RESEARCHES AND DISCOVERIES IN KENT

HOLOCENE ARCHAEOLOGY AT WANSUNT PIT, BEXLEY

Oxford Archaeology (then the Oxford Archaeological Unit) undertook an excavation in 2000 ahead of housing development at a site located south of Crayford and west of Dartford on the north side of Dartford Heath (NGR TQ 516 738). Wansunt Pit is a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) for its Quaternary geology, and the undisturbed character of its Palaeolithic horizons is well-known.¹ The English Heritage-funded excavation was aimed primarily at the archaeology located within these levels. This note is concerned with the Holocene deposits that were also encountered during the course of the investigation.

The area of excavation, some 25 x 3m, was divided into six units, each separated by a 1m wide baulk. A mechanical excavator was used to strip the soil from each unit to immediately above the top of the Pleistocene sequence. After recording the north-facing sections, the baulks were reduced to the same level. Subsequent excavation was by hand, involving the removal of 50mm spits.

A sequence of relatively fine-grained sediments dating from the medieval period onwards was exposed. This comprised topsoil, redepósited sand, subsoil and relict ploughsoil, followed by a layer of hillwash (colluvium). This in turn sealed two ditches or palaeochannels, neither of which yielded any finds. These features had been cut into a clean, fine and well-sorted sandy soil that formed the base of the Holocene sequence. This deposit, overlying an horizon rich in Palaeolithic artefacts, appears to have formed through low-energy fluvial or wind-borne processes.² However, its mixed artefactual assemblage, which included some ninety flint flakes, a sherd of late Iron Age grog-tempered pottery and thirteenth/fourteenth-century Mill Green ware, was worn, as if disturbed and redeposited through natural soil movement or agricultural processes. Wansunt Pit quarry became active during the first half of the twentieth century; a sandy deposit that underlies the topsoil represents redeposited quarry spoil.

The excavation suggests that no discernible human activity occurred directly at Wansunt Pit from the later prehistoric to post-medieval period. However, the artefactual evidence indicates that the surrounding area has
been the focus of intermittent occupation. The flint assemblage, totalling 123 pieces and including a leaf-shaped arrowhead, a discoidal core, and a levallois-style flake, is consistent with a Neolithic date. Given its size and typological range, the flint assemblage is likely to derive from an area of significant occupation. Neolithic material has already been attested in Crayford with the discovery of four stone axes.3 Recent investigations by Pre-Construct Archaeology revealed evidence for later Neolithic or early Bronze Age occupation nearby in Old Bexley Village.4 The presence of late Iron Age pottery is unsurprising, given that a contemporaneous settlement is known at Cold Blow, some 750m to the south-west of Wansunt Pit.5 The origins of the medieval and post-medieval pottery is uncertain, but appear be away from the immediate vicinity of the site. It may have been introduced through a combination of rubbish disposal, agricultural activity such as manuring, and natural soil movement.

Acknowledgements: The author is indebted to English Heritage for funding the fieldwork and post-exavation project, and Peter Allen for specialist advice. The project manager was Stuart Foreman. Information on the flintwork was provided by Hugo Lamdin-Whymark. Full stratigraphical and artefactual descriptions are deposited with the site archive at the Museum of London (Musuem code: WNT00).

EDWARD BIDDULPH

2 P. Allen, pers. comm.

RARE EARLY IRON-AGE BROOCH: RINGLEMERE FARM, WOODNESBOROUGH

A programme of field-walking and metal-detecting is being undertaken around the important Bronze Age round barrow recently discovered at Ringlemere Farm, Woodnesborough, near Sandwich (Parfitt 2003). This survey work has confirmed that a spread of prehistoric struck flints and calcined flints occurs across the entire area. There is also a light scatter
of late Roman coinage, together with occasional sherds of Iron Age and Roman pottery, and a few pieces of Roman tile. One of the most interesting finds so far made, however, is a rare early Iron-Age brooch, most probably imported from Gaul. This constitutes an important new find for Kent and belongs to a period otherwise poorly represented among the artefacts so far recovered from Ringlemere.

