

RESEARCHES AND DISCOVERIES IN KENT

A FRAGMENT OF A MEROVINGIAN ROUNDED-PLAQUE BUCKLE FROM THE ANGLO-SAXON CEMETERY AT SARRE

In 1926, when he compiled the Tables for his work on *The Anglo-Saxons in England*, Åberg recorded that a total of six Merovingian rounded-plaque buckles had been found in this country.¹ It has recently been argued that one of these buckles was probably a Kentish copy of a continental type and that two others should, for various reasons, also be omitted from this list.² This leaves the three buckles from Ipswich, Faversham and Lympe as genuine imports to this country from the Continent although only the discovery of the Ipswich buckle was properly recorded.³ It is the intention of this note to add one further, fragmentary buckle, that from grave CXXX at Sarre, to this list.⁴ This grave was described by Brent as being that of a woman and the buckle fragment was found with 'an iron buckle, and some other pieces of iron', which would be quite consistent with a female grave assemblage, especially if the 'other pieces of iron' represented the remains of keys or part of a châtelaine.

The buckle fragment, consisting of approximately half of the main plaque or plate of the buckle, is illustrated in Plate I and an attempt has been made to reconstruct it in Fig. 1. It would have originally formed the main component of a three-piece Merovingian rounded-plaque buckle of the type illustrated by Åberg in his figure 180,⁵ and it can be dated to the first half of the seventh century A.D. When complete, it would have been straight at the front, with two small attachment loops for the main buckle-loop, and then, apart from a slight incurving near the front, the

¹ N. Åberg, *The Anglo-Saxons in England*, Uppsala, 1926, 206, entries 80–83.

² R. Avent, 'An Anglo-Saxon Variant of a Merovingian Rounded-Plaque Buckle', *Medieval Archaeology*, xvii (1973), 126–128.

³ For the Ipswich buckle see – N. F. Layard, 'An Anglo-Saxon Cemetery in Ipswich', *Archaeologia*, lx (1907), 336, 340, fig. 9, no. 5; *id.*, 'An Anglo-Saxon Cemetery in Ipswich', *Proc. Suffolk Inst. Archaeol.*, xiii (1907), 9, pl. IV, 7. For the Lympe buckle see – C. R. Smith, 'Proceedings of the Association', *J. Brit. Archaeol. Assoc.*, iv (1849), 158–59, fig. 4, no. 5; *id.*, *The Antiquities of Richborough, Reculver and Lymne*, London, 1850, 264. The Faversham buckle is unpublished and is in the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford (Ash. Mus. no. 1909.135).

⁴ J. Brent, 'Account of the Society's Researches in the Anglo-Saxon Cemetery at Sarr', *Arch. Cant.*, vi (1866), 177. This buckle forms part of the Kent Archaeological Society's Collections in Maidstone Museum and its accession number is K.A.S. 388. I am most grateful to Mr. D. B. Kelly, for all his help when I was preparing this note.

⁵ Åberg, *op. cit.*, fig. 180.

rest of the plaque would have been fully rounded. A decorated tongue-plate, of a similar shape to the main plaque, would have been attached to the buckle-loop in such a way as to cover the area of attachment between the buckle-loop and the plaque.⁶ The buckle-loop itself would have probably had a concave underside and may also have been decorated. The complete buckle would have been attached, by three small loops on the underside of the main plaque, to a heavy leather belt, which was normally worn at the waist by a man, and it may have been accompanied by counter-plaques and a strap-end.⁷

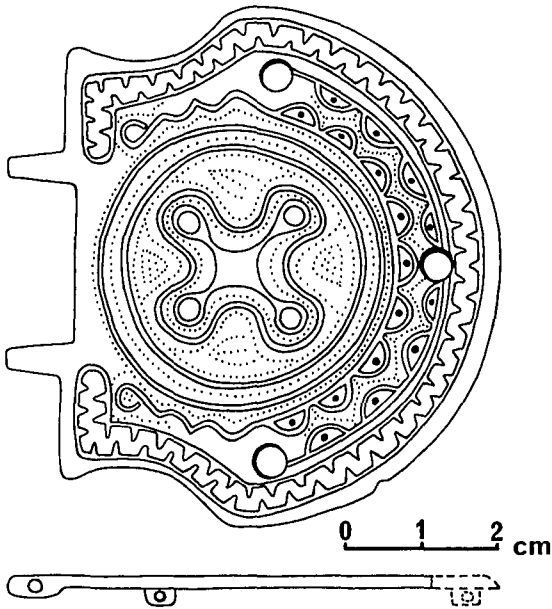


Fig. 1. Reconstruction Drawing of Merovingian Buckle.

The surviving fragment of this buckle plaque consists of one attachment loop for the main buckle-loop, another loop on the underside of the plaque to attach it to a belt and a single hole for one of the decorative rivet bosses. The surface of the bronze plaque has been tinned, to give it the appearance of being made of silver, a practice which is quite commonly used on buckles of this type. The decoration consists of a zig-zag border around the edge of the plaque, inside which there are two lines, also following the outline of the plaque, with a series of semi-

⁶ B. Trenteseau, *La Damasquinure mérovingienne en Belgique*, Brugge, 1966, 25, fig. 2.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 27, fig. 3.

circles with punch marked centres, along their length. The inner of these two lines breaks into a zig-zag with a looped terminal near the front end of the plaque. Moving towards the centre of the plaque, the next element in the design consists of two circles which surround a looped cross-like design, the centre of which cannot be reconstructed with absolute certainty. A very fine pointillé design is interspersed throughout this decorative scheme.

The rather crude execution of the decoration on this buckle plaque is quite in keeping with that which appears on buckles of this type found on the Continent. The layout of the design is also consistent with that one would expect to find on the other side of the Channel, where an outer band of decoration around the edge of the buckle plaque is very common. A central guilloche or cross-like motif also appears fairly frequently on both main plaques and tongue-plates, and in some cases the crosses appear to have very distinct Christian affinities.

The reconstruction drawing (Fig. 1) of the Sarre buckle plaque shows that it is slightly wider than is usual in buckles of this type. The fact that it was found in the grave of a woman instead of, as is more usual, in that of a man, is also unusual. However, it is fairly clear that, as only a fragment of this buckle was found in grave CXXX, it must have been incomplete when buried, and it seems probable that it was kept by its owner purely for its curiosity value. Neither the attachment loop nor the single rivet hole show any appreciable signs of wear and it is, therefore, unlikely that it served a secondary function as a pendant. Furthermore, it seems highly improbable that a buckle fragment of this type would have been specially imported from the Continent, so the buckle must have been broken while in use in Kent, thus increasing the total number of known imports of this type of buckle to four.

