

INVESTIGATIONS AND EXCAVATIONS DURING THE YEAR

I. REPORTS ON EXCAVATIONS SUPPORTED BY THE SOCIETY

Interim Report by Mr. P. J. Tester, F.S.A., on the Society's Excavation at Leeds Priory.

Our investigations during the present (1975) season have revealed significant features of the Norman monastic church which was mainly rebuilt and enlarged in the later Middle Ages. A twelfth-century buttress of Caen stone has been found at the west end, showing that the Norman nave was approximately of the same length as the later one. Both northern piers of the Norman crossing have been located and also the north-west corner of the contemporary north transept, with part of the wall of the north aisle of the nave. A short length of one side of the original presbytery survives attached to the east side of the crossing pier and on the western pier are indications of the respond of the Norman north arcade of the nave. All this, together with the apsidal chapel in the south transept found last year, enables a fairly complete plan of the original church to be reconstructed, except for the eastern extremity, which may have been completely destroyed in the rebuilding.

The north transept is shown to have been subsequently lengthened and the nave widened in a northward direction. Buttresses on either side of the rebuilt aisled presbytery have been traced, although direct evidence for the exact dating of this ambitious extension is still lacking. An entrance occurred into the south transept from the east walk of the cloister, and at the west end of the south wall of the nave the base of the processional doorway has been found with decorated mouldings on both jambs. Along the south side of the nave, projecting into the cloister alley, are four large moulded bases, the purpose of which is not clear, although they may have related to the mural arcade of which collapsed remains have been uncovered bearing the split cusps typical of Kentish work of the early fourteenth century.

The entire length of the west wall of the west range has been uncovered with part of a building projecting westward from its north end. Sufficient survives of the east range to indicate its width although most of its foundations have been destroyed. Attached to the south side of the refectory are somewhat exiguous remains of the kitchen. Judged by brickwork patching and associated pottery, this part of the Priory continued in use after the Dissolution, when the site was occupied by

the large house shown in an early eighteenth-century engraving published in Harris's *History of Kent*.

Once again, our thanks are extended to the loyal body of helpers whose continuing labours are making this investigation possible and who have often to work under difficult conditions. At least another season will be required to elucidate outstanding problems and complete our knowledge of this interesting monastic site so far as present circumstances will allow.

Interim Report by Mr. Victor T. C. Smith on the excavations at the Canal Basin, Gravesend.

Mention of the discovery of foundations on the presumed site of the Tudor Milton Blockhouse near the side of the River Thames at the Canal Basin, Gravesend, was made in *Arch. Cant.* lxxxix (1974), 143. The foundations were located during small-scale exploratory excavations carried out by the Kent Defence Research Group in 1973 and 1974.

In April 1975, with the aid of grants from the Kent Archaeological Society and the Gravesend Historical Society, a larger area was mechanically stripped for investigation. About 14 m. (45 ft. 11 in.) of wall foundation constructed of cemented chalk blocks were exposed, making a total of 21 m. (68 ft. 11 in.) found since 1973. At this stage little can be said of the plan of the building. The outline of the foundations may be likened to the shape of the right-hand part of a key-hole, of which the rounded end faces across and slightly down-river; however, the alignment and length of a robbed-out internal wall make it clear that a complete key-hole shape cannot have been the overall outline.

The facing of the main wall had been robbed-out, leaving a brick-rubble filled trench in the clay on either side of the foundation; the clay had been used to make-up the level of the site. With the aid of a pump, excavation was carried to a depth of 1.80 m. (5 ft. 11 in.) below water-level in one place so that the lowest part of the surviving structure could be examined. It was found that the main wall, originally 2.60 m. (8 ft. 6 in.) wide at the base, had been built on a chalk-raft some 1.45 m. (4 ft. 9 in.) thick and a little wider than the base of the wall. A search for piles beneath the raft could not be undertaken because of flooding. The building was probably constructed mainly of brick with some stone. Little dating evidence was found during the excavations, although the lower half of a storage jar which has been dated to the sixteenth century was discovered in the brick rubble.