The brooch (site code, RFW-03-KF 360) was discovered by Mrs Ursula Murphy during a metal-detector survey of ploughed land about 200m to the north-east of the Bronze Age barrow mound, on the opposite side of the valley. NGR TR 2954 5704. It was discovered buried at a shallow depth with one end just protruding through the surface.

The brooch is of cast bronze and is in a generally good condition, although the pin and spring are missing. The brooch is 40mm in length with a high arched bow decorated by three broad, longitudinal grooves separated by narrow ridges. The bow is relatively thick at the centre with a marked taper towards both ends. At the lower end, a short foot housed the pin catch and then turned upward to an elaborate finial, terminating in a globular knob set above a neatly turned spool and bead motif. At the head end, the bow narrows to a flattened terminal, which is pierced by a circular hole, 2mm in diameter. This contains traces of iron relating to the now lost pin/spring.

This unusual brooch has been identified as a continental three-piece brooch of Hallstatt D2/D3 type, more usually found in eastern France. There are very few close parallels from Britain and there seems little doubt that the piece represents an import. The close proximity of the Ringlemere site to the former Wantsum Channel, which appears to have been an important waterway throughout the prehistoric period, is likely
to be significant and it seems quite possible that this brooch was brought to east Kent by some foreign settler or merchant trading along the shores of the Wantsum.

A more slender brooch with a similarly decorated foot terminal comes from St Paul’s Cray in west Kent but here the bow is of flat cross-section and the spring is integral (Hull and Hawkes 1987, plate 21, no. 2347). Closer in form to Ringlemere is a metal-detector find from Berkshire (noted in The Searcher no. 218, 31-2; photo 4). There are several French examples from the Champagne district contained within the Morel Collection of the British Museum (Stead and Rigby 1999, 55 and fig. 45). These have feet with simple globular knobs but other examples have rather more elaborate terminals. There are further examples from Mont Lassois (Joffroy 1960) and the Heuneburg (Mansfeld 1973). On the Continent a date range of c. 550-450 BC is normally given for this type of brooch.

Acknowledgements: The writer is most grateful to Ursula Murphy for initially reporting her discovery. Dr Ian Stead and Val Rigby provided the identification for this unfamiliar brooch type, whilst Dr J.D. Hill also commented on the piece. Jo Bacon kindly drew the brooch for publication. The find will shortly be deposited at the British Museum along with the main Ringlemere archive.

KEITH PARFITT


THE FOLKESTONE POTIN HOARD

The existence of a hoard of Iron Age potin coins supposedly found near Folkestone in the early 1980s has been known in numismatic circles for a number of years. However, details of this hoard have always been sketchy. Estimates of the number of coins in the hoard and their origin vary, with Haselgrove (1987, 279) stating that there were 64 coins, possibly of Central Gaulish origin, and van Arsdell (1989, 320) quoting ‘about 100-
300' coins belonging to the series which he named 'Thurrock Type' after the discovery near Thurrock, Essex of a large hoard containing as many as 2,000 coins of the same type in 1987.

The writer has now obtained a copy of a report on the hoard written by Mr Chris Bailey of the Kent Numismatic Society in 1980, shortly after its discovery. His report was never published and question marks about the hoard have remained unanswered since that time. In view of the importance of this find, it has been decided to publish Bailey's report now, taking into account significant advances in the study of Iron Age coinage in Kent since 1980. Further details have been provided by Bailey, whose report is as follows:

'A Hoard of Gallic Potin Coins
A scattered hoard of 67 potin coins, being cast copies of coins of Massilia (Marseilles) in southern France (original coins c.200 BC); circulating in east Kent about 100 BC.

The coins are all of one type:-
   Obverse: shows Apollo head left
   Reverse: shows bull butting right, MA over (Massilia)

All the 67 coins examined were from different coin casts, there being no linked specimens. Three of the pieces were from the bottom of the casting strip. The number of casts used would indicate casting on a large scale and infers that the pieces were imported and not locally produced.

The hoard appears to have been buried several metres from the hill top and was found scattered over an area of approximately 3m wide by 30m down the hillside. An accidental loss would surely have been recovered immediately. These potin coins are not to be confused with the Kentish potin coins of which these were probably forerunners.

