

The newsletter for portable antiquities and finds in Kent.

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## Welcome!

finders, find specialists and everyone else interested in the archaeological finds of Kent. In this issue you will find the Kent Find Liaison Officer's schedule for the next quarter, info on new projects starting in Kent, a selection of finds from the last quarter and the first of a three part series, Kent is Wyrd', where we take a look at what artefacts make Kent, Kent

- **Editor: Jo Ahmet, Finds Liaison Officer for Kent.**

## FLO Finds Surgeries:

### July

12/07/2018 - Maidstone, Kent History and Library Centre, 1 - 6pm

19/07/2018 - Canterbury, The Beaney and Library 2 - 5.45pm (moving from the Beaney's explorers gallery to the Library meeting room 4:45pm)

30/07/2018 - Sittingbourne Library meeting room 1- 5:45pm. Please Note! This finds surgery is on a Monday.

### August

09/08/2018 - Maidstone, Kent History and Library Centre, 1 - 6pm

23/08/2018 - Hythe Library 1 - 5:45pm

### September

06/09/2018 - Tonbridge Library, 1 - 5:45pm

13/09/2018 - Maidstone, Kent History and Library Centre, 1 - 6pm

27/09/2018 - Margate Gateway, 1 - 5.45pm.



**KENT-74E1CA** - An incomplete worn and heavily corroded Medieval gilt copper-alloy Limoges mount from the pinnacle arm of a processional cross dating to c. AD 1150-1300.

This mount was found near a Knights templar chapel and would originally have been brightly decorated with enamel and gilding. making the eagle motif stand out.

Recorded April 2018, by the FLO.

### **A Note on Finds Surgeries -**

*The schedule as always is provisional and may be changed at short notice . Do keep an eye on email and social media for confirmation*

## Talking Tremisses - Hints of gold in Kent

Gold Tremisses, the gold coins originally introduced during the 380s by the Roman Emperor Theodosius I and worth a third of a solidus are rare in Britain, with the Frankish and possible Anglo-Saxon copies being the more common finds than their Roman and Byzantine prototypes. These 'pseudo-imperial' issues and related facsimiles are by far the most common of the Frankish and Anglo-Saxon types but it should be noted more distinctly Germanic inspired designs with runic inscriptions and more abstract decoration are known.



**KENT-BDF44E** - A hardly worn Early-Meideval gold tremissis of 'national civic' series originating in Northern Frankia (modern France/Belguim), possibly minted at Silvanectis (Senlis, France) by the moneyer 'BABBA' or 'BVBBA', c. AD600.

This coin is one of only two of the type known, the other is in the Bibliotheque Nationale, Paris (1992/129 BNF).

Record approved May 2018. recorded by Volunteer AW

These coins remain quite rare in Britain, however Kent is one place in Britain where finders are most likely to come across them, with four being reported to the FLO already this year. This has led to extensive research interest, with the likes of world respected professor Dr. Anton Pol. He helped ID the Tremissis in this issue and will be visiting to investigate further coins during the Autumn of 2018.

While here Dr. Pol would like to invite people to come and join him at a session identifying and ID checking tremissis as well as investigating the gold of these fantastic coins.

If interested please get in contact with the FLO and keep your eyes out for more details soon.

### Other FLO Visits

#### Metal Detecting Clubs:

24/07/2018 - Medway History Finders  
MDC

11/08/2018 - Mid-Kent MDC

11/06/2018 - Royal Phoenix MDC

## Want to contact the FLO or keep up with Kent\_Finds News?

With so much going on and crop just coming off the fields it can be a bit tricky to find time to get to see the FLO or dig out their contact details. Fear not the FLO is easy to get hold of at :

**Email** - [FLO@Kent.gov.uk](mailto:FLO@Kent.gov.uk)

**Contact No.** - 03000 410053

You can also keep up to date with what the FLO is up to or working on by following them on

**Twitter** - [@Kent\\_finds](https://twitter.com/Kent_finds)

There is also the new Kent\_Finds blog, where you can find more articles, past issues of the newsletter, previews of Kent is Wyrd and info about the Kent\_Finds team.

**Blog** - <https://finds.org.uk/counties/Kent>.

## Want to nominate a find of the month?

Tweet the FLO [@Kent\\_Finds](https://twitter.com/Kent_Finds)

Or Email

[FLO@Kent.gov.uk](mailto:FLO@Kent.gov.uk)



**KENT-AA1B15** - A complete knapped probable gunflint blank, from of Post-Medieval date, c.AD 1600 - 1900, could be produced.