RICHARD AVENT

A 'BELLARMINE' BOTTLE FROM HOOK GREEN, LAMBERHURST

In 1975, during alterations to a fireplace at 'The Elephant's Head', Hook Green, a stoneware 'Bellarmine' bottle was found buried in an inverted position c. 0.5 m. below the level of the hearth. This example, 18 cm. high and 12 cm. broad, is more slender than the early types and probably dates from the late seventeenth century.¹ The mask is highly stylized with the mouth portraying an ugly expression and the beard reduced to a few incised lines. It may be of English craftsmanship.

Although traces of a cork were found, nothing was reported from inside the vessel. Its position, however, suggests possible use as a witch

¹ M. R. Holmes, 'The so-called "Bellarmine" Mask on imported Rhenish Stoneware', *Ant. J.*, xxi (1951), 173-9.

bottle, and a number of these have been found beneath Kentish hearths.² Whether it was deposited during construction of the fireplace or at a later date is uncertain.

It has been re-buried in the position in which it was found.

A. D. F. STREETEN

EXCAVATIONS AT ST. AUGUSTINE'S ABBEY, CANTERBURY, 1975

Excavations on behalf of the Department of the Environment were continued at St. Augustine's Abbey (N.G.R. TR 154579), during June and July under the direction of the author.

The area investigated was to the south of the nave begun by Abbot Scotland (*d.* 1087) and completed by Abbot Wido (1087–99). The principal intention was to locate and excavate the 'capella de charnell'. Excavations by Sir W. H. St. John Hope and Sir Charles Peers, at the beginning of this century while the Kent County Hospital was standing on the site, had suggested that the chapel occupied a position facing the fifth and sixth bays west from the Rood Screen. This was found to be a misinterpretation of the short lengths of footing they had been able to unearth.

The chapel, which was consecrated in 1299, faces the fourth bay. Its dimensions are 7.50 m. wide by 6.75 m. deep. The walls have been extensively robbed, the south wall being robbed out entirely, but enough survives to give an idea of the building's appearance.

The footings are of mortared flint rubble, laid on bedding layers of rammed hoggin and greensand chippings. The walls are of upper greensand dressed internally with Caen stone. The chamfered offset on the outer face of the east wall survives, and there are clasping buttresses on the two corners.

The chapel was paved with slabs surrounded by an irregular border of undecorated floor tiles, the border being 1.50 m. wide at maximum. The tiles were found *in situ*, though all were cracked. They had been mortared over and used as the matrix for a later floor, probably of decorated tiles, as many fragments of these, together with one or two complete examples, were found in the demolition layer immediately overlying the tiled floor. One of the paving slabs was a re-used sepulchral slab laid upside down. It bore the remnants of a foliated cross in relief on what was originally its face, and must have come from the grave of a priest.

The footing which Hope and Peers interpreted as the west wall of the charnel chapel was found when fully excavated to extend 3.10 m. from the south wall of the south aisle at a point corresponding to the sixth pier base from the Rood Screen. It is 1.50 m. wide. This could be the eastern side of a porch into the church from the lay cemetery; the planned

² E. W. Tilley, 'A Witch Bottle from Gravesend', *Arch. Cant.*, lxxx (1965), 252–6.

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continuation of the excavation westwards next year will determine whether or not this is so.

Sandwiched between the charnel chapel and the putative porch was found a rectangular structure 7·10 m. wide by 6·90 m. deep, constructed of chalk blocks bonded with pink mortar. This building rests on the medieval ground surface, sealing the graves of the lay cemetery. Its identity and purpose are a puzzle; that it was standing at the same time as the charnel chapel and (?) porch is apparent from the fact that the robbing cut for the (?) porch cuts its western wall and that a demolition layer overlying the southern arm of the charnel chapel's south-western clasping buttress partially overlies its eastern wall. It does not necessarily follow, however, that it was a monastic building.

It is possible that the building was erected after the Dissolution of the Abbey in 1538, but, if so, it would have had a life of only fifteen years, as the accounts of George Nycolls, one of the surveyors of the King's works under Edward VI, state that the walls of the south aisle were in process of 'felling' in 1553.

HUMPHREY WOODS

ARCHAEOLOGICAL NOTES FROM MAIDSTONE MUSEUM

AYLESFORD

In May, 1976, Mr. Baldock, of Wettern Bros. Quarry, informed the museum that a kiln had been uncovered by machines removing the overburden preparatory to quarrying and kindly gave permission for its examination and recording (N.G.R. TQ 72935949).¹ The oven and all the kiln structure above ground had disappeared and before the quarry reached its present limits the ground was farmland. The twin firing tunnels remained, a structure of brick 15 ft. long by 12 ft. wide, the outer walls and dividing wall 2 ft. thick, aligned roughly SW to NE. The stoking area was at the SW, but the entrance to the tunnels had been partly destroyed. Between the walls and spanning the tunnels were a series of brick arches, 9 in. wide, with a gap of 4 in. between each arch. All the bricks in the tunnels were covered with a thick glaze, varying from green to grey. The kiln produced the common peg roof-tiles and many of these remained, some badly distorted by over-firing. They measured 10 × 6 in. and had roughly made, circular peg-holes. The red bricks used for the construction of the kiln are hand-made, without frogs, and measured $8\frac{3}{4} \times 4\frac{1}{4} \times 2\frac{1}{4} \times 2\frac{1}{4}$ in., the standard size from the late eighteenth century to well into the nineteenth century.

¹ I am indebted to Mr. Baldock, for his permission to examine the kiln, and to our member Mr. R. M. Gurton, for his assistance in the work.

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BRABOURNE

A fine Neolithic polished flint axe was found (N.G.R. TR 10504122) in 1975 by Mr. A. Hills, of East Brabourne, and kindly given by him to the museum (Acc. no. 1.1976). Grey/white patina; length $8\frac{3}{16}$ in.; max. width $2\frac{3}{8}$ in.

