

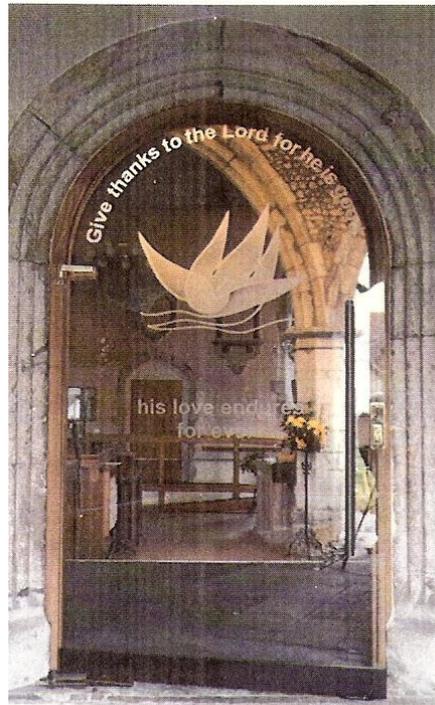
# Lenham Archaeological Society

## Archaeological Watching Brief

at

### St. Mary's Church LENHAM

Extension on South side for toilets  
March- Aug. 2012



#### **St. Mary's, Lenham**

opening of our new facilities by

#### **Graham Clarke**

Saturday 10<sup>th</sup> Nov. 2012 at 11am  
*Morning coffee and cakes as usual  
from 10am.*

#### **Dedication** by Bishop of Dover, **Rt Rev Trevor Willmott**

Sunday 25<sup>th</sup> November 2012  
at 10 am

*New glass entrance door,  
accessibility ramping and toilets*

## **Watching Brief on Lenham Church extension , March 2012**

### **Outline:-**

This extension is on the south side of the church where the shadow of a previous filled in doorway could be seen in the flint work of the south wall. The intention was to construct an annex with toilet facilities and open up this previous entrance with minimal disruption to the fabric of the main church. See attached architect plans . Date of the blocked in doorway must be post 1350 as the St . Michael fresco

(dated by Prof. Tristram ) has been slightly damaged on its bottom right corner. As such frescoes were painted /plastered over in Puritan times this suggests the doorway could have been constructed in 17<sup>th</sup> C or was it present much earlier? None of the new construction would have footings deeper than 0.5 metres