If permission can be obtained from the owners of the land, excavations will continue in 1976 on the north side of the Canal Road to attempt the location of the left-hand side of the building.

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

The fourteenth season of excavations was undertaken by the Eccles Excavation Committee at the Eccles site, in the parish of Aylesford, from March until the end of October, 1975, during weekends and for a continuous fortnight in July/August.

Financial assistance for this work, conducted entirely by volunteer labour, was again given by the Kent Archaeological Society, the British Academy, the Society of Antiquaries of London, the Haverfield Bequest of the University of Oxford and private donors; I am very grateful to all these benefactors and to the many friends who made this excavation possible.

The season's work was again concentrated on several areas of the site where it was suspended in 1974 and may be summarized as follows:

(i) *Ditch X* (*Arch. Cant.*, lxxxix (1974), fig. 1, 120) was sectioned to east and west of the 1974 points; its complete length is still unknown, but the evidence secured confirms its filling to pre-Flavian times. In one of the trenches, this ditch was intersected by *Ditch VI* (*Arch. Cant.*, lxxxvi (1971), fig. 1), which is clearly later than *Ditch X*, though earlier than the foundation of the villa;

(ii) Further work in the area of the Anglo-Saxon cemetery (*Arch. Cant.*, lxxxix (1974), 129-30) brought to light seven more burials, and it is likely that the excavation of this cemetery is now completed;

(iii) Further sections were also cut across the line of *Ditch XI* (*Arch. Cant.*, lxxxviii (1973), fig. 1, 74-5) but its excavation is not yet complete;

(iv) A number of large post-holes was recorded in the area to east and south of the Anglo-Saxon cemetery; they may prove to belong to a small timber structure, perhaps a chapel, connected with this cemetery;

(v) Work was also continued to west of the medieval site (*Arch. Cant.*, lxxxix (1974), fig. 1); more cess-pits were recorded in this area, and further lengths of foundations for a small building;

(vi) The perimeter wall of the villa (*Ibid.*, fig. 1) was sectioned and preliminary investigation has shown that it extends for at least 170 ft. beyond the point reached in 1973, probably enclosing agricultural buildings to the front of the dwelling-house;

(vii) Work was also undertaken at *Site S*, at a short distance to west of the main site, where débris in the ploughsoil suggested occupation in Romano-British times. The evidence in this site is so far inconclusive and more work will be undertaken here in 1976.

Training Course

The eighth Training Course in Romano-British archaeology and excavation techniques was based on the site and at a site in Rochester between 26th July and 9th August, 1975; it was again jointly sponsored by the Kent Archaeological Society and the Eccles Excavation Committee, and conducted under my direction, with the assistance of Mr. A. C. Harrison, who directed the work in Rochester, and Miss S. J. Marsh. The course was recognized, for grant purposes, by the Kent Education Committee for the training of teachers serving the authority.

Twenty-four students, from this country and abroad, participated in this course and were given training in excavation techniques, field survey and recording, as well as background talks, mid-day seminars and evening lectures; the course also visited Richborough Roman Fort, the Roman light-house and the excavations at Dover, the city of Rochester and the Lullingstone Roman villa.

Both the organizing bodies and the honorary director are very grateful to all concerned in the general conduct of this training course; their readiness to offer their unpaid services is greatly appreciated. I am in particular grateful to Mr. A. C. Harrison, B.A., F.S.A., for his directing of the students at his Rochester site; to Miss S. J. Marsh, for her assistance with field drawing and the finds; and to the visiting lecturers, Mr. R. G. Foord, Mr. F. Jenkins, M.A., F.S.A., Lt.-Col. G. W. Meates, F.S.A., Mr. R. Merrifield, B.A., F.S.A., and Mr. P. J. Tester, F.S.A.

