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Preston: A Most Peculiar Parish

**An investigation into the site of Preston Farm ('Old Farm'),
Preston Lane, Preston next Faversham**



The last surviving building of Preston Farm - Grove Cottage in 1989. Reproduced courtesy of Mr and Mrs Cook.

This report includes investigations at the locations listed below

KP102 in the garden of No.3 Nelson Terrace

Grid Reference: TR 01468 60737

KP104 and survey in the garden of No.16 Preston Grove (Grove House)

Grid Reference: TR 01523 60720

KPs 117A, B and C in the garden of No.1 The Close

Grid References: TR 01501 60793, TR01494 60762

KP116 in the garden of No.14 Preston Grove

Grid Reference: TR 01573 60697

Survey 122 in the garden of No.2 The Close

Grid Reference TR: 01490 60773

Major reference is made to the Report on K99 and 99A, at 3, The Mall, published online in 2013 as part of the PSN13 project¹



**Grove Cottage in 2014, incorporated in No.14 Preston Grove.
A victory for intelligent conservation.**

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¹ See PSN13 on website www.community-archaeology.org.uk

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PART ONE: General Background

1. Introduction

Preston: a Most Peculiar Parish started in 2013 and is planned to run for at least two and possibly three years. FSARG has been working in the part of the parish of Preston next Faversham that is known as *Preston Within*. Although Preston Within since 1935 has been included in the domain of Faversham Borough², the parish of Preston has a long history of its own with some astonishingly early documentary mentions e.g. in AD822 when the parish is donated by Cenulph, King of Mercia to the Archbishop of Canterbury.³

Last year the project sought to identify the levels at which medieval activity was apparent along a north-south line bordering the west of the parish. In all of the excavations, the medieval level was readily identifiable through midden scatter⁴ but in some cases more striking evidence for medieval activity was found⁵, and in a couple of cases much more limited evidence for early medieval (Anglo-Saxon).⁶ Reports on all of this are available on the FSARG website.

The aims for 2014 were to focus in on the sites of what seem to be the three most important buildings in the Preston Within area. Two of these were obvious - i.e. the church-vicarage complex and Preston House (demolished in 1930). The third, Preston Farm, was not nearly so obvious and indeed its importance was only realised from finds in the nearby garden of No.3 The Mall in 2013 (see p6 in this report).

Preston Farm, named on the 1901⁷ census as Old Farm, is the subject of this report. Even its name is very uncertain. On the 1839 tithe map, a sizeable complex of buildings is shown, owned at that time by William Baldock and run by Ann Perkins. By 1989, only one building, known as Grove Cottage survived and was the subject of a major row between the Faversham Society and town councillors fighting for its preservation and a developer, Mr Peach, wanting to demolish⁸. The Town won and this cottage survives as part of No14, Preston Grove, but the farm itself had gone beyond knowledge until 2013-4. This report is only a first stage report on the fieldwork and discoveries of 2013-4 and further archive research is essential if we are to understand the importance of this early farmstead, close to a very early church.

2. Geographical and historical background

a) Geography

The ancient heart of Preston next Faversham, i.e. the location of St Catherine's church, is situated at the top of a slope at a height of 20m overlooking to the east a shallow valley that runs south to north. South of the church, this valley runs between the Preston manors of Macknade to the east and Perry Court to the west. Further south, towards the head of the valley on the 40m contour lie the manors of Copton and Westwood. Macknade and Perry are mentioned in the Domesday Book.

To the north, the line of the valley was obscured by levelling to form the Recreation Ground in 1860⁹, but just to the north of the Rec the line of the valley is picked up by a stream, the Cooks Ditch, that runs northwards, bending to the west to enter Faversham Creek just north of Iron Wharf. It is possibly significant that a straight line drawn along the west front of St Catherine's and carried northwards intersects the entrance to Faversham Creek from the Swale.

² www.ukbmd.org.uk/genuki/reg/districts/faversham (2014 version)

³ Hasted 1798 *The History and Topographical Survey of the County of Kent* Vol 6 pp532-49 on Preston

⁴ FSARG website www.community-archaeology.org.uk/ Preston: a most peculiar parish/ all reports

⁵ FSARG website op.cit. reports of K99, 99A and 97.

⁶ FSARG website op.cit. report on K96A

⁷ See Appendix 3

⁸ See Appendix 2

⁹ www.faversham.org/ Recreation Ground 2014 version

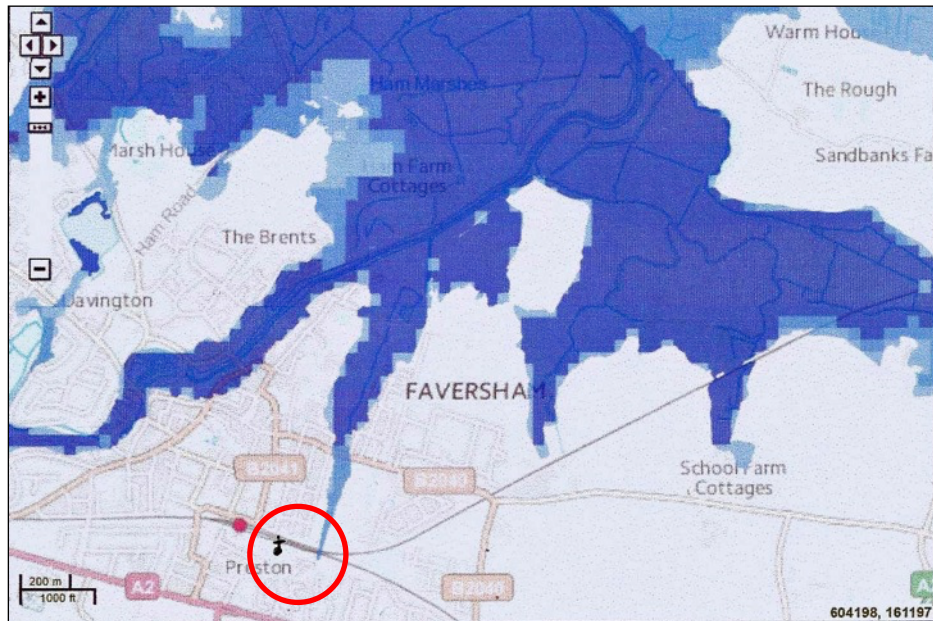
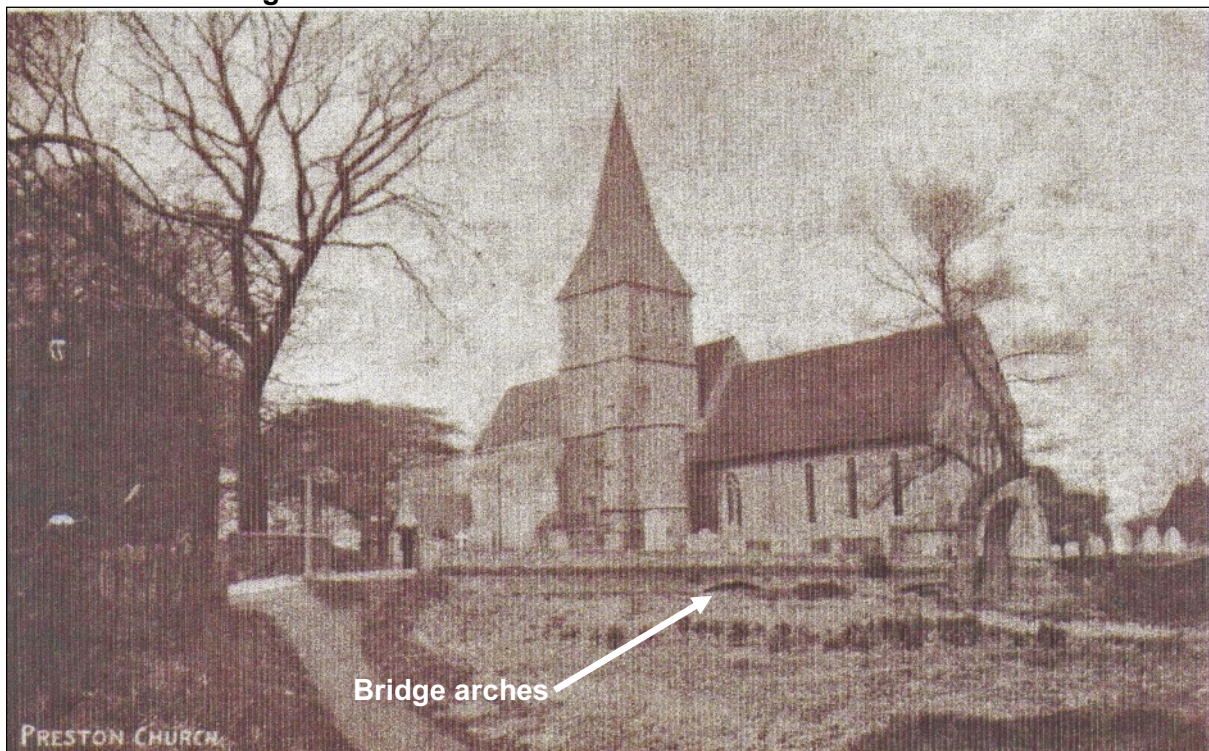


Fig 1: Flood risk in Faversham area. Dark blue is high risk, light blue low risk.

