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The Faversham Society  
Archaeological Research Group

Community  
Archaeology

## Searching for the Kings Manor: HSX19

An investigation into the archaeology of 38 (KP181) and 68 (KP182) Park Road, Faversham as part of a wider project related to central Faversham in Anglo-Saxon Times

Grid references:

KP181: TR 01848 61053

KP182: TR 01885 61192



Fig 1: A beginning and an end: Left, opening up KP181 and right, backfilling KP182.

## PART ONE: GENERAL BACKGROUND

### 1. Introduction

The 2019 FSARG project follows on from the 2016-18 research, which was an attempt to identify the site of the Saxon Royal Manor in upper Faversham. A document of AD811 named Faversham as the 'Kings little town' and the town market dates to this time.<sup>1</sup> In the 1860s an exceptionally rich early Saxon cemetery (AD550-700) was discovered in the area near Faversham railway station when the line from London to Dover was being constructed.<sup>2</sup> In earlier projects, FSARG had found archaeological evidence for a mid-late Saxon settlement down in the Stonebridge Crossing area which we see as the working merchant town.<sup>3</sup> Now we are looking for the Royal Manor itself.

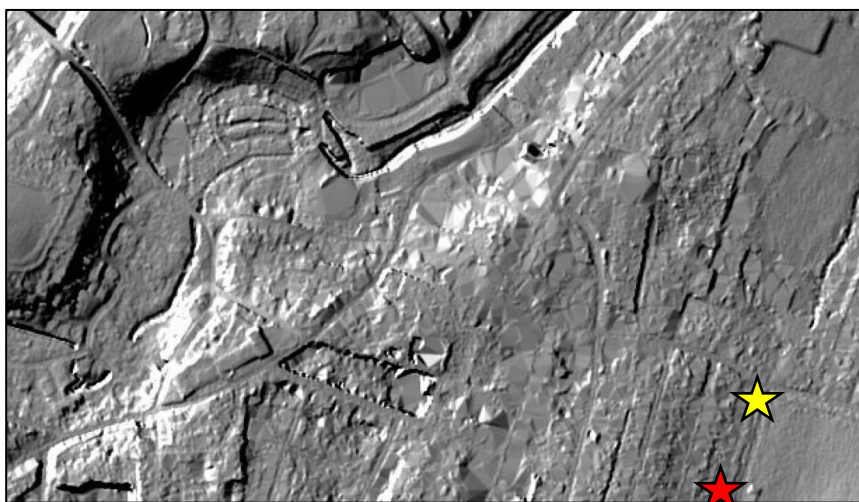
In 2016 our starting point in the search was a single piece of evidence for domestic occupation in the upper town. This was a mid-Saxon loom weight found on a bomb site in East Street which was being cleared in 1953 to build the present-day Post Office. So far, on two nearby sites we have found mid Saxon Ipswich ware and have identified a possible Saxon chalk floor and post holes.<sup>4</sup> These have led us to realise that the Gatefield Lane - Cross Lane route was probably the Saxon 'High Street'. Now we are looking closely at the zone around Gatefield-Cross Lane, except where it has been dug-off for brickearth for the brick industry (AD1860-1920s – see **Fig 2a** LIDAR map for the location of dug-off areas in Faversham).

In 2018 significant early Anglo-Saxon settlement evidence was found in a keyhole pit in the grounds of the Market Inn. This year we returned to the Market Inn to dig a much larger area<sup>5</sup> and are also using Keyhole pits to explore nearby locations such as along Park Road (see **Fig 3a-e** for details).

### 2. Geographical and historical background

#### a) Geography

The land between the Westbrook and Cooksditch valleys is a slope running down from 24m altitude at Watling Street to the south to 9m at St Marys church and 7m at Standard Quay, a total distance of 1.5km. This slightly higher ground falls away to either side, westward to the Westbrook Valley and eastward to the Cooksditch, both streams running overall south to north. The Cooksditch nowadays rises in a spring to the east of St Marys School and runs down past the Abbey Barns, to join Faversham Creek at Iron Wharf, Grid Reference TR 012354 62131. There is some evidence that the Cooksditch originally rose up near St Catherines church and was cut short by the creation of the Recreation Ground in 1862.<sup>6</sup>



**Fig 2a: The LIDAR map<sup>7</sup> shows the relief of the land in Faversham town centre, with the 'dug off' areas showing up very clearly. Key as in Fig 2b.**

<sup>1</sup> Ward G 1933 The Topography of some Saxon charters relating to the Faversham District. *Archaeologia Cantiana* 60 1-14

<sup>2</sup> Reid P 2018 *Faversham in the Making* Oxbow: Oxford pp72-76

<sup>3</sup> [www.communityarchaeology.org.uk](http://www.communityarchaeology.org.uk) 'Hunt the Saxons' 2007-9 TP1

<sup>4</sup> Op.cit. 'Investigating the development of the Town Centre' 2016 KPs 141, 146,147

<sup>5</sup> Op.cit. 'Searching for the Kings Manor' Open Area 186.

<sup>6</sup> FSARG website [community-archaeology.org.uk/](http://community-archaeology.org.uk/) archaeological investigations / *Preston a most peculiar parish* 2013-15/ Preston Farm report p5

<sup>7</sup> DEFRA LIDAR survey

## b) Geology

The gentle downward slope to the north is related to underlying chalk dipping northwards to disappear under Thanet Beds and then under London Clay. Overlying the chalk, however, is a layer up to 2-3m thick of superficial deposits, laid down during the last major glaciation. The superficial (Head) deposits are important for human settlement.