BROADSTAIRS

In June, 1976, Mr. P. Back brought a bronze Romano-British brooch to the museum (Fig. 2, no. 5). It was found on a K.E.C. building site at the junction of King's Avenue and Lanthorn Road (N.G.R. TR 396689) in spoil which had been excavated from what appears to have been a well or deep pit. No pottery or other objects were found. The brooch is of the 'head-stud' type (Collingwood's Group Q), which ranges in date from the late-first until the end of the second century, though apparently commoner in the earlier part of this period. The top of the bow and the studs at the foot and above the spring were decorated with enamel, but this had decayed or was missing, apart from a tiny fragment of red in one of the diamond-shaped cells and of blue in an adjacent triangle. The spring and pin are of bronze, but traces of corroded iron are visible at the ends of the spring, which are presumably the remains of the wire head-loop common to this type of brooch (e.g. nos. 34-5 in *Richborough IV*, plate xxviii).

CLIFFE

The base of a chafing dish (Fig. 2, no. 4B), found in the alluvium by the jetty (N.G.R. TQ 706765) in August, 1976, was brought to the museum for identification by Mr. N. G. Browne. The thick, hollow base has a triangular opening and the bottom of the bowl has two slits cut through to the inside of the base. The ware is sandy and slightly gritted, with a grey core and buff-pink surfaces, and the inside of the bowl is covered with a green glaze.

By coincidence the cup-like container part from one of these unusual vessels, found on a building site at Gravesend (Fig. 2, no. 4A), had been brought to the museum in September, 1975. This was of red ware, the rim, inside of the neck and handle being glazed, in places with a bright green and elsewhere with a mottled green and orange glaze. Mr. Stephen Moorhouse, of the West Yorkshire Archaeological Unit, kindly identified the container and sent me drawings of two of the lower parts of these chafing dishes found in London. These are from the Surrey kilns and are dated by Mr. Moorhouse, on the grounds of their fabric and glaze, to the seventeenth century. Our examples, though of different wares, are

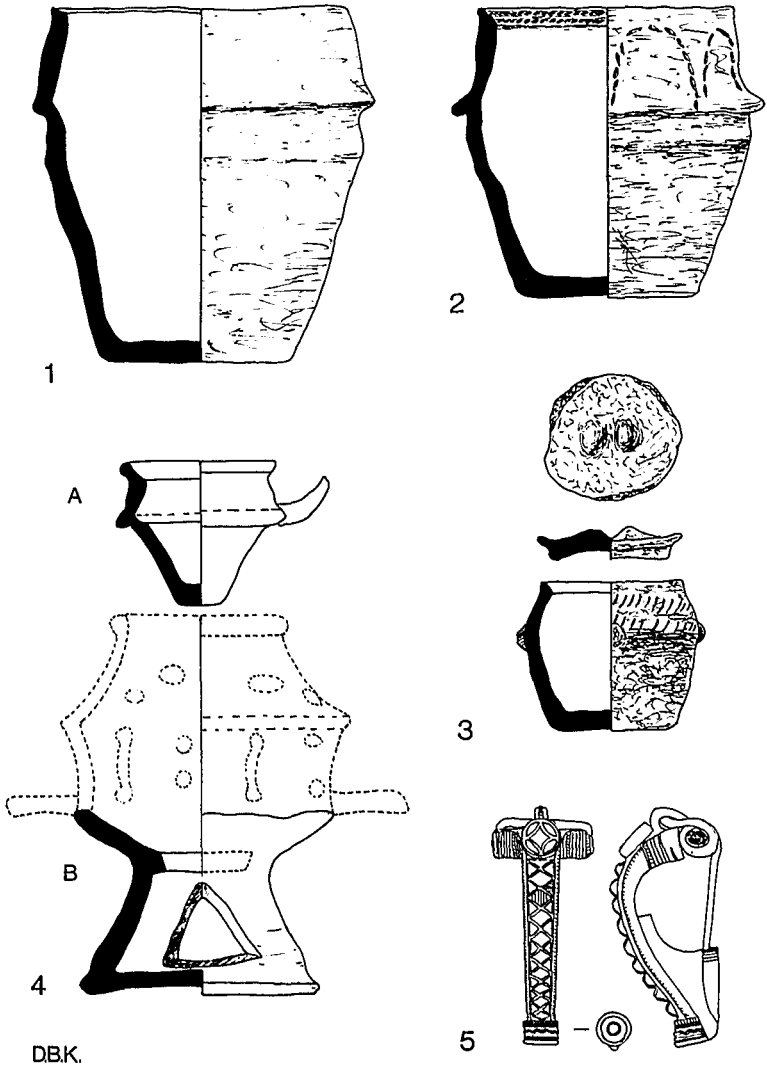


Fig. 2. Scale: $\frac{1}{4}$.

presumably of the same date. In the drawing shown here the lower vessel has been restored after one of the London examples.

HOLLINGBOURNE

In 1952, Mr. L. R. A. Grove published Beale Poste's account of his excavations at Whiteheath,² based on Poste's MSS. in Maidstone Museum. South of the site of the Hollingbourne Union Workhouse were two Bronze Age barrows, the northernmost destroyed by the building of the turnpike road (the present A2020), the other (Poste's B1) still visible as a rather spread-out mound on the south side of the road (N.G.R. TQ 820546). In 1842, Beale Poste watched the removal of sand from the southern barrow and obtained four Anglo-Saxon pots. In the following year, he excavated the barrow, finding three Early Bronze Age vessels and more material from the secondary Anglo-Saxon burials. Some of these finds, including the three Bronze Age pots, are illustrated, after Poste's drawings, in Mr. Grove's paper, but the whereabouts of the finds was then unknown.

By good fortune, in 1962, our member Mr. V. J. Newbury, of Hollingbourne, came across the Whiteheath finds at a sale of the residue of the Leeds Castle estate and purchased them. In 1975, he generously presented the three Early Bronze Age vessels to the museum (Acc. no. 35.1975).