**1. South view of church wall and initial excavation 8.3.12 . Outline of the blocked in doorway can clearly be seen .**

**Surrounding features :**

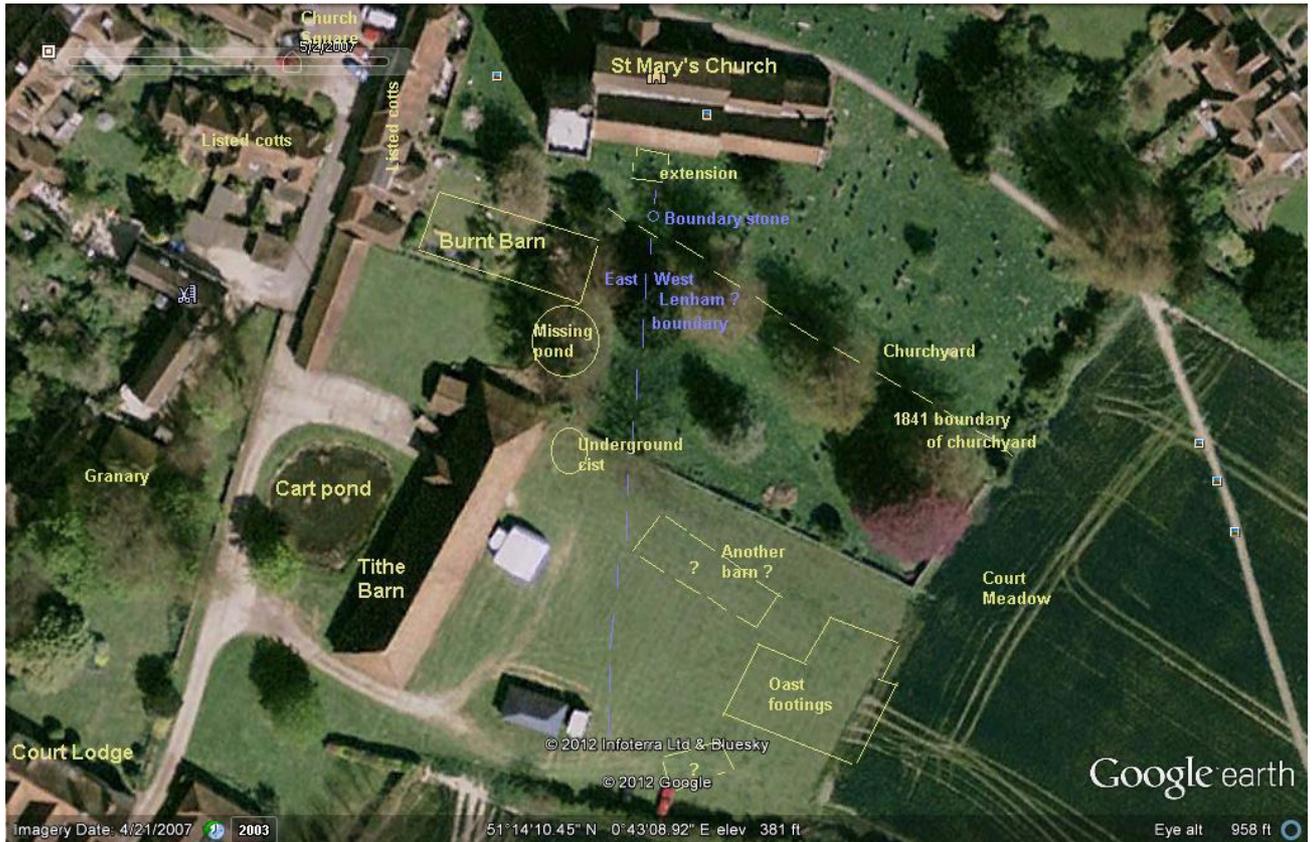
Apart from the church itself the nearest buildings of archaeological and/or listed status are the cottages in Church square and the footprint of a 14thC tithe barn that stood only 10m away until 1964 when it was burnt down .

The wall footings of this barn can still be seen in the garden of No 3 Church Square



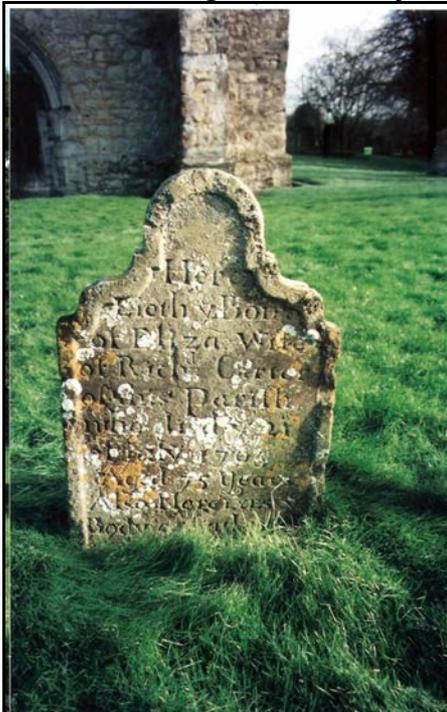
**2 . Photo looking SW.**

Recent geophysical survey (earth resist) 2012 by LAS has indicated the missing oast (on 1841 Tithe map) and has also picked up the footings of another possible missing barn . Here is a Google Earth aerial with all the buildings marked :-