**Fig 2b: Geology map of the Park Road area.**

KP181: ★

KP182: ★

Blue:	Thanet Sands
Orange:	Head gravels
Light green:	Chalk
Yellow;	Head brickearth
Cream:	Alluvium

In this part of Faversham, the superficial deposits are mainly distinctive yellow-brown Head Brickearth, usually overlying a gravel superficial deposit. The Kentish Stock brick industry flourished in the Faversham area between around 1850 and 1920, and large areas around and in the town under later housing development have been 'dug off', removing all except the most recent and most ancient archaeology.<sup>8</sup> In the LIDAR map in **Fig 2a**, the large 'excavations' in the lower centre are 'dug off' areas. Central areas have, however, escaped this destruction due to their pre-1860 enclosure of plots.

The most recent superficial deposit in this area is alluvium in the Westbrook and Cooksditch valleys. The Cooksditch valley lies just to the east of this area.

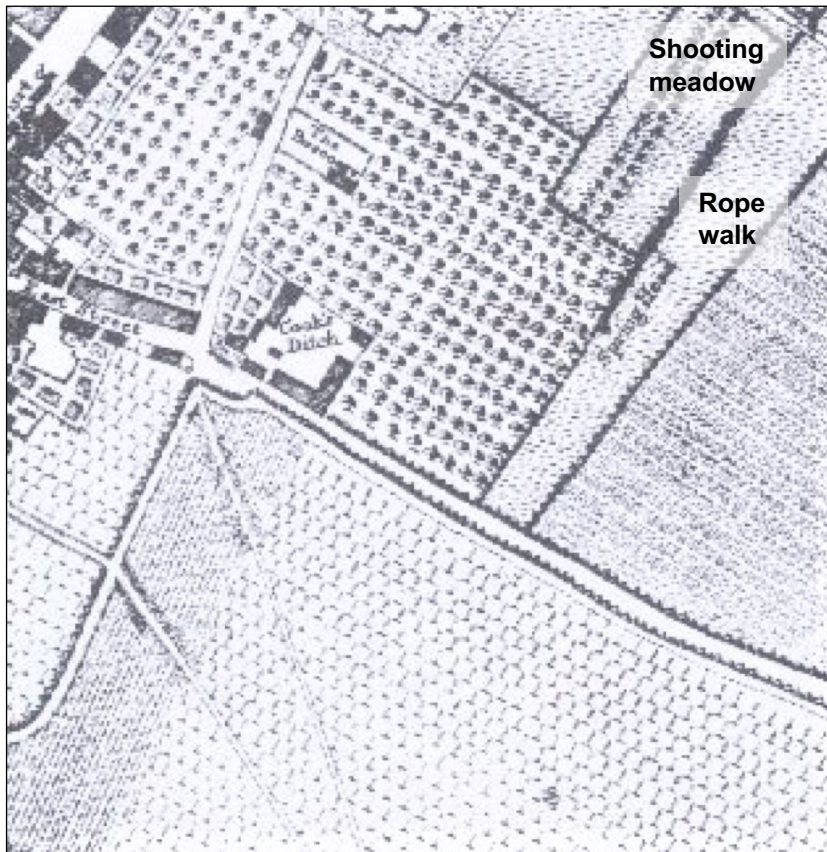
## c) Known historical background

On Jacobs 1774 map<sup>9</sup> (**Fig 3a**) the area the area is occupied entirely by hop fields. There is little change between then and 1842, except that Cooksditch House has acquired more outbuildings, including a large barn (see **Fig 3b**). The drastic changes that then happen swiftly are best seen in the map succession shown below, the only major factor not shown being the coming of the railway, just to the south, around 1860.

<sup>8</sup> TWIST Sydney 1984 *Stock Bricks of Swale* The Sittingbourne Society: Sittingbourne, Kent

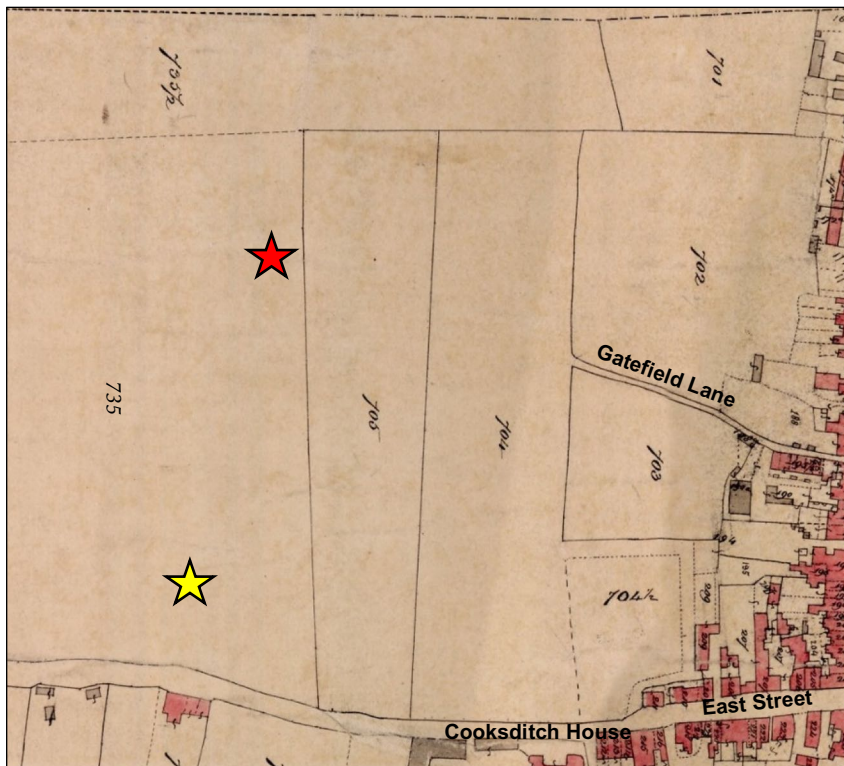
<sup>9</sup> Jacob, E 1774, republished 1991 *History of Faversham* Faversham Society: Faversham

