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THE KENT ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF ARCHAEOLOGY AND HISTORICAL STUDIES IN KENT, 1957-2007: A REVIEW

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In concluding his history of the first 100 years of the Kent Archaeological Society, Frank W. Jessup summarised some of the changes in the management, constitution and work of the KAS which had taken place in those years (*Archaeologia Cantiana*, LXX, 1956). He noted that in the Victorian era more than one quarter of the members were in holy orders, and some fifty members were titled. The list of Vice Presidents was a social roll call of the pride of Kent; 6 earls, 1 archbishop, 1 bishop, 3 viscounts, 2 barons, 5 baronets, and 11 MPs – an assembly which gave the Society an impressive presence, but was distinguished more for its representation of County patriotism than for its expertise in archaeology and history.

By 1957, Jessup noted that the membership had broadened to all sections of the community, including females, and the Society had evolved from its main interests in churches, family trees and the throwing open of tumuli, to embrace the more scientific and meticulous methods of archaeology and history, where, for instance, ‘antique pots were valued as type specimens, systematically laid out with precision’. As participants in, and inspirers of, this process, Jessup named the many distinguished antiquaries, archaeologists and historians whose work graced the pages of the ninety volumes of *Archaeologia Cantiana* and the Records series published by the Society in its first 100 years, constituting an impressive and invaluable corpus of work on the history and archaeology of Kent in a national and international context.

Jessup in 1957 looked back with considerable and justifiable pride on the Society’s century of achievements, all accomplished by entirely voluntary effort, and he looked forward to the continuation of this good work, with further broadening and deepening.

Against the background of Jessup’s description of events in the first

100 years, this present review examines the work and achievements of the Society over the 50 years since 1957, in the context of the advances in the understanding of the archaeology and history of Kent which have been achieved in those years.

Field Archaeology

The management and funding of archaeological investigations and excavations in Kent has undergone many changes and vicissitudes over the last 50 years. In this, the County suffered problems similar to those experienced elsewhere but the internal dissensions to which they gave rise in Kent have proved long-lasting, as this review will show. In the early 1960s, a surge of land developments of all types, on known or unknown historically significant sites, created the need for speedy archaeological investigation before vital evidence was destroyed, but there were little or no funds available from official sources to subsidise the archaeological investigations ideally required, and an administrative structure for speedily assessing, organising, seeking funds for and managing work on such sites did not exist. Hence arose the concept of Rescue Archaeology – the identification by competent archaeologists of development sites of archaeological interest; putting pressure on the developer and the local authority to ensure that the necessary archaeological work be done; the getting together of a largely voluntary labour force supported by minimal funding gained from any sources available (including the developer); the management and deployment of that force on the site for as long a period as could be negotiated with the developer and the local authority in order to extract from the site at least the basic archaeological and historical data it may contain, before such data might be destroyed by the development; and finally the production of a report on the results of the investigation. Naturally, the prime movers of rescue archaeology were initially looked for in existing county societies, together with other archaeological and historical groups within their local areas. However, the urgency of the need to identify archaeological work to be done, to insist that it should be done, to find the money and the volunteer work force to do it, and to fit the work fit round the programme of the developer, all in order to recover the archaeology before it was destroyed, was a way of working somewhat different from annual seasonal campaigns on selected sites organised by county societies such as the KAS. While the KAS of course supported Rescue Archaeology, awarding grants (within the limits of its existing funds) to support local groups in such work, some within the County felt the need for a more intrusive and structured approach to tackle the problem. Accordingly, in the mid 1960s a new organisation, the Kent Archaeological Research Group Council (KARGC) was formed to organise and coordinate Rescue Work of archaeological research groups

and societies in Kent. The main impetus behind this move came from a West Kent Border Group of ten local societies. By 1969 the KARGC, in addition to organising Rescue Work through an Emergency Committee, had extended its activities to include the promotion and coordination of archaeological and historical research through the medium of its constituent local groups, and, in course of time, to hold conferences and publish a monthly review and occasional reports.

The KAS was represented on KARGC by the its Hon. General Secretary, but by 1965 there was much dissension within the KARG Council, and the view was held within the KAS that the whole history of the Council from its inception had been punctuated by determined attempts (by West Kent and Reculver Groups) to obtain control of the organisation. As an instance of this, the ousting of a successful editor was cited. On that occasion, a number of members of the Council resigned in protest, but the KAS nevertheless remained a member. When, however, in 1969 the KARGC, presumably to proclaim its broadened scope, changed its name to the Council for Kentish Archaeology (CKA), the KAS was against this change, on the grounds that it might give the (misleading) impression that KARGC was assuming foremost place in the County in Archaeology.