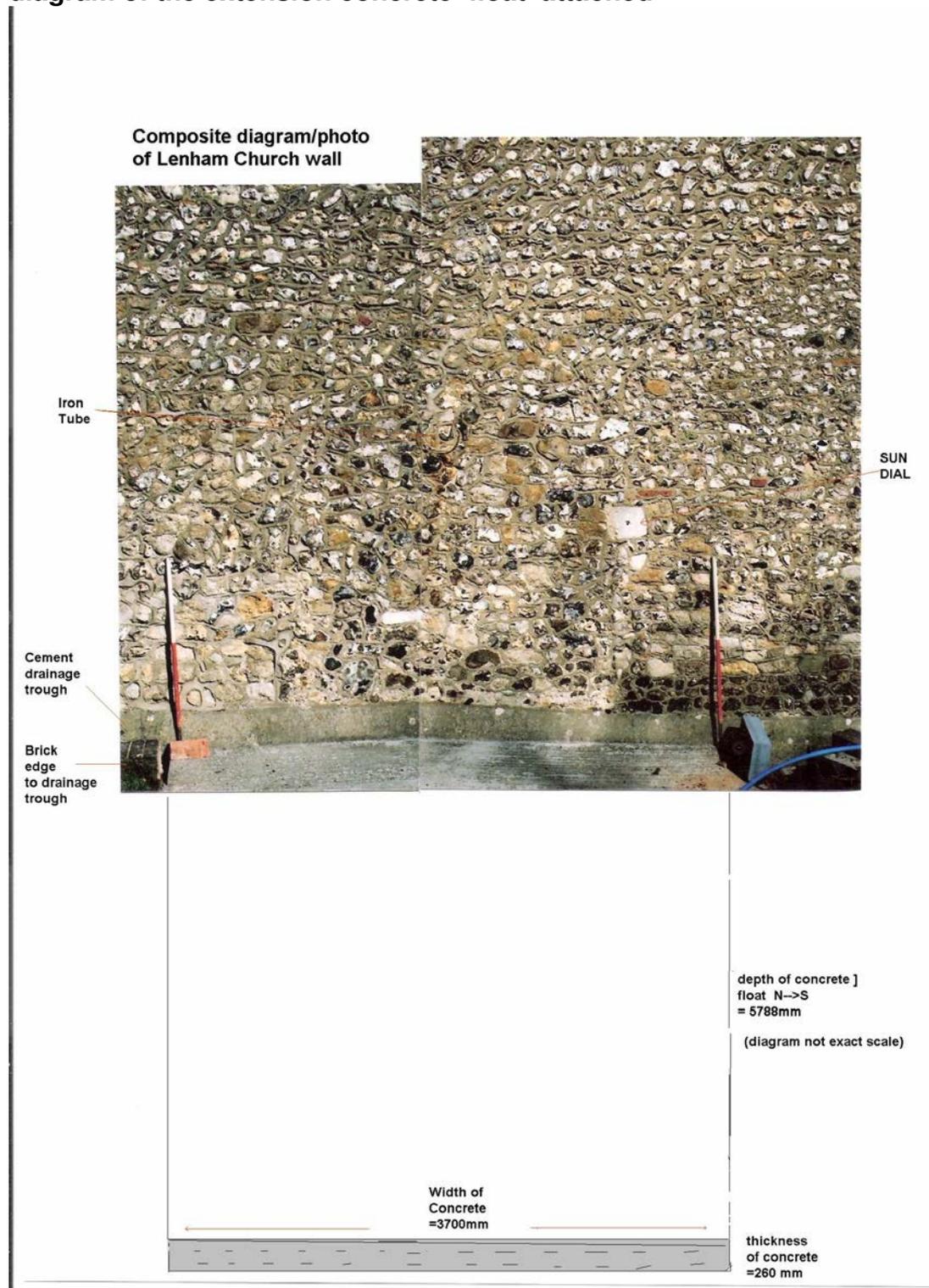
© Google Maps

**Listed Graves :-** there are five of these in the churchyard the nearest being IUD173857 = grave of Mary Carter 20m west of the tower .