This is the only example of a gunflint blank recorded on the PAS database. Most known examples of these blanks, from which finished gunflints were produced are known from areas known for gunflint production such as Norfolk, this example coming from Kent is therefore unusual.

Object recorded in June 2018 by the FLO

## Ask An Archaeologist Day –19th July

Got a question about archaeology you want to put to an archaeologist or curator? Email in or tweet using the hashtag #AskAnArchaeologist, @AskAnArchDay (Twitter).



# ROMNEY MARSH

— THE FIFTH CONTINENT —

Lucie Bolton writes

## The Fifth Continent's Heritage projects have kicked off with three exciting projects across Romney Marsh!

### Our three projects are:

**Geomorphology and Landuse** - On this project you can learn a variety of skills such as geophysical and earthwork surveys, historic characterisation, historic buildings and photographic surveys. Training will be provided in workshops which will be run in the next few months.



**KENT-4C55A0** - A Silver penny of King William I, Minted at Romney!

**The Hunt for Romney Port** - This project will help to discover the most likely location of the original Romney Port. On this project you can take part in every aspect of an archaeological investigations from the initial desk-based research using historic sources through to field-walking, survey weekends, test pitting weekends and interpretation.

**Sentinels on the Marsh** - This project aims to help local people to gain a better understanding of Romney Marsh's historic churches. This includes the role they played in shaping the communities and landscape of the Marsh. Next summer we will be excavating St Martin's Church in New Romney!

We are still looking for more volunteers. If you would like to get involved and get more information please contact the Project Heritage Officer.

**Lucie Bolton** - [Lucie.Bolton@kentwildlife.org.uk](mailto:Lucie.Bolton@kentwildlife.org.uk)



**KENT4911** - A copper-alloy mid-late medieval seal matrix of the Vicar of Ivychurch, found in the environs of St. Martin's.

# Kent is Wyrd!

## Part One: The Bronze Age Kent

### The wonder in the weird -

In this first of a series on what makes Kent, well Kent, Dr. Sophie Adams talks Bronze Age Hoards in Kent. She also reviews new discoveries being made thanks to finds reported to the PAS and through the Treasure Act 1996.

Large; heavy; unusual objects; rare collections; intriguing finds...the Portable Antiquities Scheme record of Bronze Age Kent is full of hoards: abundant, immense, well-preserved and frequently found. These range from pairs of Middle Bronze Age axes in pits, to heavy collections of copper ingots and broken objects buried in the Late Bronze Age. They span approximately 750 years of human activity (from about 1500 – 750 BC). Hundreds of years of people making objects from molten copper, tin and lead; people

using those objects and burying them complete; people making and breaking objects or never finishing those which they have made. Hundreds of years of 'shed' projects, the half repaired classic cars of prehistory, the abandoned artworks, the loved tools worn beyond use.

A quick search on the PAS database for Bronze Age hoards show this is not a phenomenon exclusive to Kent, nor is it exclusive to Britain and from across the channel the hoards in Britain can seem quite meagre. But for England and Wales, Kent's Bronze Age hoards stand out. They account for 7% of all Treasure cases dated to the Bronze Age recorded with the Portable Antiquities Scheme since 1997. Last year, of the 51 Bronze Age Treasure cases reported to PAS, 20% were found in Kent. The Kent finds are awesome: they amount to an enormous collection of metal artefacts, some gold, but most bronze. They are almost universally odd: not always fitting the general pattern for Britain. They provide a wonderful window into the technological achievements of the time, connecting us to the Bronze Age communities of the past.

### Awe inspiring finds -

The awesome range of material from Kent can be almost entirely represented by the largest hoard of Bronze Age objects discovered in the county: the Boughton Malherbe hoard, found in 2011. It has been dated to the Late Bronze Age between about 850 – 750 BC (KENT-15A293) (**Fig.1**). Placed in a small pit were axes, bits of swords, decorated plaques and jewellery; all cast from bronze.