1. Collared urn (Fig. 2, no. 1), undecorated. Buff colour externally, friable ware, slightly gritted. Diameter at rim: 6 in.; at collar base: $6\frac{3}{8}$ in.; height: 7 in.
2. Collared urn (Fig. 2, no. 3). The base and roughly one side of the urn remain. The collar is decorated with irregular arcs of cord ornament, of which four survive; there must originally have been eight arcs. The bevel inside the rim has two lines of cord ornament. The ware is friable, with some grits, has reddish brown surfaces and shows a black core at the breaks. Diameter at rim: 5 in.; at collar base: $6\frac{1}{4}$ in.; height: $5\frac{3}{4}$ in.
3. Accessory vessel with lid (Fig. 2, no. 3). A small biconical vessel with four handles set horizontally at the shoulder, all damaged. The handles were made by pushing a small stick vertically into the shoulder and forming a handle round it; the handle loops have become detached and are all missing. The neck is decorated with two lines of thumb-nail impressions, irregularly placed, so that in places the lower line is on the carination and careless overlapping has produced three lines. The lid, slightly damaged at the edge, has a single handle, like those on the vessel itself, and a flanged edge. The

² *Arch. Cant.*, lxx (1952), 160-6.

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ware is friable and slightly gritted; the dark, reddish brown surface is crackled all over and at breaks shows black. Diameter at rim: $2\frac{7}{8}$ in.; at carination: $3\frac{1}{2}$ in.; height: 3 in.

MAIDSTONE

(a) An *AE* coin of Constantine I (Cyzicus mint, R.I.C. 44) was dug up in his garden by Mr. S. Bell, of 158 Loose Road (N.G.R. TQ 765542). The find-spot is on the line of the Rochester—Hastings Roman road.

(b) The butt end of a narrow flint axe of the Neolithic period was dug up in the garden of 64 Broadoak Avenue by Mrs. S. Wilson, in July, 1976 (approx. N.G.R. TQ 763537).

PENSHURST

A Neolithic polished axe of grey flint, with a thick, white patina, was found by Mrs. Aisher (N.G.R. TQ 514412). Length $5\frac{3}{8}$ in.; max. width $2\frac{3}{8}$ in. cutting edge missing.

POSTLING

The rim sherd of a Belgic pot was found by Miss D. J. Smith in the garden of Vicarage Farm (N.G.R. TR 148387) when a new cess-pit was being dug. The rim is everted and its diameter 6 in. There is a single cordon at the junction of rim and neck and a single groove below the shoulder of the pot at its greatest diameter (7 in.). The pot is made of a hard ware with small grits, including some shell, and both surfaces of the grey fabric are a reddish brown/dark grey mottled colour. Judging by the high shoulder, the curve of the wall and the fine quality of the pot the sherd is probably from a pedestal urn.

D. B. KELLY

ARCHAEOLOGICAL NOTES FROM THE ROYAL MUSEUM, CANTERBURY

GOLD RING FROM DANE JOHN

A Viking period gold ring has been generously given to the Canterbury City Museums, by Mr. and Mrs. J. Hewitt, and is now exhibited in the Royal Museum. The donors purchased the ring at a Sotheby's sale in 1951 of the David Wachter collection. The catalogue entry¹ reads '128. An Ear- or Finger-ring of twisted thick gold wire, 1 in. diam., *Roman found near Dane John, Canterbury, 1893*. Brent, *op. cit.*, plate 5, 3'.

¹ 17th January, 1951, p. 17, item 128.

However, Brent, published in 1879,² gave no specific location other than Canterbury and noted that it was then in the collection of Mr. Trimmell. Brent's illustration corresponds in every respect to the ring donated.

Mrs. L. Webster, F.S.A., contributes the following note:

The gold ring is composed of four twisted strands of wire tapering towards the ends where they are beaten together into a narrow band (now parted in one place) which forms the back of the ring; its maximum diameter is 2·3 cm.

Such twisted wire rings, of gold, silver or bronze, are usually thought of as Viking and, indeed, the general type is widely distributed in Scandinavia and the areas of Viking activity from Russia to Ireland. At least thirteen gold examples are known from England, most from southern England, with a local concentration in Sussex and Hampshire.³ Few of these finds, however, at least in the west, come from datable contexts such as hoards, so that it is not easy to assign a close date to them. M. Stenberger, in his study of the numerous rich Viking period hoards from the Swedish island of Gotland, could cite only two coin-dated hoards from the island in which rings of this type were represented: one hoard datable to c. 1075 and the other, containing only one ring, which must have been an heirloom, to c. 1361.⁴ The few dated finds from the island of Oland and the mainland confirm this pattern, ranging from c. 1050 to the mid-fourteenth century. No rings of this type are known from Viking period graves in Sweden. These rings, and, indeed, most of the Swedish ones, are, however, of the simpler three-strand type; for coin-dating of four-strand versions, like the Canterbury ring, one must turn to English sources. A similar piece found with a plain gold ring with stamped circle decoration and coins of Edward the Confessor and William I at Soberton, Hants., was deposited c. 1068.⁵ This suggests a date of manufacture in the first half of the eleventh century, which accords reasonably well with Stenberger's central dating for the three-strand type of late eleventh to twelfth century.⁶ The Canterbury ring, which fits in well with the preponderantly southerly distribution of the English rings may, on this evidence, be dated to the first half or middle of the eleventh century.

² Brent, J., *Canterbury in the olden Time*, 2nd ed., 1879, 30, Pl. 5, no. 3.

³ In addition to the Canterbury ring and examples listed in H. Shetelig (ed.), *Viking Antiquities in Great Britain and Ireland, Part IV, Viking Antiquities in England*, Oslo, 1940, 29 ff., other rings of this type are known from Chichester, and from Slinfold, Sussex (Sotheby's sale of 26th October, 1971).

⁴ M. Stenberger, *Die Schatzfunde Gotlands der Wikingerzeit*, Vol. 1, Lund, 1947, 137-8. The two hoards in question are from Hejslunds, Ksp. Havdhem, and Amunde, Ksp. Burs., respectively.

⁵ Shetelig, *op. cit.* in n. 1, 29, and J. D. A. Thompson, *An Inventory of British Coin Hoards, A.D. 600-1500*, London, 1956, 125-6.

⁶ Stenberger, *op. cit.* in n. 2, 138.

BEAKER

A Beaker vessel, washed out of the present shore-line at Swalecliffe by high tide in October 1974, has been presented to the museum by the finder, Mr. G. Wilby, of Whitstable; the pot is currently being conserved at the Institute of Archaeology in London and will be shown in due course. The vessel, which is not quite complete, is decorated all over with horizontal rows of short, blunt incisions and with some vertical bands of longer slashes around the base; the surface is well gritted. Dimensions: 16 cm. high, 11 cm. maximum diameter at the rim, 15 cm. maximum circumference.

