



Friends of
Canterbury
Archaeological
Trust

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Friends of Canterbury Archaeological Trust Newsletter Summer 2025

www.canterburytrust.co.uk/fcat

SUMMER 2025 - DIRECTORS LETTER

Dear Friends, although a few weeks have now passed since I visited the CAT-run field-school and community dig at East Wear Bay, the inspiring sight of volunteers, local school children and students fully involved with the excavation created a strong impression in my mind, acting as a reminder of how much archaeology can achieve.

In addition to the thirty or so people on site that day, many more have engaged with the excavation in other ways, some as part of classroom activities, some at object handling sessions, and others at venues such as dementia cafés. It is on behalf of all these people that our engagement team thank you for your continued support.

Fund-raising and volunteering have always been core activities for the Friends. From my first period of employment with CAT back in the late 1980s I can remember the indomitable presence of Majorie Lyle, who managed to raise money selling much-needed second-hand baby clothes to local parents.



Majorie Lyle



Majorie's baby clothes shop

A lasting impression from the Whitefriars excavations of the early 2000s is the incredible contribution made by FCAT volunteers, who gave regular tours to groups of visitors from purpose-built scaffold walkways overlooking the main excavation areas.

Archaeology has changed significantly since the early days of course.

The implementation of planning rules based on the 'polluter-pays' principal means funding can be agreed prior to the start of archaeological works rather than by fundraising retrospectively.

Importantly, it has also helped to create a profession where public-benefit is increasingly viewed as something that provides value in its own right.

CAT's charitable status and its unique history in delivering such benefit puts us in a great position to explore these areas further. Such activities come at a cost and cannot be delivered without support, so thanks again for all you have done and continue to do.

Best wishes,



Mark

East Wear Bay Community Engagement

East Wear Bay was an intensive four-week programme of community engagement and excavation this summer and was incredibly well-received by everyone involved.

This year we welcomed students from all over the world alongside those from the University of Kent to join our two-week field school. We had 22 students from the UK, Australia, Canada, the USA and Hungary. They were taught a range of different skills including historic building recording, geophysics, surveying, site recording, photography, finds processing and environmental processing alongside excavation practices.

School visits from local primary schools also took place, including Castle Hill Community Primary, St Mary's C of E, Mundella Primary, and St Peter's C of E. It was great to welcome the children to site and show them a real excavation with the finds. The site visits follow on from in-school workshops that were delivered during the winter and spring of this year. We were impressed at how much the children remembered!

Continuing the good work we have done with the Beacon School in Folkestone, we were really pleased to welcome five of their students to undertake work experience with us on site. The Beacon School caters for pupils aged 3-19 years with Profound, Severe and Complex Needs and we were very pleased to provide opportunities for their students to study heritage and archaeology through experiential learning.

We were also really pleased to welcome clients and staff from Touchbase Care for a site visit. Touchbase Care are a local creative community who work with adults and young people with disabilities and neurodiverse conditions. They braved the wet weather on a very rainy day, which shows their enthusiasm! We sheltered under one of the marquees to look at finds and enjoyed a site tour once the rain had stopped.

To round the season off, we hosted a CBA Festival of Archaeology Open day on 26th July, which was very well attended. Visitors had the chance to look at finds from the site, meet mudlarks from London, chat to metal detectorists, and to learn about the local geology from the Kent Down's Landscape team.

It's always so rewarding to encourage people to explore their local areas and engage with their heritage, and we hope to return and do the same next year.



The Archaeology of East Wear Bay

This year, we opened a trench adjacent to the villa, where we continued our investigations into the Iron Age settlement external to the villa buildings.

This is a priority area particularly threatened by coastal erosion. We partially investigated this area in 2024, so this year allowed us to expand on our knowledge and address any outstanding research questions.

We were able to make more sense of a substantial ditch running approximately NW-SE across site with a clear turn in the NW corner. It seems to be a large enclosure or boundary ditch comprising several fills that contained late Iron Age and Roman pottery. We also uncovered evidence of more field systems and even a possible four-post granary structure, although this is yet to be confirmed.

