THE CHRISTCHURCH ANTIQUARIANS

Bumper Summer 2022 Newsletter

IN THIS ISSUE:

A WORD FROM THE EDITOR

Laureen Pearce

Welcome to a bumper edition of our occasional newsletter!

Much has happened in the last two years since the previous edition, which was published at the start of the first COVID lockdown in April 2020. After spending seven months in three lockdowns, I nearly resorted to undertaking some archaeology in my own garden! But thankfully we've all since gradually returned to some semblance of normality.

Mike Tizzard, our chairman, kicks off this issue with an update on the work at Millhams over the last two years, while Roger Donne reports on some archaeological coring undertaken in Druitt Gardens last year.

David Eels has provided the first in a series on the History of Christchurch Castle, based on his many years of historical research. Philip Tate , on the other hand, researched the origin of Hengistbury Head's name and provides an interesting article on his findings.

Finally, Roger follows up on the restoration of Highcliffe Castle walls, which he previously wrote about in the 2019 edition of our newsletter.

Two Seasons at Millhams

Mike Tizzard

In spite of the pandemic resulting in some rather sporadic augering and digging at Millhams over the past two years, we have managed to make some interesting discoveries.

In July 2020, while augering a line in front of the donkey shed and to the northeast of its eastern end, a rather strange deposit of narrow strips or off-cuts of thin tinplate was picked up in the sampling auger. At that point we did not investigate this any further but fully intended to return to it at a later date.

In the meantime, we continued augering the line towards the creek and picked up the buried channel we had found previously. More auger holes were sampled along the brick wall dividing the two gardens. These were a bit random due to garden obstacles in the way and not much was found in them. One auger hole next to the wall, however, produced a further small amount of tinplate waste and a quantity of Purbeck Stone, some of which was dressed.

We have found this type of stone before and concluded that it was stone rubble and chips most likely coming from the Priory and being used to make up the ground there at various times. We completed the augering of the site at the end of the 2020 season.

At the start of the 2021 season we returned to Millhams again to investigate the tinplate waste we had found in the previous July.

Pit 60, a 1m^2 pit, was opened up quite close to the auger hole where the tinplate had come up. The ground there had clearly been built up in relatively modern times with a great deal of mixed earth, rubble, gravel and sand, which continued down to a depth of approximately 1m and sloping down towards the creek to a depth around 1.3m. Under this, and also sloping down to a depth of approximately 1.5m, were several thinnish layers of brown sandy silt, sandy mortar and then some mixed silt with charcoal along with what looks like lumps of straw or grass. Then right in the eastern edge of the pit was a very large quantity of the tinplate waste, similar to what had been found before, except this constituted much larger pieces each consisting of several tightly packed corner pieces with curved inner edges (Photo 2). The entire deposit appears to have been dumped at the same time as it was all packed together. In amongst the off-cuts, a copper half penny token was discovered, issued by John Jordan, Draper of Gosport, and dated 1794 (Photo 1). A helmeted bust can be seen on one face and a ship on the other. This imagery was a stock design used on many other late-18th century trade tokens.

Photo 1: *The copper halfpenny coin dating to 1794, issued by John Jordan, Draper of Gosport*

We concluded that the old donkey shed, where we currently store all the Millhams finds and equipment, was possibly once a tinsmiths workshop. Old 19th century maps of the area provide evidence that the shed was already in existence at the time, and a caped-off chimney in one corner of the shed points to its possible use in the production of items made of tin-

plate (kitchen and domestic vessels and utensils, etc.). Historical evidence also confirms that there were several tinsmiths (also known as 'White Smiths') operating in Castle Street around that time. The deposits we excavated may have been the result of a clearing-out event that may have occurred when the workshop had perhaps gone out of use.

Photo 2 (L): *The tinplate offcuts from Pit 60;*
Photo 3 (R): *One of the Purbeck Stone roof tiles from Pit 61*

Below the tin deposit and also sloping down, was another deposit of very dense, sticky bluish silt. We had encountered this before in places and previously concluded that it was part of the natural geology there. Since we had dug down this far, I used our small 1'' diameter auger to see how the deposit was made up. At a depth of approximately 2.2m (the deposit was about 1m thick at its thickest point) there was a rather unexpected layer of organic matter comprising of (slightly decayed) twigs, small branch sections of silver birch, possible decayed leaves, acorns, hazel nuts, lime seeds and many other smaller seeds as yet unidentified. Mixed in with this was some silt and white quartz sand.