**Fig 3: Map succession for this area.**



**Fig 3a: Jacobs map of Faversham in 1774.**

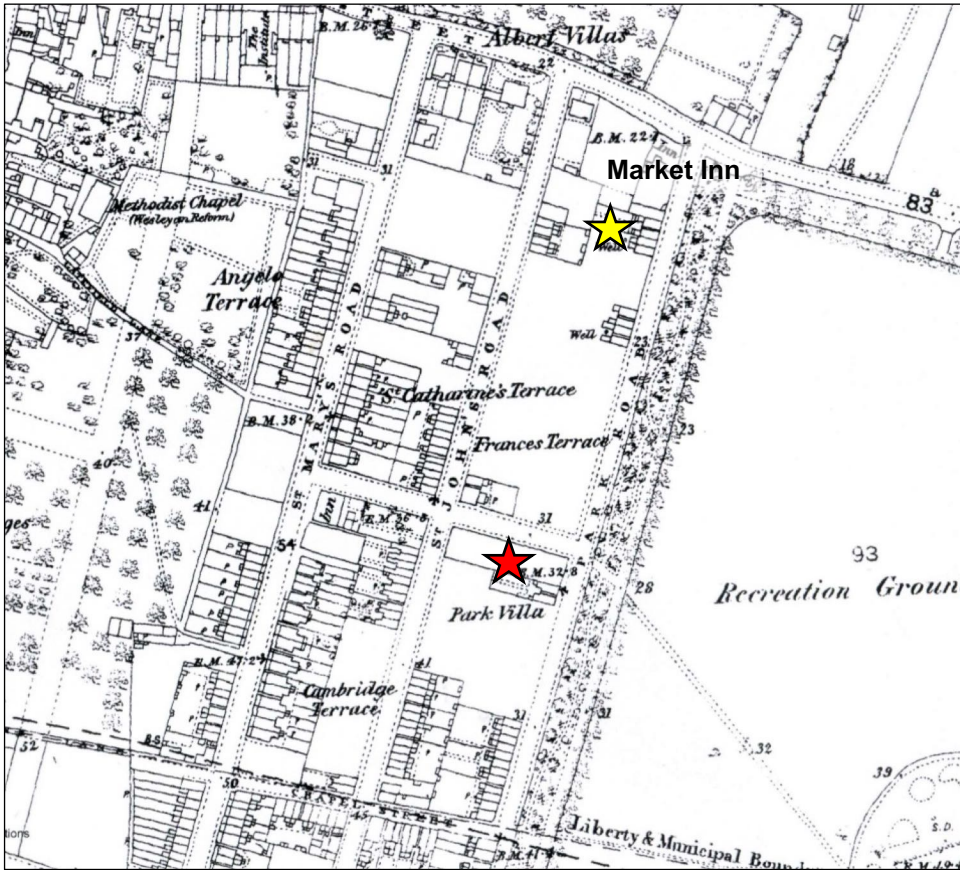
Gatefield Lane and Church Lane are prominent routeways. The fields to the east of the town centre are under hops (tall, thin) orchard (trees), arable (dotted lines), or meadow (dots). The spring head shown to the north of East Street is the start of the Cooks ditch, same as now.



**Fig 3b: The 1842 tithe map. Unlike all of the other maps used here, the north is at the bottom of the map, not at the top.**

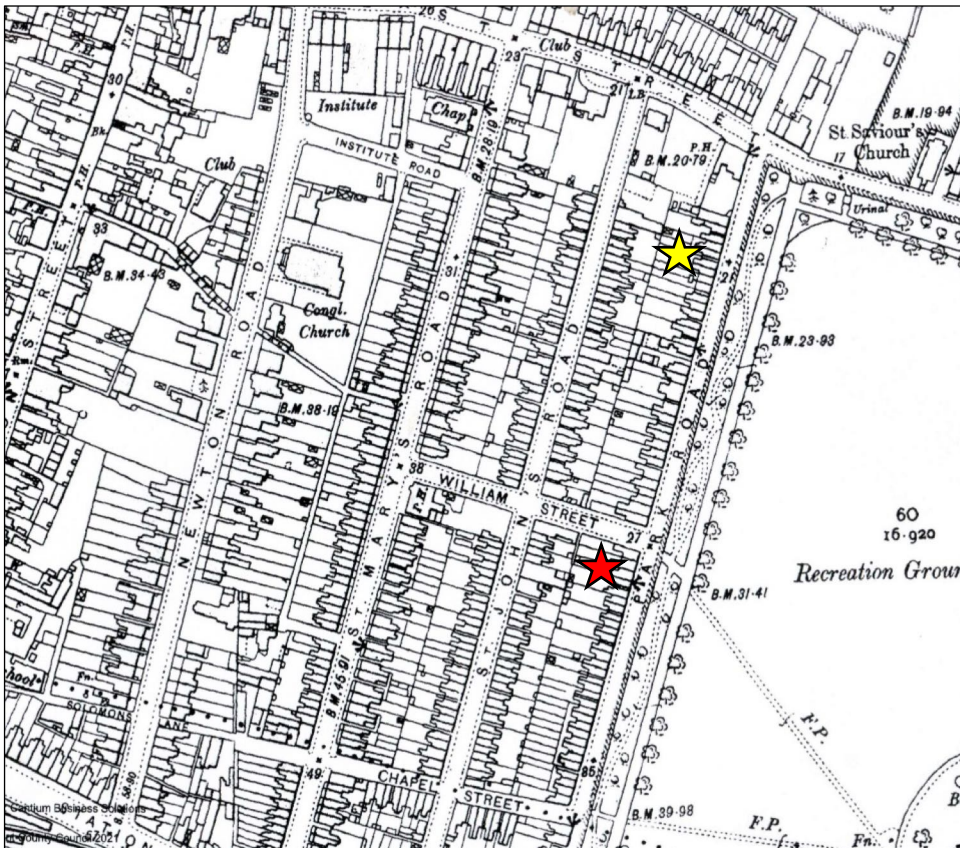
Elizabeth Simpson is the owner of Cooksditch House, which has acquired barns and other outhouses. Charles Neame belongs to the brewing family. Together they own most of the land in this area. John Shepherd is the other member of the Shepherd Neame ownership whose brewery dominates Faversham to this day. The area of interest is completely empty except for agricultural uses.

