

RESEARCHES AND DISCOVERIES IN KENT

A PRE-CONQUEST SCULPTURAL FRAGMENT FROM ROCHESTER
CATHEDRAL

Pre-Conquest sculpture is so rare in Kent, as in the south-east of England generally, that it is worth while drawing attention to the existence of any piece, however small. The fragment illustrated in Fig. 1 had apparently been used as rubble for the plinth of the later Norman cathedral at Rochester. It was found during work to underpin the west front of the cathedral in 1888-9, during the course of which the foundations of the apsidal end of an earlier Saxon structure were revealed.¹

The fragment is of a limestone slab now measuring about $12\frac{1}{2}$ by $7\frac{1}{2}$ in., and a little over 4 in. thick. The back is only rough-hewn. The slab is broken on three sides, with only one straight edge remaining. It has all the appearance of a piece of architectural sculpture rather than the fragment of a cross shaft. The 'exterior' face is carved in shallow relief, the deepest part (below the belly of the beast) no more than $\frac{1}{3}$ in. deep. The ornament was set out in rectangular panels within an outer border marked off by no more than a lightly-incised line. Parts of two panels survive: the right-hand containing the remains of a rough plait or interlace, and the left-hand the narrow hind-quarters of an elegant, stylized beast, its tail twisted over the back and round the belly. Although now in so sad a condition, the design seems to have been competently handled. But its style and relationships are difficult to assess both on account of its fragmentary nature and because the vast majority of comparative material comes from far away in the Anglian north. Possibly the panel would not be out of place at any date from the eighth to the tenth centuries, but probably it belongs to the later rather than earlier part of that period. Animal ornament and interlace are not infrequently found occupying contiguous rectangular panels in pre-Conquest art in most media and in most centuries. The Rochester interlace might be considered similar to that on the slab from St. Augustine's, Canterbury,² while the beast panel perhaps shares something in common with 'lion'-panels at Breedon or Whitby.³

¹ G. M. Livett, 'Foundations of the Saxon Cathedral Church at Rochester', *Arch. Cant.*, xviii (1889), 267 n.

² C. R. Peers and A. W. Clapham, 'St. Augustine's Abbey Church, Canterbury, before the Norman Conquest', *Archaeologia*, lxxvii (1927), pl. xxviii.

³ A. W. Clapham, 'The Carved Stones at Breedon on the Hill, Leicestershire, and their position in the history of English Art', *Archaeologia*, lxxvii (1927), pl. xxxiv (3); C. Peers and C. A. Raleigh Radford, 'The Saxon Monastery at Whitby', *Archaeologia*, lxxxix (1943), 35, pl. xx (b).

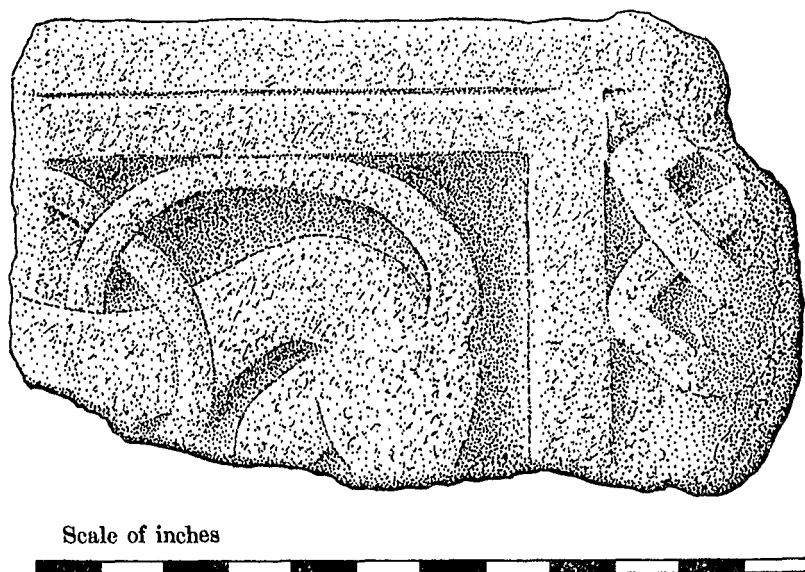


FIG. 1. Pre-Conquest Architectural Sculpture from Rochester Cathedral.

