



MINSTER ROMAN VILLA 2002

The KAS continued its annual excavation at the important Roman villa at Minster on the Isle of Thanet. This year's programme was designed to consolidate previous work and tidy up various loose ends. The digging team was saddened to learn that the long-standing director, Dave Perkins, would not be well enough to lead the team this year. Instead, the investigations were directed by Keith Parfitt, ably assisted, as usual, by Emma Boast, Tim Allen and Gemma Cuddy, with Dave Perkins keenly following developments from his hospital bed.

A total of thirty separate trenches was excavated. The bulk of these was aimed at tracing the line of the villa enclosure wall which surrounded the main house and its adjacent bath-building (see plan on page 3). Three others were designed to examine significant areas located by geophysical survey. In the course of the trenching a new, previously unknown building was located outside the south-western corner of the villa enclosure (Building 6). It seems likely that this mirrors Building 4, previously excavated at the south-east corner. Preliminary investigation established the presence of at least two main rooms and a corridor here, associated with tesserae, opus signinum and painted wall plaster. It is hoped to return to excavate this important new structure in a future season.

Work on the main villa house was confined to the re-exposure of the central part of the main range. This was to allow wall junctions to be re-surveyed more accurately and also to take another look at the problematical, D-shaped hypocausted room at the back of the range. Re-surveying confirmed that the house was as not pre-



Some of the recovered painted wall plaster.
(Photo: Richard Hoskins)

cisely laid out, with several corners that are not true right-angles.

Evidence for a gateway was located in the middle of the south side of the villa enclosure wall. This was represented by two very large post-pits, each containing traces of a circular/oval post-pipe. A gateway about 3 metres wide is suggested. A shallow slot running between the post-pits seemed to represent the position of a sill beam/door stop of timber. Rough metalting extended north and south of the entrance and must provide evidence for a road. The metalting produced a rare silver coin of Septimius Severus (dated to A.D. 201) and suggests that the road was not laid before the start of the third century.

Immediately to the north of the north wall of the villa enclosure a large shaft was located. This was oval in

shape and measured 4.70 m. (E-W) by 2.75 m. (N-S). It was excavated to a maximum depth of 2.20 m, but the base was not reached. The filling produced quantities of late first-early second century pottery, including bowls and flagons; also building debris, including painted wall plaster. It is hoped to return and complete the excavation of this shaft next year.

A complex sequence of other large pits and ditches was located outside the villa boundary wall to the north of the main house. The ditches are likely to relate to a more extensive system of ditched fields and enclosures around the villa. The pits may perhaps originally have been dug as clay quarries. The filling of both the pits and ditches produced significant quantities of pottery, painted plaster and other domestic debris.

Geophysical survey of the field continued, under the supervision of Carole and Brian McNaughton, in an effort to locate significant buried remains without having to dig for them. Local metal-detectors were able to join the project this year and spent many hours searching spoil-heaps and areas outside the excavation. This resulted in the recovery of about thirty Roman coins and other artefacts.

A small team was able to make a good start processing on site the great numbers of finds produced by the 2002 excavations. Of particular interest this year was the large amount of finely painted wall plaster recovered from pits located to the north of the main house.

The excavations at Minster will be published in instalments within the pages of *Archaeologia Cantiana*. Work on the first report is now nearing completion.

Keith Parfitt

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CTRL Talk

Helen Glass, Chief Archaeologist for the Channel Tunnel Rail Link, gave a talk on the archaeology encountered during the undertaking of this massive construction as part of the University of Kent's free public lecture series. Around 250 people attended the Brabourne Lecture Theatre to hear the highlights of the excavations and finds. Helen guided her audience through in chronological order, from the thousands of worked Mesolithic flints at Sandway, the Neolithic longhouse at White Horse Stone, the Roman remains at Thumham and Springhead, to the Anglo Saxon cemetery at Saltwood. Finally she described how a listed house at Marsham near Ashford was moved in its entirety on greased rails some few hundred yards to escape the path of the line!

Following the talk the University hosted a dinner in



Darwin College. From left to right are Dr John Williams (County Archaeologist), Professor Phil Davies (Pro Vice Chancellor of the University), Helen Glass and Dr Anthony Ward (Senior Lecturer in Archaeology and Master of Darwin).

Archaeologia Cantiana on disk from the KAFS

The full article index plus researches, discoveries and book reviews from the first volume in 1858 to Volume 122 in 2002 is now available on floppy disk and CD Rom. The disk comprises:

- * A Microsoft Word Version 6 copy of the index (can be opened in any subsequent version of Microsoft Word)

- * A text only (.txt) version of the index which can be opened and read with WordPad.

From the disk it is possible to print a hard copy of the index for your own use but perhaps more usefully it is possible to search the index within Microsoft. This enables people to quickly search for any references to a particular subject or author in any of the volumes produced between 1858 and 2002.