The CKA established its office in Dover with a Kent Archaeological Rescue Unit (KARU) as part of it, and through the 1970s was instrumental in coordinating and organising much of the rescue work in Kent. In 1970 the KARU operated what perhaps was its largest emergency scheme, in Dover, when over 140 digger volunteers from all over Kent participated for 90 days, and an open day on the site attracted over 2,000 visitors. The KAS Excavation Committee contributed to the cost of this work, and at this time that Committee reaffirmed its own major roles as 'commissioning work with the object of solving specific problems; making grants to people and groups engaged in excavations; training schemes; publishing accounts of excavations and discoveries'. By 1972/3 the KARU claimed 300 volunteers on its roll, from 12 groups associated with the CKA. Some of the volunteers were people who had abandoned their professions to take up rescue work, and CKA was able in some cases of hardship to provide small subsistence payments to assist them.

Area Archaeological Advisory Committees

In the years of the Labour Government from 1974 to 1979, the Department of the Environment provided some assistance for rescue archaeology throughout England, setting up fifteen Area Archaeological Advisory Committees (AAACs) to advise on the distribution of the limited grants to be dispersed. The AAACs were charged with advising the DoE on policies and priorities for surveys and excavations and on the back-up facilities needed in each area to ensure the speedy publication of reports.

The South East AAAC covered Kent, Surrey and East and West Sussex. Four members for Kent were included in the 14 members of the South East committee, including Arthur Harrison, the then Hon. Gen. Secretary of the KAS, and M. Nightingale, a prominent member of KAS. The amount of money available countrywide under this scheme seems never to have been much more than £1m p.a., and Kent's share of that seems to have been about £50,000 p.a. The chief recipients in Kent were the KARU and the newly formed Canterbury Archaeological Trust (CAT). For example, for 1978/9, estimates of grants proposed for Kent were – CAT £11,110 (excavation, £1,500, post-excavation £2,500, establishment costs £7,110), and KARU £34,000 (excavation £12,000, post-excavation £7,000, establishment £15,300.) The committees were disbanded in September 1979 when the Conservatives took office.

Committee for Rescue Archaeology in Kent (CRAK)

In 1975 there was sufficient agreement between the various societies and groups active in archaeology in Kent for a Committee for Rescue Archaeology in Kent (CRAK) to be formed, with representation from CKA, KAS, DoE, KCC, and Kent Museums. The first, independent, Chairman died soon after taking office, and F.W. Jessup, of the KAS, took his place. CRAK met several times a year, and it would seem that it was useful in providing the DoE and the S.E. AAAC with guidance on the state and needs of Rescue Archaeology in Kent. KAS withdrew from membership of CRAK in 1980, by which time the AAACs, and funding through them, had been abolished. CRAK, however, continued to meet for some years under a chairman drawn from CKA/KARU.

Canterbury Archaeological Trust

In 1974 a new force in Kentish Archaeology appeared, when the Canterbury Archaeological Society sponsored and founded the CAT as a registered Charity and a company limited by guarantee, with the aim of conducting archaeological work, primarily in Canterbury and its surrounding area.

Operating with a full-time professional staff, supported by unpaid amateurs, the Trust struggled to keep afloat in the first few years of its existence. In those years, grants from Canterbury City Council (CCC), the KAS, and, as noted above, the S.E. Area Committee helped to balance its books. CAT's viability was greatly strengthened when in 1979 the Ancient Monument and Areas of Archaeological Importance Act named Canterbury as one of the five areas of Archaeological Importance in England. An effect of this required the CCC, using the CAT as its Investigating Authority, to monitor all proposed developments in the conservation area of the city which would disturb the ground to a depth

greater than 600mm, and assess the work needed to gain the archaeology of the site, whether by watching brief, trial excavation or excavation lasting up to eighteen weeks, with the developer paying for the work. The flow of work for CAT resulting from this act, together with continuing aid from KAS, among other sources, helped to make CAT's financial position more tolerable. CAT's yearly reports on its work in progress became a regular feature of *Archaeologia Cantiana*, and definitive reports of CAT's work in Canterbury have been published by the KAS jointly with CAT in a series of eight handsome volumes on *The Archaeology of Canterbury*.

KAS Finances

Jessup's review of the first 100 years noted that lack of funds always inhibited the Society's activities, particularly publishing. In the 1960s and early 1970s, the subscriptions the Society felt able to charge without unduly decreasing membership were never enough to do all that might seem desirable, both for publishing and in support of rescue archaeology. However, in the later 1970s, the Society's finances were greatly augmented by handsome bequests from the wills of prominent members of the Society. Dr and Mrs Piercy-Fox bequeathed over £5,000, and the Margary bequest, in two stages in 1977/8, totalled well over £100,000. Thus, whereas KAS assets in 1977 were around £17,000, by 1978 they had risen to nearly £160,000.

Much consideration was given by the KAS Council to the purposes to which the bequests might be put. It reviewed the merits of purchasing a Headquarters in Maidstone, or allocating money to endow a Lectureship at the University of Kent; or devoting half the interest on the capital for a number of years to the preservation of old buildings. None of these suggestions found favour, and the Council finally decided on a policy of conserving the existing capital, reinvesting several thousand pounds each year, leaving about £4,000 p.a. for a major project. The first major project to be so funded was restoration of the KAS Library, seriously damaged by fire in the Museum in 1977 (see below).