**Fig. 1, KENT-15A293, The Boughton Malherbe hoard.**

These were accompanied by other tools, pieces of copper ingot and bronze casting waste, fragments of moulds in which the objects were cast (yes, bronze moulds, for making bronze objects – blows your mind!); and, at the top of the pit, a layer of complete copper ingots, one weighing over 7kg. Almost the entire panoply of shiny metal items in use over 2770 years ago. A collection in weight equivalent to a small adult (64kg; just over 10 stone). This is the portable made un-portable.



**Fig 2.** The only complete valve of a mould for casting end-winged axes to be found in Britain

Study only this and you stand a good chance of recognising every contemporary type of axe, sword and woodworking tool in southern Britain and northern France. It informs us about how the objects were made and the ways in which they were used but it leaves open the question why they were gathered together and buried here on a hillside on the north downs.

In the Boughton Malherbe hoard the moulds are particularly unusual: less than 60 Bronze Age bronze moulds are known from the whole of Britain and Ireland. They have only occasionally been found in Kent. The best preserved were discovered in the nineteenth century in a hoard on the Isle of Harty along with the axes and gouges cast in them. The Harty finds are now tucked away in the Ashmolean, Oxford. The Boughton Malherbe hoard has been acquired by Maidstone Museum and some of the key pieces are on display. These include the only complete valve of a mould for casting end-winged axes to be found in Britain (**Fig 2**). This beautiful object is decorated on the outside and hints at the possibility that these axes could have been cast in England as well as France.

## The wonderful -

In November 2017 a local detectorist discovered three Middle Bronze Age axes of palstave type in topsoil near Otterden, Kent. Encountering further strong signals hinting at more bronze objects further down, the Finder contacted the Kent FLO for assistance. Together with the tenant farmer, Community Archaeologist Andrew Mayfield and a dedicated, hardy team of KCC volunteers from the Shorne Woods Archaeology Group, they braved chill winds and frozen fingers to carefully excavate the site of the find. Their efforts were rewarded when, after initially encountering a number of scattered palstave axes they uncovered an intact, in-situ bundle of them, placed cheek by jowl (**Fig. 3**). Incredibly these palstaves had lain almost undisturbed for over 3000 years, despite a Second World War military hut having lain across the top of them!



**Fig. 3.** The Otterden Palstaves, lower undisturbed levels still in situ.

They capture a moment in time when someone gathered them by hand, perhaps tied them together with cord, and carefully laid them side by side, layer by layer in the ground. A tight cluster of axes, some worn, others not even sharpened ready for use. Some were old when buried, others new. Does this group intentionally or accidentally represent the Bronze Age community: the young and the old? The opportunity to carefully excavate and record them in situ is of great benefit to understanding this curious practice of putting useable and useful bronze objects in the ground.

## The weird -

The latest conundrum comes from the discovery of two hoards of flattish, irregular-shaped pieces of bronze found crammed into Late Bronze Age pots. The first was discovered in 2016 at Preston; it contained 929 pieces totalling 12.5kg of metal ([KENT-DA6E86](#)) (Fig.4). The second, weighing 16kg (2½ stone), was uncovered in 2017 on the Lees Court Estate (2017 T897). At both sites archaeologists assisted with the recording

and final excavation of the hoards. Thank goodness for the pots, without these ceramics and a few sword chape fragments in the Lees Court find, we would be struggling with issues over the dating the finds. The Preston pot was placed upright in the ground, but the Lees Court pot was positioned upside-down. Both vessels would have been difficult to lift when full. The bottom of the upside-down pot was missing when reported to the archaeologists and it is not clear whether it was buried with or without a base. If the latter then the metal pieces could have been poured in through the open base after the pot was buried, which would have been easier than upending the full pot. An up-turned pot *with* a base could be a good way of hiding valuable metal in the ground, but one *without* could have related to Bronze Age ritual practices. Perhaps this denoted this metal to the ground, or sending it into the upside-down world below. And what about an *upright* pot filled up? Clearly these need more investigation.

## The wonder in the weird -

For me, hoards are about communities past and present. The bringing together of objects, bringing together of people, having conversations: the dedicated detectorists, the diligent diggers, the agonising academics; children, adults, makers and breakers. We might be a bit weird round these here parts but that can be wonderful.



**Fig. 4.** The Preston Hill Hoard, as it was first discovered.

## Dr Sophia Adams, June 2018 -

Sophie started her archaeological career in Kent and has worked on a number of projects and Bronze Age hoards in Kent, including Boughton Malherbe. She is now doing post-doctoral research at the University of Glasgow.