Canterbury city sites: Excavation, watching brief and building recording projects discussed in this year’s report.

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During August and September 1993 a series of evaluation trenches was cut in open ground presently used as a car park on the corner of Northgate street and Kingsmead Road. The work was commissioned by Canterbury City Council in order to assess the archaeological potential of the site prior to its sale for redevelopment.

A total of eight trenches, located against the site frontage and to the site rear (A–H on the accompanying plan), were opened by machine and excavated by hand to the uppermost archaeological horizon. An underlying stratum of orange brown brickearth was located in all trenches and in each case was covered by an accumulation of soil approaching an average depth of 1.50 m. The soil sequence across the site was fairly uniform and comprised garden loams in the trenches to the rear, with traces of a sequence of buildings in trenches closest to the Northgate frontage.

The earliest feature recorded in Trench E against Northgate street was a substantial ditch, recut on more than one occasion. It yielded second and third century pottery and was probably the remains of a side drain for the Roman road which ran from the North Gate of Canterbury to the Saxon Shore fort at Reculver. No other evidence for Roman occupation was recovered during the evaluation. No trace was seen of the Roman cemetery thought likely to exist adjacent to the street beyond the town’s defences.

Trenches A, E and F (those closest to Northgate) all yielded remains of buildings which appeared to be of thirteenth century date. Building remains comprised fragments of chalk and flint dwarf walls which once supported timber framing. The buildings had internal floors of beaten earth and clay. Patches of burning observed on the floors indicated hearths, which in every case were outside the excavated area.

Pits located in trenches towards the rear of the site (G and H) may, on ceramic evidence, be associated with road frontage buildings. A large V shaped ditch located in Trench H was taken to represent an early boundary defining the rear of the property plots.

A gravel metalling which sealed a pit containing twelfth century pottery, located at the south east end of Trench A, was thought to mark the verge of early medieval Northgate street.

The thirteenth century structures in Trenches A, E and F had probably been demolished by the fifteenth century. Overlying loams suggested a protracted period of abandonment up to the late fifteenth century. The first sign of renewed activity in the area was observed in Trench E in the form of a building dating to the fifteenth century erected against the street. Constructed on flint and mortar dwarf walls, it appeared to have been a two roomed timber framed structure. A well defined sequence of clay floors indicated the building may have continued in use until it was replaced in the nineteenth century by a brick built cottage, part of a row shown on the first edition Ordnance Survey. One interesting discovery in the upper sequence of floors was an intact seventeenth century stoneware bottle which contained eight bent iron nails and a broken copper alloy pin. This discovery has been interpreted as a ‘witch bottle’, perhaps deliberately buried beneath the floor to ward off evil spirits. A report on this discovery appears below.

The only other building activity recorded was in Trench A where a metalled sequence for a yard or thoroughfare set well back from the street frontage was found. This may date to the eighteenth century and be connected with establishment of the smithy shown on the first edition Ordnance Survey for 1874.

Also shown on the survey is a flint wall, the remains of which were recorded in Trench H on the same alignment as the earlier boundary ditch. This discovery illustrates a phenomenon often seen in Canterbury, where early medieval property boundaries become fossilised in the later topography of the city.

By the nineteenth century the area was heavily developed with artisan’s dwellings, a smithy yard and a public house. By then Northgate Place, lined by two terraces of small houses, had been built and in 1890 the Canterbury Corporation Municipal Electricity Works was established to the north east of the area. These works were amongst the first of their kind in the county of Kent.

Most of the buildings in the development zone, save for an isolated row of cottages fronting Northgate were swept away in the 1960s during slum clearance after which the area became a car park.
2 Greyfriars Gate
Paul Bennett and Rupert Austin

Plan of Greyfriars based on first edition Ordnance Survey for 1874.
An unusual campaign of work was undertaken by the Trust for the Dean and Chapter of Canterbury Cathedral between November 1993 and March 1994. Our work here took the form of a three phase operation to record and assist with the stabilisation of a post Dissolution period gateway at Greyfriars, located on the northern bank of the Stour a short way north east of the surviving Greyfriars refectory. Although the Trust was to have provided only a survey of the gateway to assist with repair work, in the event all works were undertaken by members of Trust staff other than sub surface stabilisation of gateway fabric for which specialist contractors were employed. The team was led by Mr John Boulden who had been engaged on the conversion and restoration of our premises at 92A Broad Street. John had recently left our employ to take up a post with the Cathedral’s conservation team and the Greyfriars Gate project was his first major undertaking for the Dean and Chapter. John was assisted by Mr Alan Pope, a seasoned member of staff. For Alan this project represented his last for the Trust before retirement.