II. REPORTS FROM LOCAL SECRETARIES AND GROUPS

Ashford Archaeological Society. Mr. J. Bradshaw reports:

ALDINGTON

In a field north of the road from Harringe Lane to Partridge Farm (N.G.R. TR 08923758) occur several areas of dark soil and one of iron slag. Associated with them are coarse-ware sherds dating from Romano-British to medieval, and in 1975, a small hoard of coins of sixteenth-seventeenth-century dates was found in the area.

ASHFORD

A large brown-patinated Acheulian hand-axe was found in a field (N.G.R. TQ 993428) by Mr. D. Hone, of Kennington. Length 14.0 cm., width 10.0 cm.

BISHOPSBOURNE

In a piece of sweet chestnut coppice (N.G.R. TR 167516), the eroded remains of a large mound, 20 m. in diameter and 0.7 m. high. Several scrapers and flakes of flint were found on the surface.

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BRABOURNE

From N.G.R. TR 09664287 to TR 09774278, a long mound is discernible on the south-west slope of the downs, running parallel to the slope and road below. When ploughed in 1971, the ground immediately above and below was bare chalk and the mound itself of darker soil than the remainder of the field, with the east end standing above and the west tailing off into level ground.

In 1975, two trial trenches were cut near the eastern end to determine whether the mound had been artificially constructed on the old land-surface, or was naturally produced in the form of a lynchet from ploughing. No evidence of deliberate building was found nor definite stratification of potsherds, which were distributed similarly in both trenches.

From the surface to 0.3 m., scraps of Early Iron Age and Romano-British wares, including two small samian rim fragments of a Form 18/31 dish.

From 0.3 m. to 0.6 m. predominantly Romano-British sherds with earlier pieces, and from 0.6 m. to the base at 0.9 m., sherds of coarse-gritted hand-made wares of the Early Iron Age, with one sherd of All Over Cord Beaker. All these earlier pieces were similar to those found at Hammon's Hill, Stowting (*Arch. Cant.*, lxxxviii (1973), 218). A considerable number of flint scrapers, blades and flakes with white patination were evenly distributed throughout.

CHILHAM

Found in the garden of 16 Herons Close (N.G.R. TR 071536), a finely worked leaf-shaped Neolithic flint arrowhead. Made from a thin blade, both sides were flaked horizontally from the centre, the base broken and missing. Length 5.1 cm., width 1.8 cm. and maximum thickness 0.3 cm. Retained by finder.

GODMERSHAM

During 1974, an Anglo-Saxon knife was found protruding from the bank beneath the wall of the churchyard, 8 m. south of the west gate (N.G.R. TR 061504). This was identified by Miss Louise Millard and presented to the Royal Museum, Canterbury, by the owners, Mr. and Mrs. Pope. On examining the site in 1975 and cleaning down the section, a soil-filled hollow suggesting an old disused track was found; this contained fragments of human and animal remains, apparently a deliberate infill from a point now inaccessible beneath the churchyard wall. Of particular interest were several sherds, four of which were from Romano-British coarse-ware vessels.

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The finding of the knife in these circumstances is probably due to a grave of the tenth century A.D. being disturbed by a later burial.

ISLE OF THANET

With the assistance of Mr. F. Wall, of Ramsgate, and Miss Powell-Cotton, of Quex, work continued on the recording of new sites and the confirmation on the ground of several noted by Professor St. Joseph in his aerial survey. Each parish had a considerable number of ring ditches and enclosures, whilst three double-ditched ploughed-out barrows were noted. Among a large complex of crop-marks west of Ramsgate was found a treble-ditched barrow site with evidence of a central primary burial, and an Anglo-Saxon cemetery.

UPPER HARDRES

On the edge of Mill Bank Wood west of Clamber Crown (N.G.R. TR 164485), is a large symmetrical mound surrounded by a deep ditch. The latter is segmented by three causeways at the north, south-west and east, the north-west portion of the ditch being incorporated in a public footpath. The mound is 2.0 m. high with a depression in the top and a diameter of 15.0 m. Where it still exists, the ditch is 7.0 m. wide and 1.0 m. deep.

