



F·S·A·R·G
The Faversham Society
Archaeological Research Group

Community
Archaeology



Hunt the Saxons HSX17

Report for Keyhole KP156

4 Newton Road, Faversham

15th-17th July 2017

Grid Reference TR01675 61223



Fig 1: Getting started on KP156

1. Introduction

The main aim of the HSX17 project as a whole is to locate the Faversham royal manor complex of mid Saxon and Saxon-Norman times.¹ At the time FSARG was founded in 2004, the only early-mid Anglo-Saxon find in Faversham was an 8th century loom weight found in 1953 in a soil dump as a bombed site in central Faversham was being re-developed.² This development became the Post Office and being offered the opportunity to dig in the small garden of a property adjacent to the Post Office was very welcome indeed.

2. Geographical and historical background

a) Geography

This small garden area is to the north east of 4 Newton Road. It is separated from the Post Office site by a substantial brick wall. The garden is at a higher level than the Post Office site to the north and as 4 Newton Road is older than the Post Office, it can be assumed that the Post Office site was levelled down adjacent to the wall. The garden itself is around 5m above sea level, with the land sloping down gently to the north and up to the south.

b) Geology

The natural deposit here is brickearth, a fine-grained orange-brown superficial deposit laid down during and just after the last glacial period. The brickearth lies on top of the Upper Chalk, which dips down to the north.³



Blue:	Thanet Sands
Orange:	Head Gravels
Light Green:	Chalk
Yellow:	Head brickearth
Cream:	Alluvium

Fig 2: Geological map for central Faversham.

¹ Reid P 2018 Faversham in the making Oxbow: Oxford. Chapter 5 67-83.

² www.favershamcommunityarchaeology.org Investigations TC16, Report for T16 p5.

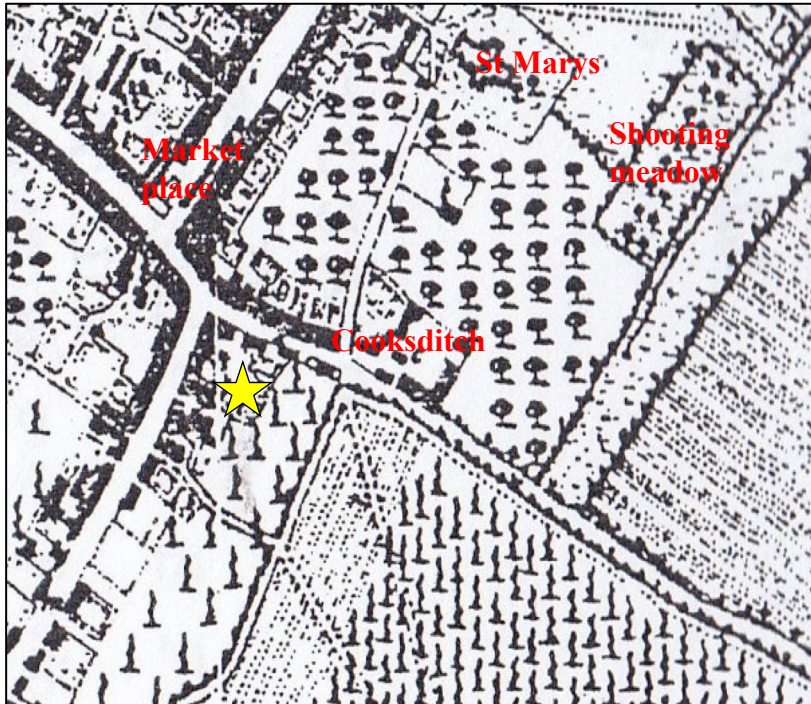
³ British Geological Survey Faversham: England and Wales Sheet 273 Solid and Drift Edition 1:50 000 Series.



c) Known historical background

The property in question was built around 1900. Prior to that date the spot was part of a piece of open ground, adjacent to the Methodist chapel (nowadays Faversham Club) off Gatefield Lane to the west and south. To the north was open garden with houses along East Street beyond: it was these properties which were destroyed in the 1944 bombing.⁴ The map regression in **Fig 3** shows this sequence very clearly.

Fig 3: Map regression for 4, Newton Road. The site of KP156 is shown by a yellow star. ★



a) Jacob's mid-18th century map, published 1774.

