



Maidstone Area Archaeological Group



Established 1969
www.maag.btck.co.uk

Newsletter, May 2012

Dear Fellow Members

We are very pleased to report that Albert's operation to have a pacemaker fitted was successful, although he will need to recuperate for some weeks. Albert wishes to thank everyone for their good wishes.

Newsletters : This is the last newsletter before the Summer Break; if you have access to email and would like to be kept informed of events between now and the next newsletter and the meeting in September, and aren't already on my email circulation list, please let me know. The e-newsletter allows us to include extra information and photographs about some of the items that can only be mentioned briefly in print, though we do bring the full version to meetings.

Excavations : These have resumed at East Farleigh on Sundays only for the time being (until Albert is back in harness). For further details, see below.

Outings and Other MAAG Events : Details are provided overleaf.

Subscriptions : reminders were sent out with the March newsletter; if your subscription is still unpaid this will be indicated at the top of this page, and this could be your last newsletter unless you renew.

Linda

AGM Notes – Friday, 20th April 2012

The AGM was attended by 26 people. Membership stands at 113, with 14 new members and 19 who have defaulted or resigned.

The lead scroll, which had been found by Trevor Bent in Building 5 at East Farleigh, had been given to Dana Goodburn-Brown last year for conservation and deciphering. She had sent some photos, which indicate that there is some text on it. We are awaiting further updates from her once the experts at Oxford have applied their "polytextural photography" technique to the scroll.

Meetings: We'd had another very interesting year of meetings, with several themes.

Treasurer: We had a surplus of £501.47 for 2011/12, minus the sum set aside for the lead scroll but plus the Gift Aid that will be due from subscriptions and donations. David had transferred some funds into another account, so generating £70.68 interest; at least double what it would have been before the transfer. It was agreed that there was no justification for increasing subs yet; David said that we are a charity and shouldn't make a profit. We now have thirty people signed up to receive the e-newsletters which will save us a lot in postage (especially after the recent increase by Royal Mail!).

Mote Park: There had been no word from Maidstone Borough Council's Parks and Leisure Manager about the World War II features in Mote Park, despite several emails. **STOP PRESS**: Thanks to our intervention, the gun loops at the School Lane entrance have now been re-instated.

East Farleigh: It was decided that digging would re-commence on Sunday, 6th May.

Elections: There was no change to the Committee members or elected representatives.

Future Activities: We have been asked to present an exhibition on our East Farleigh dig in Maidstone Museum on the afternoon of Saturday, 21st July.

Mereworth Church have offered us an evening visit, which could be combined with a walk around the village.

The Battlefields Trust are holding walks around Maidstone; Richard read out the details.

Wessex Archaeology have offered to show us their new store in Rochester one Saturday; a day in Autumn was thought to be best.

Visit to Eynsford/Shoreham : 2pm Saturday, 30th June 2012

A visit to Shoreham Aircraft Museum at 13 High Street, Shoreham Village, near Sevenoaks, TN14 7TB (entry £3 for adults, under-16s free) has been arranged following Trevor Bardell's interesting talk in March. <http://www.shoreham-aircraft-museum.co.uk/find.htm> If you'd like to make a day of it, David Carder has agreed to guide us round Eynsford Castle (admission free) from 11.30am. Take the A225 to Eynsford village; 0.2 miles north of the church take a VERY narrow road opposite the Castle Inn, bear right and follow to the end, where there is a car park by the castle entrance. (TQ 541658). Alternatively, you could do your own thing and visit Lullingstone Roman Villa which is nearby (entry £6 for non-English Heritage members). Local pubs are available for lunch, or bring a picnic.

We do not plan to hold an open day at East Farleigh this year - unless we manage to uncover a mosaic or something! - but we have two opportunities to publicise the Group:

Olympics Celebrations at Barming : Saturday, 7th July 2012

We have been offered a display table at this event which will be held at St. Margaret's Church Parish Field, Church Lane, off South Street, Barming, ME16 9HA from noon until 5pm. Many activities are taking place and several local groups will be represented. <http://www.stmargaretsbarming.org.uk/>

MAAG Exhibition, Maidstone Museum: 10am-4pm Saturday, 21st July 2012

The KAS have asked us to present an exhibition about the Group and our East Farleigh dig in the new Education Room at Maidstone Museum as part of the Festival of British Archaeology.

Please come along to support the Group at these events,
and if you are able to help out on either or both of these days please let us know.

Digging News

Watching Briefs : In March, watching briefs were carried out at St. Lawrence's Church, Mereworth prior to the installation of a heating oil tank, and at Chiefglen K9 Training School, Boughton Monchelsea, Maidstone where a polytunnel was to be erected. In April, members of the Group excavated trial pits in a field adjacent to the cemetery at Hadlow, where Trevor Bent 'detected' an Elizabethan half groat coin.