[Examined 26 May 1980 by C.J. Bailey, Kent Numismatic Society]

The coins in the Folkestone hoard, which were mostly as cast with a shiny black finish, were discovered late in 1979 by a metal detector user. The findspot is at TR 2179 3818, roughly halfway down the steep south-facing slope of Round Hill above Holywell Coombe, approximately 10m to the north of the western entrance of the A20 road tunnel at an elevation of approximately 80m above OD. A trackway, believed to be prehistoric in origin, runs along the top of the North Downs escarpment immediately above the site. The present-day coastline lies some 3km to the southeast at East Wear Bay, which may have been the site of an Iron Age port (Keller 1988; Holman forthcoming).

The 67 coins were taken to the British Museum and subsequently returned to the finder some months later. The bulk of the hoard was then dispersed within the numismatic trade. It is possible that the hoard may
originally have been larger as other metal detector users are known to have visited the site after the discovery, which may account for the estimate of 100-300 coins by van Arsdell, although this is probably excessive.

At the time Bailey produced his report, few coins of this type were known from Britain and it was generally assumed that they were Gaulish imports owing to their similarity to the Massilian prototypes (e.g. Nash 1978). However, the discovery of several hundred further individual specimens across Kent over the last twenty years, mostly by metal detector users, makes it virtually certain that these coins were produced locally. They are probably the earliest coins produced in Britain, perhaps dating from as early as the middle of the second century BC and thus predating the Flat Linear series of potin coins classified by Allen (Allen 1971). The Thurrock hoard, the contents of which were mostly in an apparently uncirculated condition, adds weight to the conclusion that coins of this type are British, although this hoard remains unpublished. Analysis of several coins of this type has shown them to be cast from British metal (Northover 1992, 261-262).

Potin coins of van Arsdell’s ‘Thurrock Type’ are now the most commonly found type of Iron Age coin in Kent (Holman 2000, 206). Their distribution suggests an origin in the eastern part of the County and the writer has coined the term ‘Kentish Primary Series’ to more accurately reflect their origin. One prolific site at Worth has to date produced over 80 of these coins (Holman forthcoming). Gaulish imports are not uncommon finds in east Kent and some of the potin coins recorded may conceivably be imports as similar coins are known from the Vexin region to the north of Paris and in central France (Haselgrove 1995), but there is little doubt that the majority are British.

DAVID HOLMAN

Holman, D.J. (forthcoming), Iron Age Coinage and Settlement in East Kent.
The village of Sarre, three miles from the sea, was once a port. Travellers crossing the Wantsum Channel there reached Thanet and ships avoiding the North Foreland waited for the double tide. Its wealth is shown by a pagan Anglo-Saxon cemetery (TR 261/650) rich in wine jugs, jewels and gold coins, which probably belonged to civilians and army officers who collected revenue.¹ The continued value of these dues is shown by a charter of about 761, freeing the nuns of Minster-in-Thanet (who had a boat at Sarre) from shipping tolls.² The kings of Kent also had a court at Sarre.³

Though now a backwater (with an old coaching inn off the modern road), Sarre was once important. Yet its name has been obscure. Ekwall gives early forms ad Serrae and Seorre (761), Syrran in the Domesday Monachorum, Serra (1154 x 1189), and Serres (1204). He took it as an old river name, perhaps from the root in Latin serpo ‘I creep, I crawl’.⁴ Mills says merely ‘obscure in origin and meaning, but possibly an old pre-English name for the River Wantsum’.⁵ Professor Coates tries a fresh tack, relating it to a dual form (in -u) related to Welsh sarn ‘road, causeway’.⁶ This note modifies his conclusions in referring it to Welsh seri ‘paved road’, causeway’ (taken as cognate with sarn).⁷

