

Bridge: Presentation.

Occurs: Domesday (Brige) as the name of a hundred. Not as a village - it is evidently part of Patrishorne -

Domesday Monachorum mentions (Brygge) a church. Earliest remaining parts of the church are late 12th c.

Importance of Bridge a) as a crossing of the river Nailbourne and consequently b) as a resource for travellers

- Not a farming village

The road through the village is of course the Roman Road from the road base in Dover to Canterbury, though the way across the downs is even earlier. There was therefore probably a small settlement of sorts in Roman times. After the Roman occupation the road fell into disuse, like many others, and the route to the Downs went via Patrishorne: the road from Canterbury still exists & continues to the Downs via a prominent hollow way.

When the route returned ~~to~~ to Bridge there were evidently enough people living and working beside it to justify a new chapel and a new parish, though this was kept as subsidiary to Bridge.

- ① So this is the street today - but where is the Bridge?
- ② Ca 1916 view from more or less same spot shows the bridge. Little else is changed. - even the railings at right are still there.
- ③ A Close-up of the bridge - incl. water-splash to cool horses and wheel-rims. Pub on each side of the river. Note keystone. Bridge built late 18th c (in arch with turnpike?)
- ④ Still in position - keystone visible also gradients of roads
- ⑤ Synnards map of Kent, 1596 earliest depiction. Note mill, Court lodge at throat stream, Name Blademansbury & Hautborne. also Beovare / Barakere
- ⑥ Ogilby map of the Dover Road. Houses clustered around the Bridge - more on Dover side! Various odd names which appear nowhere else
- ⑦ Schellin's drawing of the street in 1661 - Bridge, Farm, Whitehouse & adjacent buildings still there

The convenience of the road, and access to good water (several springs

accounts for several large houses along its course here

- (8) Charlton
- (9) Oswald's (Courage)
- (10) Bourne 1704
- (11) Bridge Place 1638 (Adrian Ocher)
- (12) Tho' the road was not all that good. Bridge place, church & Higham visible (Sichellius again)
- (13) Higham - this part put on in 1920's, but has 14th c origins  
whigham of Higham
- (14) Bifrons built by John Burgrove ca 1620, demolished in 1770's rebuilt & altered - bought by Conyngham in ca 1830: Lady C a friend of Geo IV v. fond of jewels.
- (15) Most notable resident of Higham was Count Louis Zborowsky, racing enthusiast & owner of original Chitty-Chitty Bang-Bang killed at Le Mans 1920's. Story of village being started up. Story of Jacob Epstein & village children.

- (16) Higham Special 27 litres!
- (17) Hill House. Bought by Charles Louis Secondat Baron Montesquieu in 1794, while still in use as Racing Headquarters of Cartesbury Races
- (18) Thom Rowlandson. Races ceased in 1876 - then golf course. started in 17th
- (19) Course Map. Note names and places. Crowds of thousands - also used for hustings and elections (vs Penenden Heath for W. Kent)
- (20) Bridge a village of shops to sell to all these visitors (e military)  
Mrs Johnson's shop
- (21) Edwards butcher - (2 butchers in village till 1980's - impossible to cross the road when it was the main road to Europe.
- (22) ~~The workhouse was the centre of wood: boots & shoes - esp important in WW1~~ when many soldiers camped here (incl. S. Sassoon). <sup>Grand</sup> Daughter of <sup>marriage</sup> bootmaker to Cartesbury <sup>course</sup> ~~course~~ <sup>course</sup> still lives here.
- (23) Workhouse was also used as a billet for soldiers in WW1 built 1834 it served ~~22~~ 22 parishes all round county  
Sassoon  
Newson an infantry officer



- (24) Being located on an intermittent stream, sometimes there is no water, sometimes there's too much!, most recently in 2000
- (25) But it's a long time since we saw snow this deep (1947)
- (26) Sketch map of whole parish. Note contrast of boundaries: NE to Patrochwa SE through woods, NW field boundaries as the wood was cleared.
- (27) P'house Street, similar situation: Right side of road is in Belsham cut & covered
- (28) The railway 1884 - 1947: high point the Boche Buster 250 tons stored in Borne tunnel. Fired 3 times. Damage to houses in Borne & Kington. Extra sleepers had to be put in (18 inch naval gun) largest <sup>railway</sup> gun in Europe.
- (29) Bridge Stn: still exists as a private house, as does Bish' lane which you will see
- (30) Most notable recent change in Bridge by-pass, campaigned for for over 10 yrs. (1976: Opening Caroleade
- (31) Bypass celebrations: thought this would remove traffic: for from it - High St now clogged with parked cars, esp at school opening & closing times
- (32) Archaeology: plenty to do!