Canterbury Greyfriars was established on a small island north of the Great Stour opposite the grounds of the Poor Priests’ Hospital. Initially the island (Binnewith island), formerly the garden of the Poor Priests, may have contained the early houses of the friars together with a small cemetery. By 1267 the friars had acquired land to the north of the island and it was here that the conventual buildings were constructed. This larger northern annexe was surrounded by a drainage dyke effectively forming a second island. Friary buildings, which were in the southern half of this new area, comprised at least the friary church, a bell tower, dormitory and refectory. Other buildings almost certainly existed and the disposition of the known principal ranges, set at right angles to one another, would suggest an irregular, but claustral, layout.

Access to the southern island was by a ford adjacent to the Poor Priests’ Hospital at the end of Water Lane – a continuation of Beer Cart Lane and Watling Street. Prior to the establishment of Greyfriars this was one of the main routes through the city giving onto the London road. The southern island may have been used as an outer service court from the late thirteenth century and other buildings may have been constructed here. Evaluation trenching on the island prior to the construction of a new bridge and riverside walk in 1988 revealed the footings of a post medieval building set immediately north of the Water Lane ford (Canterbury’s Archaeology 1988–89, 5–7) together with rough metallings laid for a track continuing the line of Water Lane across the island. As other points of access to Greyfriars were pedestrian, a service court to the south approached by the ford seems to be a logical interpretation.
However, no trace of medieval buildings for such a service court has yet been found.

The islands were also connected to Stour Street by at least two bridges further north. One arch forming part of the northernmost bridge, built in 1309, still survives and has been the subject of a recent photographic survey by the Trust prior to proposed refurbishment and repair. The original bridge was provided with two arches, one broad and one narrow. The broad span, formed to allow for the passage of boats, was taken down in 1589 and was rebuilt probably in the eighteenth century.

Access to the northern island from St Peter’s Street was afforded by a passage which approached the north door of Greyfriars church. The position of the north door almost certainly marked a separation between the nave and chancel of the church. That the passage continued as a ‘walking place’ or through passage, physically separating nave and chancel is also likely. North of the church and west of the passage was the lay cemetery. A number of burials associated with the cemetery were located during evaluation trenching in the grounds of St Peter’s Methodist School in 1990 (Canterbury’s Archaeology 1989–90, 8–11).

In its final form Canterbury Greyfriars covered a substantial part of the south western quarter of the walled city. In addition to the two islands, extensive parcels of land were acquired to the north west and south west, forming a large outer precinct which is likely to have been used almost exclusively for horticulture and orchards.

The Canterbury Greyfriars were eventually suppressed by Henry VIII and their holdings surrendered to the crown in 1538. The property was first let to Thomas Spylman in February 1539 and sold to him in July the same year. In 1544 the property was sold to Thomas Rolf and details of the sale indicate that at that time it comprised ‘two messuages, two orchards, two gardens, three acres of [arable] land, ten acres of meadow and four acres of pasture in the parishes of St Peter, St Mildred and St Margaret’. Rolf reduced the width of Greyfriars Passage and subdivided the estate during his period of ownership, eventually selling off substantial parcels to William Lovelace and others in 1565–6. The reduction in passage width was achieved by the construction of flanking walls of dry bonded masonry taken from demolished buildings within Greyfriars. It is quite likely that Greyfriars church was taken down soon after 1544; passage masonry may have derived from the church. Sections of passage walling still survive though dilapidated and in places in peril of collapse. The passage itself was closed about ten years ago and is now much overgrown.

The bulk of the property remained in the hands of the Lovelace family until 1629. The 1640 coloured map of Canterbury clearly shows that much of the south western part of the northern precinct...
had been separated from the original holding by that time. The core of the former establishment, however, comprising both islands and the north western part of the outer precinct appear to form one property. Two large and a number of small buildings are shown in the south western corner of the northern island. The ground formerly covered by the church and land either side of Greyfriars Passage are depicted as elaborate gardens. Orchards are shown covering the southern island and the north western part of the former precinct. Much of this arrangement, which is reflected in the details of sale of 1544, may have remained intact until the mid nineteenth century.

The surviving gateway and associated garden walls almost certainly relate to the post Dissolution history of the site and may have been built by the Lovelace family. Although later brickwork is present together with a number of recent garden features formed in the wall, the gate and wall brickwork are contemporary with bricks of identical size and
Fieldwork: Canterbury City Sites

comparable bonding mortars. The door jambs of Kentish Ragstone are of fifteenth century date and are clearly re-used. The garden wall, extending parallel to the river, is undoubtedly that shown in the 1640 survey defining the south side of the elaborate garden. The gateway also shown in the survey gives onto the principal residence south west of the garden.