Map No.	Owner	Tenant	Land use
735	Elizabeth Simpson & Charles Neame	herself	Gate Field: arable
705	As above	herself	Front Meadow
704	As above	herself	Front Meadow
703	As above	herself	Garden
702	John Shepherd	Edward Elsey	Buildings and Orchard



**Fig 3c: 1871 OS map.**

Only 29 years later than the tithe map, development is taking place rapidly. St Marys, St Johns and Park Road are laid out and acquiring houses, one little group of terraces at a time. The Recreation Ground was set up in 1862 and the Market Inn built around 1864. Newton Road, however, is yet to arrive.



**Fig 3d: 1907 OS map.**

The build-up of the area is now nearly complete, with St Saviour's Church arriving in the north. Newton Road is nearly fully developed with the Congregational Church and the Institute dominating its northern end. The line of Gatefield Lane can, however, still be clearly seen. The Recreation Ground is now almost the last remaining open space.



**Fig 3e: OS map 2020, up to date at the time of writing.**

At first glance this seems to have changed little from the 1907 map, although it is 113 years later. Actually, the Institute and the Congregational church have disappeared, the former replaced by shops and the latter by a small block of flats. The last space in the north, next to the Cooksditch source, has been filled in with retirement housing. St Saviour's Church has become the Hot Tin Roof venue. The Recreation Ground has acquired some public lavatories and a small car park. The plot next to the Market Inn has, however, survived as a space (which, happily, gave FSARG access to the important findings of OA186).

The ancient Gatefield Lane, however, remains a conspicuous routeway, cutting across the modern street pattern, though not open to modern traffic. Off to the left (west) side of the map, crossing Preston Street it becomes Cross Lane and leads straight across and down Napleton Road to Anglo-Saxon Febresham and a ford crossing of the Westbrook. This then leads on to the crossing of Oare Creek, then on to Conyer and Milton Creeks and eventually to the Rochester crossing of the Medway. Gatefield also leads south eastwards directly to Watling Street and Macknade, a manor mentioned in the Domesday book, 1000 years ago. This map is a fascinating combination of the ancient and the relatively new.

## PART TWO: THE EXCAVATIONS

These were both small keyholes, very much preliminary excavations.