Extractive industries (brickearth, chalk, gravel), the building of the railway and urbanisation have obscured the lie of the land to the north, and it is best brought home by **Fig 1**. This is taken from the Environment Agency Flood Risk website¹⁰ and shows possible floodwater reaching right up to a point just below St Catherines. Similar risk-points to the east relate to powerful springs at Clapgate and Church Farm, and it is tempting to speculate about a spring near St Catherines in earlier times.

We have not been able to find any evidence for a spring from early maps predating the creation of the Recreation Ground, such as the 1795 First Surveyors Draft of the Ordnance Survey. Local people in the immediate area of St Catherines, however, talk about a spring running underneath the houses and two prints of around 1900 seem to show a stream running out of St Catherines Churchyard under arches (see **Fig 2**). Clearly further research needs to be done on this.

Fig 2: St Catherines around 1900 from the south east.



¹⁰ www.environment-agency/floodmaps UK 2014 version.

The farm lies just to the west of the Church and Vicarage, on the higher ground overlooking the valley to the east. It would also have had a good view out across early Faversham town to the sea beyond.

b) Geology

The geological map shows the Mall and Preston Grove as being Head Brickearth.¹¹ Although the Upper Chalk is near the surface it dips down quite sharply to the north, and is masked by these drift deposits. There are important caveats, however. Edward Crow, writing in the mid 19th century,¹² says that the area to the east of the Mall 'enclosed by the 4 main roads [is] ... where the whole of the surface from 4 feet to 8 feet in depth has been removed for brickearth'. Based on excavation so far, this does seem to be a rather too sweeping statement: for example, the report for K99 and 99A at No.3 The Mall shows considerable quantities of medieval pottery in K99, a deposit that would not have survived the kind of brickearth removal Crow is describing. We also saw untouched brickearth deposits in KPs 99 and 99A. Nevertheless, there was indeed a brick and tile works within the area enclosed by the four main roads¹³ and in some places e.g. at the junction of Nelson Street and Preston Grove there is a clear drop of the kind of depth to which Crow is referring. This is a situation that must be kept in mind when dealing with the surviving drift geology of this under-researched area. At least one of the smaller excavations in the Farm area, K102, was intended to investigate possible survival of brickearth in the area of small cottages just to the south of the Farm and the larger scale investigations in the garden of Grove House had a similar objective.

The geological map also shows a tiny 'island' of Thanet Sands exposed just to the east of the Mall. Further east, the Upper Chalk outcrops along the eastern edge of the shallow valley running south to north. Beyond Preston Park itself, chalk was quarried from at least 1795 to the 1950s: the quarry can be seen on the map sequence **Fig 5**. There is no record of gravel working in this area.

c) Known historical background

Our interest in Preston Farm started with an excavation in the garden of No.3 The Mall, only around 100 metres from the farm site (about which we knew nothing at the time). We expected this keyhole (K99), to have a straightforward relationship to the property itself, a small terraced house built around 1850 on a former orchard. I predicted Victorian finds to a depth of around 0.3m, under which there would hopefully be a medieval agricultural level shown by midden scatter (tiny bits of bone and pot from the domestic midden used to fertilise the fields in those times). Beneath that would be deposits marginal to the undisturbed natural with maybe a scatter of prehistoric worked and heat stressed flint (pot boilers).

The full story is told in the report for K99 and 99A¹⁴, but, in brief, we found a Victorian layer sitting on top of a post medieval mortar floor which itself was right on top of a major late medieval / medieval pottery assemblage. We then realised that the wall dividing this garden from its neighbours had substantial amounts of re-used medieval stone as well as red brick, peg tile and flint. The inclusion of medieval stone is not uncommon in Faversham¹⁵ but we did not expect it in this location, remote in both time and place from the usual stone-generating-for-recycling sites (The Abbey¹⁶, Hospital of St Mary¹⁷ and Davington Priory¹⁸, various manor rebuilds¹⁹ - in all cases stone-generating demolition dating from the

¹¹ British Geological Survey Faversham, England and Wales Sheet 273 Solid and Drift Edition.

¹² Crow E 1848-61 *Historical Gleanings relative to the Town of Faversham and Parishes Adjoining*. CD transcript by P Tann, 2009, Faversham Society: Faversham

¹³ See on maps b) and c) in Fig 5 p10 this report

¹⁴ FSARG website op.cit

¹⁵ See for example, the Granary at Standard Quay and the wall behind the Chimney Boy Public House.

¹⁶ Philp, B 1968 *Excavations at Faversham 1965; the Royal Abbey, Roman villa and Belgic Farmstead* First Research Report of the Kent Archaeological Research Groups Council

¹⁷ Smith G.H 1980 'The Excavation of the Hospital of St Mary, Ospringe commonly called Maison Dieu' *Arch. Cant.* **XCIV** pp 81-184

¹⁸ Tester, P, 1977 *A Plan and Architectural Description of the Medieval Remains of Davington Priory* *Arch. Cant.* **XCIV** pp 205- 212


¹⁹ e.g. Davington Manor, see FSARG website op. cit. Reports from DVN10

mid 16th century). Even the demolition of the original Preston House in 1788²⁰ did not seem to help, as the evidence (admittedly speculative) is for that having been a timber and plaster Tudor building, with perhaps brick chimneystacks.

Instead, our attention was drawn to the cluster of nearby buildings shown on the tithe map and also on the 1795 First Draft of the Ordnance Survey. How far back did this Farm go? Was it far older than Preston House and Grove House (1790)?

Our attention was then further caught by something curious on the sequence of maps up to the present day for this part of Preston. In 1795, 1839, 1865 and 1877 a large rectangular feature to the west of the complex and the east of K99 is shown clearly and solidly. After that, however, it becomes 'empty' but still with clear boundaries, a lone rectangle, in the 1906, 1938 and 1953 maps. By 1963, it had lost its eastern boundary but was still there on the north, east and south sides.

In the early 1960s a row of small terraced houses, The Close, was built here, running from the back of the garden of No.3 along to our odd rectangle's eastern side. It was a strange moment realising that the northern end of the mystery rectangle was still there on the 2013 map as the anomalously shaped front garden of No.1 The Close. What was more, the rectangle seemed to be completely preserved as the plot of that modern house. Finally, when a pre-fieldwork visit was made to the house, we realised with a shock that the rectangle was in fact marked by a substantial, ancient brick wall, demolished on the east but present in one form or another on the other sides (see **Appendix 4**). What was going on?

The historical sequence since 1795 is shown in the map sequence **Fig 5**. The rectangle is highlighted on the maps by the shape 

3. Location of pits

The farm buildings and adjacent Grove House (built 1799) were very clearly shown on the 1840 tithe map. This map was superimposed on the modern map of the area. The match between the rectangular building and the garden of No.1 was close to exact. Decisions about places for investigation were now obvious:



Fig 3: The 1840 tithe map (the dark shaded buildings) overlaid on the 2013 map for Preston Grove. Excavation sites as red squares. Grove House, arrowed, is the only surviving building. North to top.