Consolidation works undertaken by the Trust comprised the repointing of surviving gate fabric and the cutting of trenches to allow for the construction of subsurface ground anchors to stabilise the structure. Trenches cut either side of the gateway and north of the adjoining garden wall, revealed the well preserved and substantial foundations of a previous building upon which the gateway and garden walls had been formed. The gateway in particular was found to have been constructed only partially over earlier fabric and unequal loadings of gate fabric over substantial buried masonry was considered to be the principal cause of subsidence.

Following removal of recent garden loams and rubble the trenches were cut to a maximum depth of 1 m. below the contemporary ground surface. The north eastern jamb of the gateway was found to sit on the south east corner of an earlier building. The foundations of this early structure were massively built in chalk and flint rubble externally dressed with good quality Caen ashlar and flintwork. The walls, 0.85 m. wide, were battered and provided with contemporary 1.02 m. long corner buttresses. The buttresses were externally faced with at least four courses of Caen ashlar forming two offsets each dressed with a 45° chamfer. The internal corner was provided with quoins of Caen merging with a battered face of knapped flintwork, resting upon an offset foundation of rubble chalk blockwork. All trenches contained only recent fills; internal floors or more ancient horizons were not in evidence. Quantities of china and bottle glass recovered from the excavated soils clearly indicated recent disturbance and it is considered likely that the walls may have been uncovered during earthworks associated with the renovation of the nearby refectory building in 1920.

The masonry for a building aligned north west to south east almost certainly formed the south east corner of Greyfriars church. The location of this exceptionally well built fragment of the church, together with masonry fossilised in the surviving walls of Greyfriars Passage (Annual Report 1981–82, 35 ) allows for the first time an accurate plotting of the chancel of the church, and represents an important addition to our knowledge of this little known establishment.

Abutting the south east buttress was a separate and later 0.50 m. wide foundation of mortared flintwork, which had probably supported a boundary wall closing the gap between the east end of the church and the river. Aligned roughly north north west by south south east, it extended to the river and from there returned to the south west parallel to the stream. It continued to the south west to form an early riverside wall which was taken up above contemporary ground level. A fragment of this upstanding riverside wall survived in the gate (section D–D). The internal face of the wall was also exposed during gate repair (section A–A). The riverside wall was later relaced with ashlaired Kentish Ragstone (section D–D).

On completion of the trenching, specialist contractors were employed to bore holes carefully through the early fabric to install horizontal and vertical metal ground anchors to support the overlying gateway. The standing fabric of the gateway was then repointed, stitched and repaired by John Boulden and Alan Pope.

Our thanks are extended to the Dean and Chapter of Canterbury Cathedral and English Heritage who jointly funded the archaeological work. We would also wish to extend our best wishes to John Boulden for his future employment with the Dean and Chapter and to Alan Pope for a long and happy retirement.
In April 1994 an archaeological evaluation of part of the Adelaide Place frontage of St James’s Car Park was undertaken prior to an application being made to Canterbury City Council for redevelopment of the site. The evaluation took the form of a single machine excavated north south aligned trench cut across the eastern end of the footprint of the proposed new building.

The temple precinct of the Roman town is known to lie immediately north of Adelaide Place. Past excavations in the area have uncovered courtyard metallings, parts of a covered walkway (portico) and a small associated shrine (Bennett 1976, 238–40). The proposed development lies over the extended line of the portico, a structure which is known to have had a substantial masonry temenos wall and a stylobate of large blockwork supporting a colonnade. The line of Roman Watling Street also crosses the area. Other interesting post Roman archaeological discoveries have been made in the vicinity, perhaps the most intriguing being a fifth century multiple burial containing both Roman and Anglo Saxon artefacts which was discovered in 1980 (Bennett 1980, 406–10).

In the event the only Roman remains identified during the evaluation were the rammed gravel metallings of Roman Watling Street. These were observed in the sides of a fourteenth century rubbish pit excavated at the base of the evaluation trench. The surface of the street was located 2.95 m. below existing; the full depth of the road was not established and natural brickearth was not encountered.

The road metalling was covered by a layer of dark loam, a soil which accumulated during the late Roman and early post Roman period, possibly during a period of abandonment. Above this deposit was a thick layer of loose textured brown loam which may have accumulated over a considerable period as a result of horticultural activity within the back gardens of adjacent street frontage properties.