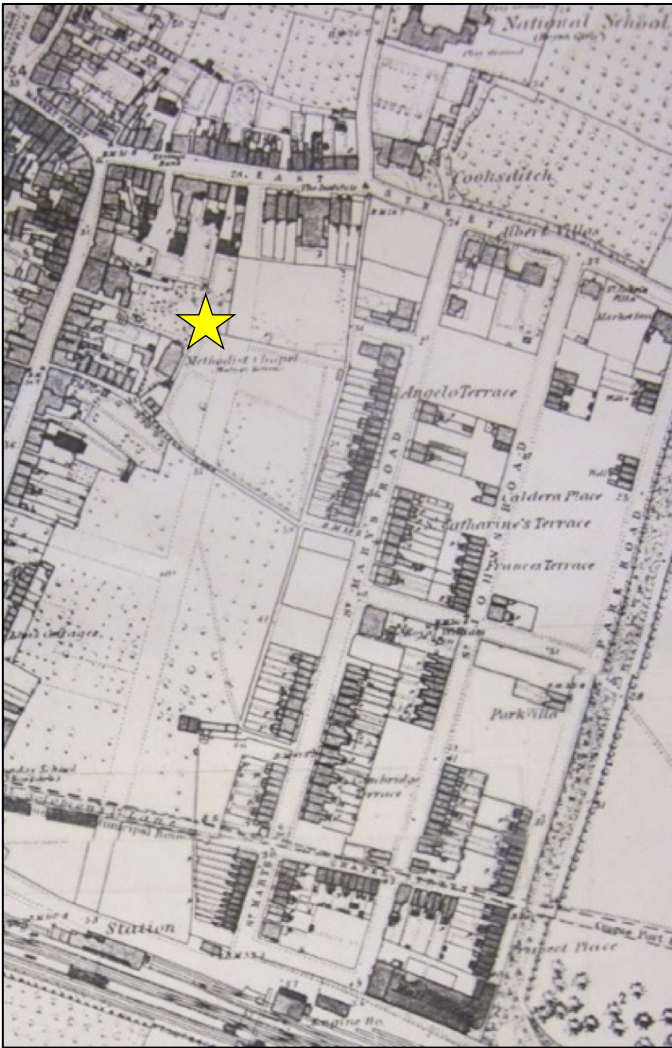
Gatefield Lane and Church Lane are prominent routeways. The fields to the east of the town centre are under hops (tall, thin) orchard (trees), arable (dotted lines), or meadow (dots).



b) 1842 tithe map.

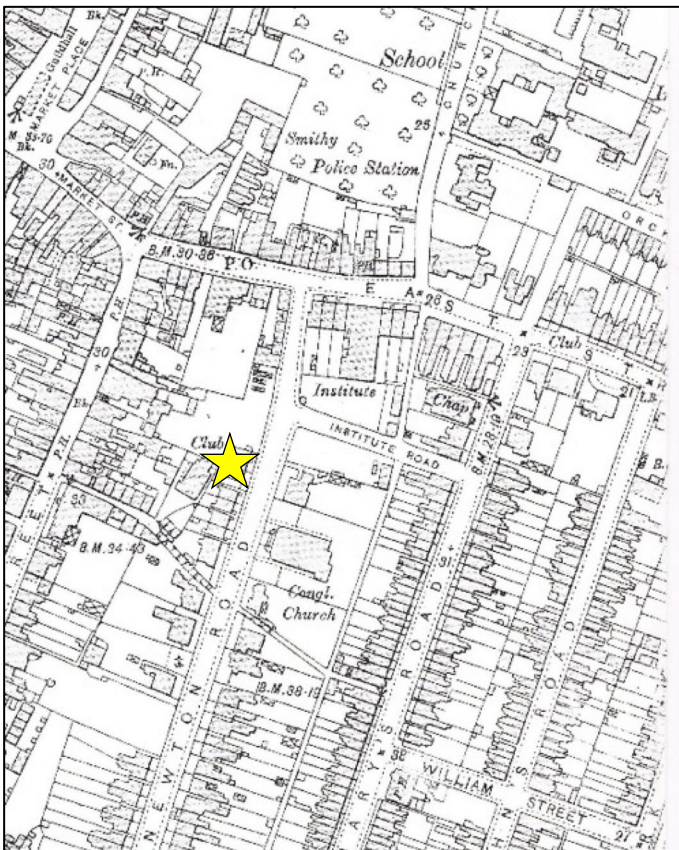
This lists owners, tenants, and land use. There have been few changes in land use since 1774, just one new building at the south end of the Rope Walk and another on Gatefield Lane. The land use is listed as mostly meadow and orchard.