Seri figures in early Welsh texts. In the seventh-century Gododdin (a series of laments for North British warriors wiped out in an attack on Catterick), the poet mourns the hero Cynon, sarff seri alon ‘serpent on the path of the enemy’.⁸ The thirteenth-century Black Book of Carmarthen refers to the ‘Three Plundered Horses of the Island of Britain’, including Bucheslum seri ‘Bucheslum of the highways’ (where the form seems a plural).⁹ seri also occurs on Welsh maps. Nant y seri ‘brook of the paved road’ (SO 02/23) is a glen south of Brecon. Cwmseri ‘paved-road valley’ (SN 66/78), mentioned by the medieval bard Dafydd ap Gwilym (but not marked on standard maps), is a dell east of Aberystwyth.¹⁰ Cae Sheri ‘causeway field’ occurs near Bangor and in Anglesey; Serior Goch ‘red causeways’ (SH 92/73) near Abergale has a plural suffix. Pensieri ‘causeway end’ (SH 33/72) is a farm on the Anglesey coast. The corrupt toponyms Sherry, Siri, and even Cicero also exist in Anglesey and Snowdonia.¹¹

These Welsh forms in ancient texts and modern toponymy offer a solution for Sarre. Books at hand say little of Sarre Wall’s early history. Margary just says ‘There was probably a ferry across the estuary where the Sarre Wall now runs’.¹² The eighth-century ad Serrae and (with vowel fracture) Seorre allow a derivation from the British form giving Welsh seri, the double r perhaps resulting from tense articulation of r in late British.¹³ As for other phonological points, we may note that if seri is related to the root sar- of sarn ‘road’, ad Serrae would show Old English i-affection (dated to about 600) and not Brittonic i-affection (dated to
(about 500). Both changes effectively raised preceding a to e, but a Brittonic sound-change can be ruled out on historical grounds.

This can be shown as follows. The British-Latin for Kent was *Cantium; yet Old English *Cantware ‘men of Kent’ (like *Reculf ‘Reculver’, with archaic u) does not show Brittonic i-mutation. This should be no surprise, as these names result from early borrowings by English (before 500). The vowel of *Kent is thus due to Old English i-affection, not Brittonic i-affection.14 Now, Sarre could hardly have been borrowed from British after 500, since Kent became English territory long before that. The e of ad Serrae, despite its resemblance to that of Welsh seri, would therefore be due to a change in English, not in Brittonic. As for the final vowel of Seorre and later instances, this can be explained by reduction in Old English of original i to a vaguer sound written as e.15

If the above reasoning is sound, and modern Sarre can be understood as from Late British *sari ‘paved road, causeway’, what conclusions does this leave? First, Coates’s explanation of Sarre as ‘road, causeway’ will be vindicated, though in different terms. Sarre can thus be added to places in Kent with a Celtic or part-Celtic name, like Thanet, somewhat shakily explained as ‘fire island’ (cf. Welsh tân ‘fire’), perhaps not from a beacon but from its white cliffs; Reculver ‘great promontory’ (cf. Welsh gylf ‘beak’); Richborough ‘mudflats stronghold’ (cf. Welsh rhwd ‘mud, filth’); Canterbury ‘stronghold of the territory holders’; and Dover ‘waters’ (cf. Welsh dwfr ‘water’).16

Second, it suggests the existence of a causeway at Sarre Wall in pre-English times. One would like to know if this accords with recent archaeological work there. If it does not, the reference may instead be to an ancient paved or hard surface at Sarre, useful for ships unloading cargo on a muddy shore (as also their passengers). Third, it points to fifth-century contacts between British and Germanic communities that included bilingualism. Fourth, Sarre’s possession of a royal court may in this context indicate a particular continuity between Celtic and Anglo-Saxon Kent. Witney, describing Sarre as the court of its laithe, notes the pagan English avoided Roman cities or fortresses for such locations. Though some of these sites were reoccupied on the coming of St Augustine, this was for ecclesiastical or trading purposes rather than as royal centres. Like the royal vills of Faversham, Wye, Kingston (Barham), Sturry, Eastry, and so on, Sarre was on a Roman road. Unlike them it has a British name. This implies closer links between Germanic occupier and displaced Celt on Thanet than one might expect.

In short, the Celtic name of Sarre is of interest for historians and archaeologists alike; not least in its implications for pre-English settlement on Thanet and continuity of population there in the fifth century.

ANDREW BREEZE 388
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3 K.P. Witney, *The Kingdom of Kent* (Chichester, 1982), 102, 111, 237.