At the south west end of the trench a chalk block wall, surviving to a height of 0.53 m., overlay the agricultural soil. Forming part of a building underlying Adelaide Place, the wall was associated with a series of courtyard layers to the north. Wall and courtyard were sealed by a demolition deposit of chalk and flint rubble. The building, probably constructed in the fourteenth century, and set some way from the contemporary street frontage may well have been a service structure, possibly a detached kitchen.

Capping demolition deposits was a further layer of agricultural loam. Cartographical surveys dating from the mid sixteenth century indicate that the block of land flanked by Castle Street, Stour Street and Hospital Lane contained large gardens behind road frontage properties. Indeed by 1640 many of the individual gardens may have been combined

Location plan showing the Adelaide Place and Hospital Lane sites together with known Roman streets and public buildings.
into one large open area, a situation which appears to have prevailed until the mid nineteenth century. The loam may therefore relate to this period when much of the area north of Adelaide Place was open ground.

Development of the open area may not have occurred until the late eighteenth century, perhaps soon after the formation of Adelaide Place as a lane connecting Castle Street and Stour Street. Adelaide Place was never officially adopted or paved, and survives today as an unregistered and roughly paved thoroughfare giving access to a small number of domestic and retail properties.

The possible garden levels were sealed by a sequence of roughly paved surfaces, surrounded by two successive buildings and associated courtyards. The first building was entirely brick built and contained two equal sized rooms separated by a partition wall. It was flanked to the north by a rubble courtyard and to the west by heavily compacted laminated deposits of clay, sand, ash, crushed brick and mortar, which may also have represented successive courtyard surfaces. This structure, which occupied the southern third of the trench, immediately adjacent to Adelaide Place, may have been constructed soon after the roadway was established in the late eighteenth century.

The primary brick building was sealed by layers of demolition rubble, soil and hardcore prior to the construction of another building on the same site, probably in the nineteenth century. This later structure, which also appears to have been built against Adelaide Place, contained a single room at ground floor level, possibly provided with a sprung floor. As with the earlier structure, courtyard metallings existed to the north and east. This one room structure may have formed part of a much larger building shown on the first edition Ordnance Survey of 1874 and which by 1938 was in use as an army recruiting office.

Both 1874 and 1938 surveys show a lane extending north of the building to a large brewery yard with an island of open ground, probably hard standing, immediately east of the structure. The metallings to the north almost certainly formed part of the lane leading to the yard; rammed deposits east of the building probably represented accumulated soils associated with the hard standing.

A large cellar subdivided by a partition wall was exposed in the northern section of the trench. Both the 1874 and 1938 surveys show a pair of buildings in this position and it would appear that the cellar belonged to one or both of these.

The building against Adelaide Place and the adjacent cellared structures were probably all destroyed during air raids in 1942. Although there is some cartographical evidence to suggest that a post war building occupied the site until the 1960s, no evidence for this structure was located.
4 Hospital Lane
Tim Allen

In Hospital Lane, at 70 feet from the top, a foundation of rubble and flints and strong thick concrete 4 feet wide; 12 feet further down the lane another wall or foundation 12 feet through with Roman tiles laid flat, and some thus: [laid herringbone fashion] and well-made angle tiles so that when two were laid together they formed a square flue or drain; in these tiles was a circular hole about the centre of one of the sides: as they appeared blackened by fire inside no doubt this was portion of a Roman house and hypocaust (84).

Excerpt from Pilbrow 'Discoveries made at Canterbury in 1868', Archaeologia xliii (1871), 151–64.

In May 1994 the Trust was commissioned by GKN Kwikform Ltd to undertake an evaluation of their scaffolding yard in Hospital Lane, in advance of proposed sale of the land for redevelopment.

There were two reasons to believe that this site was of potentially high archaeological importance. First, two substantial Roman wall foundations were discovered beneath Hospital Lane close to the scaffolding yard entrance by James Pilbrow, City Engineer, during the installation of the city’s main drainage system in 1868. They were found in association with a quantity of smoke blackened box flue tiles of a type associated with hypocaust construction (Pilbrow 1871, 156). This strongly suggests the presence of a large and perhaps important Roman building under the frontage of the present site.

Secondly, early maps show the scaffolders’ site to have been open ground for a considerable period. Land behind Maynard and Colton’s Spital (which adjoins the site) and behind houses fronting Castle Street, was given over to gardens from at least 1640 until 1843. Later plans show only small outhouses to have been built in the area. Significant archaeological remains might therefore remain undisturbed in the area to be investigated.

Three evaluation pits (identified as Trenches A–C on the plan) were excavated within the scaffolding yard. It proved impossible to excavate reasonable size trenches as much of the area is presently covered with buildings and with stockpiled scaffolding. In the event, the pits exposed a sequence of Roman and early post Roman deposits extending across the site at a depth of approximately 1.45 m. below existing.