After speaking to an environmental archaeologist sometime later about this, he suggested that this may be a buried Bronze Age landscape. This is certainly possible as it was so deep and the sea level was about 1 to 1.5m lower during the Bronze Age than it is today. It would be nice to get it carbon dated but unfortunately we do not currently have sufficient funds to cover the cost of this at about £300+ per sample.

During the 2021 season we also continued augering in the orchard garden on the south side of the donkey shed. This proved more difficult because part of the garden where we wanted to run the auger lines along is now covered with tree cuttings in one part and a collection of bee hives in another.

We started our first line right along the dividing wall adjacent and to the east of the greenhouse. On the first auger hole there was a hard impenetrable layer at approximately 0.6m deep. At first we abandoned augering there but then decided to investigate the obstruction by digging an investigation pit (Pit 61). The hard layer turned out to be several very large Purbeck stone roof tiles (Photo 3).

The tiles were all damaged and most had peg or nail holes still present. They seemed to have been laid as either part of an old path or perhaps as a hard standing for something. Some broken clay tiles were also found below this. The Purbeck tiles probably came from a large building, possibly the Priory as we have found quite a lot of Priory-related stonework in our investigations over the years.

Apart from the roof tiles, little else of interest was found in Pit 61 so it was back filled and we moved back to the main garden to re-investigate the possible organic deposits found in Pit 60.

To get a better understanding and view of the organic deposit and to see how far it extended, Pit 62 was dug wider at 1.5m x 1m than the usual $1m^2$ and positioned further east than Pit 60, directly in front of the donkey shed and adjacent to the footpath there (Photo 4).

After digging through the topsoil, we found our usual deposit containing medieval finds, consisting mainly of pottery and some oyster shells, very similar to that found all round this part of the garden.

The profile of this pit was very similar to that of Pit 60: the same silt was found at around 1m deep and the same organic deposit at about 2m deep, containing similar material in the form of seeds such as hazelnut, acorn, lime tree and other small seeds as yet unidentified. There were also small twigs and branch fragments, some of which were identified as Silver Birch. The organic deposit varied slightly in thickness but was generally just under 20cm thick, similar to what was found in Pit 60. It also appeared to be continuing further east towards the millstream so may well extend under further areas of the garden.

Photo 4: *Pit 62, surrounded by the orange hi-viz barrier, in front of the donkey shed*

In the southwest corner of the pit, there was evidence of a shrub or small tree or sapling that had once been growing there, with roots extending down below the deposit, a good indication that this level had once been the original ground level near to or on the margins of the then river Avon or a sub channel of it.

This was as far as we got last year with the pit still open but covered and fenced off. We have already returned to Millhams for the start of the 2022 season, with the aim of completing a drawing of the section of Pit 62, to do some more sieving of the medieval deposit and then to fill it back in.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL CORING IN DRUITT GARDENS - A FOLLOW-UP TO GEOPHYSICS

Roger Donne

In our last newsletter, I wrote about our multi-mode geophysical survey of Druitt Gardens aimed at tracing through the Gardens the course of the remains of the defences of the Saxon burh of Twynham, now Christchurch. These remains were discovered by series of archaeological excavations in the 1970s, well documented by Keith Jarvis in his monograph, *Excavations in Christchurch 1969-1980* published by the Dorset Natural History and

Archaeological Society. Our chairman, Mike Tizzard took part in these excavations and in particular the excavation of a trench extending for some 60m from the rear of the Regent Cinema across what is now the north-eastern end of Wick Lane car park. This trench, designated X5, revealed a tumble of ironstone boulders (interpreted as the fallen revetment from an earthen defensive bank) and also the signs of an outer ditch on the western side of the tumble. Unfortunately the precarious stability of the excavation in the sandy soil and other problems due to waterlogging prevented a completely satisfactory investigation of the total length of the section and did not allow the excavation of the ditch.