**Unfortunately Dr Paul Wilkinson is in Turkey so I will be reading his paper instead**

**Slide 1: Aerial view of Bridge**

In 2004 the Bridge Historical Society invited the Kent Archaeological Field School (KAFS) to investigate an enigmatic cropmark at Star Hill just to the south-east of Bridge.

The cropmark visible on this aerial photograph in the bottom left-hand corner is in the shape of a hexagon (point). To the right is the route of the Roman road from Dover to Canterbury now followed by the modern road. Note how it changes alignment on top of the hill to the north of Bridge.

The village of Bridge straddles the road and also the Roman river crossing over the Little Stour. The chalk hills surrounding Bridge have revealed over the last few centuries an archaeological eldorado of Saxon graves: to the north-east Bifrons, to the south-west Kingston, and now Star Hill.

**Slide 2: Kent Sites and Monuments**

Before the Kent Archaeological Filed School began its investigation, a check was made of the known archaeology. In the 2004 request to KCC burial mounds were itemised as were crop-marks, shown in blue, but no hexagon is shown.

**Slide 3: Kent Site and Monument**

However, in the 2006 request from KCC the system had been upgraded and the Scheduled Ancient Monument was now shown, but still no hexagon which is to the left of the purple zone of the scheduled area.

**Slide 4: OS Map of Bridge**

The modern Ordnance Survey Map showing the site of Star Hill (point) in relation to Bridge and the Roman Road. It is unfortunate that the archaeology discovered some twenty years ago on the

Bridge By-pass (point) has still to be published. The discoveries included Bronze Age, Iron Age, Roman and Saxon sites.

### **Slide 5: Caesar in Kent**

The hexagon at Bridge is documented by English Heritage as a "probable World War II emplacement", but Francis Vine writing in 1893 had other ideas.

1896-7

### **Slide 6: Vine Map**

He thought the hexagon was a fort (point) dating from the Roman period surrounded by other elements of Caesars camp – including another hexagon – which the Kent Archaeological Field School have also found.

### **Slide 7: Aerial Pic**

He may be right about the date, but not the function. Here a 1946 aerial photo shows the hexagon (point) and also the still surviving Anglo-Saxon burial mounds built on the Roman road. These have now been ploughed out and have disappeared.

### **Slide 8: Another Aerial Pic**

A later aerial picture from the 1970's shows where the barrows were, but also shows surviving ring ditches of Anglo-Saxon burials (point). The hexagon is just below, to the right of them and shows up spectacularly. It is about 30 metres across, the sides just under 16m long, the width of the ditch about two metres. There are rounded corners to the hexagon and no apparent entrance.

What is it? Is it unique?

### **Slide 9: Pluherlin**

Well it's not unique; at Pluherlin we have a cropmark almost the same size as Star Hill. *near Redefort en terre / Norbihon*

### **Slide 10: Alise** - *Saint Reine*

*at Dijon*



Also at Alise-Sainte-Reine

**Slide 11: Cocheran**

Also at Cocheran

*Cocheran? nr Sasbachheim*

**Slide 12: Niederbronn** *- les-bains*

Also at Niederbronn

*also nr Sasbachheim an  
Genne Boudel*

**Slide 13: Aerial pic - hex**

They all appear like this in the landscape. Here you can just make out other square enclosures to the right of the hexagon, and if you remember back to the sites and monuments slides of Star Hill there was also square enclosures to the right of the hexagon.

What are they?... They are of course a well known type of Romano-Celtic temple or mausoleum.

**Slide 14**

Investigation of Star Hill by the KAFS immediately revealed the hexagon ditch, here to be seen in the foreground. The location is important. It is on a hill with a view, the Roman road is to the left in the line of trees, whilst to the right you can see the valley of the Little Stour.

**Slide 15: Close-up of ditch**

A close-up view of the same scene shows in detail the hexagon ditch. Note how the inner face has been shaped (point).

**Slide 16: Ditch Corner**

The corner of the hexagon ditch has been beautifully carved. On the outside rim a series of post-holes are being excavated by archaeologists.

### **Slide 17: Centre Pit**

In the exact centre of the hexagon was a 3 metre wide circular pit (point) surrounded by a square cut into the chalk – seen here on the right.

### **Slide 18: Ditch**

The fill of the hexagon ditch was mainly chalk with very little organic material suggesting the ditch had been re-filled after only a short period of use – certainly less than a year.