In Trench A located in the north eastern part of the site, a medieval wall (probably part of a cess pit) cut 1.95 m. deep into earlier deposits. Substantial quantities of Roman building material appeared to have been removed and dumped on the adjacent ground when this wall was constructed. Amongst this material were fragments of smoke blackened flue tiles, Roman floor tiles, roof tiles, mortar (opus signinum) and large quantities of Roman pottery. This residual material, together with similar in situ deposits noted in the sides of the construction trench for the cess pit, provided strong confirmation of Pilbrow’s evidence for the existence of a substantial Roman building in this position.

In the western part of the site Trench C showed the stratigraphic sequence had been subject to only minimal disturbance. Here a 1.13 m. thick band of garden loam overlay ‘dark earth’ (a layer deposited during the Late Roman and early post Roman periods). Two features, a large post hole and a partially exposed steep sided cut, were associated with the development of the dark loam.

These yielded a small corpus of seventh century pot sherds, as evidence of early Anglo Saxon occupation on the site. The base of the steep sided cut (possibly a sunken featured building) was a well compacted band of gravels and flints. Lying flat on the upper surface of this was a scatter of Roman roof tile fragments. The metalling probably formed part of a Roman courtyard, possibly associated with the Roman building discussed above.

The third trench (Trench B) provided only brickwork and rubble for a recent backfilled cellar.

In sum, evaluation at Hospital Lane confirmed the high archaeological potential of the area. A substantial Roman building almost certainly survives in the north east part of the present site and beneath Hospital Lane. The building probably possessed a courtyard, located in the south west part of the yard. In addition the south west part of the site yielded evidence suggesting early Anglo Saxon occupation which may have terminated in the late seventh century after which time the area became cultivated ground and remained as such until well into the nineteenth century.

Simplified section drawing showing the sequence of deposits and features in the evaluation pit ‘Trench C’.

5 Nos 33–36A North Lane
Paul Bennett

In April 1994 two trenches were mechanically opened in the former builder’s yard to the rear of nos 33–36A North Lane in advance of plans to redevelop the yard and the former sites of Nos 31 and 32 North Lane. The first trench was located in the north west corner of the yard, aligned roughly north east to south west and approximately parallel to North Lane. The second was set at right angles to North Lane, extending between the flank wall of No. 33 and an adjacent lean to shed to the west.

Past excavations and observations in the area have highlighted the presence of important palaeoenvironmental and archaeological deposits. The earliest levels overlying natural brickearth and gravel relate to sediments laid down in palaeochannels of the River Stour (earlier courses of the river) or silt deposits laid down by successive episodes of flooding, perhaps over a protracted period (flood plain silts). The deposits encountered at depths greater than 2 m. below existing appear to have been laid down prior to the establishment of a settled community at Canterbury and may date from 8500–2000 years ago. Little work has been undertaken on these levels in the past and every opportunity to examine them in detail must be taken to achieve a full understanding of the nature and chronology of the water course and its implications for the local topography and settlement in this part of Canterbury.

Pre Roman and Roman period occupation has been located within the immediate vicinity of the evaluation. The evidence for pre Roman occupation, though relatively sparse, appears to indicate agricultural activity, perhaps associated with arable farming against the western edge of the flood plain, from the last quarter of the first century A.D. onwards. Worn and abraded pottery from a reworked brickearth topsoil together with cultural material derived from a small number of shallow cut pits testify to this phase of occupation.

Considerably more evidence derives from the Roman period. A number of narrow gravel paved roads appear to have been laid out in a regular grid iron pattern on the western bank of the Stour and...
beyond from the mid to late first century onwards. Although few contemporary occupation traces have been located it is currently believed that an early attempt to develop the western flood plain was abandoned in favour of the present site of Canterbury. The street pattern was largely abandoned, but certain parts of it were utilised to facilitate access to an industrial suburb which flourished from the late first to the late second century A.D. Ironworking, pottery, tile and brick manufacture appear to have been the principal products of the suburb. Traces of at least two second century pottery kilns were found to the rear of 16–21 North Lane. By the early third century parts of the former suburb appear to have been used for burials. Cremation and inhumation burials have been located nearby (16–21 North Lane: Bennett 1978, 165–91; 30 North Lane: Leggatt 1991, 5–6) with the latest inhumation dating into the fourth century A.D.

Although evidence for Anglo Saxon occupation has yet to be discovered, North Lane was probably established as an extra mural suburb in this period, and perhaps by at least the tenth century. Continuity of occupation against the North Lane frontage may have begun at that time although occupation may not have been particularly dense. By the twelfth century the rentals of Christ Church Priory indicate that most of the frontage was occupied and that continuity of domestic and retail properties against the frontage is certain from that time. Only one site (16–21 North Lane) has provided evidence for this.