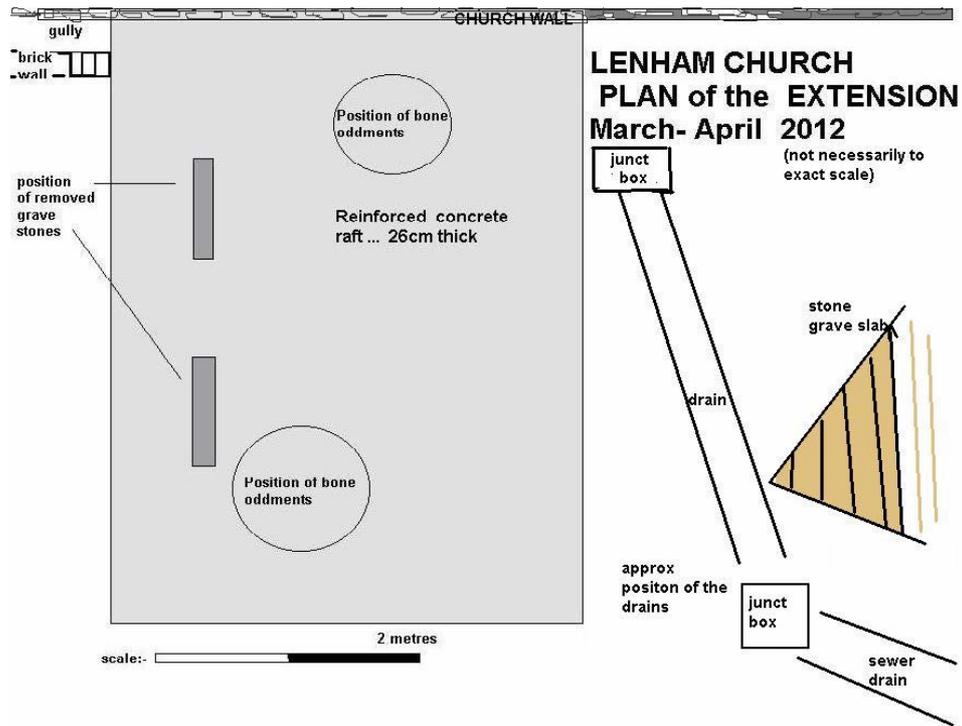
Two unlisted grave stones stood within the extension area and these were removed before I was detailed to do the watching brief but they were carefully laid aside and will be re-erected on the west wall of the extension when it is finished . The oldest grave stone a few metres east of the extension is 1747 in date. A stone slab beside the vaulted tomb to the SE of the extension was left in place and the drainage pipe routed around it

**EXCAVATION :-** Here is a composite picture of the church wall with diagram of the extension concrete float attached



Two grave stones were removed and set aside then the area for the foundation was excavated (see diagram above ) At no time did any of the trenches go deeper than the statutory 50cm . After the area had been excavated on 8.3. 2012 aggregate was tamped in and an iron reinforcing (two layers ) set in place for 26cm of concrete :-

**PLAN of the AREA & building position**



**WORK in PROGRESS :-**



**5** Excavation looking east



**6** Tamping the hardcore base

**7..Setting the grid**



**8** Red line = drain position



### DRAIN LINE :-

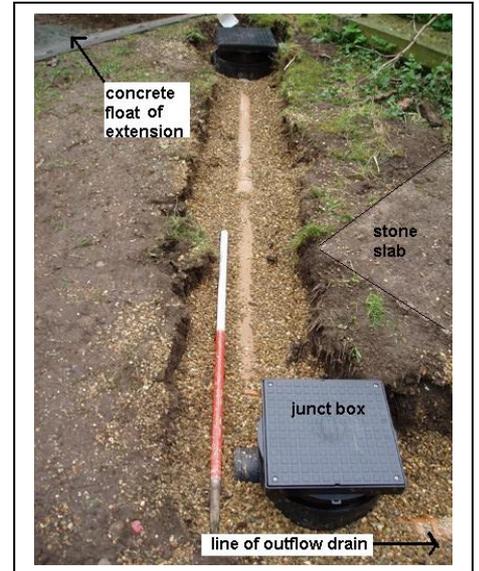
Drain for the toilet was dug in the NE corner and the soak-away drain led south then bent SE . Two reasons for slight change in plan ... (1) was that a stone slab protruded from the adjacent vaulted tomb and (2) it was decided to keep the line sufficiently distant from the garden fence of the cottage so that large vehicles could negotiate the gap (if ever needed ) and not need to traverse the drain area . This drain area was eventually capped with concrete slabs .



