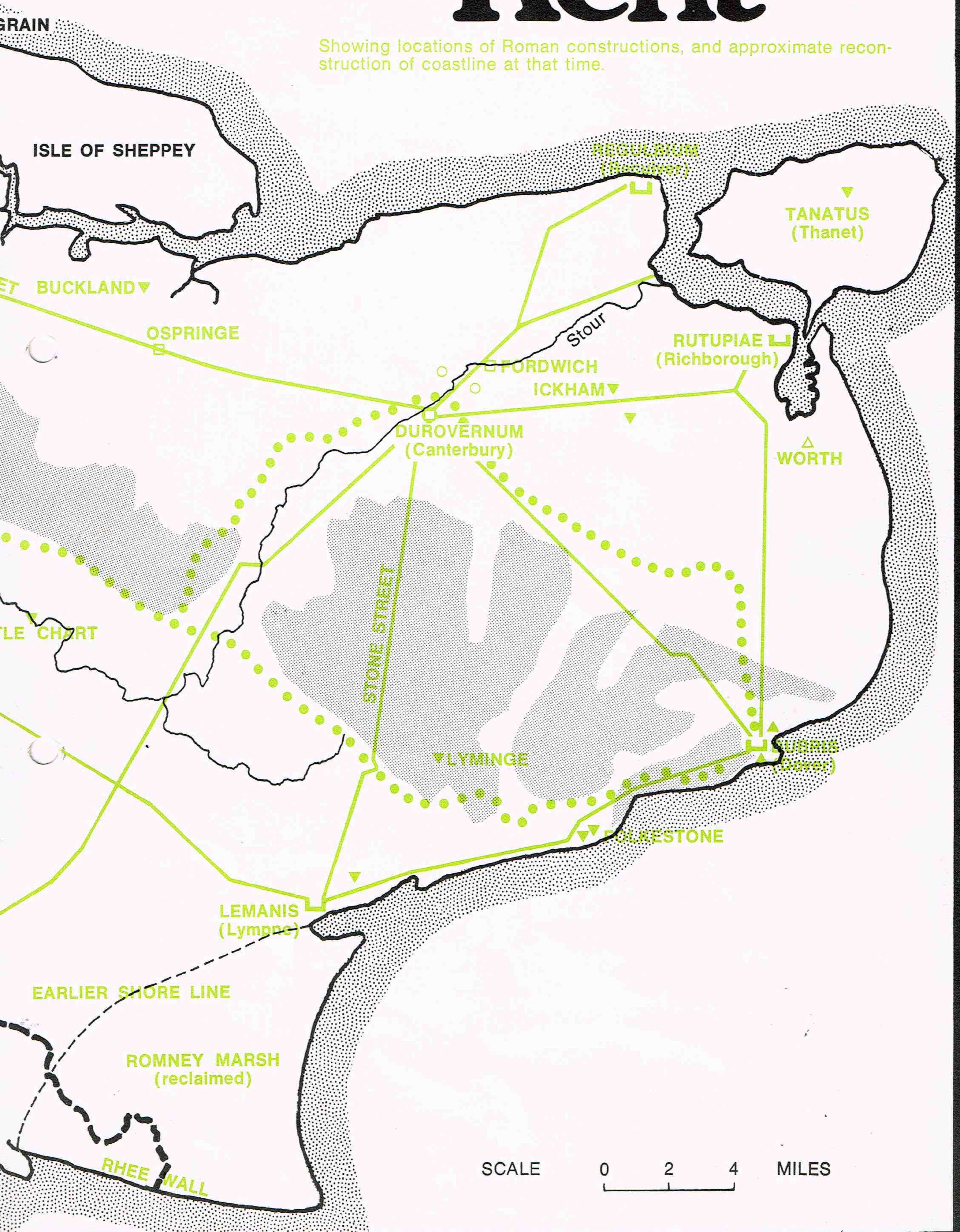