With no local records or tradition of a mill in this area, which is mostly wooded on Clay-with-flints soil, it is possible that it served the farm at Lynsore Court in the fertile valley below on the north-west.

WICKHAMBREAUX

A large double ring-ditch in field north of the river (N.G.R. TR 219586). Outer diameter 27.0 m.

WICKHAMBREAUX, STODMARSH

A large circle of prominent growth in crop for several years; it can be clearly seen from the crossroads at N.G.R. TR 215603.

WILLESBOROUGH

Mr. John Curragh, of Little Lacton Farm (N.G.R. TR 037412), found a Neolithic flint axe with slight grinding to a smooth surface near the cutting end. Slight brown patination; length 20.0 cm., width 7.0 cm.

Benenden. Mrs. M. Cicely Lebon reports:

In excavating a buried eighteenth-century retaining wall standing over 7 ft. high in a shrubbery of Benenden School park, a water cistern was discovered and dated to the early nineteenth century.

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The source of the water could not be explored; it enters the area excavated at the bottom of a high-walled cell built into the retaining wall and is accessible from above in the back yard of the old mansion, which was demolished in 1859. This part of the cistern served as a well for water used by the servants, in addition to the pump in the house itself. The wall has been interrupted by a buttressed archway through which water flows to become available immediately outside the wall from a lower level near a tool-house where it could be used by gardeners and other estate workers. Here the structures occupy the site of a moat, which was filled-in about 1780, when a 3 ft. barrel-vaulted drain was laid along the old channel. In the space, of about 11 ft., between the wall and the drain there is a curious D-shaped building with brick walls founded in the rocky subsoil below the moat bed. It is roofed about 4 ft. above its permanent water level with stone slabs supported on a central pier and two arches, as well as on its walls. The roof was not much below the 1820 ground level, but much below the present surface. It could be walked over in approaching the dipping place, which is an open rectangular water-passage between the straight side of the D-building and the archway in the retaining wall enabling water to be shared by those inside and outside the wall. Drainage is through the covered part of the cistern at the back of which there is an overflow recess with outlet into the drain.

Some fragments of fine china, including Chinese porcelain and a great deal of coarse wares, table glass, bottles, and glass from leaded windows, were taken from the moat bottom outside the cistern. The absence of any Tudor or medieval material confirms the opinion, based on old plans and pictures, that this channel of the moat was constructed in replacement of the medieval moat in order to provide an enlarged curtilage in the early eighteenth century when Admiral Sir John Norris was the owner of the estate and brickworks. The cistern was installed by a later owner, Thomas Law Hodges.

Evidence of Romano-British settlement is elusive in this park of Hemsted which has been so much disturbed by building and landscaping; but a few sherds of Romano-British pottery and of samian ware were found.

London Borough of Bexley Mr. P. J. Tester, F.S.A., reports:

At Hall Place, Bexley, a special exhibition has been mounted this summer and autumn (1975) illustrating the archaeological discoveries made in times past within the area of the Borough. This building is being used as an administrative office by the Libraries Service and also for temporary exhibitions. A Local Studies Officer and an Archaeological Assistant Curator are now employed by the

Borough and their activities do much to stimulate popular interest in Bexley's past.

St. Paulinus' Church, Crayford, St. John's, Erith, and All Saints', Foot's Cray, have all had recent repairs to their roofs. Erith Church has narrowly escaped redundancy and its future is uncertain. St. Michael's, East Wickham, has been made over by the Church of England to the Greek Orthodox Church who intend to restore it and use it as a place of worship. The repainted Royal Arms of Charles II are now in the modern church close by, together with some other fittings removed from the old building. Our member, Mr. H. A. James, has remounted the important early fourteenth-century *de Bladigdone* brass on oak board for display in the new church, as the slab to which it was latterly attached was of Victorian age. It was found impracticable to restore the brass to its original medieval stone, which remains on the floor of the old church, owing to its very eroded condition. On removing the Elizabethan Payn brass for restoration, Mr. James found the inscription to be 'palimpsest' with an earlier inscription on the reverse of great interest as it has an obvious monastic association.