9 *Geiriadur*, 3231.


15 Cf. A. Campbell, 153.

16 Coates and Breeze, 315.

A LIST OF THE INHABITANTS OF WEST MALLING, DECEMBER 1649

The listing below is written on a thick parchment strip 540mm long by 165mm wide tapering to 135mm. The document was part of the Phillips collection but has no Phillips number. Subsequently it was item A29 in the collection offered for sale by Christine Swift, bookseller of Egerton, and then item 82 in the Cobnar Books catalogue of August 1995. It was purchased by the Kent Archaeological Society for £250.00 on 28 September 1995.

*Dorse*: West Malling inhabitants

*A seduall of the inhabitance of West Mallinge the 7 daye of December 1649 from Mickellmas last past accordinge to an Acte of Parlament [in later hand] for raisinge the excise* £ s d

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alexander Chauncey gent[leman] his wife &amp; aunt &amp; 3 children &amp; 2 srearvantes</td>
<td>0 00 08</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John Turner clarke his wife and 3 children &amp; 7 borders &amp; 2 maide</td>
<td>0 01 00</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr Marchall clarke his wife &amp; one maide</td>
<td>0 0 04</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John Chapman gent[leman] his wife &amp; 3 children &amp; on[e] border &amp; on[e] maide</td>
<td>0 0 10</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Edward Weekly his gent[leman] his wife and 2 children &amp; on[e] maide</td>
<td>0 0 04</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>William Terry &amp; his wife &amp; maide</td>
<td>0 0 04</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The parish registers and parochial records of West Malling, sometimes called Town Malling, do not survive before 1698. Whilst the parish cards at the Centre for Kentish Studies show West Malling deeds before 1698 there would appear to be no listings for the seventeenth century. The 1664 Kent Hearth Tax for Town Malling shows approximately twice as many people paying tax.¹ A study of the names would suggest that some may be the same and others perhaps the wives and children mentioned

³⁹⁰
in the 1649 list. The Protestation Returns 1641/2 and the Contributions for Distressed Protestants in April 1642 have no surviving lists for West Malling.

The listing mentions George Tresse, gentleman. The will indexes for the Rochester Courts show someone of that name from this parish and Edward Hasted,² says, ‘Francis Tresse, gentleman of this town, who died in 1632,³ by his will gave a piece of land and 40£ towards building of a free school in this parish; and he charged one of his houses in Town Malling with the sum of 13s 4d per annum, for the keeping of it in repair; and appointed that four principal freeholders of this parish should be trustees for the execution of this part of his will’.

West Malling Abbey and its lands were in the hands of Sir Robert Brett when he died in 1620.⁴ Upon the death of Sir Robert, the manors and lands were granted by James I in 1621 to John Rayney, who lived at Wrotham Place and was in 1641 created a baronet of Nova Scotia.⁵ Hasted, says that his son John, who had confirmation of the lands 2 Charles I, conveyed the premises about the time of the Restoration to Isaac Honywood, of Hampsted.⁶

Many of the subsidies levied between 1642 and 1689 taxed both land and moveable property, the threshold of the former being £1 and the latter £3. However the listing above appears to have been compiled as a result of an Act of Parliament dated 14 August 1649 entitled ‘An Act for the speedy raising of moneys by way of New Impost or Excise’.⁷ The operative clause in this matter was XXXV; as this is such a long text only a fragment is given here:

> That all house-keepers, such as shall and will brew their own beer or ale, and do not sell or retail the same, shall duly pay the duty of Excise, in such manner as is hereafter directed ... [persons] to be assessors within every hundred or parish; which said persons shall have power to judge, rate and set down what they shall think fit and reasonable for every such householder ... to pay by way of a certain weekly rate for the consumption of his whole family in beer and ale, unto whose consideration it is left to judge what every such family doth or shall spend weekly by the barrel of strong or small beer and ale and to assess and tax, according to the proportion of excise set upon beer and ale ... with the name and quality of the master or mistress of every such family, and the number of persons within the same, and the place of every ones dwelling, and the sum of money at which every householder is rated to pay weekly shall be distinctly set down in writing and signed by the said assessors.