The interpretation of the archaeology from the 1969-1980 excavations led to the designation of a large part of Druitt Gardens as a Scheduled Ancient Monument now under the care of Historic England. However, since then, a number of papers have appeared which have disputed the interpretation of the archaeology put forward by Keith Jarvis and have suggested that the evidence from other Saxon burhs lead to a conclusion that the defensive structures would have been built on higher ground further up the gentle east-to-west slope in Druitt Gardens, typically, it is suggested, along the 5m contour through the town (see, for example, Jeremy Haslam's paper, *The Development of Late-Saxon Christchurch*, Dorset, and the *Burghal Hidage*, published in 2009).

In order to confirm the evidence of the excavations and to test the theories for an alternative course of the defensive structures through the Gardens, two geophysical surveys were carried out. The first, in 2009, by Bournemouth University used magnetometry and resistivity and achieved some 60% coverage of the area of the Gardens. Unfortunately this provided neither confirmation of the archaeology nor identified any other significant geophysical anomaly, and concluded that the geophysical techniques in use did not provide penetration to the depth of the archaeology, known to be at 2m or more below ground level. Accordingly, our survey which took place in 2019/2020 used enhanced techniques, including ground-penetrating radar, resistivity imaging and magnetic gradiometry, all designed for deep soil penetration.

We were disappointed that the results from our survey did not provide any confirmation of the archaeological interpretation. However, we did detect a geophysical anomaly which had the characteristics of a bank and ditch feature running north-west to south-east, but further up the slope in the

The Dando Terrier drilling rig being off-loaded at Druitt Gardens

Gardens. Our report to Historic England proposed that a coring exercise could be used to test the validity of the interpretation. Earlier this year TCA was very pleased to receive a grant of funding from Christchurch Town Council in order to make further investigations of the geophysical anomalies discovered in our survey of 2019/2020. The type of investigation we proposed was by archaeological coring – small boreholes at the positions of interest. After a successful application to Historic England for Scheduled Monument Consent to carry out this type of work on the scheduled site, we were able to go ahead with the coring exercise on 21 October 2021.

The work was carried out under the supervision of Dr Martin Bates of the University of Wales, using a drilling rig and two-man drilling team hired from Structural Soils Ltd. Martin was one of the two archaeologists who worked with us on the 2019/2020 geophysical survey and has experience with coring, having been engaged in the recent investigations and discoveries at Durrington Walls near Stonehenge. Our target for the day was to obtain two 100mm diameter cores from the positions of the geophysical anomalies which we had interpreted as possible bank and ditch features from the results of our survey and also to obtain two further cores from the estimated position of the bank and ditch as interpreted from the original archaeological excavation.

Luckily our drilling day dawned cloudy and chilly but free of rain. The cores were drilled by a small, self-mobile, drilling rig called a Dando Terrier which was delivered to site in a small van (see photograph). Drilling proceeded remarkably quickly with the rig operating by percussively driving the cutting tool into the ground. The four boreholes were drilled to varying depths, this being decided by an inspection of the cores as they were removed. Cores were taken in black plastic sleeves but the end of each core could be inspected and assessed before the sleeve was capped. By keeping light away from the cores there is the potential to date any ancient land surface by a modern technique known as optically-stimulated luminescence which can measure the time which has elapsed since sand grains were last exposed to daylight. After each core was extracted the resulting hole was filled with an inert clay material called bentonite and the turf divot, which had been removed before coring, replaced.

We are in the process of finalising the report on the core samples. It was immediately apparent that the geophysical anomaly at the top of Gardens was almost certainly due to a geological formation caused by a ridge of gravel overlaying clay. At the bottom of the slope, the results were less clear and drilling was difficult with waterlogged conditions encountered. Although we were able to drill to several metres in depth there was little evidence of the expected organic infill to an earlier ditch but we hope that closer analysis may reveal more detailed structure.

CHRISTCHURCH CASTLE - PART 1

David Eels

As old age creeps on, it is time for me to commit to paper some of my research on Christchurch Castle during the last fifty years and incorporate some of my extensive reading on castles in general and the archaeology of castles over the last sixty years.