In 1978 it was decided the major project should be the creation and funding of a History Trust, in conjunction with the KCC. Negotiations on this project continued for some years before it was finally abandoned in 1985 (see below); consequently the £4,000 p.a. earmarked for it in the Society's assets were not expended for that purpose, and from 1978 onwards some of the increased income derived from interest on the bequeathed capital was used in supporting a series of publications that would otherwise not have been affordable. Amongst these titles are: *Lost Glass from Kentish Churches*; *Studies in Kentish History*; *New Maidstone Gaol Order Book*; and *A Kentish Miscellany, A Memorial Volume for Stuart Rigold*: together with *The Archaeology of Canterbury* series

mentioned above. Money also became available for grants in support of KARU and CAT, and to local groups.

Looking at the assets of Society today, standing as they do at over £1m, we may conclude that the basic policy of the Council in 1978, that of conserving the capital while using the much of the interest for current expenditure – together with judicious management of the capital – has, so far, at least, more than maintained the real value of the assets.

Kent Archaeological Trust/Kent History Trust

In 1978 the Kent County Council accepted in principle a proposal emanating from the KAS to establish a 'Kent Archaeological Trust', involving the appointment of a full-time County Archaeologist, the costs of the appointment shared between the KAS and the KCC. As a result of various discussions, the suggestions in the original proposal underwent modification, and the purview of the proposed Trust was defined as: 'to promote the study of the past as related to Kent', and the title changed to 'Kent History Trust'. The role of a 'Coordinator of Archaeology' remained central to the Kent History Trust, and the cost of the KAS share in supporting him was estimated at £4,000 p.a. In September 1978, the KAS Council accepted the proposal in principle, and approved a sub-committee to negotiate with the KCC. The proposed scheme had the support of all of the KAS Council members but one, but nevertheless a petition from the membership in 1979 caused the President in February 1980 to hold a conference to discuss the whole matter. No formal vote was taken at that meeting, but an informal count of the 80 or so people present showed a small majority against.

In May 1980, the Chairman of the CRAK (by then dominated by CKA/KARU) wrote to the KCC and the DoE referring to the proposal to appoint an archaeological coordinator for Kent, strongly holding that this was not the way to go in the circumstances then existing in Kent. In a plea for CRAK, its Chairman maintained that assistance to rescue archaeology in Kent should continue to be channelled through organisations already active in the field. Nevertheless, in February 1981 the KAS council approved a draft scheme for the Trust, and re-affirmed support for it by a majority of 24 to 1. The Council instituted a referendum throughout the Membership on the matter, which resulted in May in a vote of 324 for, 288 against. This result was not sufficiently decisive to silence opposition to the proposed Trust, and a petition from 27 members led to a Special General Meeting in July 1981. This was an acrimonious meeting, which was adjourned *sine die*, and resolved nothing, no votes being taken. Subsequently, KAS Council agreed that the President should circulate members on the advantages of the Trust, and put a motion to support it to another Special General Meeting. An SGM on the 14 November 1982

accordingly passed a motion of support by 123 votes to 63. Reporting this vote to the KCC, the KAS asked for speedy action to bring the Trust into being.

In the meantime, a prominent opponent of the scheme had written to the KCC to say that CAT, CKA and KARU were the main archaeological bodies in Kent, doing much more work than the KAS, and had been deliberately excluded from membership of the Trust. Presumably as a result of interventions such as these, and of meetings between KCC, KAS and CKA, it was agreed in early 1983 that CKA and KARU should be invited to nominate one member each to the Trust. This does not seem to have stirred the KCC into action; quite the reverse, it seems to have increased their reluctance to enter into a dispute between the archaeological bodies in Kent. The open split in the Kent Archaeological community which by then had developed could hardly have encouraged the KCC to take matters forward, and by 1984 the KCC had decided that 'no further action be taken to set up a Trust embracing county wide support for Archaeology'. In a preamble to this decision, the relevant KCC Committee noted that 'there is a division within the archaeological interests in the County. In these circumstances, the Committee has, somewhat regretfully, accepted that a Trust wholeheartedly supported by all the archaeological interests in the County could not be achieved, and these proposals should not be proceeded with'. The Kent History Trust proposal, after nearly six years of contentious life, died with that decision, and with it also died the proposal to appoint a County Archaeologist (for the time being).

Leadership challenges and Libel Actions

In June 1983 a writ was issued in the High Court by a member of the KAS against fourteen officers and members of the KAS, listing charges of libel. The legal process went on for three years, and it was not until October 1986 that a final settlement was reached, without the matter being brought to a court hearing. In those years, too, criticism of KAS officers and council members was expressed at AGMs and specially convened GMs. Charges about the conduct and management of the society's affairs and allegations of ballot rigging were made and discussed but not accepted by the General Meetings.