9 Stone slab



10 Drain from SE corner

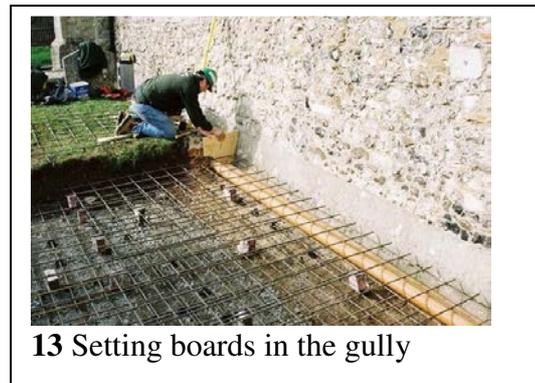


11 Drain with gravel

### MORE CONSTRUCTION :-



12 Gully - around the church



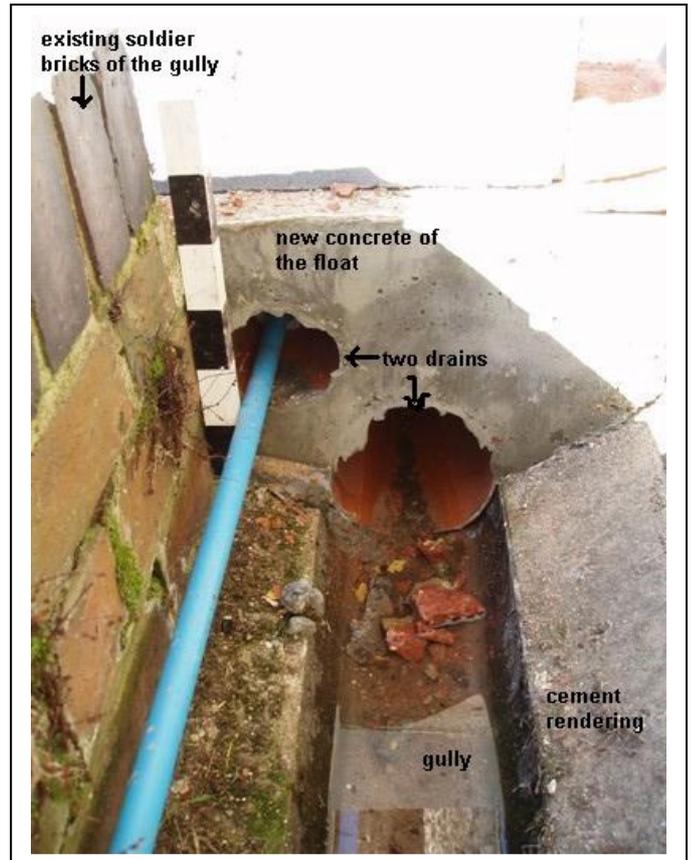
13 Setting boards in the gully



14 Concrete float



15 Drains along the church wall & showing their exit from the concrete float



16

### SEWER DRAIN outflow

fig 17



Above is a photo of the sewer drain to the right looking down the length of it when the capping of concrete slabs was in place

18



Below is detail of the area with a clay band  
That might indicate the ditch surrounding the  
Original churchyard before it was extended in the 19th Century  
Marked in are the oppositions of long bones of  
cattle ....presumably thrown in when it was a ditch .

19



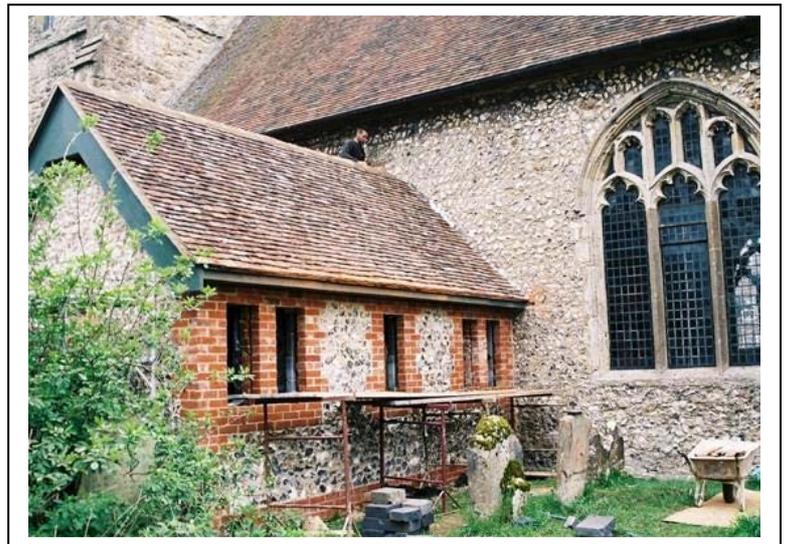
20 Starting the brickwork



21 First rafters



22 Tiling the roof



23 Tiling finished , nearly complete

## Knocking through the wall

This did not take place before the extension was nearly complete and secure .  
 An 18<sup>th</sup> century iron flue pipe was the first to be knocked through . In the early stages of dismantling a piece of dressed Caen stone coin was found by the workmen (see Finds section )