Roman levels were encountered at the present site 1.25 m. below existing. Although the earliest deposits may have been laid down by water action, they are more likely to have been deliberately dumped to infill low lying ground subject to flooding. One other possibility is that the deposits may have formed the basal component of a riverside embankment. It must be stated that the evidence from this restricted cutting is difficult to interpret and only larger scale excavation will allow a definitive explanation of the soil sequence.

A well developed sequence of garden loams dating from the twelfth century sealed the Roman levels. The development of the loam which undoubtedly accumulated to the rear of road frontage properties, was interrupted by a band of mortar and loam which may signal an episode of nearby construction activity. This horizon, associated with at least one pit, was sealed by further deposits of post medieval and modern loam and topsoil.

Against the road frontage an entirely different picture emerged. Here intact floors and foundations for a nineteenth century cottage, and a lower sequence of earlier building remains, survive just below the existing ground surface. The earliest building remains, set less than 0.5 m. below existing, were only observed in the sides and base of a number of disturbances cutting the floor of the later building.

As the Roman sequence at the rear of the site is deeply buried redevelopment processes are unlikely to provide further information. Should redevelopment of the frontage occur a well preserved sequence of modern post medieval and perhaps medieval buildings will require further examination.

6 Pound Lane Car Park
Adrian Murphy

Between March and May 1994, a watching brief was undertaken in the former Pound Lane car park, during the cutting of foundation and service trenches for a new terrace of houses fronting St Peters Lane. An archaeological evaluation of the site had taken place during September of the previous year (Parfitt 1995, 7–8).

Most of the trenches did not exceed a depth of 1.30 m. and their stratigraphy was generally consistent with that observed in 1993. The shallow nature of the trenches, combined with a high watertable and a large amount of modern concrete and brick rubble, meant that only a narrow band of deposits was visible. The occasional small patch of chalk or clay flooring was detected, concentrated along the St Peter’s Lane road frontage. Here, flint walls, which by their profile and composition could have been the remains of the dwarf walls of a timber framed building, were observed. Associated floor levels were recorded, but there was no dating evidence other than peg tile fragments beneath the floors.

The evidence gleaned from the shallow trenches observed during the watching brief would seem largely to substantiate the findings of the former evaluation, namely that due to serious waterlogging in the past, complex archaeological deposits are generally deeply buried in this part of the city.

Watching brief in progress.

7 St Radigund’s Bridge
Alan Ward

During January 1995 an intermittent watching brief was maintained during arch strengthening and parapet repairs to St Radigund’s Bridge. The work was funded by Kent County Council (Highways and Transportation).

The bridge forms part of the line of the city’s defences, several short sections of which have been recorded in this area (Blockley 1984, 30; Anderson & Bennett 1991, 13–14; McKenna 1992, 9). It is known that the medieval defensive wall crossed the Stour at this point over three, apparently portcullised, arches. Indeed, according to Gostling (1825, 14) up until they were demolished in 1769, these arches supported the only river crossing inside the city whenever the Kings Bridge was flooded. Gostling further reports that part of one of the portcullis grooves was still visible in 1821 (ibid., 16 note 13).

It seems that there was no road crossing at the site of St Radigund’s Bridge until the mid nineteenth century when a bridge is shown on Collard’s map of 1843. A date stone survives on the northern parapet of the present bridge, but no inscription other than an Ordnance Survey bench mark is visible today.
The 1995 repair works involved stripping back the modern road surface on the western half of the bridge and the replacement of the northern parapet. It was hoped that parts of the city wall and possibly remnants of the fourteenth century bridge might be observed during the work. In the event nothing of the early bridge was found. However, a considerable length (c. 6 m.) of the city wall was observed and recorded at the western end of the bridge when the modern pavement was removed and a trench cut for the re-routing of electricity cables.

Our thanks are extended to Kent County Council and the contractors whose ready cooperation greatly assisted the progress of this watching brief.

"Arches in the Town Wall" (detail). The medieval predecessor of Radigund's Bridge, engraved by R. Godfrey shortly before demolition in 1769.

8 Magistrates Court Car Park, Broad Street
Paul Bennett

On Saturday, 14th May an archaeological evaluation trench was cut in the car park to the rear of the present Magistrates Court, Broad Street, Canterbury in advance of proposed redevelopment.