²⁰ Hasted E 1798 The History and topographical Survey of the County of Kent: Volume 6 pp532-549 on Preston

- The small test pit at No.3 Nelson Terrace (K102) was to see whether or not brickearth had been removed from that site. Nelson Terrace is not yet present on the tithe map but has appeared by 1865. It is adjacent to our mystery building.
- The resistivity survey and top of the bank pit at Grove House (K104) was a similar test of a theory that the southerly part of the garden had been scraped for brickearth whereas the actual house site was on an un-scraped platform.
- The resistivity survey of No.14, next door to Grove House (K116), was to see if any of the farm buildings had survived underneath the lawn, as was suggested by the overlay.
- Finally, four excavations K117A, B, C and K122 took place inside the rectangle next to its edge to investigate it further.

4. The standard procedures

a) Geo-resistivity surveying

The area to be surveyed is pegged out and a base line established. The location of this is measured in to landmark points. A series of parallel line are set out one metre apart using special lines marked at metre points. The resistivity metre is moved along this line at either 1m or 0.5m intervals and readings taken. These are then digitalised and used to create a map of the varying resistivity of the area surveyed.

b) Levelling

A temporary benchmark is set up within the garden and linked through to a permanent benchmark - this can be a challenging task as public benchmarks are not surviving very well in these digital times. Levels are obtained using a dumpy and the height of the land calculated.

Hand held GPS are not accurate enough for our needs and a sophisticated GPS instrument far too expensive for us even to hire.



Fig 4: Chris doing levelling in the garden of No. 11 Preston Grove.

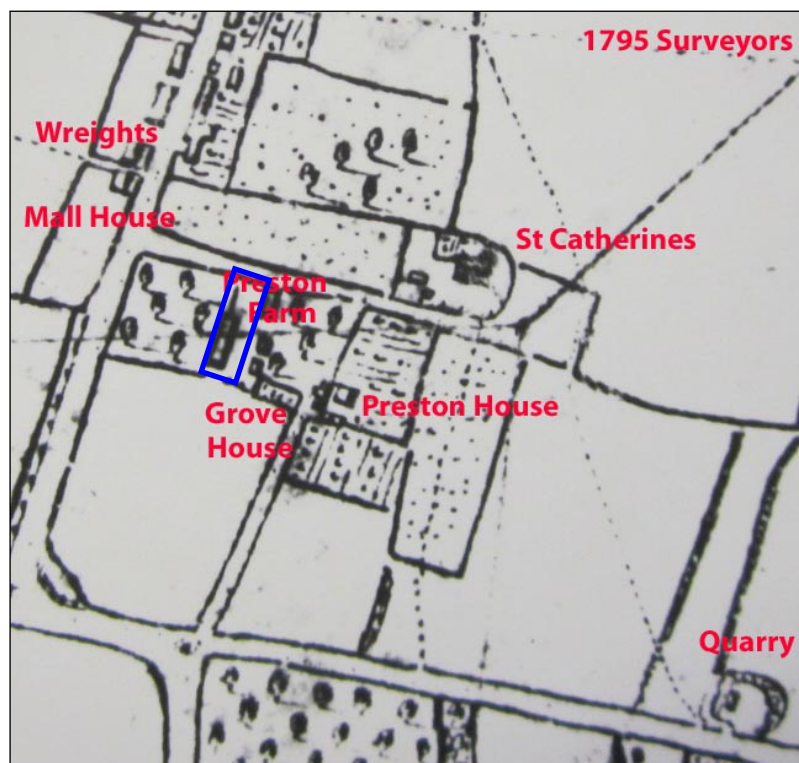
c) Keyhole excavations

An appropriately sized shape is pegged out using the planning square and the area delineated marked with string. The position of the shape is recorded by measuring to mapped corners of the house or other fixed points shown on a modern map. If necessary, turf is removed carefully from the shape, rolled, numbered and set aside in plastic bags to keep moist.

Each pit is then hand excavated using single contexts, each of which is fully recorded on the FSARG proformas. Keyholes are excavated to the maximum safety depth of 1.2m or less. All excavated soil is sieved meticulously, and placed in builder's bags to prevent contamination of the garden surfaces. Spoil bags are scanned using a metal detector. Finds are set aside for each context and, where possible, special finds are given three dimensional coordinates to pinpoint the exact find spot. Any features revealed are carefully recorded using scale plans and sections. Finally, the spoil is put back in reverse order to extraction, tamped down and watered. Turf is replaced if necessary.

Excavations are photographed throughout the time they are open, with clear signage as to the context and pit being excavated and a register being kept. Where appropriate, scale plans and sections are drawn. Information is recorded on dedicated context sheets and in site notebooks.

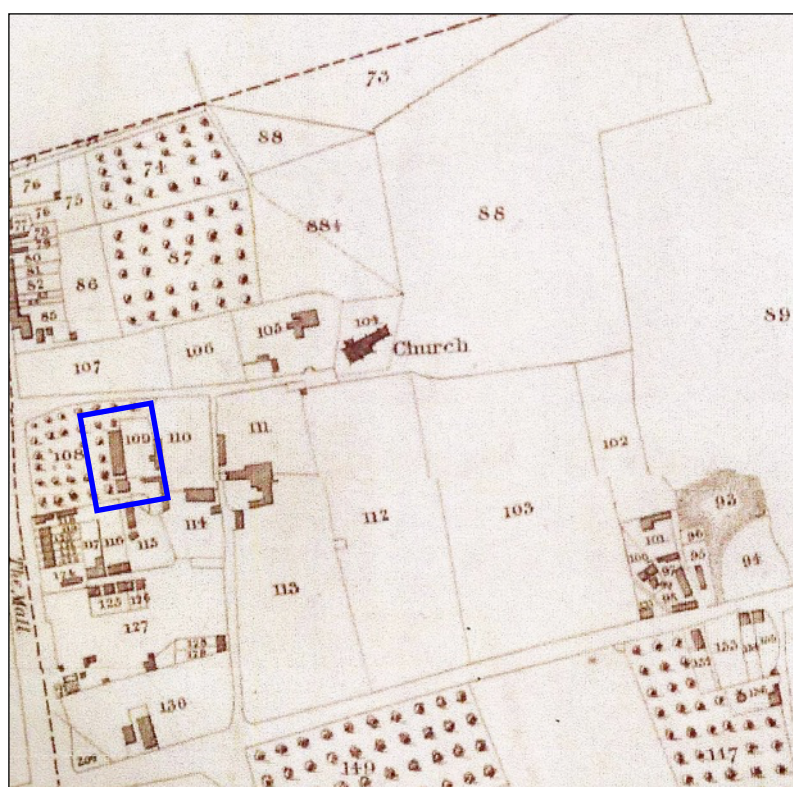
Fig 5: Map sequence for Preston Within 1795- 1963.



a) 1795.²¹

There is no development south of Preston Lane / St Catherines except for the Farm and Preston House.

Note that the quarry and the 'turnpike village' are only just present.



b) 1840 tithe map.²²

By 1840, however, there is decidedly more development. Plot 127 is a brick and tile works and workers cottages are beginning to be built. Alfred House and the Georgian Cottages on Preston Grove have arrived. The 'turnpike village' and quarry (93) are very noticeable. Preston House and the Farm do, however, remain dominant along with the Church and Vicarage. The tithe map is especially useful as it is accompanied by a list of owners, residents and usages for all plots.

²¹ Surveyors Draft for the first edition of the Ordnance Survey 1795.

²² Preston Near Faversham Tithe Award Schedule and maps 1840. KAS/ KCC archives.



c) 1865.²³

This is a detailed and attractive map edition. Notice the development of terraced cottages along the Mall and Nelson Street. The arrival of the railway is a startlingly drastic event.

This map also gives plenty of information about Preston House and its park layout. The Farm has a pond.