These exchanges died away after the settlement of the libel writ was reached in 1986. The KAS and the CKA/KARU continue to exist as separate entities, contributing to the study and practice of archaeology in Kent. There are today a good many people who are members of, or associated with, both organisations. Relations between the two continue to improve, and opportunities for a greater degree of cooperation should not be missed. Perhaps with the passage of time and in this sesquicentennial

year, it may be possible to attempt to persuade the two entities to come together and create a combined force for archaeology in Kent.

County Archaeologist Appointment; and PPG 16

For most of the 1980s, funding of and support for archaeological investigations and excavations in Kent was obtained from four main sources; English Heritage; Local Authorities; Developers; and, for some years, the central government's Manpower Services Commission (MSC). The MSC was set up to find ways of decreasing the severe unemployment of the time, and one of the stratagems adopted was to persuade employers to take on unemployed people for limited periods of work experience subsidised by MSC. Work experience on archaeological digs proved popular, and was of good assistance to cash-strapped units such as CAT. A fifth source of support was provided by the KAS, which regularly made grants to archaeological units and local societies for specific purposes.

At the end of the 1980s, the conduct and funding of the business of Archaeology in the County changed radically, with the appointment by the KCC of a County Archaeologist to its staff, and by the promulgation in 1990, by Central Government, of a new country-wide Planning Guidance Policy 16 (PPG16). This Policy Guidance enjoins every local planning authority to take archaeology into consideration as a major issue to be addressed when looking at applications for new developments. In all this, the local planning authority should ensure, before planning consent is given, that the developer should arrange for resources to be available to undertake any work specified as necessary to preserve or record the archaeology of the site. Contracts under this proviso now constitute the major source of support for archaeological work by contracting archaeological units, and have led to a large expansion of funding of archaeological work throughout the country. As a result, the archaeology in development sites has a much better chance of being investigated and recorded. The risks in this process are that the local planning authority may be infirm in its dealings with the developer, and or the developer may prove unable or unwilling to pay for work done, or the site proves more difficult or more fruitful than was projected, so that resources allocated are insufficient to do the job.

The appointment in September 1989 by the KCC of Dr John Williams as County Archaeologist could not have come at better time, coinciding as it did with the onset of the PPG16 regime. From a standing start, his unit now advises planning authorities on the archaeological implications of development on some 2,000 planning applications in Kent each year, including setting specifications for work and monitoring the associated investigations. In so doing, it has worked to ensure that the archaeological work necessary to preserve the archaeology of site is well specified, and

has been considered against the wider background of the history and archaeology of the County.

Channel Tunnel Railway

Kent has seen the largest archaeology project yet to take place in this country in the work sponsored by the Channel Tunnel Rail Link (CTRL), a slice over 50 miles long through the County. Starting in 1990 this massive project took a decade to develop in tandem with the engineering design, and archaeologists were employed at every step of the way, ensuring that archaeological issues were considered throughout. The complex structure needed included an in-house team of archaeologists, in close liaison with English Heritage and the County Archaeologist's team, which had a 'curatorial' role under the terms for the construction of the railway. An extensive Environmental Assessment was produced by the Oxford Archaeological Unit (OAU), from desk-top investigation, aerial photography, maps, geotechnical investigation, field walking, trial trenches and test pits. As a result it was decided that some 55ha of the line of the route required detailed archaeological investigation, and over forty sites were excavated, ranging from the flint scatters of pre-historic hunter-gatherers to Second World War installations (see *Archaeologia Cantiana*, cxix, 1999, 191). The largest of the excavations was a kilometre long (to record a multi-period landscape), and the smallest 10m by 15m (to sample a colluvial sequence).

The archaeological work was paid for by Union Railways (South) Limited, the parent company of the CTRL, awarding contracts for specified areas to bids from contracting archaeological units. Four professional archaeological units so employed were the CAT, the Museum of London Archaeological Service, OAU, and Wessex Archaeology. In the process of determining the line of the railway the then President of the KAS (Kenneth Gravett) gave his expert advice on the age and structure of ancient buildings under threat. The KAS as a Society played no significant role in the archaeological phase. It is interesting to speculate what input it might have had if the Kent History Trust had come to fruition, with a County Archaeologist part funded by the KAS.

KAS Excavations Committee

The KAS Excavations Committee, more recently named the Fieldwork Committee, over the last 50 years has made a great contribution to archaeology in Kent in two main ways; first, in fostering, financing and supporting with advice and technical expertise, digs, investigations and publications by local archaeological and historical societies and groups; and second by instituting and managing its own archaeological

investigations, often associated with training sessions for KAS members. Activities in the first role are too numerous and widespread in Kent to attempt to detail here, generally they amounted to support for two or three local projects each year, costing several thousand pounds.

Work directly managed and financed by the KAS committee generally took place in yearly campaigns of some weeks in the summer and early autumn, with volunteers drawn from membership of the KAS or from local societies, and often associated with training sessions. Among these may be mentioned:

Lullingstone Roman Villa Site Final campaigns in the late 1950s, headed by Lt Col Meates, included the discovery of the magnificent classical wall painting of water nymphs.