A single trench (5.75 m. x 2.5 m.) was opened by machine and excavated to a maximum depth of 2.25 m. An intact archaeological sequence together with a small number of features was located slightly above the level of natural brickearth at approximately 1.65 m. below the present car park surface. The largest of these features was of later medieval date and may have been a brickearth quarry or a rubbish pit of substantial size. This feature had almost completely removed an earlier pit which was arguably of Roman date. Two possible post holes observed as soil stains at the level of natural brickearth may have also been of Roman origin.

The car park lies in the immediate eastern environs of the Roman town. Roman burials are known approximately 50 m. north and north east.
of the site in Lady Wootton's Green. A Roman road extending south east from Queningate runs immediately north of the site.

In the early medieval period the area became a suburb of Canterbury occupying a position between the defences of the town and the western boundary of St Augustine's Abbey. The present line of Broad Street, Lady Wootton's Green, Monastery Street and Church Street St Paul's, roads respectively west, north, east and south of the site in Lady Wootton's Green. A Roman road extending south east from Queningate runs immediately north of the site.

The large feature covered an area measuring roughly 5.50 m. square. It cut the naturally occurring deposits of orange brown brickearth, and was in turn, along with the brickearth, truncated by the cellar floor. The feature was also cut by a burial (SK 1), tentatively identified as Roman (see below) and thereby giving it a possible Roman attribution. The sides of the feature consisted of in situ brickearth burnt to a depth of approximately 0.15 m. Although the burning had produced a hard red surface no signs of vitrification were observed. The backfill of the feature consisted of grey, silty, soil mixed with occasional quantities of chalk flecks.

Unfortunately it has not been possible to offer an interpretation for the function of the feature for three principal reasons. No finds were recovered from the fill; the feature was not bottomed (in fact only a very small proportion of its estimated total area was examined); and the sides of the feature showed no signs of vitrification, so ruling out many of the industrial interpretations which might otherwise have been made.

It was not anticipated that the proposal to underpin the building at 8 Vernon Place, Canterbury (TR15175738), would disturb much of archaeological significance. However, a large enigmatic feature and inhumation burials, all of probable Roman date, were discovered during the course of a watching brief maintained at that address.

The discovery of these archaeological features beneath Vernon Place has significant consequences for our understanding of the depth of archaeological deposits outside the town and is likely to influence our response to development proposals in the area in the future.

Thanks are extended to Abbott Construction who gave us every assistance during a difficult and somewhat complicated project.
St Gregory’s Priory Development, Northgate
Martin Hicks

From October to December 1994, an archaeological watching brief was maintained at the former site of St Gregory’s Priory, Northgate during the cutting of foundations for the wholesale redevelopment of the area.

Between 1988 and 1990 large scale excavations on this site, the former GPO sorting office, uncovered a complex sequence of medieval buildings. The earliest identified was a church founded by the Norman archbishop Lanfranc in 1086. This was rebuilt in the twelfth century and a complex of claustral buildings formed at the same time to the north of the new church. The institution for Augustinian canons was dissolved between 1536 and 1537. Only a single range of buildings fronting the Northgate road survived the Dissolution, and this was converted into a private house and elaborate garden. The building and garden survived until 1800 when it was sold for redevelopment. New roads subdividing the area were built (High Street St Gregory, Victoria Row and Union Street) with houses formed against these streets, to service the artillery and cavalry barracks located nearby. The west range survived as a semi derelict dwelling until 1848 when it was finally demolished.

Following the 1988–90 archaeological excavation the site remained open as a casualty of the recession until redevelopment for student accommodation for Christ Church College was begun in September 1994. Consultations between the landowners, the architects and the Trust resulted in the new development being based on piled foundations. A survey of the known archaeological remains was utilised by the developers to determine new non destructive pile positions.

The foundation design consisted of a mixture of driven and augured piles, linked by a network of trench built ring beams. The depth of the ring beam trenches was set 1 m. below existing. There was some concern that the construction of the trenches might damage previously unrecorded archaeological levels. This anxiety was heightened when the development area was extended into parts of the site not previously archaeologically excavated.

During the piling activity no significant damage to the priory remains was observed. One pile (along the east frontage) hit an obstruction, but following investigation using a mechanical digger it became apparent that it had clipped the northern side of the chapter house wall and the damage was mitigated by repositioning of the pile. Elsewhere all obstructions investigated proved to be the remains of modern concrete foundations. A soft spot discovered in the extended area at the junction of High Street St Gregory and Victoria Row, proved to be an infilled wartime bomb crater.

In the extended development area several archaeological features were revealed. In the area formerly under the pavement of High Street St Gregory a flint wall on a chalk foundation was uncovered. This footing probably formed part of a post Dissolution boundary wall and may be that built shortly after 1573 when Sir John Boys, the then tenant of the west range, enclosed his grounds.