When viewed from the top of the tower of the Priory Church, or from Convent Walk in the winter months when there are no leaves on the trees, Christchurch Castle has the appearance of a typical early Norman motte and bailey castle (Photo 1). The motte is the artificial mound while the bailey is the courtyard stretching from the mound to the Mill Stream which is now occupied by the bowling green. On the motte are the remains of two walls

Photo1: *Aerial view of Christchurch Castle, taken from the Priory Tower in 2010*

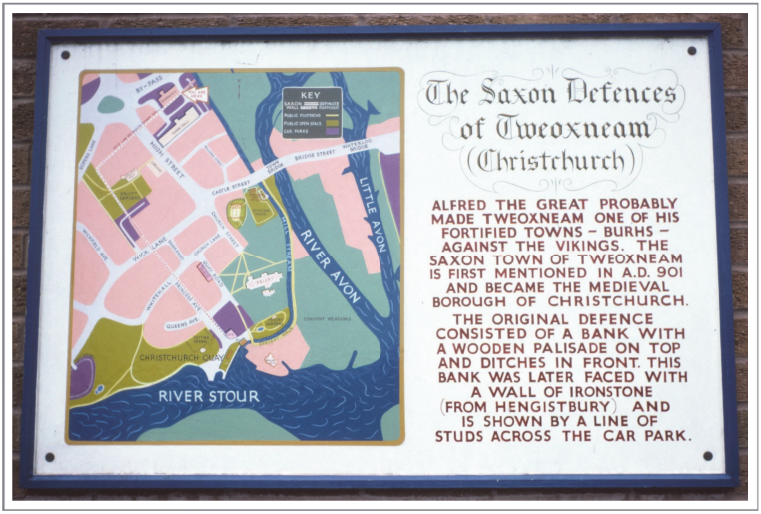


Photo 2: *This was one of four boards put up in the Town Centre in about 1976. The two main streets of the Saxon burh were straight roads corresponding to High Street and Church Street in a north-west to south-east direction, with Wick Lane and Castle Street crossing at right angles. However, the construction of the castle and the digging of its wide ditches forced Church Street and Castle Street out of alignment.*

of the keep (probably late 12th century) while in the bailey on the bank of the Mill Stream is the roofless Norman house (known locally as the Constable's House) which was built *circa* 1160 and had the castle's great hall on its first floor. There is no sign above ground of any other medieval masonry.

The first documentary reference to the castle is in a charter of the first Baldwin de Redvers issued *circa* 1140 before he was created 1st Earl of Devon by the Empress Matilda in 1141 when she was queen in all but name for a few months. In this charter Baldwin confirms that the Dean and Canons of Christchurch (the Minster Church had not yet become a priory) own all the land between the cemetery and the castle ditch as far as the waters of the Avon. As this charter is confirming the possessions and liberties which the canons had before his time, presumably meaning in the time of his father (the first Richard de Redvers) who died in 1107, the castle must have been in existence by 1107.

It is usually said that the first castle, an earth and timber castle, was most probably built by the first Richard de Redvers who held Christchurch from *circa* 1100 until his death in 1107, but there is no proof of this so it could have been built by one of the first two Norman kings when Christchurch was still a royal manor. I have studied the Domesday Book entries for the boroughs in Hampshire and Dorset which had early Norman castles and found that evidence for a pre-Domesday castle at Christchurch appears to be negative, but for various reasons it is really inconclusive.

John Kenyon (a castle expert), in his excellent 1990 book *Medieval Fortifications* on the archaeology of castles, emphasises that the presence of a motte does not necessarily mean that it was an original feature as it can mask earlier features. As an example, he states that following the Battle of Hastings when castles were built within existing fortifications such as Saxon burhs, ringworks were the first structures (Christchurch was a burh by 915 AD). From Christopher Young's detailed monograph *Excavations at Carisbrooke Castle, Isle of Wight, 1921-96* we learn that his excavations in the 1970s found post-Conquest ditches forming a rectangular ringwork within the small Saxon burh and that these ditches had been filled in around the end of the 11th century. The first Richard de Redvers was granted Carisbrooke and the Isle of Wight *circa* 1100 and it seems likely that he constructed the motte and heightened the burghal banks to form the bailey of the castle. If there had been a post-Conquest ringwork at Christchurch,

Richard de Redvers could have done the same there; however, only archaeology can provide the answer.