For those without Microsoft Word the CD Rom can be ordered with the software on condition that membership is taken out with the Kent Archaeological Field School. The KAFS has an educational licence from Microsoft that enables the Microsoft programme to be used by its members. To order the disk members of KAS need to send £2.50 for production, p&p costs. For the full programme of software and index the cost of membership to the KAFS is £15 a year.

Enquiries to: KAFS, School Farm Oast, Graveney Road, Faversham ME13 8UP

Members' attention is drawn to the fact that there is already a full list of contents pages on the KAS website - www.Kentarchaeology.org.uk

Sponsorship for Reculver Publication



To mark 50 years of rescue archaeology in Kent and SE London by Brian Philp of the Kent Archaeological Rescue Unit, an appeal for sponsorship was made towards the costs of publishing the excavations at the Roman fort at Reculver. The initial sponsorship donations were presented to a surprised Brian by Dr Richard Reece during the conference on the Classis Britannica

Brian Philp with his surprise cheque.

held in early October 2002 at the Museum of London. An especial acknowledgement and appreciation for this most generous support is made by KARU to www.classis-britannica.co.uk, Hanson Aggregates, JClubb Ltd and Millbrook Garden Centre Ltd. It is hoped that the Reculver report may be published by late 2003-2004.

TALKS & SPONSORSHIPS



Winter 2002/3

The Bronze Age Dover Boat . . . 10 Years On

To mark the 10th anniversary of the discovery and excavation of the Dover Boat by Canterbury Archaeological Trust (CAT), a conference was held over two days at the end of October in the Maison Dieu in Dover, sponsored amongst others by the British Academy, the KAS, Dover Bronze Age Boat Trust, Dover District Council, George Hammond plc, KCC, Dover Harbour Board and P&O Ferries.

Over 130 delegates attended and 16 speakers gave papers relating to nautical aspects in prehistory. The conference had a truly European flavour, as our Scandinavian neighbours boast similar boat discoveries to that of the magnificent Dover example. Papers given ranged widely between the practical aspects of boat construction, reconstruction and the information to be derived from this (Peter Clark of CAT dreams of building and sailing a Dover Boat replica across the Channel) to the wider aspects of seafaring in the Bronze Age. Subjects such as deposition and the ritualisation of undertaking voyages, the legacy of the Humber Fenby boats, the iconography of rock art in relation to sea voyaging, prehistoric harbours in Kent and an environmental context for the Dover Boat were all covered. Details were given of a proactive search for the remains of Bronze Age boats and related remains under water in a systematic project underway at the University of Oslo.

The vexed question of the Dover

Boat's course was approached head on by Peter Marsden pleading for restraint in interpretation and proposing that the evidence better fits a riverine vessel. Perhaps the answer will never be resolved until Peter Clark fulfils his dream, thus proving his stance of the boat as a seagoing vessel...

This was a stimulating conference, which, as is always the case when enthusiastic experts convene, threw up many more questions to be pondered upon in the future.

A half-size replica of the Fenby Boat (see below) was displayed in the entrance of the Maison Dieu - a beautiful craft put together by Edw in Gifford.

The discovery of the Dover Boat is described by its excavator, Keith

Parfitt, in 'Back Page People' at the end of this Newsletter.

The Dover Boat is now displayed in a special award-winning gallery in Dover Museum. However, the Museum has faced recent cuts as Dover District Council strove to save over £2,000,000. The outcome is that the Council has committed itself to retaining a fully registered museum on 3 floors, remaining open 6 days a week throughout the year, but that there will be 3 job losses from within the curatorial and custodial staff. It is to be hoped that a museum which houses one of our greatest national archaeological treasures subsequently has enough staff to maintain the wonderful heritage of its area.

The Editor



A delegate examines the half-size replica of the Fenby boat in the Maison Dieu.

Otford Anglo-Saxon Cremation Urn

An Anglo-Saxon cremation urn has been unearthed in Otford following a watching brief ahead of construction of an extension in a private garden. Otford and District Archaeological Group (ODAG) suspected that they might encounter remains of this type as a similar but smaller urn was found in the 1950's in the same garden, although the exact location was unknown.

Amazingly, the pot was only 8" below the present land surface and was partly under a concrete path. It was upright and crushed but apparently still complete; the urn found previously (now in Maidstone Museum) needed to be partly restored. Careful trowelling revealed a pattern of incised decoration and 3 bosses, an unusually

small number as cremation urns can have over 20. After excavation it was wrapped in crepe bandages and covered in cling film.

ODAG hope to be able to reconstruct the pot after careful excavation of the interior and to display it in the Heritage Centre in Otford. It has been x-rayed, cour-

tesy of the owner of Eland Veterinary Clinic at Dunton Green, and there are indications of bones on the x-ray but no grave goods as yet.

Below left: The cremation urn, and right: a detail showing the pattern of incised decorations.



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