The late Dr. D. L. Clarke contributed the following note:

The beaker from Swalecliffe is a characteristic East Anglian beaker, to be dated c. 1800 B.C. The centre of distribution of this Beaker group is focussed in east Anglia and its littoral, but stretches in a significant way across the Thames estuary and along the coast of Kent and Sussex. By implication, it is clear that this Beaker group was to some extent interested in the coastal resources of this area and inter-communication must have been maintained by coastal canoe traffic. Several other finds of east Anglian beakers have been made from various parts of the Kent coast and its hinterland – Barham, Bromley, Dover, etc.

The location of the beaker find, *in situ* and complete at the foot of the Swalecliffe cliffs, just where the small stream opens out onto the Long Rock mussel beds, is very reminiscent of the Beaker settlement location at the Eastbourne cliffs in Sussex at Belle Tout. In fact, the local beaker strongly suggests a peripheral burial immediately adjacent to similar east Anglian Beaker settlement, exploiting the marine resources and the sand and mud flats, tidal ponds and mussel beds, the settlement thus following the earlier occupations of the same general area indicated by the Mesolithic pick and flints, the Neolithic working floors and the Late Bronze Age hoard.

K. G. H. REEDIE

EXCAVATIONS IN 1976 BY THE CANTERBURY
ARCHAEOLOGICAL TRUST

On the 1st April, 1976, I became the first director of a new Archaeological Trust set up to cover not only the City of Canterbury but also the surrounding new Government area, and on 24th September, 1976, a major appeal was launched to try to raise funds to allow a fully professional unit to be set up.

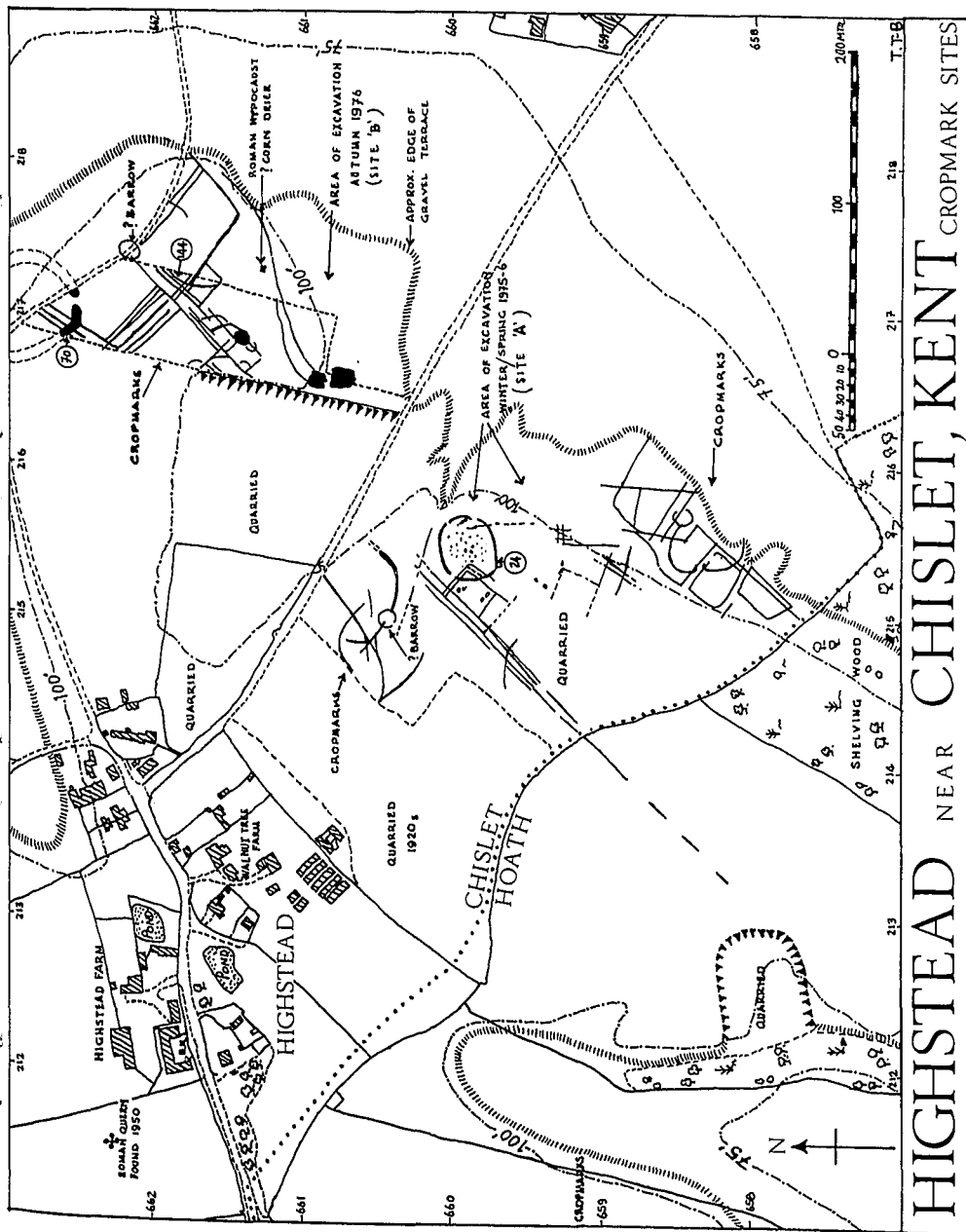
Apart from compiling a 'Sites and Monuments' record for the district, the Trust has undertaken three major rescue excavations during the year as well as observing and recording a whole series of smaller sites. The director has been setting up a system whereby all proposed redevelopment in the City and District can be ascertained very early on so that major excavations (where necessary) can be planned and carried out well in advance. In the Canterbury District, urban redevelopment and gravel extraction, and to a lesser extent by-pass construction, are the most important destroyers of archaeological sites at the present time, and it is here that we are concentrating our efforts. The following are some of the sites we have examined in the past year:

HIGHSTEAD, NEAR CHISLET

Two major areas of sites have been examined this year in advance of gravel extraction; they both lie on the 100-ft. terrace just east of Highstead village (Fig. 3). These gravel terraces, sandwiched between the Blean Forest to the west and the once open seaway of the Wantsum to the east, were occupied for very long periods of time, and it is only since the silting up of the Wantsum channel in late-medieval times that these hill-top settlements have shrunk. For example, Chislet village to the south is today far less populous than in the medieval period when the manor was one of the earliest and greater possessions of St. Augustine's Abbey. Highstead village, which still exists today with two farms and several houses, is no exception, and it is quite clear that this village is only the latest of settlements in well over 3,000 years that have stood on this hill-top terrace.