Nothing has been done towards rebuilding the timber hall-house taken down at North Cray in 1968 (*Arch. Cant.*, lxxxvii (1972)) and the materials are still in store awaiting action by the local authority. In view of the existing financial position there seems little prospect of a change in this situation for some time.

London Borough of Bromley Museum. Mrs. S. Palmer reports:
Poverest—Interim Report

Throughout 1975 work continued on the excavation of the Roman building in the Fordcroft area of Orpington, adjacent to Poverest Road. Attention was also given to the areas round the building: a mechanical excavator was used to dig several trial trenches in an effort to determine the whereabouts of the remainder of the building. It can now be confirmed that there are Roman walls under Bellefield Road, and it is hoped that in the future limited excavation here may show the nature of these structures. In several places the remains of a cobbled courtyard was found, which may have surrounded the building.

Trial trenching between Bellefield Road and Fordcroft Road provided some geological evidence for a large basin-shaped depression here in the gravel, probably an arm of the River Cray. This depression is filled with a thick, dark clayey loam deposit containing much Romano-British material. No evidence of excavation in Romano-British times was found, and it seems that this was a marshy area used for depositing rubbish from the Roman building at this point.

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Three well-preserved Anglo-Saxon burials and two or three very fragmented remains of others were uncovered immediately adjacent to the Roman building. This is a continuation of the pagan cemetery excavated in the 1960s by Mr. P. J. Tester (*Arch. Cant.*, lxxxiii (1968), 125-50; lxxxiv (1969), 39-78), and appears to be the northernmost limit of the cemetery. One grave (no. 74, Poverest) contained the skeleton of a woman, possibly in her mid- to late-twenties, with a knife in her back, just below the pelvis. The knife may indicate the cause of death, although there could be other explanations for the presence of the tool in this position. The remains of a string of beads, a 'stutzarm' brooch (damaged) and an iron buckle were found with this burial. The other two burials are both males, possibly in their forties. The better preserved one had a small spear by his head; the other burial is incomplete but had a spear, knife and various other unidentifiable iron objects. A very fragmentary burial was that of a child (milk teeth) with two saucer brooches. It is thought highly unlikely that there are any more burials in this cemetery, which has by now produced 76 or 77 graves.

During the summer months a canopy was erected over the Roman building so that it can be made available to visitors for viewing.

May Avenue Burials

During extension work on a private house at 34 May Avenue, Orpington (TQ 46796775), during August, 1974, three cremation burials were uncovered. May Avenue is about one hundred yards from the Poverest Romano-British site, and this cemetery therefore can be regarded as part of the Fordcroft settlement complex. Burial A was in an urn of Patch Grove ware which had as a lid a samian dish (Form 18/31R) with the potter's stamp TITVRONIS; it contained a small grey barbotine-decorated jar and a pink double-ring flagon. Burial B was in a very fragmented urn of fine grey ware and contained two Kimmeridge shale bracelets, a necklace of 126 very tiny faceted jet beads, six larger jet beads, 29 segmented jet beads, and 16 blue glass beads as well as very fragmented pieces of glass and thin copper, perhaps part of a brooch. Burial C was also in a large urn of Patch Grove ware, very fragmented. A bowl of samian ware (also Form 18/31) was found next to the burial and has a potter's stamp, AVITVS F. Another small piece of rim from a samian dish has a roughly inscribed graffito, partly legible []QVAR[]. A small buff-coloured double-ring jar was found between burials B and C as well as a sherd of hard grey ware; these possibly originally belonged to burial C.

These burials all date to the latter part of the second century A.D. Coins dating to the third or fourth century have been found in the area of the Romano-British building at Poverest.

Dover Archaeological Group. Mr. T. D. Crellin reports:

The Dover Archaeological Group, directed by Mr. John Gaunt, investigated a Romano-British burial site revealed by road widening at a junction on the Northbourne-Eastry road (N.G.R. TR 329527). The site was completely excavated in association with the Kent Archaeological Rescue Unit. Grave goods included beads, bone pins, cinerary urns, beakers, a samian platter and other samian sherds.

