



# Maidstone Area Archaeological Group



Established 1969

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## Newsletter, September 2010

### Dear Fellow Members

Welcome back after our summer break - not that it's been a break from digging, as you'll see below. Please find enclosed with this newsletter a copy of our Rules and Programme Card.

*Linda*

### Special General Meeting

The Members' Meeting on Friday, 19th November 2010 will incorporate a short Special General Meeting to propose the following resolution - "that Mr. and Mrs. Baughan be elected Honorary Members of the Group". The Baughans are the owners of the land at East Farleigh on which our excavation has been taking place over the last few years and have been generous benefactors to the Group during that time.

### East Farleigh

#### Excavation : August Update

Excavations this year concentrated on Building 5, which ended its life as a kitchen. Construction appears to be early Third Century and its original use is still open to speculation. The building consists of two rooms lying east/west, each 4.5m square. These are surrounded on the north, east and south sides by a 2.3m wide corridor. Just inside the entrance between the two rooms is a mortar scar on the floor which indicates the position of a quern. A large greensand quern top stone broken into five pieces, and half of a second one, were scattered on the floor of this room. Also found was part of a millstone grit lower stone. The position of the quern is adjacent to where two pots were found built into the floor last year.

The northwest corner of the room contained a stoke hole-like hearth consisting of a fire channel between two rows of stone. This may have heated a cauldron placed over it. The walls of the room contained evidence of burning where small fires had been lit. Stake holes and daub indicated the position of a small 350mm diameter oven. Against the south wall a patched area of floor produced a possible hoard of 130 mid Fourth Century copper alloy coins ranging in size from 3mm to 15mm diameter. Fifty coins were 4mm in diameter, and these are believed to date from 350-365 AD. These coins are being studied by staff at the British Museum.

The east room produced a second oven, 700mm in diameter, located in the southeast corner opposite the 1.2 metre bread oven located last year. A common stoke hole for these ovens is under investigation. This stoke hole built into the floor has left the decayed mortared floor of the room covered in a sooty/ash deposit.

The corridor has a mortar floor on the north and east sides. The walls at the west end of the north corridor were plastered with a layer of op-sig on a base coat of yellow mortar. This had at some time been painted white. Nearby a small D-shaped alcove 600mm wide was located at floor level on the inner wall.

The external painted and decorated render previously located was proved to cover the whole of the outside of the west wall.

Excavations will continue until the beginning of October, when the site will be back filled.

#### Open Day

This was held on Sunday, 1st August. We had a record number of visitors - approximately 300 - and once again it was a great success. Our grateful thanks to all our stalwart volunteers who assisted on the day in every capacity; your help was much appreciated. Again we received some very generous donations, totalling £656.52, and attracted several new members - welcome to you all. Our thanks too for all those who can tick the 'Gift Aid' box on the form; our Treasurer said that we have received £342.94 from Gift Aided subscriptions covering the previous three years, so it all helps.

## Albert's Archaeological Roundup

**Shorne** The final two weeks of excavation this year will end on Sunday, 26th September. This year further work took place on the NE tower where ovens have been located; the kitchen area and the courtyard were also explored.

**Burham** The University of Birmingham has excavated part of the Neolithic causeway camp found at Burham.

**Lyminge** The University of Reading has spent 6 weeks excavating four mid-Saxon sunken featured buildings and two post built buildings. Notable finds include the first Sixth Century iron plough coulter ever located, and some lead loom weights.

**East Kent Road Link** Two Bronze Age gold bracelets almost 3,000 years old have been discovered by Oxford/Wessex archaeologists during excavations along the route of the East Kent Access Road. This excavation has now been completed; see <http://eastkent.owarch.co.uk/> for details. If you do not have access to the internet, please ask me for further information.

**Folkestone A Town Unearthed** This project has now started. Excavation of the East Wear Bay Roman Villa will take place during September (Visits at any time).

**Maidstone** A watching brief by Archaeology South- East has taken place on the site of a new science block at Barton Road Grammar School.

## Other Archaeological News

**BBC News, 7th July** : Researchers have discovered stone tools in Happisburgh, Norfolk, that suggest that early humans arrived in Britain nearly a million years ago - or even earlier. The find, published in the journal Nature, pushes back the arrival of the first humans in what is now the UK by several hundred thousand years. There are no early human remains, but the researchers speculate that the most likely species was *Homo antecessor*, more commonly known as "Pioneer Man". The research was led by Dr Nick Ashton of the British Museum, London, as part of the Ancient Human Occupation of Britain (AHOB) project.

**BBC News, 2nd September** : A metal detecting enthusiast has found what is believed to be the only intact Roman lantern made out of bronze ever discovered in Britain in field near Sudbury, Suffolk. It is now on display in Ipswich Museum.

## Maidstone Museum Events

**Talk : Thursday, 14th October from 7.30pm - 9.00pm** : "Maidstone in the Battle of Britain". Local author Tony Webb gives an account of life in Maidstone when the skies above Kent were filled with warring aircraft. Suitable for 16years+. Tickets £3 each (Friends of Maidstone Museum £1.50) Booking is advisable; please call 01622-602838 to reserve a place.

**Seashells, Seashells... : 6th July 2010 - 9th January 2011 (River Safari Gallery)**

An exhibition exploring shells, fossils and natural history curiosities collected from all around the world by Robert Damon, an eminent Victorian Geologist, collector and dealer in natural objects.

**Textile Treasures : Until 9th January 2011 (Costume Gallery)**

An opportunity to see a selection of samplers and textiles from the Museum's collections, dating from the 17th Century to the 19th Century.

**Coming soon...**

An exciting exhibition exploring Crime and Investigation, in partnership with Kent Police.

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