Mottes are usually roughly circular in shape and surrounded by a wide and deep ditch, with the ditch being filled with water if a water supply was available. The summit of the motte would have had a wooden palisade around the edge with a wooden building or tower inside it. The bailey would also have been surrounded by a ditch connected to the motte's ditch. The material dug out of the ditch would have been used to form an internal bank with a wooden palisade on top. At Christchurch the ditches on the north and south side of the bailey would have joined the Mill Stream thus allowing the ditch to fill with water and form a moat. The ditch around the the motte at Plympton (another De Redvers castle) is now about 8 metres wide and about 2 metres deep. In the 12th century it would have been at least double the depth and probably narrower. At Carisbrooke excavations in 1967 found that the ditch around the motte had sides cut into the chalk at an angle of 45° and was at least 4 to 5 metres deep.

Several documents from the 14th, 15th and 16th centuries mention the northern ditch/moat and the castle gatehouse, with the latest I have seen being dated October 1579. These show that the ditch was behind the houses in the upper part of Castle Street and alongside the road in the lower half of Castle Street, while the gatehouse was near to the present entrance to the castle motte. As the gatehouse had to be in the bailey it must have been near to where the northern bailey ditch joined the motte ditch as at Plympton. At this point it is necessary to point out that a close examination of the masonry at the bottom of the doorway into the ground floor of the Constable's House, together with the present internal and external ground levels, indicate that the ground level surrounding the bowling green is now more than a metre higher than it would have been in the 12th century.

Regarding the southern ditch, our 2003 geophysical survey found a ditch-like feature at the eastern end of the public gardens south of the brick wall behind the bowling green in the area I had predicted it would be twenty years earlier. Many months after we had completed the report on our survey, we were provided with information which could locate the line of the ditch connecting the motte ditch to the southern bailey ditch. When the bowling club wished to move their clubhouse from the north side to the south-west corner in the 1980s, normal foundations could not be dug

because it was a scheduled site so it had to sit on concrete piles about 5ft (1.5m) square. For these, shafts were dug about 15ft (4.5m) deep into which concrete was poured. The excavated material showed the top 4ft (1.2m) was made-up ground, then came about 7ft (2m+) of refuse, with natural gravels below that. This seems to indicate that the 7ft refuse layer was filling in of the old moat/ditch with the top 4ft corresponding with the one metre plus difference in levels explained at the end of the last paragraph.

In the second half of the 12th century the important wooden buildings would have been replaced by stone buildings and the palisade would have begun to be replaced by a masonry curtain wall. I have seen documents dated 1263 and *circa* 1338 which list people who held land in return for defending Christchurch Castle in time of war.

The earls of Devon would have spent some of their time at Christchurch Castle, with documents showing that at least three of them chose to be buried in Christchurch Priory. Following the death of Baldwin, the 7th and last Earl of Devon, in September 1262 his widow Margaret held Christchurch Castle as part of her dower and lived there. Following her marriage to Sir Robert Aguillon in 1269 she and her husband are recorded as living there. Margaret died in 1292 and in November of the following year Christchurch became a royal castle for 37 years. When Edward I married his second wife, Margaret of France, in September 1299, he immediately gave her a large package of lands which included Christchurch and its castle. In the following August a survey of Christchurch was carried out on her behalf. The survey included the castle and described the Constable's House and its kitchen, the keep, a chapel and a small cellar outside the gate.

In January 1331 William de Montacute (later to become 1st Earl of Salisbury) was given by a grateful King Edward III, on the advice of parliament, a package of lands worth £1,000 per year (including Christchurch and its castle) for his service to king and country in the previous October. Following his death in 1344, his widow Katherine lived there some of the time until becoming a victim of the Black Death in 1349. While she was there the Prior of Christchurch allowed a bridge to be constructed over the southern arm of the castle moat in order to give her easy and quiet access to the priory.I believe this bridge would have been near to the bowls pavilion. Her son, another William, the 2nd Earl of Salisbury, is known to have lived at the castle at times and is thought to have died there in 1397 as his will was witnessed at Christchurch just five weeks earlier.