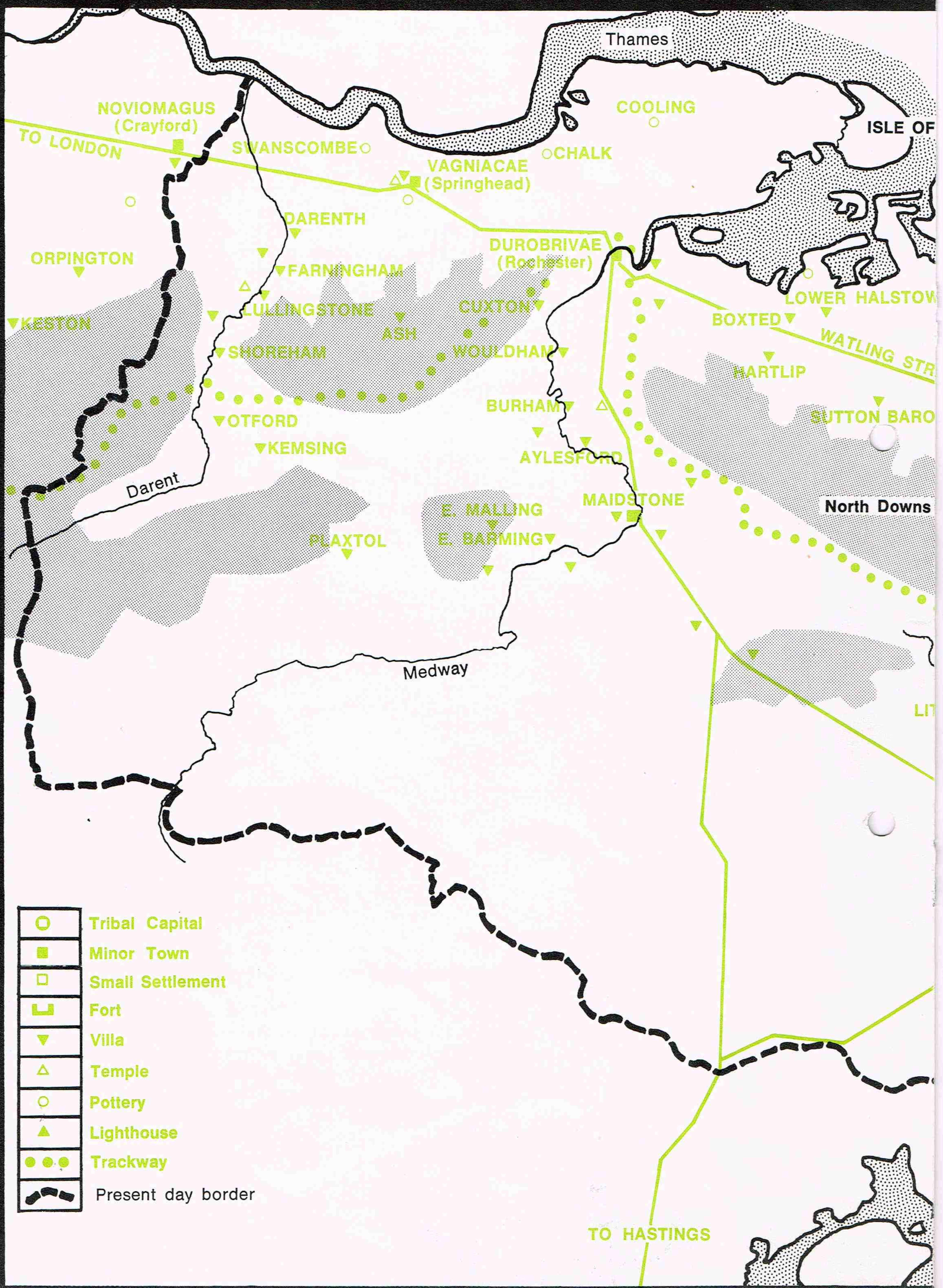