Reculver In 1960, Brian Philp began his yearly campaigns on the Reculver Fort and Church site.

Cobham Also in 1960 Peter Tester worked on Cobham Park Roman Villa.

Eccles In the early 1960s, Alec Detsicas began his yearly campaigns on the Eccles Villa site, lasting until 1977, and including a dozen training sessions.

Iron Age Also in the 1960s, a research programme into Iron Age earthworks in Kent, headed by Mrs Piercy-Fox, took place.

Rochester For over twenty years, Arthur Harrison undertook a series of investigations in Rochester, often with the help of the boys of Sir Joseph Williamson's Mathematical School, establishing himself as the expert on the archaeology of the City.

Thanet In the late 1990s began the yearly campaigns on the Abbey Farm Villa (Thanet), lasting until 2004, and including training sessions or up to 30-40 people each year. The work gained the runner up award in the Pitt Rivers competition of the BAA. Work continues on the large quantity of painted wall plaster recovered during the excavation.

Other sites investigated at various times with KAS Fieldworks committee support include sites at Springhead; Bigbury Camp, Harbledown; Tonge castle moated site; Wingham Roman Villa; Higham Benedictine Priory; Tonbridge Castle Hill Iron Age Site; Boxley Abbey; Leeds Priory; Oldbury.

Professional and Amateur Archaeology

There is no doubt that, post 1990, the scope for amateur archaeologists to exercise their skills has become limited by the PPG16 regime. For archaeological work engendered in the planning process of developments,

the processes followed are commercial. A developer, in many cases advised by his own paid archaeological expert, negotiates a contract for archaeological work by a professional archaeological unit which will satisfy the planning authority (also in many cases advised by its own paid archaeological expert) that the work to be done will satisfactorily explore and record the archaeology. These procedures have greatly increased the funding of archaeology in England to the point where it is a multi-million pound industry, have given rise to the creation of many archaeological companies and businesses, and have encouraged the Universities and Colleges to create new departments and courses to train archaeologists to fill the full-time jobs created. The commercial nature of the procedures offers little or no scope for non-professional work. Some professional units do draw on the assistance of volunteers, but not usually in positions of authority on commercial contract work. It is noteworthy that in the immense amount of work done for the CTRL, no provision was made for non-professional volunteer participation.

Nevertheless, voluntary organisations such as the KAS and its members still have a necessary, if not vital, role to play in the county in which the voluntary organisation operates, and in the wider national and international scene. The publications of the KAS, particularly *Archaeologia Cantiana*, offer a medium of high academic standing through which the results of commercially sponsored investigations may be weighed and set in the context of existing knowledge and theory of the archaeology and history of Kent. Then, where the PPG16 regime does not operate, and no funding is available, the KAS is able to organise funds and volunteers to undertake investigations and excavations of sites of interest. In this way, year by year, the Fieldwork Committee of the KAS has provided and will continue to provide, modest assistance and funds to local Kentish societies and groups for investigations of research interest. An example of what can be done in this manner is the award-winning excavation of the Roman Villa at Minster in Thanet, organised and funded by KAS in conjunction with Thanet Archaeological Society and the Trust for Thanet Archaeology, in a series of summer campaigns over the years 1996 to 2004, and currently being reported in a series of articles in *Archaeologia Cantiana*. An example occurred in 1999, when, with the agreement of the KCC, volunteers were able, as a training exercise, to take part in the excavation, ahead of residential development, of a Roman settlement at West Hawk Farm, near Ashford. An example of how volunteers can be successfully integrated into a large-scale contract dig is the use by CAT of volunteers throughout the three-year long work at Whitefriars, Canterbury. One of the more unfortunate consequences of PPG16 is that distant archaeological contractors working in Kent are under no obligation to ensure speedy access to their results or to their finds by the residents of the County.

A particular problem, which remains to be solved, is the backlog of

some hundreds of minor excavations and researches by local Kent groups since the Second World War still awaiting publication in one form or another. An attempt by the KAS to get help from the Heritage Lottery Fund failed, but this is a matter that remains on the agenda of the Fieldwork Committee of the KAS.

Conduct of KAS Activities

Over the years, the Society has, in the main, conducted its activities through committees whose number and responsibilities have varied somewhat according to the needs of the time. Currently, there are committees whose areas of interest cover Fieldwork, Publications, Churches, Library and Collections, Education, Place-names, and Membership. The committees report regularly to the KAS Council, whose members are elected at the AGM as are the Officers of the Society. The President takes the chair at General and at Council meetings and is ex officio a member of all committees. Other Officers are the Hon. Editor, the Hon. General Secretary, the Hon. Treasurer, the Hon. Librarian, the Hon. Membership Secretary, the Hon. Excursions Secretary and the Hon. Curator, who bear responsibility for the conduct of matters within their designated areas. Up to four Vice-Presidents are appointed, and are members of council, with no specific responsibilities. The Society has no paid staff, and work for the Society by members is voluntary.