I haven't found any record of later owners living at the castle when it seems to have become just an administrative centre, and later on parts of it were allowed to deteriorate. Readers who wish to know more about the earls of Salisbury, their families and their heirs should read my book *Lords of Christchurch 1331-1480*s. Subsequent articles will deal with the motte, the keep and the Constable's House.

WHAT'S IN A NAME? HENGISTBURY HEAD

Philip Tate

In the April/May issue of the local *Christchurch Eye Magazine*, local historian Stephen Roberts made reference to the claim that Hengistbury Head was so-named because the Jutish leader Hengist had been buried there. This prompted me to revisit my own notes on the subject.

I also visited Wikipedia to review what it had to say on the matter. Although the toponymy for the Hengistbury Head entry detailed the headland's earlier names, it lacked any citations. I had a job to do!

The earliest known documented reference to Hengistbury (unless anyone knows otherwise) is found in the *Christchurch Priory Cartulary*. In a deed dated 1139-1141, Baldwin de Redvers, the Lord of the Manor of Christchurch, gifted Hedenesburia to the then minster church at Twinham. Variants of this spelling also appear in cartulary documents dated 1331 and 1337. I have therefore added a Wikipedia citation of *The Christchurch Priory Cartulary* (2007), edited by Katharine A Hanna.[1]

I believe that in the distant past I found a place-name translation of Hedenesburia – perhaps 'high headland fort' or similar – but I have been unable to relocate it. Does anyone have a documented translation?

Interestingly, my online research found an Anglo-Saxon charter dated 877 (*Cartularium Saxonium*, Vol.ii, No. 544) in which a Bishop Tunbiorht grants land at Nursling near Southampton to the refectory of Winchester.[2] One of the boundary landmarks is described as 'hedenes dene'. Unfortunately, in the article in the Proceedings of the Hampshire Field Club & Archaeological Society, 'hedenes' is not translated, nor is its precise location identified. Nevertheless, it was presumably a feature associated with a dene – a narrow river valley.

According to the Wikipedia article, in the 17th century another name for Hengistbury was Hynsebury. My online research traced this reference to *State Papers* during the reign of King Charles II.[3] On July 23 1666 it was reported that seaman from the Christchurch area considered that 'Bascombe, Bournmouth, and Hynsebury' were places where the enemy might easily land. The enemy at that time was the Dutch – with the French as their potential allies - the Second Anglo-Dutch War having begun during the previous year. It seems that the defence of the area comprised only 100 men under the command of a William Barrow. I have added the *Calendar of State Papers* as a citation.

The Wikipedia article claimed that the modern spelling of Hengistbury was dated to the 19th century. However, the same article made reference to Isaac Taylor's *Map of Hampshire* dated 1759.[4] In addition, my research found a letter written in 1777 by antiquary Francis Grose to the eminent amateur scientist Gustavus Brander, who resided at Priory House, Christchurch. In it he mentions the speculation that Hengistbury Head may have been named after the legendary – and possibly mythical – Jutish leader Hengist. This letter was reproduced in *Archaeologia*, the journal of the Society of Antiquaries of London, in 1779.[5] Of course, this association with Hengist, who according to the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle succeeded Vortigern as King of Kent and died in 488, has long been discredited.

Isaac Taylor's Hampshire 1759 (Old Hampshire Mapped © Martin and Jean Norgate 2002)

Nevertheless, this reference and citation has now been added to Wikipedia, correcting the assertion that the modern name dates to only the 19th century.

If any TCA members have additional information on this subject, I would happily revise Wikipedia further.

Citations:

[1] Hanna, Katharine A. (ed.), *The Christchurch Priory Cartulary* (Hampshire County Council, 2007). ISBN 1-85975-761-8.