There were penalties for non payment, fraudulent returns and rewards of 2d. in the £ paid to High Constables of every hundred and borsholders within each division and clerks for making, writing and engrossing the assessments. The Act also provided that ‘no person taking alms
or collection shall be included within this assessment for any ale or beer that is or shall be brewed in their own houses and consumed by themselves and families within their own houses'. Hughes says that it was the difficulties of collection that was responsible for the removal of the excise on ale and beer brewed in private houses; this article of the Act was repealed 28 March 1650.8

Braddick points out that whilst there was some initial reluctance to raise revenue through excise duty on beer and ale the first parliamentary ordinance was passed in July 1643 and the king followed suit in December 1643.9 The range of commodities gradually increased and in January 1644 meat and salt became liable; the excise on foreign salt, for example, was 50 per cent higher than on the native product.10 The powers available to officers were considerable – they could examine payers on oath and enter cellars warehouses and shops – and, anticipating hostility, they were to enjoy indemnity.11 The excise on beer and ale actually proved the most productive of all the excises under the Protectorate and was continued in 1660.12 Moreover, these commodities had been singled out for special treatment long before the Civil War when 'to raise revenue on the vices of the people was most approved of by wise men'.13

DUNCAN HARRINGTON

4 For a description of his tomb in the church see A. W. Lawson and others, A history of the parish church of St Mary the Virgin West Malling, Kent (1904), pp. 50-55.
5 Anthony Cronk, A Short History of West Malling (1951), p. 15.
6 Cronk says this was Edward Honywood and then to his son Isaac.
8 Edward Hughes, Studies in Administration and Finance 1558-1825 (1934), p. 118-19; see also Firth and Rait, '...this article is repealed 28 March 1650 vide 17 Dec. 1651'.
10 The original rates on salt were as follows (a) foreign (including Scottish) 1d. per gallon; (b) native ½d.; refined salt (except imported Scottish) 2½d., refined Scottish 1¼d. and native ¾d. All salt used in the fishery was exempt.
12 Hughes, op. cit., p. 119.
13 Trade's Destruction is England's Ruin or Excise Decryed (1659).
In January 2002 a subsidence occurred in a field at Manston (TR 3348 6737). Mr Montgomery of Manston Road Farm kindly informed the Kent Underground Research Group who visited the site on Sunday 3rd February and conducted an examination of the feature before it was filled and made safe.

A roughly ovoid hole, 1.5m by 2.1m, gave access, via a sloping pile of debris, to a section of chalk tunnel 7.7m in length on a magnetic bearing of 310°. The passage was 1.4m wide and 2.1m high to the apex of a Norman Arch profile. The roof was 1.0m below the top of the chalk strata with 0.5m of overlying Clay-with-Flint deposit giving a cover of a mere 1.5m. It was impossible to determine if the tunnel continued beyond the area of subsidence, or if the subsidence had been the result of a shaft collapse, as the chalk and clay debris completely filled the passage at this point. Some limited excavation in order to bypass the blockage was undertaken until safety constraints made continued progress unwise.

The sides of the tunnel had been carefully trimmed by the excavators to minimise minor falls and flaking from the chalk which was found to be very friable and prone to crumbling. The passage ended in a vertical work face which had also been trimmed flat.

No artefacts of any kind were found at the time of the examination, although dates of 1751 and 1755 and the initials WI and WT were found carefully carved in the walls, the area being especially smoothed first. The carving and style of the dates and letters indicated that they are almost certainly genuine and were carved by either the excavator or someone shortly after extraction had ceased.

The tunnel had been dug to obtain chalk for agricultural purposes, i.e. as a top dressing in its raw state or burnt to produce lime, and was one of many such excavations in the Thanet area. A much more extensive set of chalk caves dug for this purpose existed to the south of the village and was known as the ‘Manston Caves’ and were a well known local attraction in the nineteenth century. They had been dug around 1760-70 to ‘procure chalk to mix with manure’ and they, too, had been excavated with very little roof cover so that by the 1830s the western galleries had fallen in. It is thought that any remnant of this chalk mine was destroyed during the Second World War when RAF Manston’s massive concrete emergency runway was constructed.

ROD LEGEAR