At Venson Farm, the farmer, Mr. Gambrell, reported a subsidence in a field (N.G.R. TR 299531) after heavy rain. Under 2 m. of Brick-earth a flint-lined well was uncovered. A few sherds of samian ware were recovered from the fill of the well; their significance has not yet been established.

The route of the Lydden-Dover by-pass was inspected before work started on the new road. An Acheulian-type hand axe and a similar damaged hand axe were found on the surface of ploughed fields at N.G.R. TR 329441 and TR 325442, respectively. After removal of the topsoil, two U-shaped ditches were found running on to the line of the road in an east-west direction at N.G.R. TR 316445. The few pottery sherds which were recovered have not yet been dated. The Roman road on the line of the by-pass at N.G.R. TR 324444 was sectioned and recorded, and many Romano-British pottery sherds, some samian sherds and a number of horse-shoes were recovered.

Dover Sub-Aqua Club. Mr. S. Stevens reports:

While carrying out training dives just outside Dover Harbour, the Dover Sub-Aqua Club discovered a hoard of about 90 bronze objects, including palstaves, winged axes, broken swords, needles and other miscellaneous items, which is now deposited at Dover Museum.

Hundred of Hoo. Mrs. P. Day reports:

A survey by the Lower Medway Archaeological Research Group over the area of the Stoke saltings produced no traces of occupation. Evidence for a Romano-British site, now being eroded by the Thames, has been found north of the mouth of Cliffe Creek (N.G.R. TQ 708771); parts of a probable chalk floor, tile débris and briquetage for salt-panning are visible below the tide line. Much pottery and a bronze brooch were recovered from this area.

Kent Defence Research Group. Mr. V. T. C. Smith reports:

The excavation of the Tudor Milton blockhouse at Gravesend continued during 1975 and an interim report appears elsewhere in this volume. Work will be resumed in 1976. The Group initiated a second excavation during 1975 on the site of the Gravesend blockhouse about

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550 m. to the west. This excavation was carried out by the Thameside Archaeological Group. It is hoped that the blockhouse may remain permanently open to public view. The restoration of New Tavern Fort, Gravesend, was started in late 1975. In this project the Group was assisted by the Gravesham Society and the Medway Military Research Group. The magazines have been cleared of rubbish and are in the process of being decorated and attention is to be given to the restoration of surface works. Three cannon have been obtained locally for mounting and display at the fort, and a number of artillery rounds of various periods have been presented by the Royal Engineers. An illustrated guide-book to the fort has been printed.

Documentary work and field investigation of the late nineteenth century defended London mobilization centres is well advanced. Research into the defences of the Medway and Dover areas is continuing. The Group surveyed some of the Napoleonic and later defences at Dover Castle.

The Group still needs more assistance in its work and anyone who is interested is invited to write to the Secretary, Mr. D. R. Barnes, B.Sc.(Econ.), 24 Walters Road, Hoo, Rochester, Kent, ME3 9JR.

Otford and District Historical Society. Mrs. Z. M. Pateman reports:

As part of its silver jubilee celebrations the Otford and District Historical Society held an exhibition of local history in the Village Hall from 7th to 13th July, 1975.

Among the exhibits were the Otford Middle Bronze Age collared urn, a Romano-British brooch, a sixth-century cremation urn with finds from more recent excavations, and groups of objects and photographs illustrating farming, local records and domestic bygone. A complete record of the history of the Parish Church with commentary, photographs, plans and sketches, and a display dealing with the activities and achievements of the Society from 1950 to 1975 completed the exhibition.

A lecture on 'Early Man in north-west Kent', by Mr. P. J. Tester, attracted a full house.