⁴ [www.bbc.co.uk > history > stories > WW2 People's war – I was bombed out.](http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/stories/WW2_People's_war_-_I_was_bombed_out)



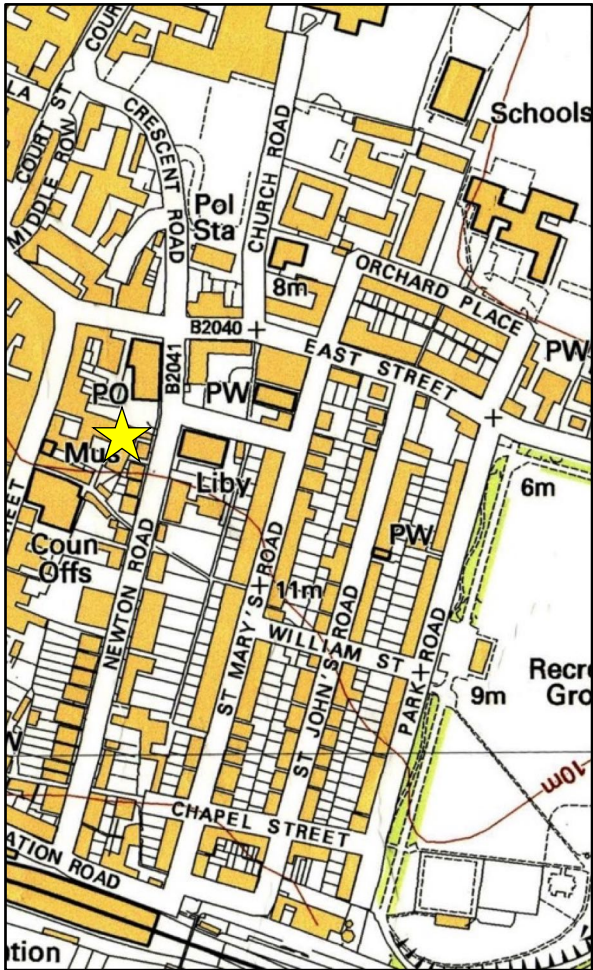
c) 1865 OS map, 6" to mile.

In the 23 years since the tithe map, big changes have taken place at this eastern end of Faversham. St Marys and St Johns Roads are well under way, with many small terraces being built by different speculators. Houses have been built along both sides of East Street. The railway has arrived. The Recreation Ground has been created to the east. Newton Road, however, is just a sketch on the map and Crescent Road, of course, does not exist. The building on Gatefield Lane on an odd-shaped plot is labelled Methodist Church (nowadays the Faversham Club).



d) 1907 OS map, 6" to mile

A more limited area is shown on this map, but it well and truly shows the coming of Newton Road in the years since 1865 - number 4 has arrived. The neighbouring area to the north, however, is still open ground. The Methodist Church has become a Club. Note the splendid Institute on East Street and the large Congregational Church on Newton Road - both gone nowadays. Still no Crescent Road - that must await the 1960s.



e) 2009 OS map.

The red star shows the location of 4, Newton Road nowadays. Crescent Road has arrived just to the north, to create a road through Faversham that bypasses the Market Place. The Post Office has also arrived.



f) The “Faversham Tank” in Newton Road near to East Street Junction in 1919, presented to the town and displayed on the Recreation ground. The picture is taken at the intersection of Newton Road and East Street, looking south up Newton Road. The building to the right is the site of the current Post Office. The star ★ marks 4 Newton Road.

Photo from the Faversham Society archive.

3. Location of pit

The pit was to the north east of 4 Newton Road's garden, running North-South. The garden was raised compared to the patio and border area to the rear of the property. Due to the layout of the garden, we were constrained in the choice of pit location due to boundary walls and garden borders.

4. The procedures

A 2m by 0.75m rectangle was pegged out and the area delineated with string. The position of the rectangle was recorded by measuring to mapped points within the garden. As this area of the garden was scrub and not formally laid to lawn, no turf needed to be removed. The pit was excavated using a mix of spits and contexts, each which was fully recorded. The maximum depth of the pit was 1.2m. All excavated soil was carefully sieved. Finds were set aside for each spit / context, and features revealed were carefully recorded. Finally, the spoil was put back in and watered.

5. The findings

Initially a spit (an area evenly excavated to a depth of 15cm) was dug. Spit 1 was poor grade topsoil mainly containing shrub roots and CBM (60% of finds were Ceramic Building Material). Other finds consisted of small amounts of pottery, iron (nails) and vessel glass. Spit 2 was dug to a depth of 60 cm and was similar in content to Spit 1, although contained more poorly sorted and lumpy sandy material.



Fig 4: Floor of trench at the base of Spit [2].

Note the irregular boundary between [1] which is topsoil and sandy layer [2] on the far side.