The Quarry continues to expand to the east and has lime kilns.



d) 1907.²⁴

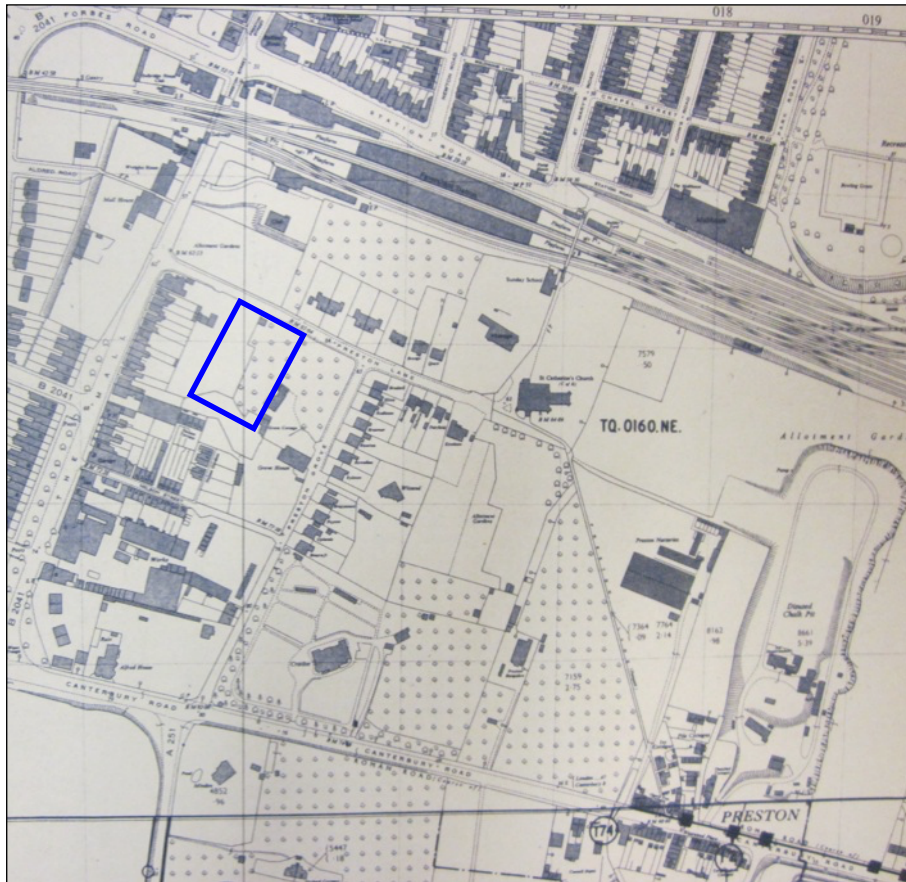
North of the railway line, the town is beginning to fill up but Preston Park remains almost untouched except for a couple of large greenhouses.

The quarry and 'turnpike village' have not changed much.

The Schoolroom has arrived!

²³ OS 1865 (1904 reprint) Sheet XXXIV.9.10 Scale of original 1:536

²⁴ OS 1907 Sheet XXXIV Scale of original 1:2500



e) 1962.²⁵

The quarry is now disused and a large horticultural nursery has appeared nearby.

The most important change for us, though, is the disappearance of Preston House and its replacement by a row of detached houses lining the northeast end of Preston Grove.

The Farm is much reduced in number of buildings.

At the southern end of the former Preston Park a large house, nowadays known as Preston Court, has arrived and semis line the northern side of Preston Lane.

Only the Church and Vicarage endure relatively unchanged in their spacious settings.

²⁵ OS 1963 Sheet XXXIV

PART TWO: Individual Investigations

a) Report on No.3 Nelson Terrace: Test Pit KP102.

i) Location

This was a pit dug with the sole aim of testing the presence of brickearth at that spot. As can be seen from **Fig 6**, Nelson Terrace is on a level with the surface of the garden so at the time of building around 1850 the garden was more or less at its present level. KP102 was located at the southern end of the garden close to the end wall.

ii) The procedures

The size of the pit initially was 0.5m x 0.3m. Later on, it was widened to enable access to lower levels. No turf was present but otherwise normal procedures were followed and a maximum depth of 1.2 m was reached.



Fig 6: View of No.3 Nelson Terrace.



Fig 7: The pit at the end of excavation.

iii) The findings

Three context layers were identified in this pit. The lowest, [3] was 70-120cm down and was a poorly sorted mixture of orangey brickearth and dark garden silty clay. Between 57cm & 70cm there was a layer

of subsoil, [2], ashy in colour with clay mixed in and to the surface a layer of worked soil [1], friable and moderately sorted.

All three contexts contained 19th century pottery and late clay pipe fragments. There was a much greater range of artefactual fragments in [1] but there was no clear date. The only small find was a hall marked shouldered tea spoon that had been deliberately folded to form a tube.

Toward the base of the pit at 1.1m a ceramic drainpipe [4] was uncovered. This was an unexpected find as the pipes for Nelson Terrace are nowhere near this spot. No trench cut was visible.

iv) Interpretation

KP102 demonstrated unarguably that any brickearth layer had been removed prior to 1850. A nearby excavation KP104 shows the highly distinctive 'ginger' deposit that constitutes brickearth. Here we have an example of what Crow was talking about. Confirming this, all of the archaeology was post removal i.e. post 1850, except for a sherd of residual medieval pottery.

The drainpipe was a puzzle. It must be assumed that this is part of an earlier system for Nelson Gardens, a terrace that runs at right angles to Nelson Terrace and just predates Nelson Terrace. Any trench cut had long since lost any definition in this soft, worked over, garden soil.

b) Report on Grove House, survey and KP104.

i) The location

KP104 was located at the rear of the property with the agreement from the owner avoiding the site of the previous tennis court. This tennis court was on the lower lying, more southerly part of the garden which we suspected had been scraped for brickearth. The resistivity survey **Fig 15** suggested that this higher area, nearer the house that dates from around 1799, had *not* been scraped and was therefore worth investigating.

ii) Procedures

Standard procedures were followed, to a depth of 30cm when the natural was reached (**Fig 8**).

iii) The Findings

The deepest layer [4], revealed at 26cm and excavated only to 28cm, was brick earth, in which were found 3 worked flints, a Mesolithic scraper and a microlith and a Neolithic arrow head.

Above this was layer [3], into which a trench had been cut [7] which contained a modern 14cm diameter salt glazed stoneware drain pipe. The pipe was 28cm from ground level to top of pipe. This layer contained a variety of inclusions being consistent with infill and also a Mesolithic microlith blade and a micro notched tool.

Above this was layer [2], another consistent infill. A late Bronze Age flint scraper and Mesolithic bladelet core were found. This layer measured 9cm from ground level to 16cm to top of layer [3]. The most recent layer [1] was turf with a thin layer of top soil, extending to a depth of nine centimetres.

Layers [3] and [4] contained small abraded sherds of medieval pottery and bone.

iv) Interpretation.

The aim of this excavation was to investigate the environs of Preston Farm (Grove house). The medieval sherds suggested a medieval agricultural level at only 15cm down but this was, however, disturbed and

mixed with small amounts of modern construction materials and later pottery in the upper layers. The presence of brickearth did confirm that this area had NOT been scraped for brick making.

The prehistoric flint was residual.



Fig 8: The completed excavation. The tags show the extent of the cut shape. The characteristic 'ginger' of the brickearth is very evident.

c) Report on No.14 Preston Grove: Survey 116 only.

i) Location

This geo-resistivity survey was carried out because the overlay map for Preston Farm showed the possibility that remains of former buildings of the farm might stretch underneath the garden. This particular group of houses was built in the late 1980s on what at the time we understood to be an orchard.

On the site of the future No.14, however, still stood the last surviving building of Preston Farm, Grove Cottage. The cover picture and the one inside the cover show what happened, with further photographs and a newspaper report from the time in **Appendix 2**. Measurements of the bricks in the surviving Grove Cottage, so cleverly incorporated in the house, are 20.3cm x 10cm x 5.3cm, dimensions that correspond to a Tudor- Jacobean date rather than the 18th century generally assumed for Grove Cottage.