East Farleigh : Excavations re-commenced on Sunday, 6th May with Steve Clifton in charge while Albert recuperates. Trenches have been started to trace the path of the boundary wall to the west of Building 5 and also to see whether anything remains in the way of footings, etc. of Building 4 (apart from the SW corner) and the NE corner of Building 2, both of which are SW of the 19th century revetment.

It is planned that midweek digging will re-commence once Albert is fully recovered (probably mid-June?) when we plan to hire a small excavator for a week in order to dig some trial pits to locate any further buildings. Further information will be given at the June meeting, by email and on our website.

Other News

Bigbury Hill Fort : There has been a programme of coppicing at Bigbury, near Canterbury, and the general lines of the hill fort are now much more evident - access can be gained via public footpaths etc. (Thanks to Clive Blackwood for this information.)

Future MAAG Meetings

We have been advised that Kent Police College will be raising their hire charges considerably from April 2013. We are investigating alternative venues and will be issuing the 2012/13 Programme Card with the September newsletter. For your information, the next meeting dates and speakers will be:

21st September - Andrew Clarke: Old Maidstone Firms, including Sharp's, Clarke's and Breweries

19th October - Paul Oldham: Elizabethan Maidstone

16th November - Members' Evening : **14th December** - Christmas Social

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EXTRA PAGES FOR E-NEWSLETTERS

Eynsford/Shoreham Visit:

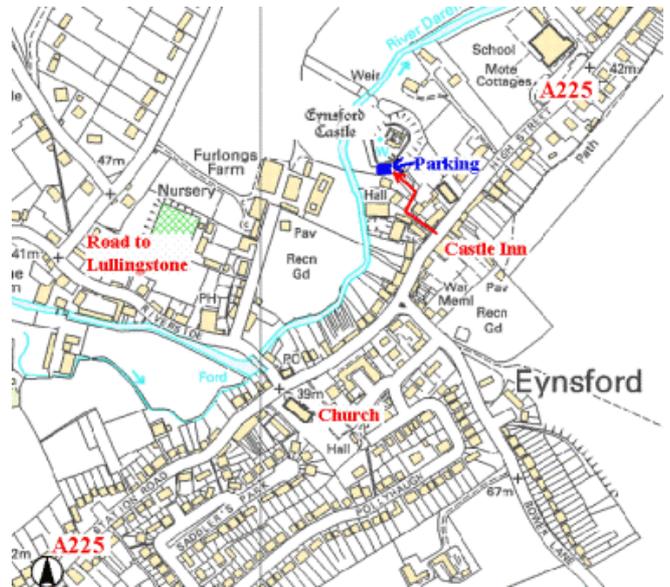
For those interested in the morning visit to Eynsford on Saturday, 30th June 2012 here is a map that David Carder has produced showing how to find the castle.

Take the A225 to Eynsford village; 0.2 miles north of the church take a VERY narrow road opposite the Castle Inn, bear right and follow to the end, where there is a car park by the castle entrance. (TQ 541658). Meet up at 11.30 am.

The map also shows the road leading to Lullingstone Roman villa. This is another English Heritage property but there is a £6 admission charge plus £2.50 for parking.

Details available at:

<http://www.english-heritage.org.uk/daysout/properties/lullingstone-roman-villa/>



Here is another of David's maps showing the location of the Shoreham Aircraft Museum where we will meet up at 2.00 pm.

From Eynsford travel S along the A225 for about 3 miles and turn right into Station Road (Shoreham Station). Follow this road (which changes into Church Street) for about ½ mile to reach Shoreham High Street.

Turn left into Filston Lane and you will find a car park about 100 yards on the left. Walk back to the junction with Church Street and the Museum is a further 75 yards along the High Street on the left.

There are at least two pubs in the village which serve lunch, both in Church Street - the Ye Olde George Inn (opposite the church) and the King's Arms.

Mote Park Gun Loops:

In late January it was noticed that in constructing a new pedestrian gateway from School Lane, as part of the Mote Park Regeneration Scheme, the WWII gun loops built into the wall had been partially destroyed. The gun loops are recorded as a monument in the KCC's Heritage Environment Record (No. TQ75SE145).

We immediately contacted Nick Yandle, the CEO of Gallagher Group, who stopped further work at once and informed the client, Maidstone Borough Council. After some months of inactivity, the entrance has now been repositioned and the gun loops re-instated.



28/01/2012



09/05/2012

The Lead Scroll found at East Farleigh:

The scroll was found in the late 4th Century building demolition layer, next to the wall at the west side of the NW Corner of Building 5. This building ended life as a kitchen/bakery/canteen. It may have started life in the mid-third century as something grander like a temple.

The scroll was handed over to Dana Goodburn-Brown for conservation. She recently sent us these preliminary photos:



As found, after cleaning and stabilisation



After unrolling, in Dana's words "very fragile, eek !!"