[2] Crawford, O.G.S., Note on the Anglo-Saxon Bounds of Nursling, AD., 877 (*Proceedings of the Hampshire Field Club & Archaeological Society*, Volume 6, Supplement, 1913); https://www.hantsfieldclub.org.uk/publications/hampshirestudies/digital/1900s/Vol_6/Williams-Freeman%20_suppl.pdf

[3] Green, Mary Anne Everett (ed.), *Calendar of State Papers Domestic Series of the Reign of Charles 2* (Longman, Green, Longman, Roberts and Green, 1864); https://archive.org/details/bub_gb_fsAZVYdVK4UC/page/568/mode/2up

[4] Taylor, Isaac, *Taylor's Hampshire 1759;* https://www.oldhampshiremapped.org.uk/hantsmap/taylor4/TY22F.htm

[5] Grose, Francis, *Archaeologia, or, Miscellaneous tracts relating to antiquity* (Society of Antiquaries of London. Volume 5, 1779); https://archive.org/details/s2id13276630/page/236/mode/2up

---

HERITAGE RESTORED: THE HIGHCLIFFE CASTLE WALL REBUILT

Roger Donne

Regular readers of our newsletter may recall my interest in the listed former boundary wall to the grounds of Highcliffe Castle. In the December 2014 issue I wrote a short piece about this early 19th century wall and its unusual construction of 'Hitch's Patent Bricks' which was one of the reasons for its Grade II listing. The wall lies alongside the busy Lymington Road on the west side of Highcliffe and bears the scars of many traffic accidents. In our newsletter of March 2019, I reported that the wall had suffered quite

extensive damage due to a traffic collision resulting in the demolition of several metres of the wall and I despaired as to how this stretch of wall with its unique but obsolete brick design would be repaired – "just how it will be restored is a mystery"

Left: *The demolished wall;* ***Right:*** *The wall restored*

I am now very pleased to report that in January 2020, twelve months after the traffic accident, I observed that two bricklayers were in the process of rebuilding the wall, with a supply of bricks made to the original design of the Hitch patent. In conversation they told me that the batch of bricks had been manufactured from new moulds specially made for this job since of course the original bricks are no longer produced commercially.

With the completion of the rebuild we have now a restored section of wall, reproducing all of its distinctive features including the triangular buttresses and capping. Although preservation of an old feature is preferable to restoration, in this case there was little choice and the lighter colour of the repair distinguishes this section from the original. It must have been an expensive repair but as far as I am concerned a welcome restoration of our Highcliffe heritage, as can be seen in my photograph taken at the time (see above).

Since then the properties behind the wall have been demolished to allow for new development, which hopefully will continue to respect these unique aspects of our neighbourhood.

A CAT SKELETON AT MILLHAMS

Laureen Pearce

On Sunday 4th July 2021, Mike, Roger Donne, Steve and I were investigating Pit 61 near the greenhouse behind the donkey shed at Millhams. Mike wanted to investigate further after augering in the area and finding a hard, impenetrable layer, as described in his article above.

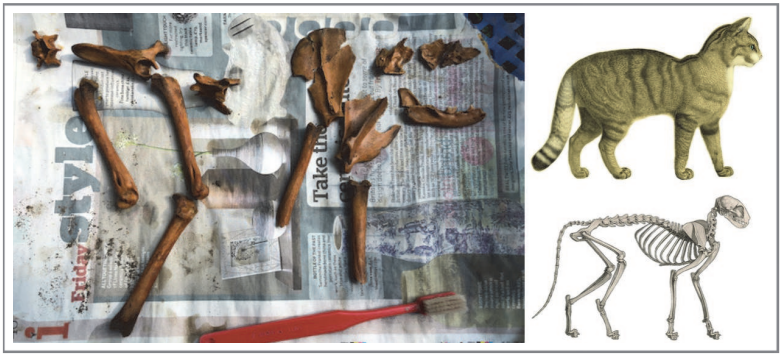
As Mike dug down, he uncovered a tight collection of small animal bones to one side of the pit. Throughout the site at Millhams, various bones of domesticated animals had been found, but since those showed signs of butchering and cooking, they were interpreted as the discarded leftovers of meals enjoyed by the previous occupants of the site.

The bones we found that day, however, were different. Mike pulled out enough to attribute to a single individual animal: five long bones, two shoulder blades, half a pelvis, two vertebrates, skull fragments and a jawbone (see photo), with the remaining bones probably still *in situ* within the walls of the pit.

Once the jawbone had been cleaned up, I noticed immediately the small sharp teeth, which seemed more consistent with a carnivorous animal than the herbivores we had previously uncovered. At first I thought it was a small dog, but to be sure, I started searching online for images of animal jawbones to compare it to. After a few minutes, I had found an image of a cat skeleton and matched all the bones. We had found the buried remains of a cat.