The survey concentrated on the lower, western part of the garden. We were told that this lower part had been widened not long before and the spoil used to make up the higher ground, so surveying the higher ground would not be worthwhile.

ii) Procedure

Normal procedures were followed for the survey. Light colours denote high resistivity i.e. drier spots, often buildings or demolition materials. Dark colours are wetter areas maybe filled in ditches or robbed out wall trenches.

iii) Findings (Fig 15 p19)

Most of the garden came out as quite evenly well-watered, with two exceptions. One was a small light-coloured couple of squares - we see a lot of this kind of feature in gardens and they are invariably washing pole bases. The other area was far more striking and less easily explained. This was a large white area in the north westerly part of the garden (see **Fig 15**, p19).

iv) Interpretation

The concentrated area of high resistivity is very much where we would have expected to find traces of earlier buildings (see overlay maps **Figs 3 & 16**). The householder Mike, however, tells us that at the time of the house building (1991) there was a large tree here that was taken out during the building phase. The cavity created by this may very well have been used as a rubble dump by the builders - FSARG has found lots of builder's left-overs beneath the lawns of Faversham. It is also in a plausible location for a paved area in the past, or a covered-in well. Enquiries are afoot of anyone who remembers this building in the 1980s, not so long ago.

d) Report on No.1 The Close: K117A, 117B and 117C (see also Appendix 4).

Report on KP117A

i) Location

This excavation was located at the northern end of the walled rectangle of land that corresponded to a former building of Preston Farm, next to a surviving buttress and wall segment. To the west of this the wall had disappeared and was replaced by a low modern garden wall (see KP117C). To the east, the wall had been damaged in the 1987 Great Storm and replaced more recently by a fence, but with the lower 1m of the wall surviving. As the adjacent garden was 1m lower down than the interior of the rectangular enclosure, the surviving lower metre acted as a retaining wall for the upper garden, with the truncation section more or less flush with the enclosure interior. This is shown on the scale plan in **Appendix 4**.

ii) Procedure

A 1m x 1m pit was excavated using the standard procedures. At a later stage a 0.3m x 0.6m extension was dug on the western side.

iii) Findings

The wall itself was revealed as shown in this pair of photographs:



Fig 9: The excavation spot before digging started.



Fig 10: The base of the old wall is visible.

The new fence and surviving wall base can be seen to the right. On the left is the new low garden wall. In the centre is a surviving pier and some fragments of wall [7]. This section had been ivy covered until very recently, hence the unweathered look of the lower bricks.

Projecting bricks can be seen supporting the pier and towards the lowest level on the left, rough mortaring is visible. The rubble context [4] matched with the pier at the upper tier of projecting bricks. Upper [5] is on a level with the top of the mortared base.

The first three contexts [1], [2] and [3] in descending order corresponded to top soil, subsoil and subsoil. All three were dark clayey silts, varying from a friable top soil to firmer subsoils. Inclusions were small and battered and not very abundant. The pottery, only small amounts, was 19th century. Not until context [4] (with [6] from the extension merged into this) at a depth of around 30cm did demolition material (brick, tile, mortar, plaster) emerge in any quantity. Context [4] overlay a yellowish-brown layer [5] with almost no inclusions which was not fully excavated. This was seen as the natural soil.

Excavation stopped at this point as we did not want to risk undermining the old wall and, anyway, seemed to have reached the natural soil.

iv) Interpretation

As always with walls, the question is whether surrounding layers date from after the wall was built and have accumulated around it or whether they are the earlier pre-wall soil into which the wall was sunk. The most likely scenario here is that [1], [2] [3] and [4] accumulated post wall building and that the wall [7] was set down into [5] in a mortared trench. Disappointingly, no evidence for a medieval stone wall was found, either in place or as demolition material. The brick sizes here (23cm x 6.7cm x 10.7cm) and absence of frogs suggest an eighteenth - early 19th century build for the wall.

Report on KP117B

i) Location

This excavation was located at the southern end of the rectangular enclosure, next to the east wall. The wall is much more complete in the south, running from the concrete platform on which the Close houses are built to the end of the enclosure and also along the southern edge, but much of it is obscured by shrubbery and a shed. The location of KP117B was a compromise between these factors. The location is shown on the scale plan in **Appendix 3**.



Fig 11: The pit and wall before digging.

ii) Procedure

A 1m x 1m pit was pegged out and excavated to a depth of around 80cm using the standard procedure. At this point it was decided to extend the pit to the south by 40cm and the north by 30cm both to expose the wall base further. Maximum depth reached overall was 1m.

iii) Findings

Context distinctions were made on the basis of changes in colour and texture rather than on artefactual content, of which there was very little. Only [2], just underneath the topsoil at a depth of 10cm - 28cm contained much material and that was mostly brick, tile, mortar, plaster and a large block of dressed ragstone i.e. demolition material. Some of the brick was blue glazed. Context [2] did however; also contain some pottery (mostly 19th century) and small amounts of fragmentary bone and glass.

Context [2] overlay a deep yellowy brown layer, ranging down to 1m (and probably continuing further down) which had very little in the way of inclusions and approached natural brickearth in many ways. This layer is labelled as [3], [4], [5] and [6] merged, labelled as [3] from now on. The nature of the wall is best understood from a photograph sequence:

Fig 12: The northern extension after the removal of [1] and [2]. The large stone block is residual from context [2]. To the right, higher up is the so-called buttress, a shallow collection of material possibly there to shore up the wall.



Fig 13: End stage. In the southern extension, the heavily mortared base of the wall can clearly be seen. In fact the wall just above this is quite 'snotty' (i.e. not pointed, lots of mortar dribbles) therefore not meant to be exposed to public gaze.

iv) Interpretation

As with KP117A, the brick sizes fit with 18th to early 19th century brick sizes. The presence, however, of blue glazed brick and dressed stone in the demolition rubble did seem at first to be a real puzzle - these materials clearly do not come from this particular stretch of wall, which has been accounted for down to its very foundations. An important answer to this will come in the summary interpretation at the end of this report.

Report on KP117C

i) Location

This was very much a small test pit to test whether or not the low garden wall bordering the west boundary of the front garden of No.1 The Close had been built on a remnant of a previous earlier wall. KP117C was located just to the west of KP117A.

ii) Procedure

A small slot was dug to a depth of around 60cm up against the modern wall.

iii) Findings

At 32cm down, a projecting concrete foundation was encountered. A further 25cm of excavation revealed only brickearth with no signs of any earlier wall and no inclusions.

iv) Interpretation

When the original wall was removed, the foundation trench was robbed out and the later low wall obscured any trace of this.



Fig 14: The finished pit, showing the concrete foundation.

e) Report on No.2 The Close: KP122 and rodding

i) Location

This small test pit was located in the back garden of No.2 The Close. The purpose was to try to find a foundation of the enclosure wall which we assume to have formerly run all the way round the mystery rectangle. KP122 was located along a line drawn from the end of the wall to the southern edge of the gardens and the north western corner of the front garden of No.1. The location is shown on the plan in **Appendix 4**.

ii) Procedure

KP122 was a 60cm x 35cm slot across the north-south line and was dug to a maximum depth of 55cm. Standard procedures were followed. Rodding was carried out both within the pit and all along the north south line as described above.

iii) Findings

Under a layer of dark garden soil [2] (9cm deep), a layer of yellow-brown brickearth [3] was found. Into the top of this had been sunk a pit [4] with a fill [5] similar to [2]. The pit was a straight sided flat-bottomed oval hollow, 35cm maximum length, 30cm deep, and had been sunk into the brickearth [3]. [3] had small quantities of inclusions such as tiny fragments of shell, bone and brick / tile / mortar.

iv) Interpretation

No wall foundations were found, either by digging or rodding. The pit was not a rubbish pit and may just possibly be a post hole.



Fig 15: Georesistivity surveys for Preston Grove.

PART THREE: Summary for Preston Farm

The initial effort to establish the degree to which the area enclosed by the Mall / Preston Lane / Preston Grove / Nelson Street had been scraped for brickearth was productive. The survival of the brickearth is very important to archaeologists: stripping it away destroys nearly all of the archaeology, with only deep burials in the underlying gravels and early prehistoric deposits escaping destruction. Nowadays extractive industries have to employ archaeologists to keep a constant watch but that only became compulsory in 1991. So a great deal of Faversham's rural archaeology has been lost.

