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THE BUILDER OF BIFRONS

In their interesting note on the excavations at the site of Bifrons in Patrixbourne, R. Cross and T. Allen say that the original house 'was erected either by Sir Robert Bargrave (*id.* 1600) or by his son, Sir John Bargrave' (*Arch. Cant.*, cvii [1989], 328), but neither Robert nor John, nor any other member of the family, was ever knighted.

In his will Robert Bargrave describes himself as Robert Bargar, of Bridge, yeoman, but he was also a tanner there and was buried in the chancel of Bridge church on 4th January, 1600/01, as was his wife Jane, daughter of John Gilbert, of St. Peter's, Sandwich, late in 1603. He had directed in his will, which was dated in 1598, that he was to be buried with his father at Patrixbourne, but he apparently changed his mind. He was identified with Bridge, where he had his tanhouse, rather than with Patrixbourne, and of his eleven children all were baptized at Bridge, except the last three, who were baptized at Patrixbourne, beginning with his son, George, on 2nd April, 1586.

John, the eldest son of Robert, was certainly of Patrixbourne and, moreover, he did not inherit his father's tanhouse at Bridge, although his eldest son was baptized there in 1598. Of his seven remaining children, five were baptized at Patrixbourne, but Sarah, the fifth, was baptized at Tilmanstone, on 8th November, 1607, and John, the sixth, at Nonington, on 18th November, 1610, suggesting the family's absence from Patrixbourne during that time. Their father is reputed to have been the builder of Bifrons, and it would appear from these details that he was, and that the construction was carried out in the period 1607 to 1611. It was in September 1611, too, that John Bargrave, alias Bargar, of Patrixbourne, had a grant of arms from Camden, Garter.

The possibility that John's father, Robert, built Bifrons cannot as yet be ruled out, but is contrary to tradition and not really supported by the existing evidence. One interesting aspect of the matter is the sudden rise to riches of the Bargar, or Bargarves, of Bridge, because before John, certainly, and Robert, possibly, the family were of somewhat humdrum station in Willesborough. Wealth may have come through John's marriage to Jane, the daughter and co-heir of Giles Crouche, of London, about 1597.

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THE TRUST FOR THANET ARCHAEOLOGY: EXCAVATIONS AND EVALUATIONS, 1989-1990

*The Thanet Way Improvement Scheme*

Mentioned briefly in last year's volume, the Romano-British site at St. Nicholas Court Farm, St. Nicholas-at-Wade (Thanet Site and Monument Register No. 304) produced further occupation evidence, which included a small round isolated section of flints on rammed chalk, measuring 1.50 m. in diameter and numerous pits and ditch sections. These contained large quantities of pot-sherds which are currently being studied. Preliminary indications suggest the site was occupied from A.D. 50/75 to A.D. 200/250, peaking at around A.D. 150/200.

A small number of medieval pottery sherds *c.* twelfth-fourteenth century were also recovered as were some Early to Late Iron Age sherds.

*Road Improvements at the Lord of the Manor junction of the A253 (Canterbury Road) and the A256 (Haine Road)*

The scheme involves bridging the valley sloping down from the Late Neolithic and Early Bronze Age enclosures and barrows that straddle the Haine Road at this point. This aspect of the scheme provided an opportunity to investigate the interesting prehistoric evidence which might be preserved in the downwashed soil horizons along the valley bottom. Four 'boxes' each measuring 3 x 3 m. were excavated to subsoil. Only boxes 1 and 2 were of archaeological interest. Just below modern topsoil a layer of chalk nodules was observed to cover the whole surface of the box. Finds indicated a nineteenth-century date and suggest that this may be a scatter from the railway cutting of 1846. A layer of flints with sherds of Late Bronze Age/Early Iron Age pottery *c.* 600 B.C. was encountered 1.40 m. from the surface in box 2; this was surprising, but not disappointing, as it had been thought that much earlier horizons would be found. We may conclude that prior to 600 B.C. these slopes were perhaps wooded or pasture and not prone to soil erosion and downwash.

As the route of the new road would pass through unexcavated areas of an important archaeological site, it provided three opportunities: (1) to establish the western boundary of the famous 'Ozengell' Jutish cemetery, (first discovered in 1846). Jutish graves had been encountered during the 1977 excavation of the Late Neolithic enclosure, and it was not known whether any further graves existed to the west; (2) to return to the north-west quadrant of the