### **Slide 19: Close up – Ditch**

Here you can have a close look at the fill - note there is no organic material at the back of the ditch.

### **Slide 20: Hexagon ditch**

Further investigation in the south-east corner of the hexagon revealed Saxon graves clustered around the periphery of the hexagon.

### **Slide 21: corner of Hex**

Same area but look at the exquisite workmanship in carving the corner of the hexagon. At the bottom right you can just see the foot of a Saxon grave. (point)

### **Slide 22: Grave cutting hex / 5 copy**

It was important to understand the relationship of the Saxon graves to the hexagon. Did the graves cut the hexagon, or did the hexagon cut the graves?

The evidence retrieved is emphatic: The Saxon graves cut the hexagon, so the hexagon must be earlier than the Saxons. But how early?

### **Slide 23: Graves / 7 copy**

The graves you have just seen continued in a family group to the south-east. Treasure was found- gold, silver, glassware, spears, brooches, necklaces, silver coins but very little skeletal remains.

In fact so much treasure was found it was important to retrieve these artefacts so they would be safe, available for study and displayed in museums.

### **Slide 24: Graves with people**

It is important to remember we know very little about the Saxons, or indeed the Franks, we have little written evidence, so it is only by the study of their day to day objects that we can begin to understand them. But we must remember they were people like you or me with lives lived and loved ones lost. We, and I mean archaeologists must treat such discoveries with compassion and try and juggle both academic demands but also demands of the local community.

### **Slide 25: Grave 7 / Hex**

I said earlier that the Saxon graves cut the hexagon: here is one such example. If the hexagon was later than the Saxon grave it would have disturbed it.

### **Slide 26: Hex cut by grave**

It didn't. The skeleton and grave goods were still in situ. Indeed if you look closely (point) you can see the grave infill cutting the hexagon infill – excellent evidence that the hexagon was dug first.

### **Slide 27: Gold**

Grave goods included gold pendants.



### **Slide 28: Gold**

Here at the moment of retrieval.

### **Slide 29: Bridge Glass**

Glass palm cup – miraculously intact, and the finest so far found in Kent.

### **Slide 30: Palm Cup / Spear**

Here cleaned in distilled water. Above it a small spear awaiting x-ray and conservation at the British Museum.

*30a another view*  
*30b. Faunett Inventorium Sepulchrale*

### **Slide 31: Spear**

The objects have been drawn and are awaiting inclusion in the interim report.

### **Slide 32: Grave Finds**

Frankish pottery from the late 7<sup>th</sup> Century. *describe*

### **Slide 33: Bridge as Pot**

Again drawn up

### **Slide 34: AS pot**

With the decoration shown in detail.

### **Slide 35: Gold Pendant**

Gold! Worth a fortune but modern archaeologists will think more of what it tells us, rather than what it is worth.

### **Slide 36: Gold Faversham**

Evidence is accumulating that such gold items were made at Faversham. This item was retrieved from Kings Field in Faversham by William Gibbs, the local grocer who paid the labourer about 2 shillings for it.

### **Slide 37: Kingston Brooch**

Less than two miles away from Star Hill at Kingston this wonderful brooch was dug up in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, again probably made at Faversham.

37a Wiltred Coin  
37b Septimius Severus coin  
37c A bead.

### **Slide 38: Bridge 06**

*isally*  
We returned to Star Hill at Easter 2006 and our Research Design was structured – controversially to open a series of liner test pits on a grid. This is not a strategy used before in the UK, but is cost effective, and also works.

### **Slide 39**

Features are exposed and once the extent of these features plotted areas can then be focused upon. Here you can see the outline of three graves cut into the chalk exposed by this method.

### **Slide 40: Star Hill**

Indeed there were so many features a 50m strip and map was undertaken and over 98 graves exposed. But not only graves, Star Hill had been occupied since 6000 BC. Dozens of Neolithic tools and post-holes were discovered. Bronze Age structures and an Iron Age settlement with its own permanent ditch. The site had been densely occupied for over 8000 years – the Saxons were the last in a long line of people to occupy the hill, living or dead.



### **Slide 41: Bridge 06**

Unfortunately the hill had been severely damaged by ploughing, here you can see the score marks left by the plough. This meant all of the Iron-Age and early Saxon cremation urns were smashed and scattered.

### **Slide 42: Bridge 06**

The first task was to clear off the chalk surface and record the features.

### **Slide 43: Bridge 06**

You can see in this slide how densely packed the features are – cremation pits, Iron Age post-holes, a Bronze Age fence and graves, and more graves.