Maidstone Area Archaeological Group. Mr. P. E. Oldham, M.A., reports:

The practical work of the Group includes excavation, field survey, building recording, industrial archaeology and local history. The excavation of the north wing of the Mount Romano-British building in the Old Barracks, Maidstone, has continued under the direction of Mr. D. B. Kelly, B.A., A.M.A. The building appears to be an extensive one, its east wall running south from the north-east corner to the barrack wall limiting the excavation, a distance of some 30 m., and

perhaps beyond it. On the north side, a stone drain runs from an apsidal bath, both disused in the last phase of the building's occupation.

The investigation of the suspected moated manor-house site of Mott Hall, Bearsted, has started under the direction of Mr. P. E. Oldham, M.A., and the remains of a stone building have been discovered. Only pottery of the fourteenth century has been found so far, although documentary evidence suggests that occupation of the site continued to at least the middle of the seventeenth century. Field surveys have been organized in Chainhurst and East Farleigh.

The building recording section, led by Mr. M. A. Ocock, has continued its parish-by-parish survey of vernacular buildings. Work on Barming has been completed and measured drawings have been prepared for a number of the more interesting structures, including Bridge Cottage and St. Cuthbert's Cottage. A start has been made on the buildings of Bearsted parish with several members engaged in recording external details, and the help of Professor Brunskill is gratefully acknowledged. Documentary research for both parishes is continuing and making a significant contribution to the studies. Comprehensive drawings have been made of the fine Wealden hall-house at Larkfield and a full description of the building is being prepared.

The task of researching and compiling a history of brewing in Maidstone is complete and a publisher for the resultant book is sought. The project has been submitted for a British Petroleum Industrial Heritage award. The section leader, Mr. M. J. Fuller, organized a visit to the works of Messrs. Amies, the paper-mould and water-mark manufacturers.

Mr. L. R. A. Grove, B.A., F.S.A., F.M.A., and Mr. R. J. Spain have constructed a map of Maidstone in 1650, based on a contemporary written survey. This map has stimulated further research and discussion on the development of the town.

Sevenoaks Area. Mr. P. E. Leach reports:

The Otford Group, under the direction of Mr. J. A. Pyke, undertook further excavation on the Otford Isolation Hospital site, N.G.R. TQ 515593; a second-century rubbish pit was investigated and produced a quantity of Patch Grove ware, some colour-coated and samian ware also. Two bronze brooches, with enamelled inlay and colour chequer, were found; Mr. M. R. Hull suggests that they are possibly imported and of second-century date.

The Sevenoaks School Archaeological Group, under the direction of Mr. J. H. S. Mowat, is investigating an abandoned cottage known as 'Pig and Whistle' at Magpie Bottom, N.G.R. TQ 543609, which has strong local traditions regarding smuggling; it lies not far from

the main Otford-Shoreham road. The cottage of flint, brick, and chalk had three rooms and is eighteenth- or, possibly, seventeenth-century in date; a denehole about 150 yds. away is in process of excavation.

The Wildernesse School Archaeological Group, under the direction of Mr. A. F. Tullett, is undertaking a survey of the gravestones in Seal churchyard. To date, a large area to the north and east of the Church has been cleared of undergrowth, and recording of the stones together with a large scale plan will take place during the coming winter.

Rochester. Col. E. T. L. Baker, O.B.E., T.D., M.A., reports:

When the Bridge Chapel was being restored in 1937, some burials were disturbed in the centre of the chapel, near the site of the altar. Three skulls from these burials, which were probably those of some of the medieval chaplains of the foundation, were re-interred in a recess made in the east wall of the chapel. This recess was closed by a stone slab, 3 × 1 ft., placed vertically inside the chapel.

It has been thought advisable to place these facts on record in case this re-burial might cause unfounded speculation in the future.