### KP181: 38 Park Road, Faversham

#### 1. Excavation

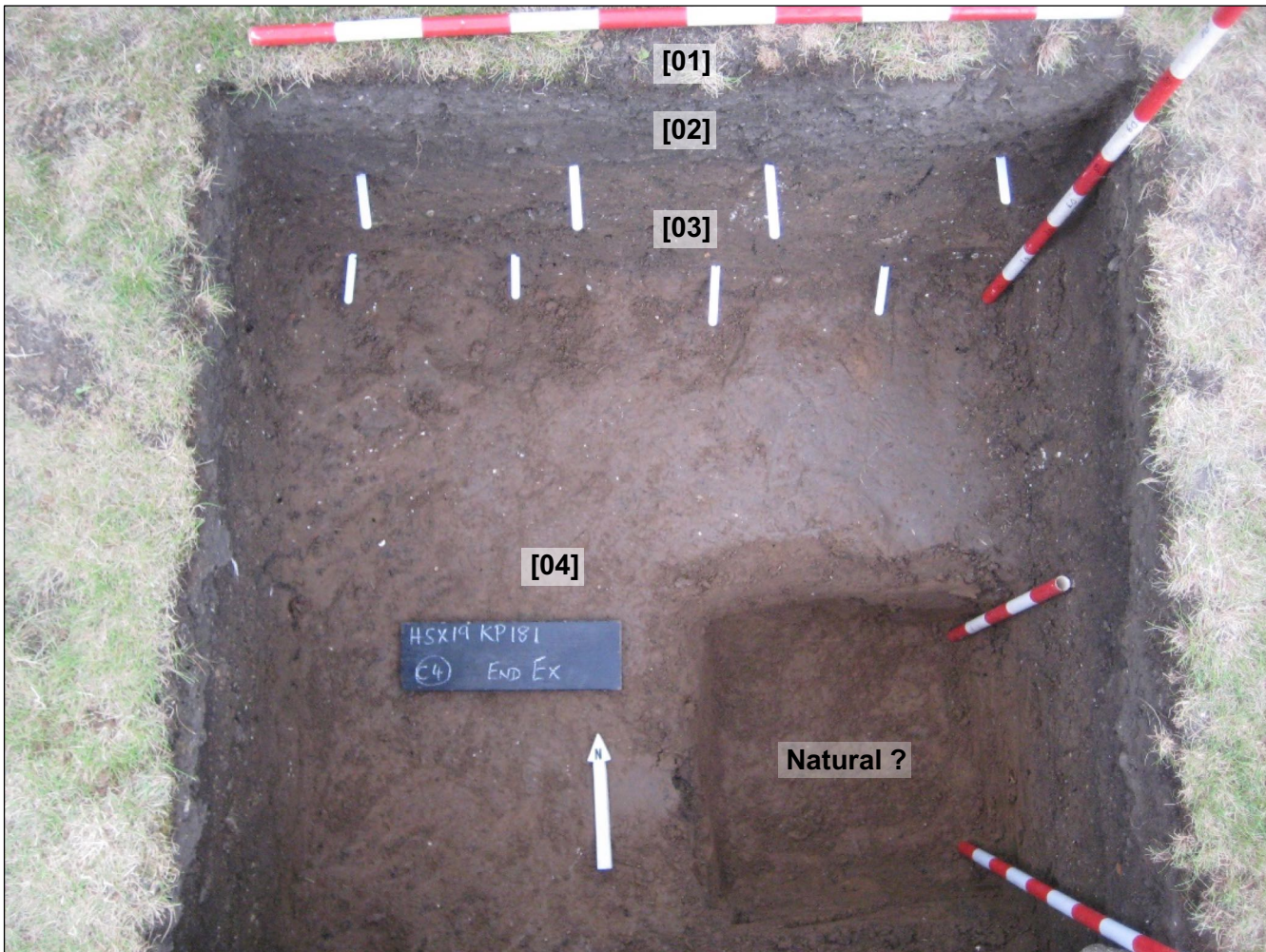
A 1m x 1m square was laid out (see **Fig 1**) and its location measured in using the rear of the property. The turf layer context [01] was then removed. Context [02] was dark greyish-brown, ashy and friable and was easily trowelled. It contained a variety of items such as builders rubble, glass, clay pipe fragments (including 9 bowl fragments) and some worked flint. The pottery sherds covered a wide range in age – although mainly Early Modern e.g. transfer ware and Redware, there were a few sherds of post medieval such as Bellarmine and Midland Black and even medieval spot-glazed and early medieval Tyler Hill shelly dusted. Most surprising of all for an uppermost context were a Roman sherd and a sherd of Anglo-Saxon organic tempered (see **Appendix 2** for details). Small Finds from [02] included a pearly button and a military button, both dated to the 20<sup>th</sup> century and another military button dated to around 1803, also a bone fragment (see **Appendix 3** for details on all Small Finds).

At a depth of 32cm, the deposit altered to something closer to garden soil with chalk flecks and this became context [03]. There was much less building material and ash, although still some coal fragments. The pottery was still dominated by Redware and Early Modern, although still with one Roman sherd. Three Small Finds were identified – a small ceramic dolls head, a stone rod and two black glass beads – again, details in **Appendix 3**.



**Fig 4:** The top surface of context [03], with [02] completely removed. The contrast between [02] and [03] can be seen in the pit wall.

At a depth of around 60cm the soil became more typical brickearth – yellowy brown with vertical black streaks created by worm holes and roots. The finds content here was very limited, but still mixed in date with early modern sherds and a mid-medieval shelly ware sherd, a tiny clay pipe stem fragment, a few iron nails. The most frequent find was, however, worked flint and heat stressed flint – see **Appendix 4**. Excavation ceased at a depth of 95cm as the brickearth began to resemble the natural undisturbed deposit.



**Fig 5:** End of excavation, with the lowest levels of [02] and [03] marked in the pit wall with tabs. The nature of [04] is visible on its surface and in the sondage. The base of the sondage is natural brickearth [05].



**Fig 6:** The dolls head from context [03], date uncertain but probably early 20<sup>th</sup> century, based on the hair style.



## 2. Interpretation

The map succession in **Fig 3** shows clearly that this area was empty of settlement until the building of the present house in the mid-late 19<sup>th</sup> century. Although the building of and use of this property accounts for the brick and tile, coal, iron nail, 19<sup>th</sup> early 20<sup>th</sup> century pottery (see **Fig 7**) in the upper layers, it is too recent to account for the post medieval content – the pottery, clay pipes, the early military button.

In other keyholes in this area, which was covered in hop fields in the 18<sup>th</sup> century (see **Fig 3a**) we have found similar finds – similar in date and type. It is interpreted as the debris of the hop pickers, bringing their stoneware pots with them as ‘packed lunches’. Similarly, they would have enjoyed the odd pipe-smoke as they took a break.

The worked flints are so ubiquitous in Faversham keyholes we are in danger of taking them for granted. An overall look at prehistoric settlement up to the early Iron Age is being planned at the moment (May 2021) and will bring together the worked flint finds for Faversham and what they reveal about those early settlers.

Finally, there is that early Anglo-Saxon pottery sherd. We will return to that in the final interpretation in Part 3.

### KP182: 68 Park Road, Faversham

This was a training excavation, with instruction in the basic practical aspects of excavation and recording findings.