From time to time the Society has fostered and supported particular interest Groups, outside this committee structure. Two such in the 1990s were the Kent Underground Research Group (KURG) and the Kent Defence Research Group (KDRG), both of which went on to become highly successful independent organisations, affiliated to the KAS.

IT and all that

While retaining this working structure, the Society has moved with the times (perhaps somewhat slowly), and has not neglected the opportunities that IT and the Internet offer not only to provide ready and easily usable services to members, supplementing contacts by other methods, but also to enable the Society to reach out, on a county, national and international basis, to non-members interested in the history and archaeology of the Ancient County of Kent, by offering free access to the Society's accumulated knowledge and expertise. To these ends, enthusiastic KAS members have built up over the last five years two interconnected Websites. The first, <kentarchaeology.org.uk>, covers four broad areas :

About the KAS What the Society does, operational structure, membership issues.

Activities and Information Meetings Diary, conference notices, news items, KAS Newsletters for downloading.

Publications Information on KAS publications for sale.

Research Lists and transcripts of records of various types on Kentish history and archaeology, genealogy and family history, including visual records from KAS collections, monumental inscriptions from churches and churchyards, transcripts and indexes of wills, Kent place-names extracted from OS maps, population figures 1801 to 1921, Roman Pottery of Kent, Subsidy Roll 1334/5, information on Tithe maps.

The second, <kentarchaeology.ac> website, is the Society's on-line publishing site which covers five broad areas:

eArticles Posting of original articles on Kentish matters, subject to approval by the Hon. Editor.

eBooks Publication on-line of complete books, approved and sponsored by the KAS Publications Committee. A book on Hadlow Parish is the first such.

Records Includes names and dates of Canterbury Consistory Court Wills; Kentish dialects and provincialisms; Sir E. Dering's *Booke of Expences*; Kentish Hundred Rolls.

Collections Data Bases Includes Library book stock, Visual Records, KAS collections at the Centre for Kentish Studies.

Researchers List of researchers willing to undertake paid work.

The above gives a picture of the contents of the websites at the time of writing; they are constantly being added to. In addition, much of the Society's business is now carried on by eMail, while continuing to maintain contact by non-IT methods with those members who have no ready access to computers.

Publications

Fifty-five volumes of *Archaeologia Cantiana* have been issued in the years since 1956, including two index and two Memorial volumes. In those years there have been but three Editors; J.H. Evans (1956-1968), A.P. Detsicas (1968-1999) and T.G. Lawson (1999-). The Society may be justly proud of the range, quality and high academic standard of the corpus of research and discoveries in the history and archaeology of Kent which has been recorded, year by year, in these volumes. In addition, a series of six monographs on specific topics such as *The Roman Pottery of Kent* and *Watermills* have been published. Mention has already been made above of *The Archaeology of Canterbury* series, published in association with the CAT.

The Publications Committee has produced a further dozen volumes over the last 50 years, the latest of which are *Kent Heresy Proceedings*, *Religious Worship in Kent*, *The Survey of Archbishop Pecham's Kentish Manors 1283-85*, and *Kent Hearth Tax Assessment Lady Day 1664* (in association with the British Record Society and the University of Surrey). A New Records Series was started in the mid 1990s. This provides records volumes in discrete paper-backed sections, distributed as and when each section is compiled and printed, leaving the recipients to put the sections together as a volume. In that way costs are minimized. To date, three volumes have been issued, vol. 1 in 5 parts, vol. 2 in 5 and vol. 3 in 9. Four parts of Vol. 4 have so far been issued.

Through its Allen Grove Memorial fund, the KAS gives grants to Kentish historians and historical groups and societies to assist in research for, and the publication of, Kent local history projects. On average, some four or five such projects are supported every year, with grants of a few hundred pounds each. Copies of the resulting publications are deposited in the KAS Library.

Perhaps the most notable KAS publication of recent years has been *An Historical Atlas of Kent*, edited by Terence Lawson (Hon. Editor, KAS) and David Killingray (Professor Emeritus at Goldsmiths College, University of London, and Chairman, KAS Publications Committee), with contributions from over 50 mainly Kentish historians. This work surveys the history of the Ancient County of Kent from its earliest human habitation to the beginning of the 21st century. The primary aim is to provide an entirely different perspective from that conveyed in most conventional histories, which often fail to include adequate mapping information. The Atlas is designed to complement conventional histories, and it does so in a triumphant fashion. The eighty chapters, together with superbly clear cartography by John Hills, represent a great and lasting achievement.

Lectures, Seminars, Social and Educational Activities and Outings

The KAS programme of activities has always included, year by year, events organised in addition to KAS committee activities. Most years, up to half a dozen lectures by eminent experts have taken place, together with a one-day seminar on a broad topic. For instance, between 1999 and 2003, six lectures were held, three with Canterbury Christ Church as venue and three at Rochester Visitor Centre, and two one-day seminars also took place at Canterbury. Additionally, the Society organised free public lectures in the County Hall Maidstone, as part of the Kent Week Festival.

