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# INVESTIGATIONS AND EXCAVATIONS DURING THE YEAR

## REPORTS FROM LOCAL SECRETARIES AND GROUPS

*Lower Medway Archaeological Group.* Mr D. Bacchus reports:

In 1983 with possible development of the east side of 'The Brook', Chatham, the Group sought and were granted permission to excavate. The area excavated (N.G.R. TQ 76166775) lies near to land where eleven Roman interments were discovered in March 1897 (*Arch. Cant.*, xxiii (1898), 14).

Six trial trenches were dug, revealing disturbance of the soil down to the natural chalk. Throughout the nineteenth century, pottery, pipes and animal bones had been dumped all over the area under excavation. Trial trench 2 revealed a pit dug into the chalk to a depth of 2.60 m., with an approximate diameter of 1.80 m. at the top tapering to 1.30 m. at the bottom. This pit had been filled with alternate layers of brown soil and layers of small chalk lumps. In the brown soil, pottery, glass, pipes, animal bones and oyster shells were recovered. The pottery and pipes dated from the late seventeenth to the mid-eighteenth century. It seems that, after a period of dumping, the rubbish layer was sealed with chalk and then the dumping continued. From the site five small value Georgian coins were found.

The Group participated throughout 1986 in the K.A.S. excavation at Rochester Northgate.

*Maidstone Area Archaeological Group.* Mr A.J. Daniels reports:

The Group, in conjunction with the Lower Medway Archaeological Group, were given in May the opportunity to carry out excavations into a structural failure at the Friend's Meeting House, Northgate, Rochester.

Three trenches were dug adjacent to the suspect walls of the house. The trenches were dug to a depth of 3 m., revealing the foundations of the building and a large number of medieval rubbish-pits.

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Excavations were continued on an adjacent vacant site on which a car park is due to be constructed. Three trenches, 3 m. sq., were dug as near to the principal road of the Roman town as possible. The trenches were dug down to natural brickearth, the top of which lay about 3 m. below ground level. The only structure encountered was a sixteenth-century kiln or oven, badly disturbed by rubbish-pits. The stratification was pierced by later rubbish-pits, but some Roman material was found in context.

*Sevenoaks Branch.* Mr J.A. Pyke reports:

A number of flint flakes and a round-edged scraper were recently found in the grounds of Yaldham Manor, Kemsing. Three were found when contractors were removing earth to rebuild a wall in the south-east corner of the manor gardens. The site lies close to the route of the trackway, which Margary suggested linked the North Downs ridgeway with Oldbury and the Tonbridge river crossing to the south.

The recent building of an extension to the south side of Chantry Cottage, Otford, revealed several ragstone walls at a depth of 90 cm. These appeared to be part of a conduit which ran under the cottage on a north—south alignment, from the direction of the village pond towards the Gate House of the Archbishop's Palace. The conduit was built of ragstone walls with a roof of chalk blocks, but there was no evidence of a lining to the floor. A report and drawings of this feature have been deposited in the archives of the Otford and District Historical Society.

### *Correction*

In the report by the Dartford District Archaeological Group, published in the last volume (*Arch. Cant.*, cii (1985), 275), the second sentence of the second paragraph should read as follows: 'From the state of preservation of the bones it was obvious that this burial was of much more recent date. An explanation for the strange inhumation was found in John Dunkin's *History and Antiquities of Dartford* published in 1844.'