively intact and enough evidence survived to allow a reconstructed plan to be created.¹³ Clamp kilns were the earliest type of kiln used to fire bricks and this kiln would appear to be one of the last clamp kilns in the area before those of a more permanent type were introduced. The earliest use of the kiln at Bonham Drive might have been during the mid eighteenth century.

20. Florence Road, Maidstone (TQ 7521 5502)

Following the identification of a possible Roman structure during evaluation of a plot destined to site five new houses, excavation took place in the spring of 2004. Significant archaeological levels were found to survive very close to the modern ground surface and early machine clearance was soon abandoned in favour of hand excavation which revealed robber trenches and walls indicative of the presence of a Roman villa. Two rooms of a bath suite which appeared to extend beneath Florence Road were excavated including *opus signinum*-lined pools or plunge baths. Parts of a drainage system for the pools with pit, a tile-lined conduit and various channels draining into an open ditch, were recorded. Though the excavation was small in scale, it conclusively proved the presence of another villa in an area of Roman activity concentrated around Maidstone and the Roman route of Stone Street.¹⁴

21. Holborough Quarry, Snodland (TR 7025 6235)

A Late Bronze Age (c.900 BC) settlement was excavated during the summer

and autumn of 2004. At least one major round-house was identified against the western boundary of the excavation with many more post-hole groupings representing circular, square and rectangular structures identified across the site. Numerous rubbish pits were also identified, all of which contained large quantities of domestic debris. Amongst the finds from the pits were a number of baked clay loomweights and a bone weaving comb, indicative of the manufacture of woollen textiles. A large quantity of animal bones recovered from the pits indicated the keeping of livestock whilst carbonised pulses and grains were recovered from soil samples. Other evidence for agricultural activity was the presence of many four-posted structures conventionally interpreted as corn driers or granaries.

The site was bounded to the north by a narrow, slightly curving ditch, whilst a southern ditch was broken by 'causeways' and appeared to mark an internal division between areas of the settlement. An eastern settlement boundary adjoined the quarry while the western boundary was undefined. The area between the north and south ditches appeared to have been the main domestic focus whilst areas further south and east appear to have been used more for food storage and production, or perhaps for livestock, as indicated by the many smaller post-hole structures and fence lines. At least ten pits containing cremated human bone were identified along the site's southern boundary and a further three cremations identified on the western side of the site appeared to form a westward extension to the southern boundary ditch. A number of deep, circular features in a group located a short way south of the southern boundary contained rare evidence for metalworking. Amongst the group was a pit containing a large assemblage of clay mould fragments for a bronze sword, probably of Ewart Park type. Detailed analysis of these moulds will take place when the site has been fully excavated; excavations were suspended due to the presence of protected species.

ENDNOTES

¹ Blockley, K., Blockley, M., Blockley P., Frere, S.S. and Stow, S., 1995, *Excavations in the Marlowe Car Park and Surrounding Areas, Canterbury*.

² Tatton-Brown, T., 'The Abbey precinct, liberty and estate', in R. Gem (ed.), *St Augustine's Abbey, Canterbury*, London, 1997, 126.

³ Hamilton Thompson, A., 'A descriptive note on Sir W.H. St John Hope's plan of the infirmary of St Austin's Abbey now first published in the complete plan of St Austin's Abbey', in Canon R.U. Potts, 'The plan of St Austin's Abbey, Canterbury', *Archaeologia Cantiana*, XLVI (1934), 179-94.

⁴ *Archaeologia Cantiana*, CXXII (2002), 346-7; CXXV (2005), 267-8.

⁵ Barrett, D., 'Island Road, Hersden', *Canterbury's Archaeology 2004-2005*, 19.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 19-20.

⁷ F.G. Parsons, 'A round barrow at St Margaret's Bay, Kent', *Man*, 29 (1929), 53-4.

⁸ *Archaeologia Cantiana*, cxxv (2005), 269.

⁹ *Archaeologia Cantiana*, cxxii (2002), 354-5.

¹⁰ The map is held at Magdalene College. A modern tracing of a part of it is in Romney Town Hall.

¹¹ K.M.E. Murray, 'Excavations on the site of the leper hospital New Romney', *Archaeologia Cantiana*, xlvii (1935), 198.

¹² G. Bedo, *The Reliquary*, vol. xiii, 144.

¹³ A. Linklater, *Canterbury's Archaeology 2004-2005*, 38.

¹⁴ A. Detsicas, *The Cantiaci* (Gloucester), 1983, 126-8.