One of the smaller pieces has been viewed under a scanning electron microscope (SEM). This appears to show a letter "R" which hopefully means that there is a good chance of reading at least some of the inscription.

There is also a new photographic technique ("polytextural photography") which combines images taken with a variety of raking light which might produce good results.

Dana was meeting the lead scroll specialist at Oxford at the end of April to discuss this find. Further news when we have it...



East Farleigh excavation resumes:

Work resumed at East Farleigh on Sunday 6th May.

Here are a few pictures to prove that we have started (trench numbers refer to plan below)...



Trenches T2, T5 and T3 (in the foreground) to locate any remnant of Building 4

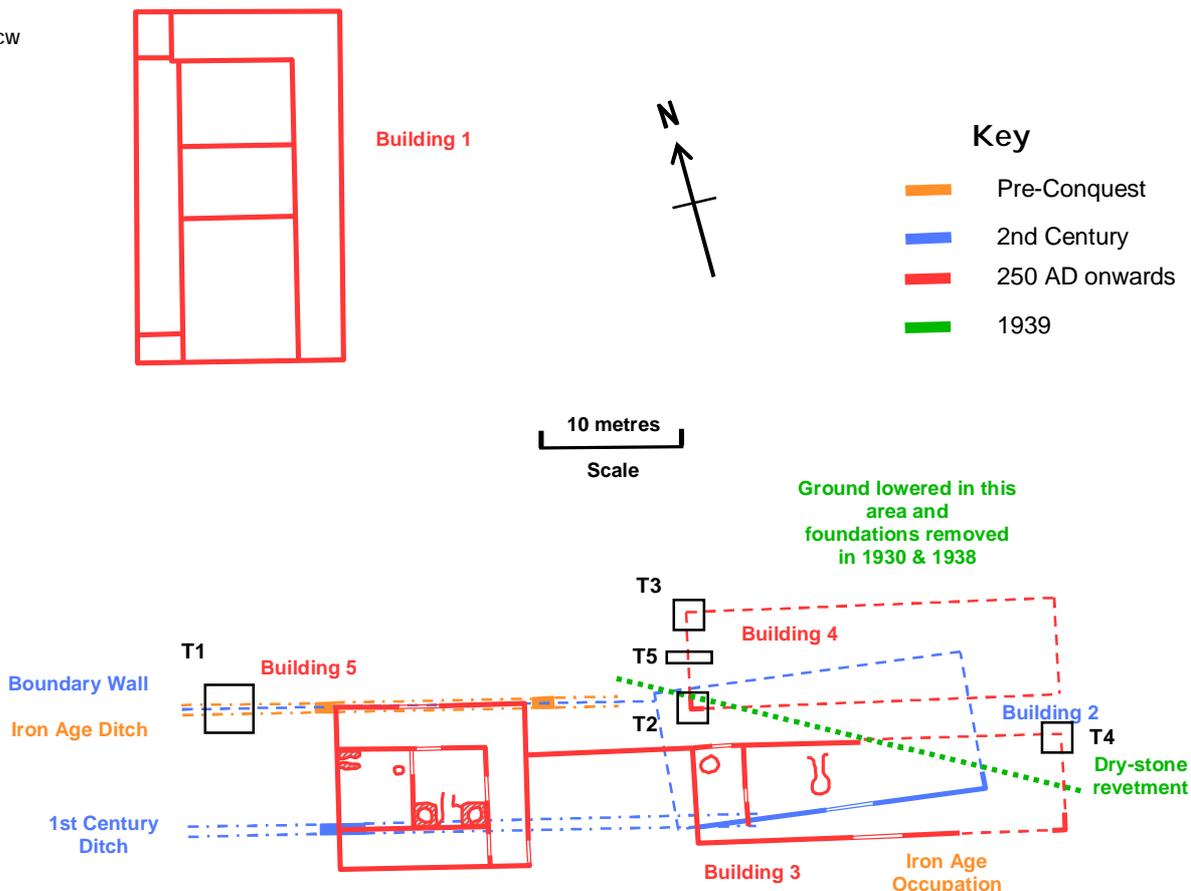


Trench T2 showing SW corner of building 4 with C20th stone revetment in foreground.

Here is a plan Albert has produced showing the presumed development of the site. I have added the location of our initial trenches (T1 to T5).

M
A 2012 A
G
RCW

East Farleigh Roman Buildings



Caption anyone?

Website News:

The Newsletter Archive pages have now been populated. All the newsletters we have - dating back to 1971 - have been uploaded as .pdf documents. For the first three decades, all the Newsletters are combined into one .pdf document; those from 2010 onwards are in individual .pdf documents.

There are probably a few missing from the early years, so if any of you were members back in the early 1970s and still have a copy of your Newsletters, we'd love to hear from you.