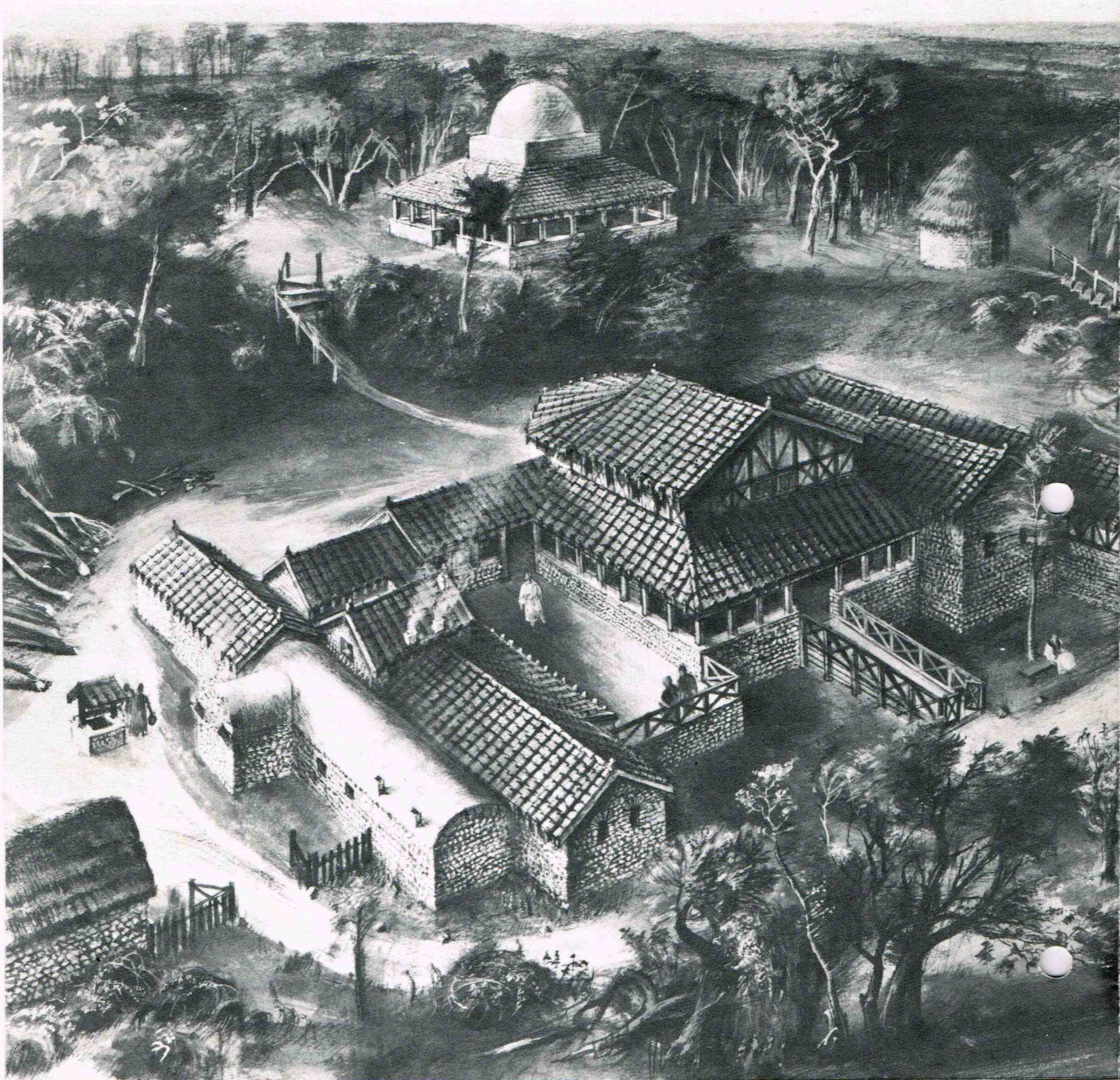
Kent

Showing locations of Roman constructions, and approximate reconstruction of coastline at that time.