Natural inclusions consisted of a few shrub roots. Small pieces of CBM, iron (nails) and building rubble were found and put into the waste pile. A six pence coin was found. A 20cm wide slot was then excavated across the middle of the pit in an east west direction. In this at 60cm down a difference in soil type was detected and it was decided to remove all of Spit 2 to expose the new surface, which was identified as context [3].

Fig 5:

In the foreground right to left is an investigative sondage. Beyond this, the three 'bands' [5], [4], [6] stand out very clearly.



Context [3] was a darker earth colour with no sandy deposits. At a depth of 75cm we uncovered a 'brick earth' coloured band running east west (**Fig 5**). It was bordered on each side by two peripheral bands, similar in colour to each other and to context [3]. These were identified as context [4] (centre brick earth coloured band), context [5] (southern peripheral band), context [6] (northern peripheral band). The question then became whether [4] was an infill in a trench cut into [5] = [6] or whether [5] and [6] represented different fills either side of [4] and would prove to be underlain by [4].

Access to the western edge of the pit was improved by cutting a step into Context [3] mid trench, stepping down to the level of Context [6]. This also enabled us to try and ascertain whether context [4], [5] and [6] extended eastwards or whether edges could be ascertained.

Context [4] was identified as not natural due to brick, slate, shell, pottery found within it, and contexts [1], [2] and [3] were looking like a series of dumps. In **Fig 6**, the western cross section of the pit shows the delineation of the contexts. It was decided to chase context [4] as a possible edge of a feature was identified in its south west corner.

**Fig 6:**

Western edge of pit showing the relationships of contexts [1], [2], [3], [4], [5], [6]

Contexts [5] and [6] were excavated revealing [4] seemingly as a 'raised type' feature (possible 'wall?') running west-east and 'curving' at the eastern end to the south of the pit. Context [4] was cut through revealing its inner composition, and at this stage it appeared to sit on top of Context [5] - [6], i.e. a filled trench rather than a raised wall.



Fig 7: a) [4] exposed

b) Section through [4]

c) Context [7]

To test this further, a 30cm wide slot (context [7]) was then put in 60cm from the western edge of the pit. A range of similar assorted date material was found within context [7] as found in the contexts above. The slot was then extended to the western edge of the pit. When context [4] was removed down to the [7] level, a similar uniform coloured surface was seen, although 'smears' of [4] material could be seen. It is likely that contexts [3], [5] and [6] were basically the same material.

Due to time pressures and the need to finish the excavation, a 20cm slot was dug into the floor ([4], [5], [6]) at the western end of the pit to see if [4] extended downwards past the smeared level. The slot revealed similar material to [5] and [6] and it therefore confirmed that context [4] did not extend downwards and that it sits on and is set into. [5] - [6] / [7] A single cut context number [8] was assigned to the U-shaped trench occupied by the brickearth fill [4].

6. Interpretation

The pot chronology report (**Appendix 2**) shows a wide range of pot within each context, each being broadly similar to each other. Roman pot was found in [2] along with early modern 19th - 20th century pottery, sitting above a piece of mid-Saxon Ipswich ware in [3] which was again mixed with post medieval and early modern pottery. Roman pot was also found in context [5], again with post medieval and early modern. Throughout each context, clay tobacco pipe fragments were found.

The pottery jumble and the presence of clay pipes throughout lead us to believe that this pit was a series of mixed-up dumped layers. A possible source of the 'dump' material could be the rear of the house, which has an excavated patio area, the spoil from this being dumped to the side. Context [4] was seen as a small trench, possibly used for pipework, which was filled with the brick-earth type material when the pipe was removed. Although the mixed nature of the deposits meant that no features could be identified except for the former pipe (?) trench, the presence of Roman and, above all, Saxon pottery, and the small amount of medieval pottery suggests significant Roman and Saxon activity close by, followed by a period of agricultural usage until recently, hence the clay pipe content.

6. Final comments

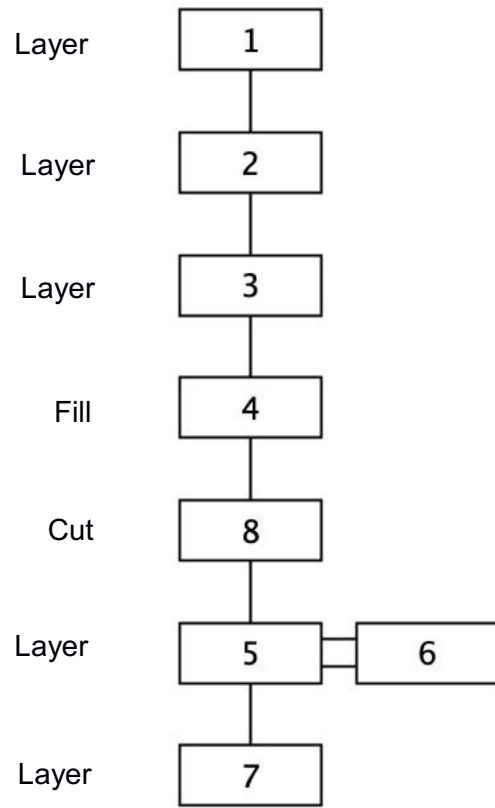
The pit was difficult to dig, due to the confined space, leading to issues such as where to store the spoil whilst excavating. The weather during the dig was varied with periods of high winds and heavy rain which did affect the digging. Nevertheless, it was a very worth-while project as it confirmed Saxon activity nearby, our main objective.