More recently, with the modernisation of the KAS Library enabling the holding of moderately-sized gatherings, a series of 'Lectures in the Library' have been most successfully held. In 2004, the KAS began Adult Learning Courses in history and archaeology in the Library.

A notable initiative by KAS in 2004 and 2005 was the staging, in conjunction with the Maidstone Museum, of one day 'Kent History and Archaeology Shows'. At these events, held in the Maidstone Museum and Bentlif Art Gallery, Kentish historical and archaeological societies and organisations set up their stalls to exhibit and explain their activities and publications. On each occasion, about 40 such organisations set up stalls, and about 500 people were present at and visited the show. Exhibitors were provided with stalls at no cost, and entrance was free.

Regular social gatherings staged by the KAS are a Summer Garden Party, usually organised in or near an historic building worthy of a visit, and a Christmas Lunch Party with entertainment. Additionally, the Annual General Meeting is generally followed by lectures or visits. The Churches Committee organises a number of visits each year to churches of interest. A holiday tour of an area with features of historical interest is organised for members each year on a self financing basis.

The KAS Library

The Library, in Maidstone museum, has year by year, constantly added to its unique collections of books, booklets, pamphlets, visual records and ephemera of Kent history and archaeology, and to its collection of journals of other UK and foreign societies by judicious purchase, donations or exchange arrangements. In June 1977, however, a set-back was suffered, when a serious fire in the Museum (caused by arson) broke through a door and an area of wood panelling into the Library. Prompt action by the Museum staff and the Fire Brigade cut the losses to about ten per cent of the value of the books and furniture, and speedy action was taken to remove some rare and valuable volumes. Many of the items lost by burning or by water damage were replaceable, and, fortunately, almost none of the rare and early volumes were affected in any way, except that some frail bindings suffered from their numerous moves. A small collection of irreplaceable eighteenth-century Kentish newspapers and a number of slides were lost.

Pending reconstruction of the Library, its total contents were removed to temporary storage in a number of different locations. The reconstruction was in 'Queen Anne' style, and the work was carried out with the full support of Maidstone Council, and with very little call on the Society's insurance claim. The layout of the interior and the restitution, carting, cleaning, sorting, shelving and indexing of the collections was supervised with great efficiency by the Hon. Librarian, Dr Peter Draper, assisted by a dedicated volunteer group of members whose meticulous efforts enabled the substantial heritage of the Library to be largely restored and recreated. The Library opened for business again in Autumn 1979.

The Library employs no full-time staff, but volunteers from the

membership assist the Hon. Librarian in keeping the collections in order, and in helping visitors in the use of the Library. A group of volunteers meets every week to catalogue and index an extensive collection of visual images of all types. To date, through their sterling work, some 20,000 items have been indexed, and they are tackling , with undiminished enthusiasm, perhaps another 20,000 or so, remaining to be catalogued. Another group is cataloguing and typifying collections of manuscript notebooks bequeathed to the Society by long departed members, to make information in that material more accessible to modern day members. Then, there are volunteers checking and listing books on shelves and identifying books in need of renovation.

Shelf space in the Library is now so crowded that overflow storage of items not in frequent demand has had to be arranged in other locations, with access possible, when required. As noted above, searchable databases of the indexes of the Library collections, and other information to assist in the use of the Library's resources, not only by members but also non-member researchers, may be found on the Society's websites.

Conclusion

At the time of writing, the Society is planning events to celebrate its sesquicentenary celebrations in 2007. Two one-day symposia at which eminent speakers will describe and recall significant advances in Kent history and archaeology over the last 50 years will be organised with the cooperation of UKC. One will take place on its Canterbury campus, and the other on the Medway Maritime campus. In cooperation with Maidstone Museum, an exhibition of Anglo-Saxon artefacts found in Kent, including artefacts currently held in museums outside Kent, will be mounted, with free entrance for all, in the Bentrif Gallery of the Museum. The KAS's newly-established Hasted Prize for the best recently submitted Ph.D thesis on a Kentish History or Archaeology topic will be awarded during 2007. A summer party will be organised in the grounds of Allington Castle. A DVD of the totality of the 126 volumes of *Archaeologia Cantiana* so far published will be available for purchase by members and organisations in association with KAS.

Altogether, this should prove a most stimulating programme with which to mark a memorable year in the history of the KAS, and will be a celebration of 50 years in which the KAS has continued its pivotal role in researching and publishing new discoveries, and reassessing the old, in the history and archaeology of Kent. This has been achieved not only by the work of the Society itself, but also by the judicious use of its resources to encourage and assist the many local societies, organisations and interested individuals in Kent in their work. Membership of the KAS has, over the last 50 years, broadened to reach into all levels of society,

and KAS has moved with the times in embracing modern methods of research, publishing and communication. In sum, the KAS can look back with satisfaction on the progress made in the last half century, despite difficult and somewhat tempestuous times, and look forward with continued confidence to work in the digital world of the future.