But the overall parallel which comes most readily to mind takes the form of a small sandstone slab now built into the doorway of Wamphray church in Dumfriesshire, bearing a similar bipartite design, albeit with distinctively early northern features.⁴

Remains of only relatively few free-standing Saxon stone crosses survive in south-east England, although such documentary evidence as exists suggests that they were found as early in southern England as in the north, while the wartime discovery of the remarkable All Hallows fragments attests to the existence of an important late-Saxon 'London school' of sculpture at least as sophisticated as any in the north.⁵ On the other hand, the lists of survivals *in situ* suggest that architectural sculpture was equally common in all parts of the country.⁶ The reasons for the general absence of cross-sculptures in south-east England are not yet clear. But it is plain that unless some special characteristic may have caused it to be preserved—such as the incorporation of a crucifixion—purely architectural sculptures will normally

⁴ J. Romilly Allen and J. Anderson, *The Early Christian Monuments of Scotland*, Edinburgh, 1903, ii, 449-50, fig. 470; illustrated also by N. Åberg, *The Occident and the Orient in the Art of the seventh Century, I, The British Isles*, Stockholm, 1943, fig. 44.

⁵ T. D. Kendrick and C. A. Raleigh Radford, 'Recent Discoveries at All Hallows, Barking', *Antiq. Journ.*, xxiii (1943), 14-18.

⁶ J. and H. M. Taylor, 'Architectural Sculpture in pre-Norman England', *J.B.A.A.*, 3rd series, xxix (1966), 3-51.

PLATE 1



Crop-mark Site at Westenhangar.

have been reduced to rubble when the buildings of which they formed part were deemed to be outmoded. Whereupon they must often have formed part of the rubble needed for subsequent structures, only coming to light during the course of later restoration or destruction. By the time of the first Norman building at Rochester, the Saxon church was acknowledged to be in an advanced state of dilapidation.⁷

Saxon buildings in Kent seem normally to have used stone quarried locally, or acquired at second hand from nearby Roman sites. The Rochester stone is not local to Kent. It is a clean-washed, shelly, oolitic limestone with a sparry matrix, which almost certainly came from some part of the Jurassic Ridge of central England. Professor Jope has drawn attention to the very extensive use of this material, from quarries probably at Barnack and elsewhere, throughout the Saxon period.⁸

Since its discovery, the Rochester fragment has apparently lain loose in the cathedral crypt. The broken edges seem recently to have been further bruised.

M. J. SWANTON

A 'LOST' CROP-MARK SITE AT WESTENHANGER

The vertical aerial photographic survey of Kent undertaken by the Royal Air Force in 1946 revealed significant crop-markings lying within the ring of the Folkestone Racecourse at Westenhanger (N.G.R. TR 124369), Plate I.¹ The site extends on either side of the fence and ditch—an old-established boundary—which divides parcels 160 and 162. The markings are considerably less clear to the north of the fence, where the ground had been levelled and impacted for use as a racecourse coach-park. Fig. 2 shows the significant features plotted schematically, but at the same scale, on the relevant section of the O.S. 25-in. map.

The area to the south of the fence was deep-ploughed on several occasions during the period 1949–52, with the result that the superficial characteristics of the site, insofar as they might be revealed by aerial photography, seem to have been obliterated. No crop-mark appears in any of the subsequent vertical surveys made by the Royal Air Force, nor in any oblique photographs undertaken commercially.

The crop-mark present in 1946 appears to have outlined the plan

⁷ 'paene vetustate dirutam', *Textus Roffensis*, ed. T. Hearne, Oxford, 1720, 142; and cf. William of Malmesbury, *Gesta Pontificum Anglorum*, Rolls Series, lii, 136–7.

⁸ E. M. Jope, 'The Saxon Building-Stone Industry in Southern and Midland England', *Med. Arch.*, viii (1964), 91–118.

¹ 106G/UK/1443; print no. 4462.