In the zone south of Nelson Terrace the upper brickearth had been removed, as was clearly established by KP102. The extension of this level of the ground included the southern part of the grounds of Grove House, formerly occupied by a tennis court. The drop down into this southern zone from the garden of No.14 Preston Grove, the site of the Farm, was very marked indeed, as it was in the Grove House grounds. In the northern zone, brickearth, conspicuous as always by its bright ginger colour, has survived seemingly untouched. It underlay the excavations in the rectangular enclosure, showed up straight away in the top of the slope excavation in the Grove House grounds and we saw it last year in the garden of No.3 The Mall. In the case of KP104, Grove House, a few small abraded sherds of medieval pottery strongly suggests that this was a medieval agricultural surface.

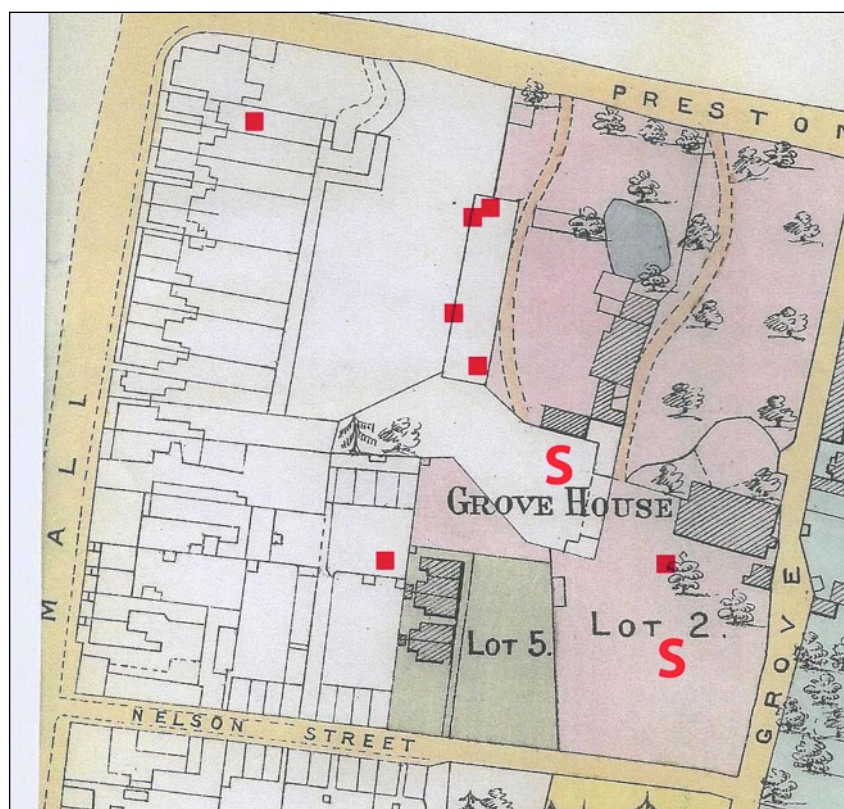


Fig 16: 1905 map with excavation and survey points in red.

During the field seasons in Preston Grove we were fortunate in being given some very useful archive items by local householders, for example the fascinating story and pictures of Grove Cottage (see Cover pictures, Survey 116 report and **Appendix 2**). Another very useful item was a beautiful coloured map of the Preston House estate when it came up for sale by the Hilton family in 1905 - see left.

Almost all of the farm buildings shown in **Figs 3 & 16** are underneath the 1980s road surface and garage driveways, therefore inaccessible.

It is interesting to note that in **Fig 16** 1905 our rectangular enclosure is now outside the farm buildings cluster, i.e. outside the shaded-in Preston House Hilton-owned estate. Quite who owns it at

this stage we are not sure because, as is clear from **Appendix 3**, nomenclature in this area is very confusing, even the streets seem to change their names. Further research will be carried out.

The most startling piece of new evidence from a householder was, however, a photograph of something extraordinary. We had been told by several neighbours that the former householder at No.4 Preston Grove had dug a deep hole in the south west corner of his garden exposing a wall which, we were told, was made of flint. This wall was part of the rectangular enclosure. Then a photograph arrived from the residents who took over the house.



Fig 17: The south west corner of the garden of No.4 Preston Grove.

At last we had our medieval stone wall. Even after backfilling it is just visible at ground level. The feature on the extreme right-hand side is the corner of the concrete platform on which The Close terrace was built in 1963. Clearly the dressed stone has been removed and old bricks re-used to create a pillar. This is the section that has the modern buttress on the other side.

The chequerboard blue and red brickwork above the stone is also of considerable interest, as it is typically post medieval. Above that is a soft pinky - red brick, very familiar from Faversham buildings. We now have the origin of the building material found in KP117B - the stone block and the blue glazed bricks, dumped after this wall was broken down during the building of The Close. Both red and blue bricks from the KP117B [2] dump are unfrogged and 5 cm (2") thick, which places them firmly in the 16th-17th century (Tudor- Jacobean) frame.



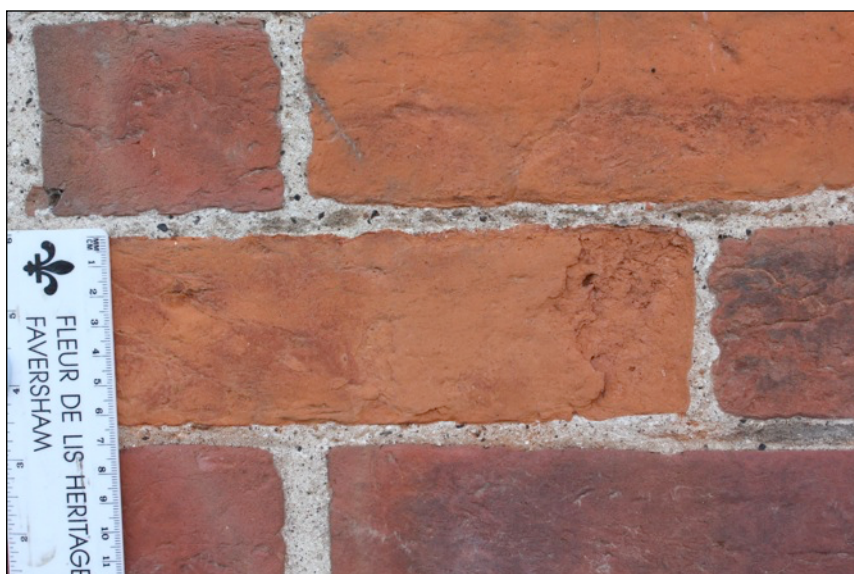
Fig 18: Examples of 17th century blue glazed brick and a red one from KP117B.

Although at first sight the chequerboard pattern is similar to the blue and red pattern at Grove House, **Fig 19** the Grove House bricks are in fact bigger (6.7cm - 7.0cm thickness), which is appropriate for the build date of 1790.

Fig 19: The wall of the older part of Grove House.



Fig 20: Close up to show the size of the bricks in the older part of Grove House.



We now have another problem, however. Why are the enclosure walls exposed at the KP117A & B locations *not* like the one exposed in **Fig 17**? At both KP117A & B the walls are composed of red brick only with mortared trench style foundations. The bricks have a thickness of 7cm, placing them firmly in the late 18th / 19th century, the same period that saw the building of Grove House and the rebuilding of

Preston House. Is there an early stone building here in the central part of the rectangle with two later wings? Yet our rectangle is present as a whole on the earliest map of 1795.

What is significant, though, is that we have a link between the finds in K99 in 2013 (post medieval mortar floor overlying abundant late medieval pottery)²⁶ and another nearby series of events - i.e. the possible demolition of a medieval structure and its replacement by a post medieval one.

At the time of writing (November 2014), we are awaiting leafless conditions to take a closer look at the wall from the garden of No.4. We are especially interested in what is happening *north* of the concrete platform interruption. **Appendix 4** summarises the current survival condition of the walled enclosure. Meanwhile, pursuing the past of this farm through the archives has already begun. Further posting will be made online as more information and understanding is found. Watch this space!

7. Final comments

This investigation has been a true forensic process, looking for clues to answer questions, and has been a real adventure, with a number of (for us) dramatic moments. It is far from over!