ANNEX

Functioning as it does on voluntary labour, and without any permanent paid staff, the Society has been well served over the last fifty years by the quality and dedication of its officers and its council members. Particular credit must be paid to those who have carried out the onerous office of President. Among these leading personalities, the following may be mentioned:

Major Teichman Derville (1876-1963) held the Presidency for 20 years up to 1959, sustaining the Society through the War years and the stringency of the immediate post-war decade. He held many other appointments in the County, including Deputy Lieutenant and bailiff of Romney Marsh. His book on *The Level and Liberty of Romney Marsh* puts on record the laws and customs of the Corporation of the Marsh, and he was also an acknowledged authority on the History of the Cinque Ports.

Teichman Derville was succeeded by *Sir Thomas Neame* (President 1959-1967), sometime High Sheriff of Kent, Governor of Wye College and Chairman of the East Malling Research Station whose deep interest in the history of the county was evidenced by his valuable collection of, and his knowledge of, maps, books and manuscripts relating to the county, and recognised by his election to FSA. His obituary in *Archaeologia Cantiana* reckoned him to have been one of the Society's most influential and respected Presidents.

The election of *F.W. Jessup* (President 1976-1982) brought to the office an historian who had just retired from a distinguished career in Adult Education in Kent and in Oxford. He had published many papers and books, notably a *History of Kent* (1958), which have stood the passage of time as witnesses to his acute mind and scholarship. From his time on, Presidents took on the role of working Chairman of the KAS Council with day to day involvement in the Society's activities, in addition to representational and legal responsibilities as Head of the KAS. In his obituary (*Archaeologia Cantiana*, CVIII, 1990), it is noted that 'he took over the presidency of our society during a difficult period of its existence, and those of us who were privileged to sit close to him, at Council meetings or stormy AGMs, will long remember the patient geniality and unflinching

good humour with which he circumnavigated many reefs and piloted us all into calmer waters; for this alone, the Society remains forever in his debt'.

Canon Derek Ingram Hill (1912-2003) was perhaps the last of the clerical antiquaries of Kent, dating back to Brian Faussett in the eighteenth century. His 80-year association with Canterbury and its Cathedral began in 1923 when he entered the King's school, and he joined the KAS in 1934, contributing regularly to *Archaeologia Cantiana* with articles on stained glass, churches and his beloved Cathedral. As President between 1982 and 1987 he contributed much to the calming of the society's stormy meetings in that period. His interjection in a particularly fraught AGM turned anger into laughter, when, in answer to the then General Secretary's despairing declaration 'What we need to sort out our problems is an unemployed Archangel', Canon Ingram Hill exclaimed 'I can assure members that there is no unemployment in heaven'.

L.R. Allen Grove (1910-1990) was from 1948 until his retirement in 1975, Curator of Maidstone Museum, and for part of that time, Honorary Curator of the Society's collections of artefacts housed in the Museum. He was Chairman of the Kent History Federation from 1977 to 1985, and he served as KAS President 1986-7. He has been described as a polymath; a medievalist by degree, to this base he added a wide understanding of matters archaeological, of numismatics, of ceramics and of all those facets which attach to a museum of high repute; an antiquary in the finest tradition of the term. His service to the Society was celebrated by the 'Allen Grove Memorial Volume', *Archaeologia Cantiana*, cxv, 1993. The handsome legacy that he left to the Society provides grants year by year to local historians in Kent to assist them in publishing their work.

Kenneth Gravett (1930-1999, President 1988-1998) combined his working life as an electrical engineer and Inspector of Education with his passion for the study of buildings and advising owners on their structure and history. After retirement, he gave full rein to the study of historic buildings, particularly in Kent. He was Chairman of the Kent Historic Buildings Committee for many years, and he organised the annual Building Recording Conference in Kent for 36 years. His magnum opus, *Timber and Brick Buildings in Kent* was published by the KAS. His advice in the planning of work on the Channel Tunnel Rail Line helped to secure the future of a number of historic buildings which might otherwise have been demolished. In his ten years as President he was instrumental in starting up the New Records series of KAS publications, and in his quiet and calm way he steered the Society through a period of readjustment.

While *Alec Detsicas* (1926-1999) never aspired to the presidency, his 30-year tenure of the office of Honorary Editor, during which he produced 35 volumes of *Archaeologia Cantiana*, in addition to editing and contributing to the Society's Monograph and Records series, must count as a very major contribution to the Society's continued high reputation for the excellence and scope of its publications on History and Archaeology in all their branches, with particular relevance to Kent. His training excavations on the Eccles site are well remembered, and his book *The Cantiaci* remains a standard reference work on Roman Kent. A Memorial Volume celebrating the work of Alec Detsicas, and of Kenneth Gravett, is in *Archaeologia Cantiana*, CXXI (2001).

Sources

Sources drawn on in the compilation of this review include:

Reports, articles and obituaries in the volumes of *Archaeologia Cantiana*, 1957 to 2006.

KAS files of the period, including those labelled 'Writ', 'History Trust', 'Finance', 'KARGC', 'Margary Bequest', 'County Trust', 'AGM 1984'.
CAT and KARU publications.