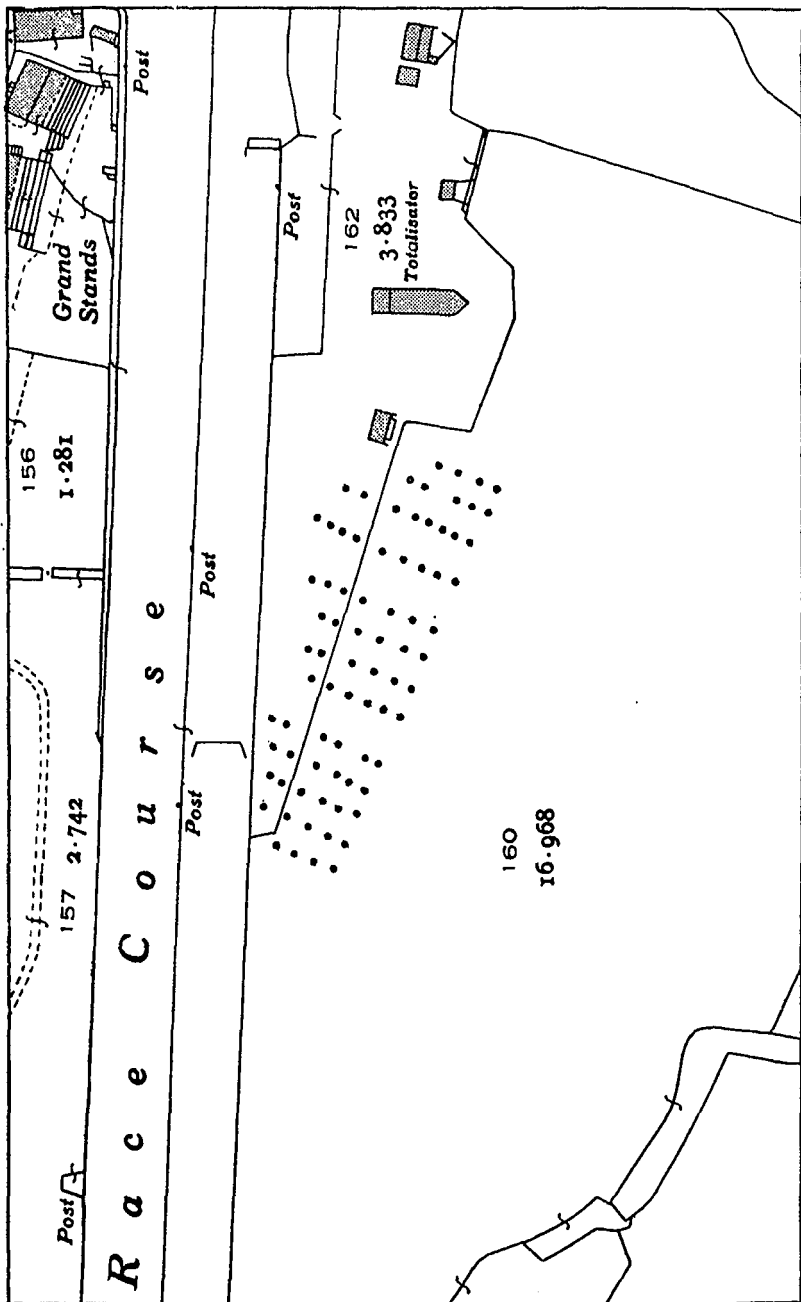


FIG. 2. Schematic Plan of Westenhanger Crop-marks. Scale: 1 : 2500.

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of a series of what were possibly 'boat-shaped' buildings of the kind characteristic of Dark Age Europe,² and now increasingly familiar from excavated examples at Cheddar, Yeavinger and elsewhere.³ If this surmise is correct, there might have been some six or seven halls lying in parallel, greater in number and significantly larger in size than even those at Yeavinger. In the light of this, it is interesting to recall the early tradition, recorded by Grose, that Westenhanger Manor originated as a palace of the Anglo-Saxon Kentish kings and as attributable to their eponymous founder Oise himself.⁴ Certainly, the Westenhanger estate seems to have been in royal hands as late as 1035, when it was given to Bishop Eadsige by Cnut, in a charter describing half a 'ploughland' *æt Berwican*, which the late Gordon Ward recognized as belonging to this estate,⁵ and which includes *inter alia* such boundary-marks as 'The King's Ford'. Cnut had already granted Eadsige other land *æt Berwican*, and ultimately all his estates seem to have come into the possession of Canterbury Cathedral.⁶ It is interesting that at the time of the Domesday survey, Berwick was held by one of the archbishop's knights '*pro uno manerio*',⁷ which suggests that some conflation had taken place and that one or other 'manor' had ceased to exist as such. If this were so, it might possibly provide a hypothetical *terminus ante quem* for the abandonment of the Westenhanger site. But as yet there exists no material evidence to indicate the date, or indeed the character, of the features shown in the crop-mark.