#### 1. Excavation

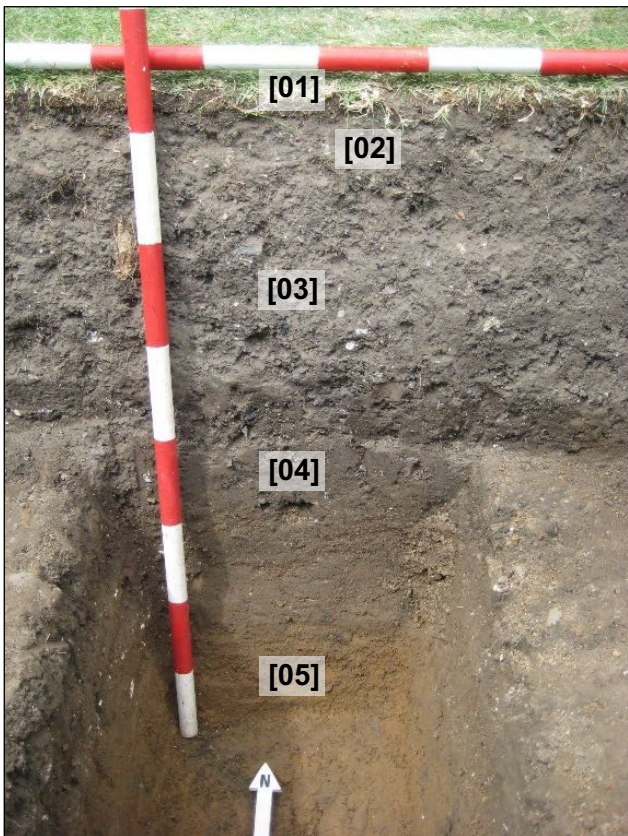
A 1.5m x 0.8m Keyhole was marked out with string and measured into the property. The turf was then removed - context [01], down to 5cm. Rubble was immediately visible underneath in context [02]. [02] was removed using forking to loosen the hardness and rough sieving rather than detailed, and was a dark, compact layer containing an assortment of late 19<sup>th</sup> - 20<sup>th</sup> finds such as pottery (later redware, transfer wares), coal, glassware (including a small bottle – see **Fig 7**), animal bone and oyster shell.



**Fig 7:** Small, thick walled, moulded bottle found in Context [02]: side and base views. Date late 19<sup>th</sup> century - see **Appendix 3** for more details on Small Finds from KP182.

Context [03] lighter in colour, softer and more clayey was encountered first in the southern part of the Keyhole at a depth of 16cm and was excavated separately, and proved to underly context [02] which had a maximum depth of 38cm. Once [03] had been levelled out, because of shortage of time a decision was taken to dig a sondage across the middle of the trench, see **Fig 8**. A new context name [04] was given to the bottom of main trench / top level of the sondage, which was a darker soil with less content.

At a depth of around 50cm, the soil changed to an even more clay-like soil with flecks of chalk, context [05]. By 70cm down this was a yellow-brown deposit with black vertical streaks from worm holes and roots i.e. a classic brickearth soil. The finds were very scanty - one small, abraded sherd of medieval Tyler Hill pottery typical of midden scatter and one small sherd of Roman: a few small pieces of bone and shell and some worked flint and stressed flint. The excavation stopped at a depth of 78cm, with [05] looking increasingly like the natural brickearth.

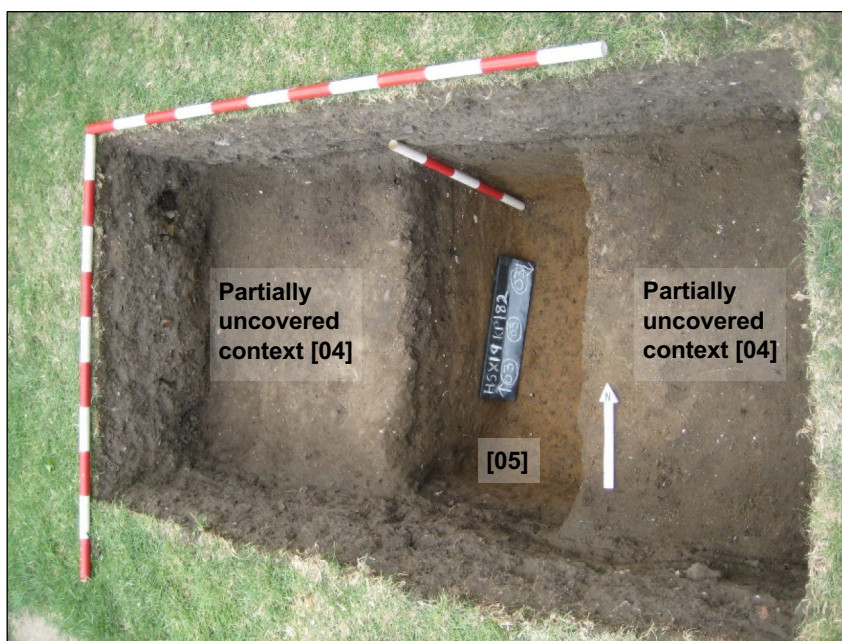


**Fig 8: KP182 at the end of digging.**

a) Close up of **north** side of the sondage with contexts marked in.

b) General view of the trench, showing the side profile of the sondage.

The contrast between the worked soils of [02], [03] and [04] on the one hand and [05] and below on the other is very marked indeed in these photographs.



## 2. Interpretation

This was a very well excavated keyhole, which demonstrates the stratification very clearly. The top layers [02] and [03] plainly dated from the occupation of the property since around 1860-70 with [04] possibly belonging to the hop field days. The lower end of [04] shaded into [05] with a few early pottery sherds suggesting that this could be the medieval field level. [05] contained little in the way of finds, only a few worked flints and heat stressed flints, and was close to being natural brickearth.