- Tribal Capital
- Minor Town
- Small Settlement
- ▭ Fort
- ▼ Villa
- △ Temple
- Pottery
- ▲ Lighthouse
- Trackway
- Present day border



Lullingstone Roman Villa

by Lt. Col. G. W. Meates, FSA
Director of Excavations

The Roman Villa at Lullingstone was discovered in 1947 as a result of an archaeological survey of the Darent Valley, and this was confirmed by a reference in a book, "Custumale Roffense", published in 1788 by John Thorpe the Antiquary, which recorded the finding of a Roman mosaic floor at the north gate of Lullingstone Park when posts for the Park fence were being inserted. Excavation at this point began in 1949 and continued for thirteen consecutive seasons. The results were

spectacular, and have added much to what already was known of country life in Roman Britain. These main discoveries will be described later in detail.

The survey showed that Romano-British villas occupied sites along the valley from Dartford to Otford. These villas were at intervals of about 2½ miles, and the Lullingstone Villa is situated half-way between the two places. Both Dartford and Otford, with Farningham, consisted of a considerable group of buildings of the Roman period which

of the Wall but in A.D. 306 died while reorganising the northern defences from Eboracum (York). He was succeeded by his own son Constantine who spent some further time in Britain before leaving on a series of campaigns to make himself complete master of the Roman world. Perhaps Constantine's greatest contribution to Britain came later: it was under his rule that the Roman state embraced Christianity as the State religion.

Under Constantius and Constantine the defences of Britain had been set in somewhat better order: the Wall had been restored, the fleet modernized to combat the never-ending threat from the sea and the forts begun by Carausius strengthened as first line of coastal defence as the Saxon Shore Forts (an article later in this issue gives a full description of these forts in Kent.) For some fifty years this improved state of affairs gave Britain an uneasy peace. The Picts and Scots from the north gave moments of anxiety: the Picts (or "painted ones") were the descendants of those Caledonian tribes who had virtually forced the building of the two northern Walls; the Scots were a later import

pire of the West as his own. To support his claim on the Continent he took the garrison troops with him, stripping the northern defence line. This time when the Picts and Scots attacked the Wall, they were not driven back. The end however had not quite arrived. Another general, named Stilicho, came from Rome. Again the power of the northern tribes was broken, again the shore defences were strengthened. But the respite was short. Four years later Stilicho left, taking with him the best troops: Rome herself was threatened by the barbarian Gothic hordes. Stilicho was victorious but never returned to Britain: in A.D. 408 he was murdered on the orders of the Emperor whose Empire he had saved. In Britain confusion reigned. The remnants of the army set up one leader after another: two were murdered in the process. The third crossed to Gaul to substantiate his claim and took with him what was left of the garrison force. His vain attempt left Britain defenceless. After his defeat and death the Romano-British citizens appealed to Rome for help, but the Emperor Honorius had troubles enough of his own with the Goths hammering at his gates,

The 'London' medallion of Constantius



having crossed the sea from Northern Ireland to take up residence in northern Britain. Unable to defend everywhere at once the government tried to make them allies by allowing groups to colonise land in the province. The move did not have a great deal of success: in A.D. 367 the Picts poured across the Wall in a massive invasion, the Scots followed along the north and west coasts and the Saxons swept into the south-east. The situation was critical. The Count of the Saxon Shore (in charge of the coastal defences,) was killed, as was the Count of Britain, the governor of the province.

The situation was only saved when the Imperial Government in Rome sent a capable general, Theodosius, to Britain to take charge and drive out the invaders. This he did: the Wall was again restored, the east coast defences again strengthened. Timely as it was, Theodosius' intervention gave only a short breathing space. Nearly twenty years later a general named Magnus Maximus took a leaf out of Carausius' book and claimed the Em-

and told them they would have to look after themselves.

It is not certain that this ominous note of A.D. 410 was the final gasp of Roman power: the south and east of the country might have been later re-occupied. By A.D. 429 this desperate effort (if indeed it ever took place) had finally failed and Britain was on her own: no legions, no fleet and no "Pax Romana" to defend her. The Saxon raiders saw their opportunity: no longer were raids and booty sufficient, colonisation and land became their aims. As the sea-wolves crowded onto the shores, Britain fought back as best she might. But the Saxon power was not to be denied and the light of the Romano-British cause flickered but fitfully after the legions had left.■

In the next issue: The First Saxons