8. Acknowledgments

We are very grateful to the householders here, not only because they gave us access to their gardens but also because they shared such important information with us. In particular I must mention Eileen Chapman of No.1 The Close, The Cooks of No.14 Preston Grove, Robert Bartlett of Grove Place, Richard and Daisy Turner and Christine Dadd of 3 & 4 Nelson Terrace. The Auction map came from Graham Setterfield of No.15 Preston Grove. Finally, thanks to Marilyn Chantler and Ian Crosfield of No.4 Preston Grove who supplied the seminal photograph of the medieval stone foundation - we are eternally grateful for the initiative of Faversham people.

Being based in the Preston Schoolroom was a very enjoyable experience, and we are very grateful to Rodney Foord and Hilary and Ken Tuttle for enabling this.

Addendum:

Excavation KP116 at No.14 Preston Grove

This took place in May 2015 and was aimed at testing the marked anomaly in the north west corner of the lawn that had been revealed by the geo resistivity survey in 2014 (see **Fig 15**).

Method

A 1m x 1.5m trench, aligned east - west, was excavated to the rear (south) of the house (**Fig 15**). The trench was carefully positioned to span both a high and low resistivity area. This trench was excavated using the usual meticulous approach, as outlined on pages 9 - 10 of this report.

Findings

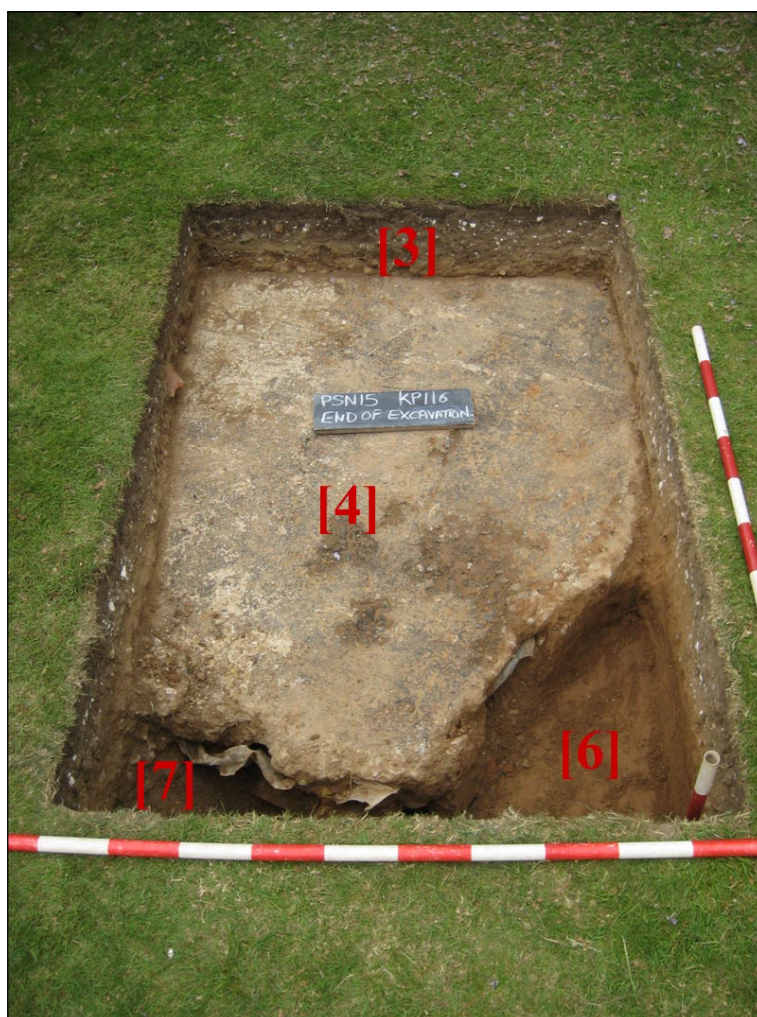
Brown topsoil [2] underlay the turf [1], itself overlying a more brickearth coloured layer [3]. Context [3] was a well sorted, fine grained deposit with a range of artefactual fragments. The pottery included three medieval midden scatter type pieces (small, heavily abraded) and two sherds of Roman pottery (one slipped fine ware, one coarse black burnished ware). A residual Mesolithic bladelet core was found in context [3].

²⁶ FSARG website op.cit PSN13 Report on K99 and K99A,

As [3] was removed, the reason for the resistivity anomaly over most of the pit was quickly revealed i.e. a concrete layer itself sitting on thick plastic sheeting. Underlying the concrete layer, itself classified as a fill [4] into a cut [5], were two types of deposit, visible at the south east end of the pit. These were a brick earth type deposit with no apparent inclusions [6], adjacent to a deposit with a high brick rubble and mortar / plaster content [7]. It is possible that [7] was in a pit dug into [6] and underlying [4] but excavation stopped at this point, the anomaly having been explained.

Interpretation

The main interpretative points are in the above account of the findings. The blurred edge of the concrete, lack of structural indicators and the absence of buildings in this area on aerial photographs back to 1940 do suggest this was simply a outdoor working surface, maybe even dating back only to the 1989 conversion / building of the house: the 1990 aerial photograph, available on Google Earth, although blurred at this scale, hints at such a presence.



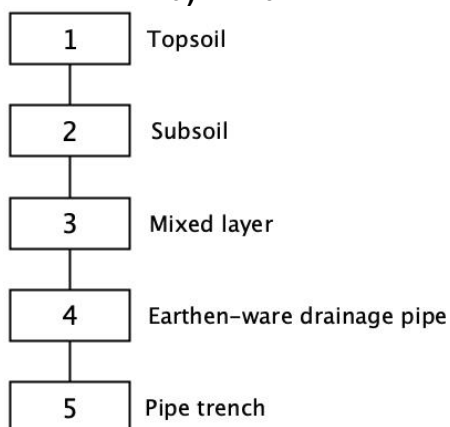
Some doubt did emerge about the origin of the upper layers [2] and [3]. The Roman pottery was very unusual for this part of Preston. Perhaps the upper layers had been brought in from somewhere else?

Acknowledgements

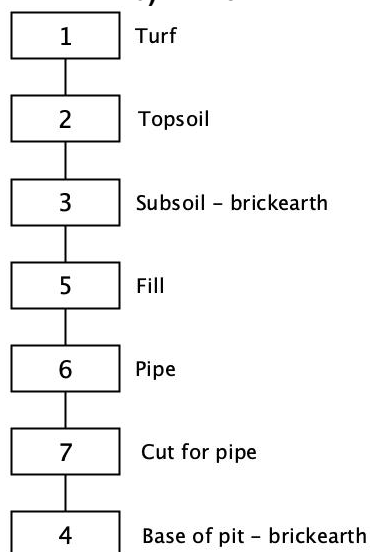
Again, great thanks to the Cooks for letting us dig in their lovely garden. Sorry it wasn't a more 'fun' answer to the anomaly question!

Appendix 1: Harris Matrices for pits.