7. Acknowledgments

Great thanks to John Coulter for allowing us to dig in his so interestingly located garden. This garden now deserves a medal as one of the very few Mid-Anglo-Saxon producing sites in Faversham.

Chris Wootton & Dr Pat Reid

April 2021

Appendix 1: Harris Matrix for KP156

Appendix 2: Pottery Chronology for KP156

(Weights in grams)

CAT code	Dates AD	Contexts						Total
		01	02	03	04	05	06	
Pre	Pre 43						7	7
Rom	43 - 410		13			36	1	50
EMS	410 - 700			7				7
MLS	700 - 850							0
LS	850 - 1050							0
EM	1050 - 1225		21	20				41
HM	1225 - 1400		10		3	3	6	22
LM	1400 - 1550		6				5	11
PM	1550 - 1800		152	45		20		217
PM / EM redware	1550 - 1900	5	225	230	9	10	20	499
EM	1800 - now	15	142	114	18	7	1	297
Uni	any							0
Totals		20	569	416	30	76	40	1151

Comments

Context 02: Stoneware e.g. Bellarmine . Early Med shelly ware. Med & L med Tyler Hill midden scatter sherds

Context 03: Ipswich ware 1 sherd, E med shelly ware, 1 piece Midland Black in PM

Context 06: 1 sherd Roman, 1 piece prehistoric. Remember that 05 and 06 are merged into the same context in the end.

Appendix 3: Lithics

Catalogue No.	Context	Type	Qualifier 1	Subtype	Period
1053	5	scraper	end	notched piece	Neolithic
1054	6	gun flint			Post Medieval
1055	4	burin		microlith	Mesolithic
1056	3	scraper	end		Mesolithic
1057	3	microlith			Mesolithic
1058	3	arrowhead	broken tip		Bronze Age
1059	3	scraper	discoidal		Bronze Age
1060	3	scraper	end	notched piece	Neolithic
1061	3	arrowhead		microlith	Mesolithic
1062	4	blade		point	Mesolithic
1063	1	rod			Neolithic

Only finished tools are shown here.

Appendix 4: Small Finds

SF No.	Context	Simple Name	Material	Weight (g)	Description	Dimensions	Earliest Date	Latest Date
6	7	Arrow-shaped pottery	Ceramic	2.2	A curious triangular pottery piece with a rounded base. The two longer straight sides are lined with white slip. The pottery is probably Tyler Hill. The 3 edges are finished, not broken. Purpose / function unknown. Medieval.	2.9cm max. length 1.9cm max width, 3cm max thickness	1200	1500
7	7	Polished bone sliver	Bone	1.0	Sliver of highly polished bone with the lengthways (and width) sides finished but ends broken. Both ends show small rivet holes, probably the break point weakness. Clearly a decorative fastening but function unknown.	0.8cm wide, 3.5cm long, 0.2cm thickness	?	?
8	2	Sixpence George VI	50% silver 50% copper alloy	2.83	Sixpence - George VI. Spink Standard Catalogue 4084 reference. Milled edge (crenallation) Obverse: Portrait George VI facing left with bare head. Inscription (legend) reading: GEORGEIUS VI:D:Ce:BR: OMN:Rex. Reverse: Crown above CRI with date to left 19 and right 44. Inscription - top - FiD.DEF.IND IMP. Bottom: Six pence. Designer George KrugesGray.	19mm diameter	1937	1946
28	3	Button	Copper Alloy	1.4	This is a small 4-hole button, painted black, with indecipherable legend, probably from agricultural clothing e.g. smock.	7.7cm diameter, 0.2cm thick	1800	1900
29	6	Button	Copper Alloy	9.0	This is a circular brass button with a circular shank loop on the reverse. No pattern is visible on the obverse. This is the type known as Tombac. Probably 18 th century.	3cm diameter, 0.4cm thickness	1700	1800