### **Slide 44: 06 / 32**

In consultation with English Heritage and the British Museum and prior to scheduling it was decided not to excavate the Saxon graves but concentrate on the prehistoric features. Here students of the field school are excavating and recording features.

### **Slide 45**

Even the graves were meticulously recorded.

### **Slide 46**

Special attention was made to prehistoric post-holes and over 2000 prehistoric shards of pottery have been retrieved which will allow us to phase different occupations of the site.

### **Slide 47**

The bases of cremation urns with some contents did survive the ploughing – this particular one is Iron-Age.

### **Slide 48**

This fence structure is unique, pottery dates it to the middle bronze age – slots for split wood posts packed with clay have survived in the chalk.

### **Slide 49**

The amount of information, compared to earlier excavations on Saxon graveyards in the area is staggering. We have everything from Neolithic flint tool manufacture to a Romano-Celtic sacred site, from middle Bronze Age farming to an Iron-Age settlement. And cluttering it all up are hundreds of Saxon graves, from huge barrows, to smaller ring ditch barrows, to family groups.

### **Slide 50**

We have had the time and resources to sample, and record to a level seldom achieved on such sites in the past.

### **Slide 51**

It has been an amazing opportunity for archaeological students embarking on their careers to be involved in an excavation of such excellence.

### **Slide 52**

New methods of recording have been tested in the field.



### **Slide 53**

Field drawings show the complexity of the site.

### **Slide 54**

With Saxon ring ditches, Iron-Age structures and rubbish pits.

### **Slide 55**

In all – in an area 50m x 20m over 2500 separate contexts were recorded, drawn, photographed and sampled.

### **Slide 56: Childs Grave**



























































Unfortunately our work at Bridge did stir up a hornets nest: English Heritage alone received 18 requests to stop the work, a number of local residents mounted an orchestrated campaign to stop the work. Do they have a point? This Saxon child's grave with its few remaining bones – should it have been left in peace?

### **Slide 57**

My answer is a resounding NO! We move into the future by looking back at the past.

Discussion on who we were, where do we come from, what does it all mean are important to us and long may it continue.

Dr Paul Wilkinson can be reached at [info@kafs.co.uk](mailto:info@kafs.co.uk) on his return from Turkey

- 1/Bridge/AP west 
- 2/bridge SMR 2004 copy 
- 3/bridge SMR 2006 copy 
- 4/Bridge OS. map copy 
- 5/Caesar in Kent/book cover 
- 6/Vine map/2 copy 
- 7/Bridge ap/EH copy 
- 8/Bridge/Kent/AP/colour 
- 9/Pluherlin 
- 10/Alise-Sainte-Reine 
- 11/Cocheren 
- 12/Niederbronn 
- 13/.jpg copy 
- 14/Bridge03/98 
- 15 
- 16/Bridge 2003 copy 
- 17/Hex centre pit/Bridge copy 
- 18/Bridge 02 ditch/hex copy 
- 19/Bridge hex 02 copy 
- 20/Bridge hex copy 
- 21/hex corner 05 copy 
- 22/grave cutting hex/5 copy 
- 23/gravers/7 copy 
- 24/graves with people 
- 25grave 7/ hex copy 
- 26/hex cut by grave copy 
- 27/Bridge/gold copy 
- 28/Paul with gold copy 
- 29/Bridge/glass/ grave f 
- 30/palm cup/spear /Bridg 
- 31/Bridge/spear/G 3 
- 32/Bridge/grave eleven copy 
- 33/Bridge.AS.pot. copy 
- 34/Bridge/ASpot/decoration 
- 35/gold pendant/bridge copy 
- 36/GOLD.Faversham copy 
- 37/Kingston Brooch copy 
- 38/Bridge/06/linearss copy 
- 39/Bridge/06/ liner/graves 
- 40/star hill march 006 
- 41/Bridge/06/31 copy 
- 42/Bridge/06/18 copy 
- 43/Bridge/06/41 copy 
- 44/Bridge/06/32 copy 
- 45/Bridge/06/33 copy 
- 46/Bridge/06/39 copy 
- 47/Bridge/06/24 copy 
- 48/bridge/palisade/06 
- 49/Bridge site cop 
- 50/bridge/records/06 
- 51/surveying cop 
- 52/hex/03/sectio 
- 53/Bridge site plan/5 
- 54/Bridge site plan 1 
- 55/Bridge site plan/3 
- 56/bridge/childs grav/0 
- 57/bridge05/25 co 
- Bridge/06/35 cop 
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