**Fig 9: Coping with the excavation of a small opening - KP182 at its final stage, illustrating just how fit you need to be!**

## PART THREE: THE OVERALL FINDINGS

### 1. Interpretation

The archaeological simplicity of Keyholes KP181 and 182 is unusual for Faversham, where most Victorian terraced housing went in on sites with previous uses more complex than agriculture. Even modern housing in central Faversham is often on a complex site; for example, I live in a 20-year-old house beside Faversham Creek which is on the site of a former cement factory, originally making 'Roman Cement' from local septaria, the factory itself having been on the site of early quay revetments just outside the Abbey precinct: the fact that worked flint was also found on this site by the pre-construction archaeologists<sup>10</sup> is normal for Faversham! Even if the brickearth has been 'dug off' for brickmaking this just gives an added complexity.

KP181 and 182 are quite elegant in their simplicity, as you can see in the photographs, and confirm the map succession in **Fig 3a-e**. Until the Park Road houses arrived in stages in the later 19<sup>th</sup> century, this was agricultural land. Yet there are hints of activity earlier – worked flints, medieval pottery. These Keyholes are far too small to show patterns left by, for example, ditches and embankments and one thing archaeological investigation does teach you is that you are never 100% sure of what the next Keyhole will reveal.

### 2. Further comments

Returning to the aim of the overall project *Searching for the King's Manor*, that sherd of organic tempered pottery from KP181 is very significant. This kind of organic tempered pottery (**Fig 10**) is easy to identify - highly distinctive in its distinctive pitting, pinkish-brown surface and thickness (hand-made). Large quantities of this ware came from OA186 nearby at the Market Inn, along with a cruder, black, irregular walled type of organic tempered. All of this pottery is hand made.



**Fig 10: sherd of organic tempered pottery from KP181 Context [02].**

This dates to the 7<sup>th</sup> century AD i.e. the 600s. It is easily confused with mid medieval shelly ware, also hand made with pinkish surface and also losing its additional content (shell) over time but the shape of the rotted-away content says this was made with grass and seeds additions, long since gone.

<sup>10</sup> Archaeology South-East 2000 *Archaeological Investigations on land at Belvedere Road, Faversham, Kent*. Unpublished.

Until the last few years when we have been working *east* of the traditional town centre, we had not found any of this early Anglo-Saxon ware, although we had found sherds of mid to late Anglo Saxon grey ware down in the Westbrook valley near the fording point. More recently, however, we found Ipswich ware (mid Anglo-Saxon) close to Gatefield Lane. Then in the summer of 2018 in the garden of the Market Inn, Keyhole Pit KP174, yielded abundant organic tempered ware of both types and other undoubtedly early Anglo-Saxon finds e.g. a pin beater: we returned to that spot in 2019 for what were spectacular results by our standards.<sup>11</sup> To find sherds of organic tempered ware in the nearby keyholes KP181, 184 and 185 as well is very encouraging. We are on the track of that legendary Royal Manor!

### 3. Acknowledgments

Great thanks to Alan Teague of 68 Park Road and David Wootton of 38 Park Road. These Keyholes were a pleasure to dig and have given us insight into an area of archaeology that no-one, to our knowledge, has looked at before.



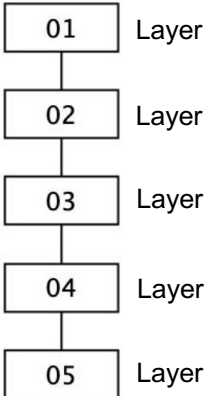
**Fig 11: All of the Redware from KP181 context [02].**

This is the commonest kind of pottery in this pit and also many other Faversham pits. It is everyday ware, used in kitchens and workplaces. Some is made nearby in Kent, some in Stoke on Trent, Staffordshire. It is a continuation of a medieval way of making pots and is often hard to date accurately between AD1600 and 1900.

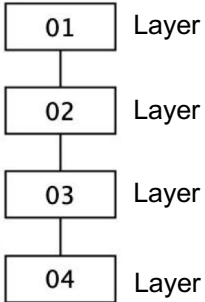
<sup>11</sup> Op.cit. Investigations/ Searching for the King's Manor/KP174, OA186

**Appendix 1: Harris Matrices.**

**KP181**



**KP182**



## Appendix 2: Pottery Chronology

FSARG: Pottery in grams by age by context, using CAT pottery classification

### KP181

CAT code	Dates (all AD)	Context					Totals
		[02]	[03]	[04]			
PREH	Pre 43						
R	43-410	5	3				8
EMS	410-700	5					5
MLS	700-850						
LS	850-1050						
EM	1050-1225	10					10
M	1225-1400	6		2			8
LM	1400-1550		2				2
PM	1550-1800	5	7				12
PM/LPM redware	1600-1900	470	175	11			656
LPM	1800- now	206	281	25			512
Unident			8				8
<b>Totals</b>		<b>707</b>	<b>476</b>	<b>38</b>			<b>1221</b>

**Comments:**

[02]: 1 Face piece Bellarmine (PM), 1 Roman, 1 med spot glazed, 1 early A-S organic tempered

[03]: 2 Bellarmine(PM), 2 Roman, Midland Black in redware

[04]: 1 Piece Tyler Hill Med, 1 piece Prehistoric?