Fig. 3 illustrates the general position of the site. It lies at the centre of the Dark Age estate, as outlined by Ward, on gently sloping land lying within the angle made by two Roman roads out of *Portus Lemanis*, both of which were apparently open and in use throughout Saxon times: north to Canterbury and north-west to Rochester. The point where the Lemanis-Canterbury road fords the East Stour river—which formed one of the boundary-marks of the Dark Age estate—lies 600 yards to the north-east. The present Westenhanger Manor, a moated and castellated building dating largely from the fourteenth century, is situated close to the East Stour, less than 200 yards away to the north-west.

² See generally B. Hope-Taylor, 'The "boat-shaped" House in northern Europe', *Proc. Cambridge Antiq. Soc.*, lv (1962), 16-22.

³ P. Rätz, 'The Saxon and medieval Palaces at Cheddar, Somerset—an interim Report of Excavations in 1960-62', *Med. Arch.*, vi-vii (1962-3), 57, figs. 18, 20; H. M. Colvin (ed.), *The History of the King's Works*, London, 1963, 2-6, figs. 2-3. Aerial photographs of Yeavinger and Milfield are provided by D. Knowles and J. K. S. St. Joseph, *Monastic Sites from the Air*, Cambridge, 1952, 270, pls. 125-6.

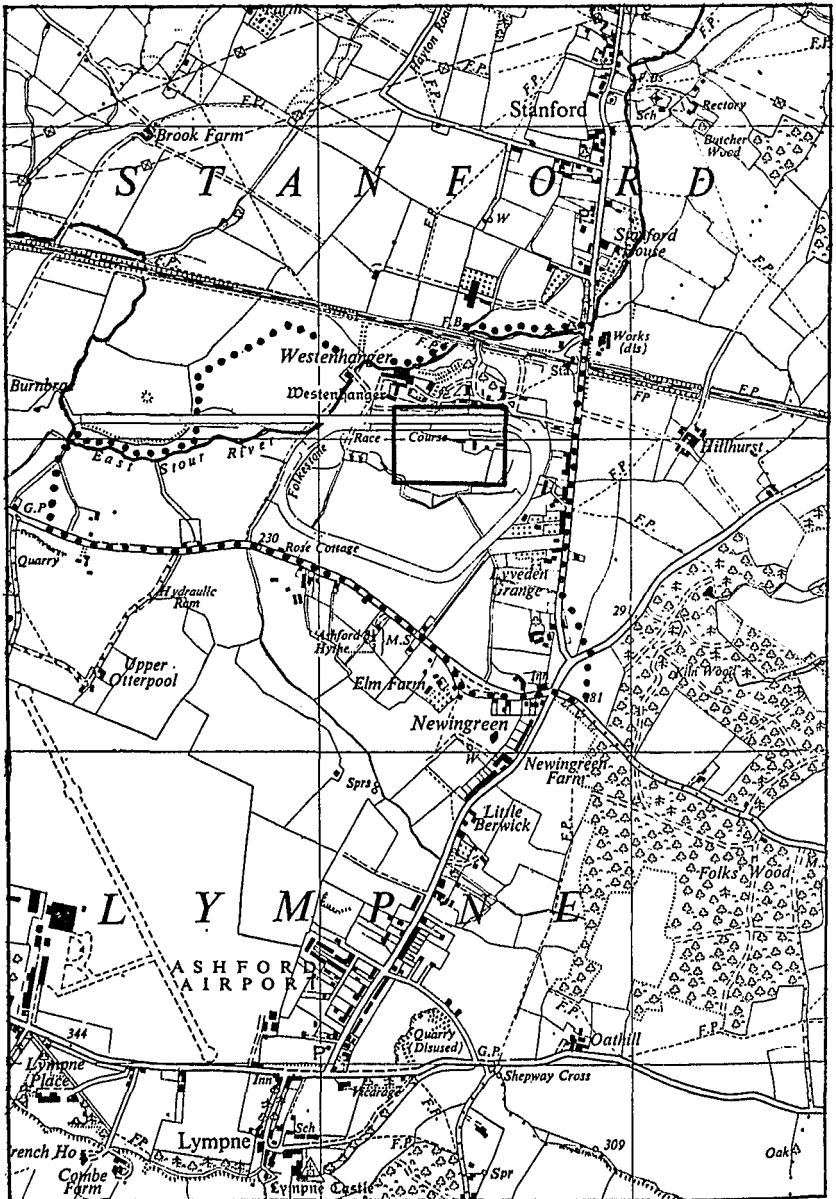
⁴ F. Grose, *The Antiquities of England and Wales*, London, 1773-87, iii, 84.

⁵ G. Ward, 'The Westenhanger Charter of 1035', *Arch. Cant.*, xlvii (1935), 144-52.