Cats threw their lot in with humans about 9000 to 10 000 years ago. Dogs on the other hand have been associated with humans for at least 15 000 years, so cats are newcomers by comparison. The earliest evidence of cats cohabiting with humans dates back to 7000 BC in China, 5300 BC in Crete and 4000 BC in Egypt, where they were worshipped as gods.

The small feline started appearing in artwork as early as 1350 BC in Egypt and in Greek art during the 4th and 5th centuries BC, primarily as mouse or rat catchers. During the Roman era, it seems cats did not enjoy the same status as dogs, as they were not depicted as frequently in Roman art. A rare depiction comes from a beautifully preserved 1st century AD Roman mosaic that was uncovered in The House of the Faun in Pompeii that portrays a spotted tabby catching a pheasant.



Left: *The Millhams cat bones;* ***Right:*** *An anatomical drawing of the skeleton of a wildcat (Felis silvestris), relative of the domestic cat (Felis catus), Wikimedia Commons*

The earliest evidence of a cat being viewed as a pet comes from a burial stele for a Gallo-Roman child who died in the 2nd century AD in the Bordeaux region of France. The stele depicts a small girl cuddling a cat close to her chest while a partial inscription identifies her as the daughter of Laetus.

The first cats to arrive in Britain came with the Romans, either purposefully included as useful pest-control on their boats, or accidentally as unwitting stowaways. Various Roman villa sites in York, Bishopstone, Lullingstone, and Rudston, dating between the 2nd and 4th centuries AD, provide some of the earliest evidence of cats being associated with British households. When the Romans finally left Britain in the 5th century AD, the cats remained behind.

Sadly, by the 14th century people's attitudes towards cats took dark turn. Widespread superstitions and fears about witchcraft resulted in a massive slaughter of cats which resulted in an increase in the rat population. It has been hypothesised that perhaps this act played a significant role in the spread the dreaded Bubonic Plague throughout England and Europe between 1346 - 1353. But this determined feline purred its way back in our homes and our hearts by the 1500s. Today there are more than 8.5 million pet cats in British homes alone.

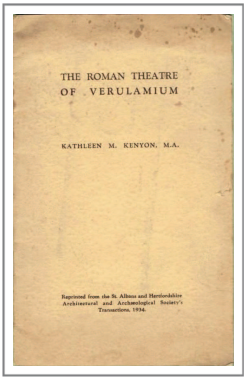
The Millhams cat skeleton is a testament to our love of house cats, possibly having being lovingly buried in a corner between the greenhouse and the

wall in fairly recent times. My guess is that it was sometime in the 20th century, in spite of the fact that it was lying in the Victorian layers.

When Mike, Roger and Steve were finished investigating Pit 61 they re-interred the bones in the process of re-filling the pit. Unfortunately I was not present that day.

FREE TO A GOOD HOME

Philip Tate


THE ROMAN THEATRE
OF VERULAMIUM

KATHLEEN M. KENYON, M.A.

Reprinted from the St. Albans and Hertfordshire Architectural and Archaeological Society's Transactions, 1934.

I have a 1934 copy of *The Roman Theatre of Verulamium* by Kathleen M Kenyon, MA that I would be happy to give to a good home. It's in reasonable condition: 20 x pages and 9 x b/w photographs.

If you're interested, please contact me on phil.pjt@btopenworld.com with your address and I'll put it in the post. First come, first served!

CONTACT DETAILS

If you would like to know more about The Christchurch Antiquarians, memberships or the articles published here, please contact the Chairman, the Secretary, or the Editor:

Chairman
Mike Tizzard
61 Jumpers Road
Christchurch BH23 2JS
Tel: 01202 476242
m.tizzard@ntlworld.com

Secretary
Roger Donne
15 Barnfield
Christchurch BH23 4QY
Tel: 01425 273333
tca@donne.free-online.co.uk

Editor/Treasurer
Laureen Pearce
Mob: 07947 753679
laureltree71@yahoo.co.uk

TCA website & blog: http://christchurchantiquarians.wordpress.com