Before the present excavations began, indications of this earlier settlement had come from the discovery of two very fine Early Bronze Age beakers (now in the British Museum) and also a Romano-British quern just to the west of the village. In the early 1960s Professor J. K. St. Joseph flew over the area and photographed four extensive areas of crop-marks (Fig. 3), and during the summer of 1975 Mr. Frank Jenkins, M.A., F.S.A., excavated a Roman flint and brick-built structure containing a hypocaust. This was situated on the eastern side of the northern group of crop-marks and is perhaps a corn-drying oven.

Work started in September 1975 on the group of sites south-west of the Highstead to Boyden Gate road (Site 'A'), and we were able to excavate a small Early Iron Age enclosure and its overlying Roman ditches before the site was totally destroyed by gravel extraction early in 1976. The Iron Age enclosure had four entrances through its enclosing ditch (24) and inside were a series of pits. The pottery gives an approximate date of between the fifth and third centuries B.C. for this settlement. Overlying this enclosure was a series of straight early Roman



HIGHSTEAD NEAR CHISLET, KENT CROPMARK SITES

Fig. 3.

ditches, which delineated a Roman field system and a track of at least two phases. In the corner of one of these fields were three coffined inhumation burials, which contained first century A.D. pottery.

In late May 1976, part of the area north of the road was stripped of topsoil in advance of gravel extraction and work started on the second site (Site 'B'). This site, which was continuously excavated until November 1976, has produced a mass of pits, ditches, round huts, etc., and was clearly an area of dense settlement, particularly in the Iron Age. A large quantity of Iron Age pottery has been recovered and this will be of great importance to future Iron Age studies in north-east Kent. The earliest pottery so far is of the 'Minnis Bay' type and much of this comes from the 'mini-hillfort' ditch at the northern end of the site (70). Following the abandonment of the 'mini-hillfort' (and the filling-in of the ditch) large open areas of settlement of the Middle and later Iron Age were created, and this was followed by the cutting of long straight ditches (? field boundaries, etc.) of the Belgic, early and later Roman periods. The site has also produced isolated Neolithic and Mesolithic finds, and a possible barrow (seen as a crop-mark during the early summer of 1976) exists just beyond the limits of the present excavation.

Finally, a timber building with double lines of post-holes delineating its walls and a single doorway on one side has been excavated. This may be early Anglo-Saxon in date.

78-9 CASTLE STREET, CANTERBURY

During the first six months of 1976 large area excavations were undertaken at this site in central Canterbury in advance of redevelopment. This site was considered to be particularly important not only because of its proximity to Canterbury's Roman theatre, but also because it offered a large area of medieval street-frontage for excavation.

As expected the early part of the excavation allowed a sequence of medieval and post-medieval buildings and their associated pits to be examined, including some pits which were probably late-Saxon. Below this were found the remains of a large Roman street (Fig. 4), which had clearly been in use throughout the Romano-British period. Of great interest was the fact that this street appeared to be aligned on the rear wall of the theatre and not on the street-grid as postulated by Professor S. S. Frere. On the south-east side of the street were some large robber trenches, which must be in some way connected with the theatre, perhaps as a monumental entrance. Unfortunately, the key to this area lies under Castle Street. On the north-west side of this street was a timber gutter and pavement of the later Romano-British period and beyond this were two large parallel walls, which were much wider than those of ordinary domestic buildings. Excavation of this area in both trenches has

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now shown that these walls are the foundations of a colonnade facing north-westwards onto an open gravel-surfaced courtyard. Around the edge of the courtyard was probably a stone gutter and the level of the portico was raised above the courtyard level in the usual way. Although the area had been badly robbed, several marble architectural fragments, part of a bronze inscription, and parts of a fallen Corinthian capital in a Jurassic limestone were found, as well as some of the large flat sandstone

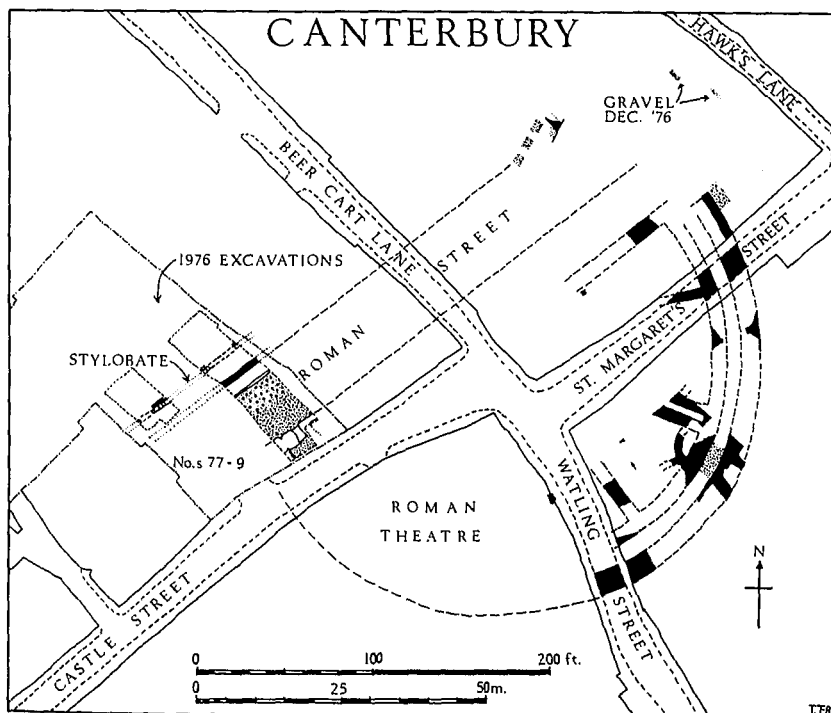


Fig. 4.

blocks *in situ*, which made up the stylobate. This colonnade may have been part of a monumental portico surrounding a temple next to the theatre, but clearly much more excavation is needed to understand this area in detail. The Corinthian capital fragments seem to have come from another monumental building. Overlying the destruction levels of the colonnade and courtyard were some rough floors and hearths with associated postholes and from these levels came much late Roman pottery and coins as well as some Anglo-Frisian pottery.