### KP182

CAT code	Dates (all AD)	Context					Totals
		[02]	[03]	[04]	[05]		
PREH	Pre 43						
R	43-410				1		1
EMS	410-700						
MLS	700-850						
LS	850-1050						
EM	1050-1225						
M	1225-1400	2	4	3	2		11
LM	1400-1550	2					2
PM	1550-1800	1	27				28
PM/LPM redware	1600-1900	494	296	29			819
LPM	1800- now	367	201	8			576
Unident							
<b>Totals</b>		<b>866</b>	<b>528</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>3</b>		<b>1437</b>

**Comments:**

[02]: Medieval 1 piece Kingston ware, Post-m – 1 piece Westerwald, 1 Midland black. Lots of LPM transfer wares

[03]: Post-m – 1 stoneware, 1 marbled redware

[04]: Med -2 pieces Tyler Hill

[05]: 1 piece Tyler Hill, 1 Roman (?)

### Appendix 3: Small Finds Tables

#### KP181

Small Finds No.	Context No.	Simple Name	Material(s)	Count	Weight (g)	Condition	Completeness	Type Date Earliest	Type Date Latest	Written Description
1	02	Button	Nacre Mother of Pearl	1	1.7	Good	Complete	1850	2000	A mother of pearl (Nacre) 2-hole button. It has a shallow recessed circular area extending from the centre (which is 13mm diameter) with a raised ridge at this point. These buttons were mass produced in the 19 <sup>th</sup> century.
2	02	Military Button	Copper Alloy (Brass)	1	6.7	Good	Complete	1914	1945	A general service tunic military button, with royal arms. Die-formed, 3 piece manufactured with separate fitted shank, circular hollow, with convex front, convex back, crimped joint, simple looped wire shank. Back-mark: H&H Ltd Birmingham (A lesser-known button manufacturer) Hall & Hinksley, Clifford St, Lozells & 47 Furnace Lane, Lozells, Birmingham.
3	02	Military Button	Copper Alloy (Bronze)	1	1.6	Fair	Complete	1790	1802	An early Royal Artillery Military Button. Two-part construction, flat, design has the shield of the board of ordnance:- three left pointing cannons stacked vertically on a horizontally striated shield. The upper part of the shield divided and containing 3 cannon balls. No back-mark.
4	02	Bone Fragments	Bone	2	4.3 + 1.1	Fair	Fragment			Two pieces of bone, shaped. The largest of which has two cut marks running across the short edge. Smaller piece has a possible pattern of rough lines running across the shorter edge.
5	03	Ceramic Doll or Figurine Head	Ceramic	1	5.8	Good	Partially Complete	1700	200	Small white glazed ceramic figurine head with black hair in a bob / page boy style. Traces of red on lips. Broken at neck.
6	03	Bi-Bevelled Stone Rod	Stone	1	1,3	Good	Complete			A bi-bevelled stone rod, brown mottled in appearance with a scratched twisted mark along its length. Both ends have flats where the ends have been artificially rounded through an abrasive process. Unknown purpose.
7	03	Two Black Glass Beads	Glass or Synthetic	2	2.2 + 2.2	Poor	Nearly Complete			Two beads probably glass or a synthetic material. One is spherical with a hole through the centre, the other a round barrel shape with a hole down the centre.



## KP182

Small Finds No.	Context No.	Simple Name	Material(s)	Count	Weight	Dimensions	Condition	Completeness	Type Date Earliest	Type Date Latest	Written Description
1	02	'Yale' type key	Copper Alloy	1	19	43mm x 20.2 max x 1.7 thick	Very Good	Complete	1922	2000	'Yale' type (padlock?) key marked 'Made in England' and 'Romac' on one side Marked 'FP650' on other. Remains of corroded iron 'key ring' in hole. Romac Industries was founded in 1922 and exhibited in the 1963 motor show (Grace's Guide to British Industrial History). This style of car ignition / door key is hard to obtain - much sought after by vintage car enthusiasts if not already cut.
2	02	Small Glass Bottle	Glass	1	8	33.8 mm high x 15 mm dia body 10. mm dia neck 12.6 mm dia rim	Good	Nearly Complete	1800	1920	Small moulded clear glass with opalescence on interior surface, damage to rim, moulding lines on the side.
3	02	Key	Iron	1	16	35.5mm long x 15.5 max x 7.4 max.	Corroded	Complete	1800	1950	Small Post Medieval Key. Date indicated by oval rather than circular hole. Rather old-fashioned style, comparing with internet images probably 19 <sup>th</sup> or early 20 <sup>th</sup> century.
4	02	Piece of slate	Slate	1	48.9	91mm x 53 x 4.2 thick	Good	Complete	1800	1950	A piece of roofing slate with a small hole (5mm x 4) to one edge. There is a scratched mark similar to a carpenter's face mark to one face. Large scale slate production in Wales and Spain did not start until late 17 <sup>th</sup> century peaking at end of 19 <sup>th</sup> century. (Wikipedia)
5	03	Tile	CBM	1	14.9	41.5 mm x 23.1 mm x 16.7 mm	Good	Fragment	1600	1900	Possible Ceramic Tile with black painted surface reverse; has a diagonal groove cut into it.
6	03	Ceramic Object Fragment	Ceramic	1	25.9	57 mm x 42.8 mm x 17.5 mm	Poor	Fragment			A cream base ceramic fragment, part glazed with a cream colour. Curved, with a broken section that appears to have been formed with holes such as a strainer or flower holder. A lip is suggested at one edge, Rough score lines on surface (outside). This may be part of a pouring jug with a strainer built in.

## Appendix 4: Lithics.

*To be completed as soon as possible when lockdowns ease. Pat Reid, May 2021*