The eastern extremity of the extended development was the main area for archaeological concern. It was not investigated during the 1988–90 excavations and lay over the choir of the twelfth century church. When a large section of concrete was broken up and removed, it became clear that it had been rafted over a series of deep, brick built basements, which had removed all traces of the choir. The basements presumably belonged to structures built in the 1800s and had been backfilled following bomb damage during the 1940s.

In conclusion, the close liaison between the Trust and all those involved in the new development resulted in damage to known archaeological remains being avoided. When new elements of historical interest were revealed, they were recorded swiftly causing no interference with the construction work programme, and the resulting impact on the archaeological material was minimal.

Our thanks are extended to W. Taylor, Bursar of Christ Church College for unstinting support and Pentangle Design Group for their ready co-operation during the project.

No. 54 London Road
Jon Rady and Grant Shand

At the beginning of November 1993 an archaeological evaluation was carried out to the rear of 54 London Road (TR 1386 5818) in advance of the construction of an adolescent residential and day treatment centre.

The site lies immediately north of the main Roman road to London and Rochester, which is bounded, to the south at least, by an extensive Roman cemetery containing both cremations and inhumations. At least nine sites have previously been examined in this area, most significantly that at Cranmer House to the south of London Road in 1982, where a large number of Roman cremation burials and some early Anglo Saxon finds, including a very fine early seventh century gold pendant, were recovered (Frere et al. 1987, 56–73).

Two machine cut trenches were excavated down to the level of natural brickearth. Both were void of archaeological features or artefacts.

A few months later, an intermittent watching brief was carried out during the preliminary stages of construction work. Groundworks involved the removal of overburden to well below the top of natural soils over much of the west and north
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west area of the site and the cutting of a network of foundation trenches, primarily over the north eastern half of the area.

Although most of the work was carried out by machines using toothed buckets, which did not leave any clean horizontal surfaces, enough clean sections were cut through all the deposits to confirm the total absence of archaeological levels suggested by earlier work. The absence of archaeological features and artefacts, although determined from a relatively small sample area, strongly suggests either that the Roman cemetery does not extend this far north and east, or that it did not extend north of the Roman road in this area.

Thanks are due to Canterbury and Thanet Health Authority for funding the archaeological works.

12 No. 30 St Lawrence Forstal
Mark Houliston

In December 1994 the Trust was called to 30 St Lawrence Forstal where a human skull and other bones had been uncovered during the construction of a rear extension. The skeletal remains were recorded in situ and then removed for study (see report, p. 70). The burial seems to have been made in some haste, with the body flexed to fit into a pit. There was no sign of weapon injury and cause of death could not be ascertained from the bones. A medieval lace tag was found in association with the burial.

The bones seem to represent an isolated burial, undertaken quickly in unconsecrated ground. No other burials have been found in the area despite the location of the leper hospital of St Laurence, founded in 1137, 200 m. to the north east of the present site (Woodruff 1938). The bones showed no sign of leprosy.

Above: Detail of the skull.
Left: The burial.

13 Westgate Gardens
Alan Ward

In March a watching brief was maintained during the cutting of a soakaway in the yard behind The Umbrella Centre, St Peter’s Place. The sides of the pit cut an interesting section through waterlogged deposits. A large corpus of Late Iron Age and early Roman pottery, including imports from Gaul, was recovered from alluvial clay close to the bottom of the pit whilst an organic peat deposit above this contained well preserved, but fragmentary, wooden stakes, Roman pottery and a few late Saxon or Early Medieval sherds dating to c. 900–1200. Alluvial deposits, probably laid down during flooding of the area, lay above this and immediately beneath the modern brick rubble make up for the yard.

The glimpse of archaeology recorded during the watching brief corresponds well with what is known about the early history of the area. The defensive walls around the Roman town were not constructed until the late third century. These pass close to the site of the soakaway and might suggest that the area was comparatively dry at that time (Bennett 1984, 50). The lack of later Roman pottery might support the view that by the fourth century the area was becoming uninhabitable. Studies elsewhere (Waddelove 1990, 256–9) have shown that the sea level around south east England rose by a few feet during the period of Roman rule and has risen by several feet since then. This would probably have been reflected further inland in higher local water tables and slower flowing rivers. The observed thick peat deposit probably formed during the Anglo Saxon period. Similar deposits have been seen elsewhere in Canterbury overlying Roman levels (Rady 1986, 15). The area was apparently still subject to flooding in the early medieval period; there is a notable absence of rentals for the area (Urry 1967). Successive surveys from the seventeenth century onwards all show this part of Canterbury as open land or gardens.