In the earliest levels on the site were excavated the probable remains

of pre-Roman huts. In the fill of the hollows where these huts stood was a mass of Belgic and early-Romano-British pottery as well as several 'potin' coins and a coin of Cunobelin associated with bronze slag.

CANTERBURY CASTLE

Large-scale excavations are now in progress in the area immediately north of the Norman Keep. This area of Canterbury, which is due to be redeveloped shortly, was very badly disturbed by the building of a Gas and Water Works in the nineteenth century, and excavations have shown that much of the upper levels has been destroyed. However, it was possible to locate for the first time the Castle ditch, which contained many fragments of the destroyed Keep (including Purbeck marble and Caen stone architectural blocks); these had presumably been thrown here in 1824 when there was an attempt made to demolish the Keep. The excavations have also found some very early Romano-British pits and a long straight ditch which had been recut at least twice. In the fill of the ditch was a very large quantity of Belgic pottery and early samian ware as well as an 'Aucissa' brooch and a corpse. It is possible that this may be one of the ditches of the Belgic *oppidum* which was filled in at the time of the Roman conquest.

As well as the Roman and Belgic material some pits of a late-Saxon date have been found. The pits, which were cut by the eleventh-century Castle ditch, contained 'Pingsdorf' ware as well as coarse cooking-pots.

THE PARADE, CANTERBURY

During G.P.O. trenching operations in April 1976, part of several walls and *opus signinum* floors and a tessellated pavement were found in the Parade at the bottom of Butchery Lane. The tessellated pavement, which had a central mosaic panel (Plate II), was clearly part of the west wing of the Roman courtyard building found by Professor S. S. Frere in 1946 south of Butchery Lane.

THE OLD PALACE, BEKESBOURNE

During November and December 1976 rescue excavations were carried out on the site of the archiepiscopal Palace at Bekesbourne. During the cutting of a modern main drainage trench, several wall foundations and a sixteenth-century brick-built sewer were encountered and partially destroyed. The brief excavations were undertaken first to clear the débris caused by the mechanical excavation of the trench, and secondly to see what sequence of buildings had existed in this part of the Palace and to obtain some dating evidence.

A small area excavation was therefore carried out and a sequence of medieval chalk and flint walls and post-medieval walls were discovered. As well as this, the brick drain (and some of its associated *garderobes*) was excavated and some stratified pottery groups were obtained. Two fine decorated lead objects and a jeton were also found in the destruction levels.

Our work will also include a full reassessment of the surviving gate-house and other buildings of the palace, as well as an examination of the documentary evidence, in conjunction with Mr. Andrew Butcher, of the University of Kent.

16 POUND LANE, CANTERBURY

Towards the end of January 1976, a small excavation was undertaken inside no. 16 Pound Lane before the concreting-in of the floors. This excavation was considered of great importance as it was thought likely that for the first time the relationship between the Romano-British and the medieval city walls could be examined in conjunction with the foundations of one of Canterbury's semi-circular towers; this was only possible because the west wall of the tower had been cut through and the city wall itself demolished. An excellent sequence was examined, despite the high water-table (7.4 m. A.O.D., at times).

The area beneath the nineteenth-century timber floor revealed the top of the curving medieval city wall outside the tower, to the west, and the Romano-British city wall inside it. The south wall of no. 16 Pound Lane is entirely a nineteenth-century re-building and sits directly on top of the demolished and much wider city wall (Fig. 5). Two very small trenches were cut between the city wall and the tower (outside and inside the western wall) and showed clearly the ground level associated with the building of the tower and the re-facing and widening of the city wall; this ground level is at +7.2 m. O.D. and above it is a layer of black silt, clearly the result of flooding, which is to be expected because the site is close to the Stour whose mean level near Canterbury is rising due to the relative rise in sea-level in the south-east. This rise in the mean level of the river can be seen very clearly in other parts of Canterbury: the thirteenth-century arch over the river at Greyfriars has water nearly up to the capitals; also, at the Westgate only the very top of the battered plinth is visible above the modern road level, and it is likely that this plinth carried on down a long way, as on the towers on the east side of the Cathedral precincts near the Queningate.

The semi-circular tower at no. 16 Pound Lane is just the same, and the excavations revealed the battered plinth, which is made of fine ashlar blocks of Kentish ragstone, carrying on down to a great depth and buried in later silt. The medieval ground level sloped down the furthest

away from the city wall, so the number of ashlar courses increases further round the tower; this was very clear in the excavation and can also be seen at all the other semi-circular towers in Canterbury which have battered plinths. These plinths allow the towers to extend out into the city ditch, without any risk of undermining. The upper part of the tower wall is over 1.3 m. (c. 4½ ft.) thick and made of flint on the outside and chalk blocks inside, while its core is filled with very strongly mortared chalk and flint (Section A–B, Fig. 6). Below the modern floor