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

The excavations undertaken, on behalf of the Department of the Environment, by the Kent Archaeological Society have produced useful results. At Northgate, a series of cuttings was made in front of the Roman City Wall which here survives to a height of seven feet, with several courses of the original facing intact. It was pierced by a square culvert, doubtless for drainage purposes, and showed evidence of medieval repairs at the point nearest to the Gate. The Gate itself must have been quite small, probably no more than an archway in the wall, which is understandable in view of the fact that it would seem that in Roman times the water of the estuary came virtually up to the foot of the wall; no evidence was found of a defensive ditch to the north of the wall, only a gentle slope of grey river mud. After the wall ceased to be of use defensively, a great quantity of domestic rubbish of the Tudor period was dumped outside it, from which it was possible to recover many pieces of leather, including a complete shoe, which had been preserved in the waterlogged conditions.

At the site on the corner of George Lane and Corporation Street, six cuttings were made on both sides of the wall. Four courses of the original facing survived outside but inside it was intact for 10 ft. An interesting feature was a small medieval building, about 14 ft. square built against the wall with a flight of stone steps descending into its undercroft. This is best explained as a guard-house—the walls were too slight to be

defensive—and it certainly served partly as a latrine. Sections were cut across the bank of earth piled up inside the wall, which may help to date it.

Finds have been quite numerous. The finest undoubtedly were the set of bronze bracelets and bangles found with a burial just inside the wall, but also from the Roman period there have been nine coins (two silver and one very fine bronze *sestertius* of Antoninus Pius), a bronze brooch with blue enamel decoration, a spatula and bronze and bone pins, besides great quantities of pottery. Three Nüremberg jettons, or casting counters, used for arithmetical calculations and dating from the late sixteenth century and a mass of wasters from a clay pipe workshop of the early nineteenth century complete the historical picture.

Dartford District Archaeological Group. Mr. R. M. Walsh reports:

Trial excavations in mid-July at a site in Wilmington (N.G.R. TQ 732542) brought to light a Romano-British building; further work has established, in an area of some 50 × 70 ft., parts of a building, with walls constructed of flint and yellow mortar, which may prove to be a granary or basilican building belonging to a larger dwelling-house in the vicinity. Outside one of the walls of this granary, evidence was found for a probable channelled hypocaust, which may never have been in use. Pottery and other finds suggest a preliminary dating to the third century A.D. for this building.

Thames-side Archaeological Group. Mr. D. G. Thompson reports:

The site (N.G.R. TQ 650744) is situated under the riverside lawn and car park of the Clarendon Royal Hotel, Gravesend, and the excavation is being carried out by the Thameside Archaeological Group, under the joint direction of Mrs. V. Smith and Mr. D. G. Thompson, on behalf of the Kent Defence Research Group of the Kent Archaeological Society. The historical background to the blockhouse is given in *Arch. Cant.*, lxxxix (1974), 141–68.

An initial probe survey of the Clarendon lawn failed to locate the buried walls thought to exist. However, the Group was able to establish their approximate position using a modern map on which was superimposed a plan of the blockhouse in 1715. Excavation commenced in July 1975 and a layer of compressed rubble was encountered below the topsoil; beneath this layer was found the north-west half of the semi-circular front wall of the blockhouse. Excavation continued on both sides of the wall to a depth of 2 metres. The wall, built of brick and faced on the outside with ashlar blocks was found to be 2.55 m. wide at the base, but reduced to 2 m. for the rest of the surviving height,

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due to an internal 'step' 44 cm. wide, and a offset on the outer face. Gun ports bricked-in at a later date were discovered together with four iron 'retaining' rings still in place.

Inside the blockhouse and nearly level with the base of the wall was found a compact layer of chalk. A later floor was built above this and the space between filled with clay and rubble in which some large pieces of masonry (i.e. door jamb, keystone, and part of a gully) were found, indicating a period of major reconstruction.

During the course of the excavation a brick wall was found behind the semi-circular front and, as this addition was not shown on the 1715 plan, it was obviously of later construction. The wall is 1.10 m. wide and 2.08 m. high, a shallow foundation trench having been cut through the chalk layer noted above, The old sea wall was located and found to consist of large oak uprights to which had been attached planking running horizontally.

Future work will be concerned with the excavation of the interior of the blockhouse and establishing the total depth of the walls and the nature of the foundations.

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