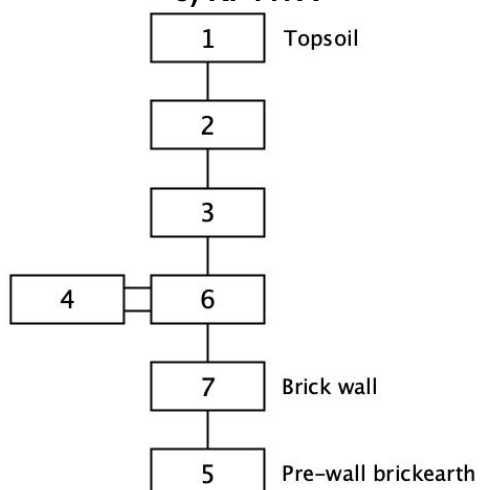
a) KP102



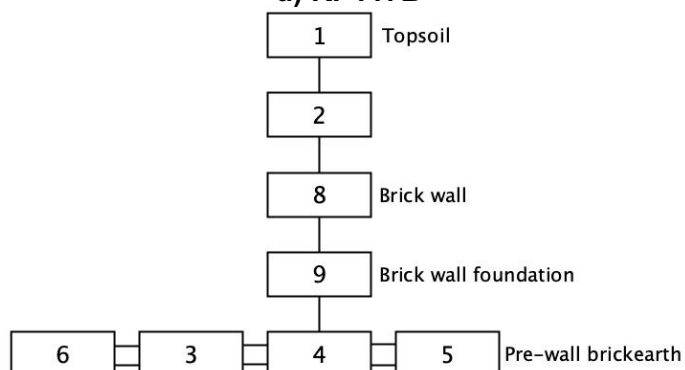
b) KP104



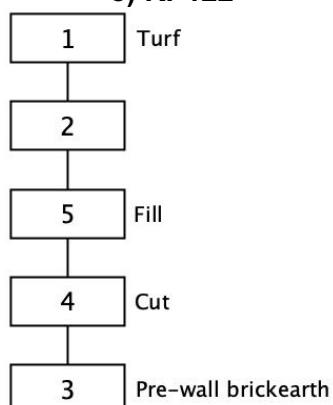
c) KP117A



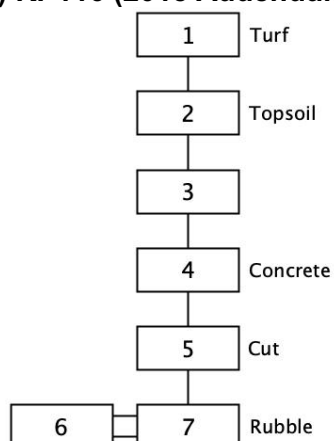
d) KP117B



e) KP122



f) KP116 (2015 Addendum)



Appendix 2: More on Grove Cottage



Above, two snapshots taken by a local resident in 1989.

Below, a newspaper article on the conservation battle.

Fury at 'ploy' to demolish cottage

DEVELOPERS SAY REPAIRS ARE UNECONOMIC

A MOVE to demolish a decaying listed cottage in Faversham has angered town councillors, who accuse the owners of deliberately allowing it to become derelict.

Deputy Mayor of Faversham Cllr. Andrew Osborne said on Monday that such a ploy is commonplace among developers and they must not be allowed to get away with it.

He said the plans by Peach the builders to pull down Grove Cottage in Preston

Grove should be fought vigorously at a public inquiry and the owners must be made to repair the building — or pay the consequences.

Grove Cottage has been left empty for years, while a housing development has grown up around it. Peach applied to demolish the cottage, but was refused permission by Swale Council.

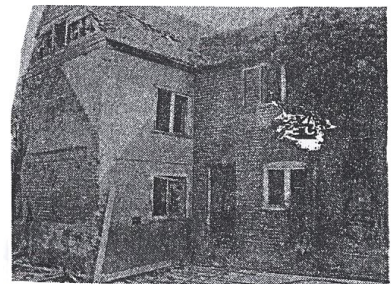
Town councillors discussed the issue on Monday and whether they wanted their architectural adviser Mr. Anthony Swaine to speak at the planning inquiry into the

cottage's future.

Cllr. Osborne said the developers must be made to repair the damage, or have a compulsory purchase order put on it by Swale.

He said it was a recognized ploy to neglect properties until they were said to be uneconomic to repair.

Cllr. Osborne said: "I have never yet known a building that could not be repaired. If you change the owner you can get the work done. It is a ploy for owners to allow buildings to become derelict then



Grove Cottage: Empty for years

to apply for demolition.

"If we allow this it will happen again."

Cllr. Peter Lee-Roberts said he had visited the cottage on Sunday and could not see how it could be economic to restore it.

Cllr. Michael Cosgrove said the cottage was of "dubious architectural merit" and he could not see the point of holding out for preservation.

"If it was a gem of a building it would be different," he said.

"It really is not worth while saving and we have got to be realistic and save our efforts for what is worth saving."

Cllr. Laurence Courtney said much of Abbey Street would have been demolished years ago if the same argument had been applied.

Members' voted 6-5 in favour of asking for Mr. Swaine's support.

Faversham
TIMES
and Faversham Gazette

Published the last week in April 1987

Appendix 3:
Census details for the main properties in the Preston Grove area.

Preston Occupation* of Main Dwellings 1840 – 1911

Source	Preston House (111)**	Preston House (113)	Vicarage	Grove House (114)	Alfred House (130)	Grove Place (128,129)	Farm (109)
1840 Tithe Map	Giles Hilton	Gerard Gossenden	Rev James Peto	John Shepherd	Grace Waller	Thomas Greensted John Milne	Ann Perkins
1841 Census	Giles Hilton	Gerard L Gossenden (farmer)	James Peto	John Shepherd? Naval Captain	Grace Waller	Thomas Greensted Rachel Perkins Elizabeth Perkins	
1851 Census	Giles Hilton		James Peto	John Shepherd?	Grace Waller	Thomas Greensted Elizabeth Perkins?	
1861 Census	Giles Hilton	Richard J Hilton	James Peto	?	Edward Exton?	Thomas Greensted Martha Britten Young	
1871 Census	Richard Hilton	Maria Hilton	James Peto	?	Frederick N Mead	Ellen C Greatbach Elizabeth A Perkins?	
1881 Census	Richard Hilton	Maria Hilton	John R Cooke	?	Unoccupied	?	
1891 Census	Richard Hilton	Maria Hilton	John R Cooke	Unoccupied	Unoccupied	?	
1901 Census	Richard Hilton	John Ramsey	William Carus-Wilson	George Gardiner	Harry S Neame	?	Jas M Dence
1911 Census	Edwin Wood		William Carus-Wilson	Walter M Gillett	Harry S Neame	?	

* Ownership and occupation may differ

**Plot numbers on tithe map

Preston House appears to have been split into two dwellings after the 1851 census. In 1911 it is not possible to determine whether it was returned to one dwelling occupied by Edwin Wood or whether the second part was re-named.

Records also exist for Grove Place, Preston Grove, Preston Place, Preston Orchard and Preston Lodge.

1841 there is no record of Ann Perkins. A Rachel Perkins is living at **Grove Place**, she is a farmer. Elizabeth Perkins of independent means and Thomas Greensted a farmer are all listed as **Grove Place**. There appear to be three households/properties here.

1851 the census records all say Preston Lane with no record of house names or numbers. Thomas Greensted is listed as living there as a farmer out of business and the premises is being run as a boarding and day school, I am assuming this is part of Grove Place. Elizabeth Perkins is also there.

1861 a Thomas Greensted is listed as living at **Grove Place** as a Collector of Taxes. This is the same Thomas Greensted and his wife is listed as "Scholastic" and there is a teacher and scholars living at the premises. Martha Britten Young, Scholastic, is also at Grove Place. This appears to be next door to a listing for London Road where Edward and Sophia Exton live. He is a gardener. In **1871**, Frederick N

Mead is living at **Alfred House** and Sophia Exton is his housekeeper. I cannot find any record of Alfred House in 1861, so the London Road address may be it, although Edward Exton was a gardener and unlikely to be the householder.

1871, again only listed as Preston Lane, there is a school run by Ellen C Greatbach. Also, there as another household is Elizabeth A Perkins. Could this be Grove Place? It appears to be near to Alfred House.

1881 a George W Finn, grazier, farmer and salesman is living at **Preston Place**. This is the first time I have seen a record for Preston Place. Is this a part of Grove Place renamed?

1891 Preston Grove appears as an unoccupied dwelling this next to Alfred House, also unoccupied, on the census. **Grove House** is also unoccupied and is next to the dwelling of **James M Dence**, a gardener.

1901 Grove House is occupied by George Gardiner a corn merchant and farmer and next to this is **Old Farm**, occupied by **Jas M Dence** a wool sorter. **Preston Lodge** appears for the first time, occupied by Frederick Pryer a bank manager and brickmaker. This appears to be in the Mall so probably no connection.

It would appear that **Grove House** was occupied by John Shepherd a naval captain up to his death. He appears on the tithe map, the 1841 and 1851 census. He would appear to be deceased by 1861 and I cannot find any occupation of Grove House until 1901.

Research carried out by Pat Wheatley

October 2014

Appendix 4:
Scale plan for the walled enclosure.

Scale plan of the
rectangular plot/building
of the 'old farm'

Scale 1cm: 100cm

P.M. Reid.

Drawn from field
measurements 14.10.14