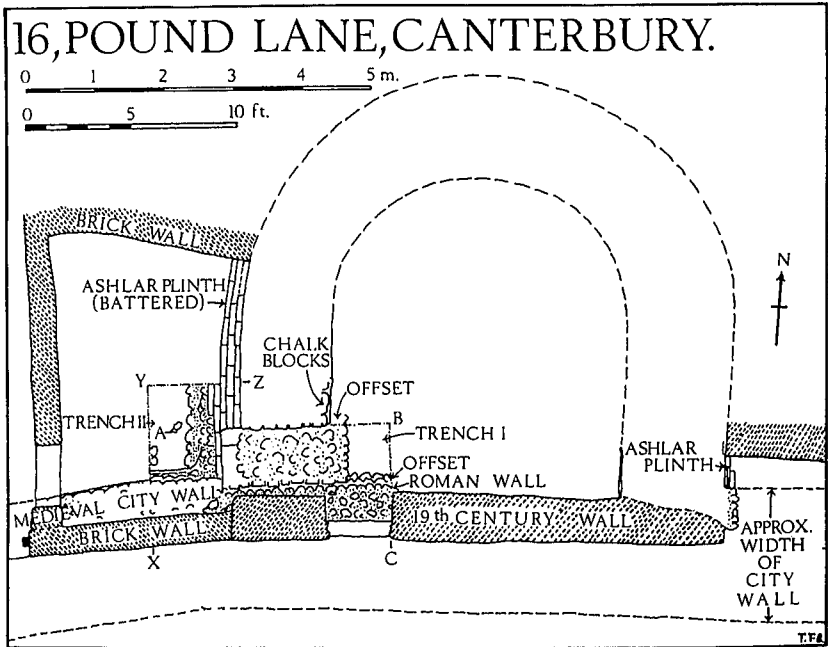


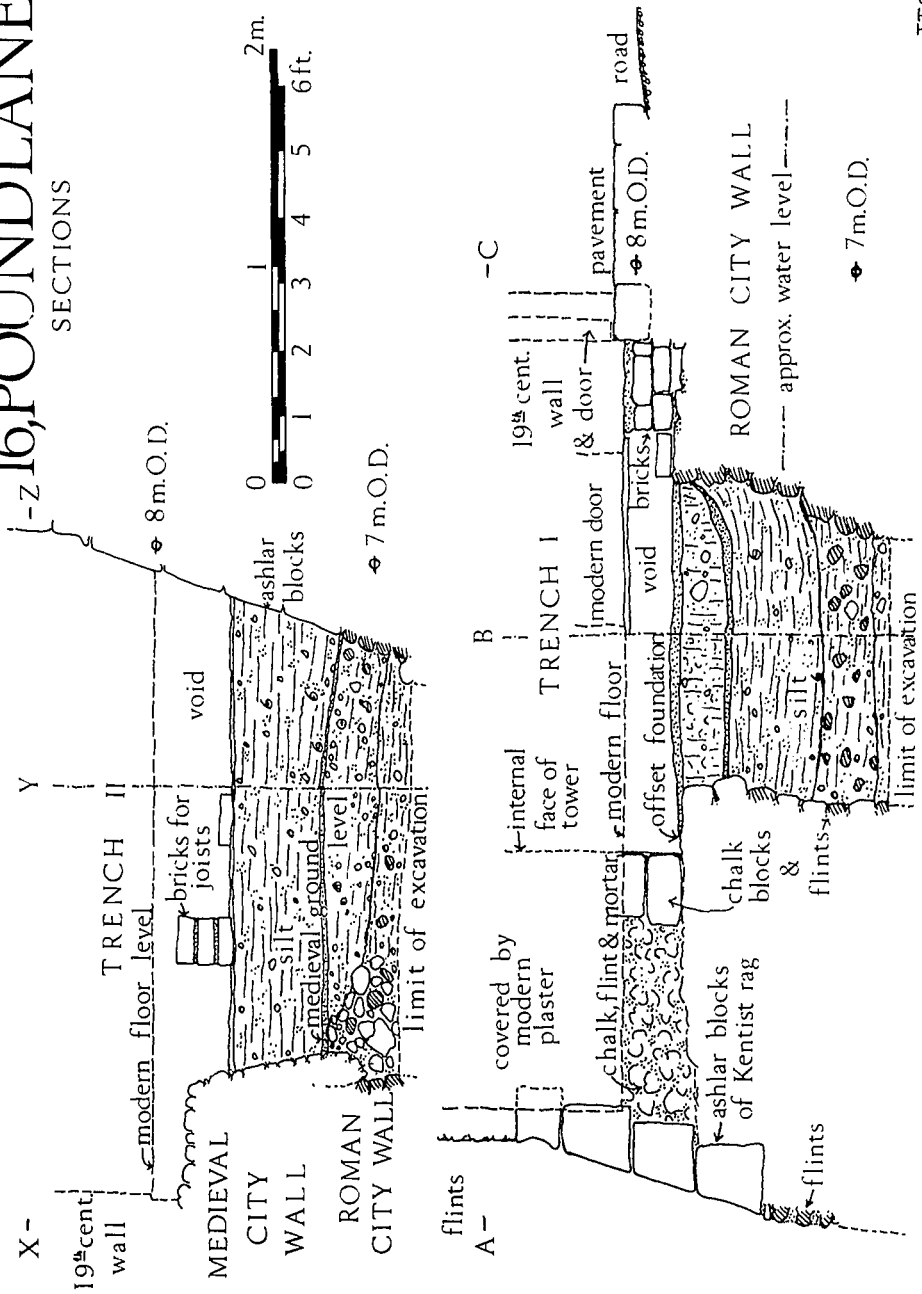
Fig. 5.

there was an offset on the inside of the foundations, making them nearly 2 m. (over 6 ft.) wide to prevent sapping by an enemy.

Below the layer of mortar, marking the medieval ground level, was more silt to an undetermined depth; no dating material was obtained from this lower level, so no archaeological date was possible for the tower and widened city wall. However, the West Gate and the 'longwall' to the north were being re-built after 1379 (perhaps under the direction of Henry Yevele, who also designed the nave of Canterbury Cathedral) and, because the present tower is architecturally very similar to the Westgate, it seems likely that it dates from the late fourteenth century

16, POUND LANE

SECTIONS



T.F.B

Fig. 6.

RESEARCHES AND DISCOVERIES IN KENT

when many Kent towns and castles were renewing their defences against an invasion by the French. The evidence of the excavation shows that the city wall running west from the tower is definitely a re-facing of the Romano–British wall and contemporary with the building of the semi-circular tower, as the mortar used is identical in both cases. It seems likely that the rectangular ‘Sudbury’ tower and the tower at no. 19 Pound Lane may be a little later, possibly fifteenth-century in date.

Only a small section of the Romano–British city wall, on the inside of the tower where it had not been re-faced, was examined; it was made of the characteristic courses of large flints found elsewhere along the circuit of the wall. A single Romano–British tile was found in the face of the wall and, lower down, an offset was visible (Section B–C, Fig. 6); in the post-Roman period, the face of the wall had been buried by silt and later the wall of the medieval tower was straight-jointed against it (Fig. 5). The base of the Romano–British city wall was not examined as it probably extended several metres down.

T. TATTON-BROWN

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PLATE I



Merovingian Buckle
(Scale: $\frac{1}{2}$)

PLATE II



Photo: Kentish Times

Mosaic found in the Parade, Canterbury, near the Junction with Butchery Lane.
(The scale is a foot rule.)