⁶ J. M. Kemble (ed.), *Codex Diplomaticus Aevi Saxonici*, London, 1839-48, iv, 37.

⁷ *Domesday Book*, London, 1783-1816, i, 4b.

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FIG. 3. The Position of Westernhanger and the Estate Boundaries identified by Ward. Scale: 1 : 25000.

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A resistivity survey of the site carried out in 1969⁸ revealed no significant pattern of findings. And two ten-foot-square trial trenches, one either side of the boundary-fence, indicated uniformly disturbed soil conditions. Beneath the turf-line a layer of brown loam lay at an uneven depth of between 10 and 15 in. over natural clay. Scattered through the brown loam were found remains suggesting a long history of human activity, including animal bones, fragments of brick and tile of various dates, one highly abraded sherd of samian ware (Form 18/31) and a handful of waste and worked flakes of Upper Palaeolithic or Mesolithic flint-types.⁹

Although probably considerably disturbed overall, minute excavation techniques of the kind developed to recover the plan of timber buildings at Hen Domen might well reveal surviving evidence. And as increasingly sophisticated archaeological techniques become available, the site will remain potentially valuable. Certainly, in view of the possible effect of the renewed Channel Tunnel proposals, the future of this site would repay vigilance.

M. J. SWANTON

COOLING ROMANO-BRITISH SITE

The seventh, and final season's excavation, at the Cooling Marsh Romano-British industrial site, north of Rochester, was carried out between August, 1972 and July, 1973. The excavation, on behalf of the Lower Medway Archaeological Research Group and with a grant from the Kent Archaeological Society, was directed by A. Miles and M. J. E. Syddell.

The excavations were concentrated on locating the main features and limits of a *terp* mound, which had been built on the original surface of the saltings, as well as establishing the position of a kiln site discovered in 1932 by Mr. F. Muggeridge (*Arch. Cant.*, xlv (1933), xlii).

The recent investigations showed that the original first-century mound had been wedge-shaped, some 120 m. long by 44 m. wide, with a creek curving around its southern extremity. Continued occupation of the site, and deliberate dumping of salt-panning and pottery waste materials, caused the mound to widen to 112 m. To the west, a gently shelving beach gave direct access to the Thames estuary. An interesting feature in the north-west corner was a rubbish-pit dug in the foreshore, filled with cockle, mussel, oyster and edible snail shells. In one small

⁸ With the kind permission of the Secretaries of the Folkestone Racecourse and of their tenant, Mr. G. Walker, of Somerfield Court.

⁹ Now deposited at Maidstone Museum.

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area of this pit, eight intact miniature or toy pots were found, the largest measuring only 75 mm. high.

Excavation to the east of the mound on the supposed kiln and industrial area proved the existence of burnt clay and ash to a depth of 3 m., and much first-century pottery waste, but the kiln was not located.

The pottery, ranging from the first to the fourth centuries, and the salt-panning débris are now being processed and studied at the Larkfield Archæological Centre, near Maidstone.

A. MILES

ARCHÆOLOGICAL NOTES FROM MAIDSTONE MUSEUM

MAIDSTONE

1. Flint scrapers and flakes of Mesolithic/Neolithic type, found by Mr. J. Ellwood on allotments between the River Medway and Upper Fant Road (N.G.R. TQ 745545).

2. Æ coin of Constantine I, found by Mr. E. J. Jenner in allotment adjoining his garden at 24 Albert Road. R.I.C. Trier 537. (N.G.R. TQ 758568). The Rochester-Hastings Roman road follows the track of the allotment path.¹

MARDEN

Neolithic polished axe of brown/honey-coloured flint, found by Mr. J. Tipples in a stream at Chainhurst. Length: 5½ in.; max. width: 2½ in. (N.G.R. TQ 7247).

SUTTON VALENCE

A bronze boat-shaped brooch (Fig. 4) of the Early Iron Age was found by Mr. D. A. Boxall, of Stallance Farm, on his land in January, 1973 (N.G.R. TQ 818491). The length of the brooch is 3¾ in. and it is complete except for the end of the long foot. Running from the points at the middle of the sides across the top of the hollow bow is a slightly raised band of ornament, consisting of a lattice of horizontal and vertical lines, incised after the brooch had been cast.

In a paper on early Italian brooches, Ridgeway and Smith² discussed and listed the finds of similar brooches in Britain and subsequent finds were published by Hawkes.³ Four boat-shaped brooches have been found in Kent,⁴ including one from Boughton Monchelsea, only three

¹ I. D. Margary, *Roman Ways in the Weald*, London, 1965, 214, and map 216.