Several Iron Age coins were found, including a Somme Valley potin, which was likely produced by Celtic tribes in Gaul. Some quern stone roughouts were uncovered, but we know that quern production appears to have ceased by the time the villa was built. Two of our field school students unearthed a spindle whorl and loom weight, which were essential tools for textile production. A number of amphora sherds and two refitting amphora base fragments were also found, possibly from a Dressel 1 type.

We look forward to making the interim report for this year's excavation available as soon as the initial assessment work has been completed.



DONATIONS TO THE FRIENDS



Donations to the Friends of CAT are always welcome, whether in appreciation of on-line Zoom talks or more generally through a wish to support CAT.

This can be done by bank transfer using the following details:

Account name: **The Friends of Canterbury Archaeological Trust**

Account number: **95413383**

Sort code: **60-04-27**

Please use the reference "FCAT Donation".

Or, send a cheque made out to The Friends of Canterbury Archaeological Trust, to:

FCAT Admin c/o Canterbury Archaeological Trust, 92a Broad Street, Canterbury CT1 2LU

Thank you for any support.

Key Contacts:

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Watching Brief at Westgate Square

Staff at the Trust have recently been working with Canterbury City Council at Westgate Square.

The aim has been to improve the future of the city whilst preserving and better understanding its past. This forms part of the Connected Canterbury heritage works and has given us an exciting opportunity to investigate the many layers of the city's history. This area has, during numerous excavations, evaluations and watching briefs, yielded significant archaeological remains from the later prehistoric period onwards

The present Westgate is the last survivor of Canterbury's seven medieval gates. Built of Ragstone and local flint, it dates to the late 14th Century but was built on much older foundations. It's possible it may even stand on the site of an earlier Roman gate, as the medieval city wall is known to have followed the footprint of the Roman wall.

It consists of a pair of round, three storey drum towers abutting a central gatehouse and gateway which had a drawbridge and portcullis. Additional constructional details to the Westgate have been seen during these current works including a section of the connecting defensive wall with a small postern gate cutting through the city wall. The Westgate certainly has a long and fascinating history and was even shared by military and civil defence personnel during the second world war.

The nearby Church of the Holy Cross (now the Canterbury Guildhall) was originally constructed at the same time as the gate, but the porch was removed in the late eighteenth century. So far, several alignments of earlier churchyard walls and foundations to the original porch have been revealed as well as the memorial stone to a well-known 18th century cricketer.

All these discoveries provide fascinating snapshots of moments in Canterbury's past and will hopefully continue to as this work continues. It is due to run until Spring 2026.



UPCOMING LECTURES & EVENTS

From Roman Forts to Viking Mints: Treasures that Changed the Rules

 *Thursday 25th September 2025, 7pm*

Isabelle Diggle – Finds Liaison Officer for Kent,
Portable Antiquities Scheme

LG16, Laud Building, Ground Floor

The Archaeologies of Cnut: Kent's Second Viking Age

 *Thursday 30th October 2025, 7pm*

Heidi Stoner – Senior Lecturer in Medieval
Archaeology, Canterbury Christchurch
University

LG16, Laud Building, Ground Floor

The Archaeology of Westgate Square, Canterbury

 *Thursday 27th November 2025, 7pm*

Andy Linklater – Watching Brief Manager,
Canterbury Archaeological Trust

LG16, Laud Building, Ground Floor.

Talk also available online via FCAT members area on
the CAT website after 27th November.

Facing the Cliff: An Update on the Archaeology of East Wear Bay

 *Thursday 22nd January 2026, 7pm*

Andy Macintosh- Project Officer, Canterbury
Archaeological Trust

Location TBA.

IMPORTANT CHANGES

In the future, we plan to manage all FCAT memberships using Member Mojo alongside Mailchimp software and will be launching this on Monday 1st September.

You do not need to do anything, and your membership will continue as before. However, you should be aware that you may receive an email from Member Mojo to confirm your membership on the 1st September.

After the 1st September, emails to members will be distributed via Member Mojo instead of the current FCAT announcements email address, so please make sure that our emails are not being redirected to your junk email.

We have recently updated the FCAT webpage and there is now a new members area where previous newsletters can be found. We will also use this area to post recordings of lectures, if they are available.

Recordings will be available after the live lecture for a period of four weeks. The password to access the members area is FRIEND_0043!

We ask for your patience as we streamline our procedures, which we hope will better serve our valued members.



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