² *Proc. Soc. Antiq., London*, second series, xxi (1906-7), 97-117.

³ T. D. Kendrick and C. F. C. Hawkes, *Archæology in England and Wales, 1914-1931*, London, 1932, 168-9.

⁴ Ridgeway and Smith, *loc. cit.* in note 2, 113-4.

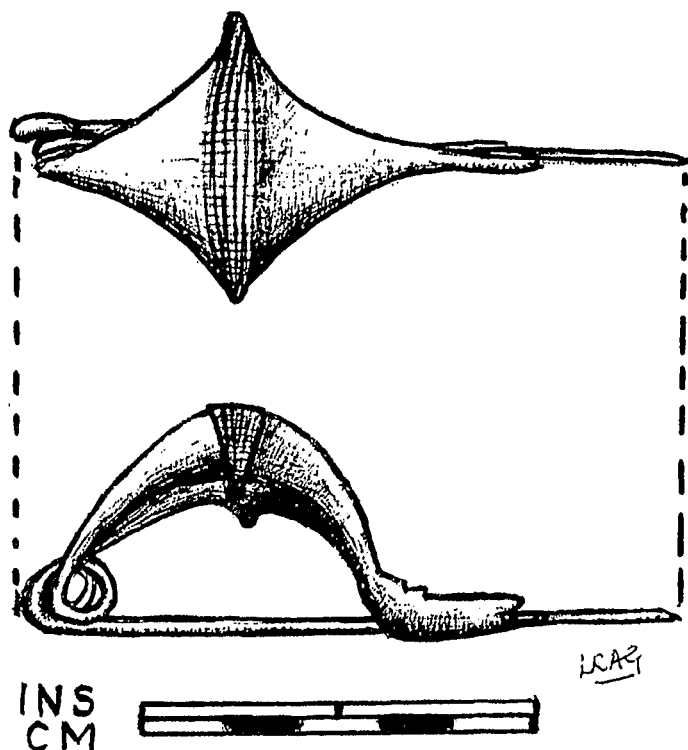


FIG. 4. Boat-shaped Brooch of the Early Iron Age from Sutton Valence.

miles from the find-spot of the Sutton Valence brooch. None was found on an Iron Age site, but since both the Boughton Monchelsea and Sutton Valence brooches were found and did not come from collections of antiquities, it is likely that they arrived here in the course of trade or were brought by immigrants. These brooches are usually assigned to the sixth century B.C.

Mr. Boxall has kindly deposited the brooch on long loan at the museum (loan 1973/1).

WOODCHURCH

The upper stone of a medieval pot-quern⁵ of Mayen lava was found by Karen and Jonathan Grieves at May Farm in 1967, some 50 yards east of the farmhouse (N.G.R. TQ 956356), and kindly given by them to the museum (Acc. no. 5-1973).

⁵ For a note on the type, see G. C. Dunning in *Antiq. Journ.*, xlv (1965), 62-3. I am grateful to Dr. Dunning for his comments.

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The stone is $11\frac{3}{4}$ in. in diameter and $3\frac{1}{2}$ in. in depth. The grinding surface has a downward slope and there is a single hole to take the handle on the upper surface at the edge. The lead which secured the rind in the slots remains.

D. B. KELLY

WARDEN POINT, SHEPPEY

Through the kind offices of Mr. M. Moad, Curator of Rochester Museum, I have been able to study a bronze medieval seal matrix which was found during the Summer of 1973 by Mr. G. W. Bowles of Chatham whilst he was beachcombing below the cliffs at Warden Point, Sheppey. The finder has lent it to Rochester Museum.

DESCRIPTION

Diameter of the circular matrix surface: $\frac{7}{10}$ in.

Height: 1 in.

Inscription in Lombardic lettering:

*** LEL AMI AVET**

(You have a loyal friend)

There is in existence a parallel, described by A. B. Tonnochy in the *Catalogue of British Seal-Dies in the British Museum*, 1952, p. 148, number 726. This, too, is of bronze and is circular with a hexagonal conical handle ending in a pierced trefoil. In the centre of the matrix appear two crossed hands bound at the wrists, with a bird to the left between them. The British Museum example (in the Franks Collection) also has its legend LEL AMI AVET within pearled borders. The Warden Point and British Museum seals are both of early-fourteenth century date.

L. R. A. GROVE

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