24



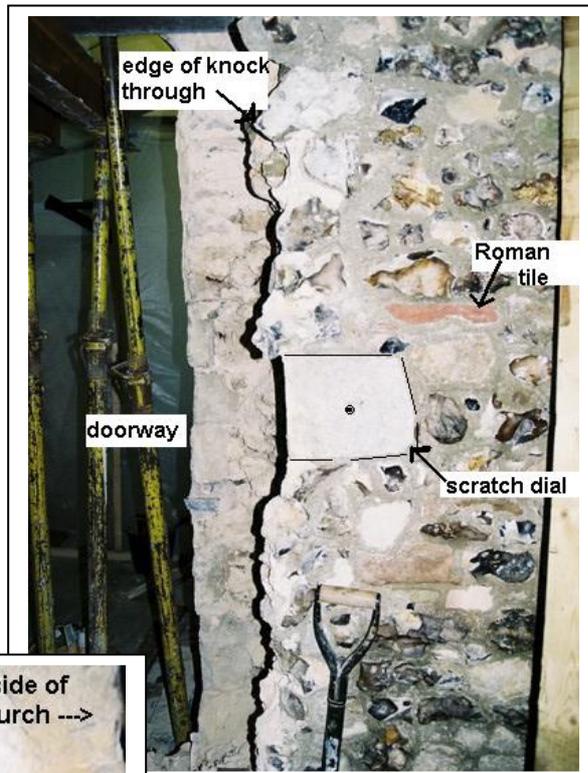
25→



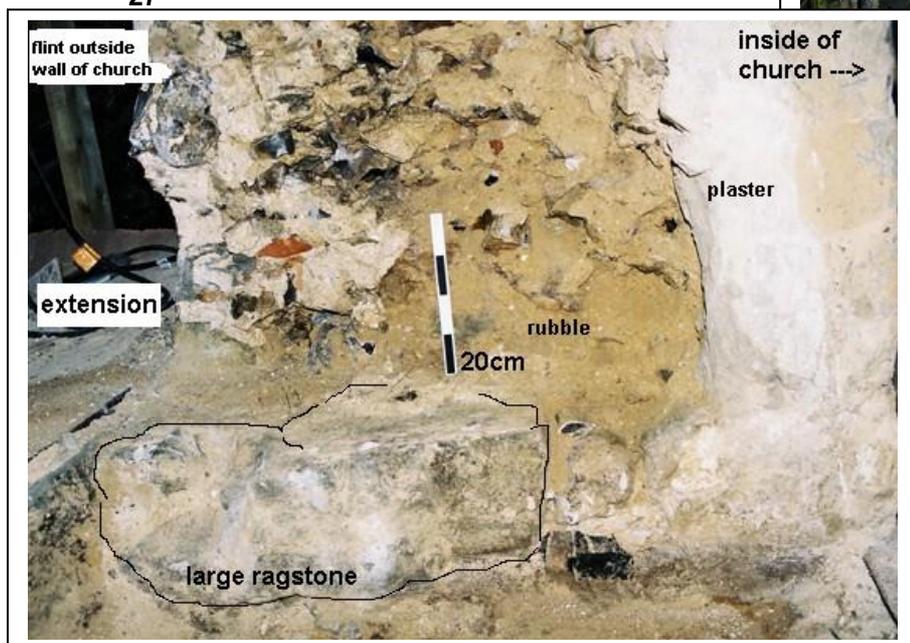
Set in this area of the church wall is an old scratch Sundial . The hole in the middle was to insert a stick and tell the time :-



26 a) Sadly it will be on an inside wall of the new extension as seen in knock through → 26 but preserved in a small niche. The structure of the church wall could now be seen in section ...see below in pic 27.



27



View of west side of broken church wall Just above floor level.

**Bones** came up in the excavation of the extension footings . They were very shallow and it would appear that they were dug up when the 18<sup>th</sup> C grave diggers were digging more recent graves . A clay pipe bowl dates between 1720-50 and would fit the date of the 1747 grave stone to the east.



28 various bones



29 mandible



**30 top of a skull**

More finds occurred in the sewer drainage trench but mostly modern . Kent peg tile , few bits of brick and animal bones . These included 3 forelimbs of different cows as if there was a cart pond or ditch in the area that then had rubbish thrown in . Animal tooth proved to be of a sheep ( grazing in the churchyard ?) One curious piece of flint resembled a roughed out horses head ...a child's toy hobby -horse? It has definitely been knapped. (see 30)



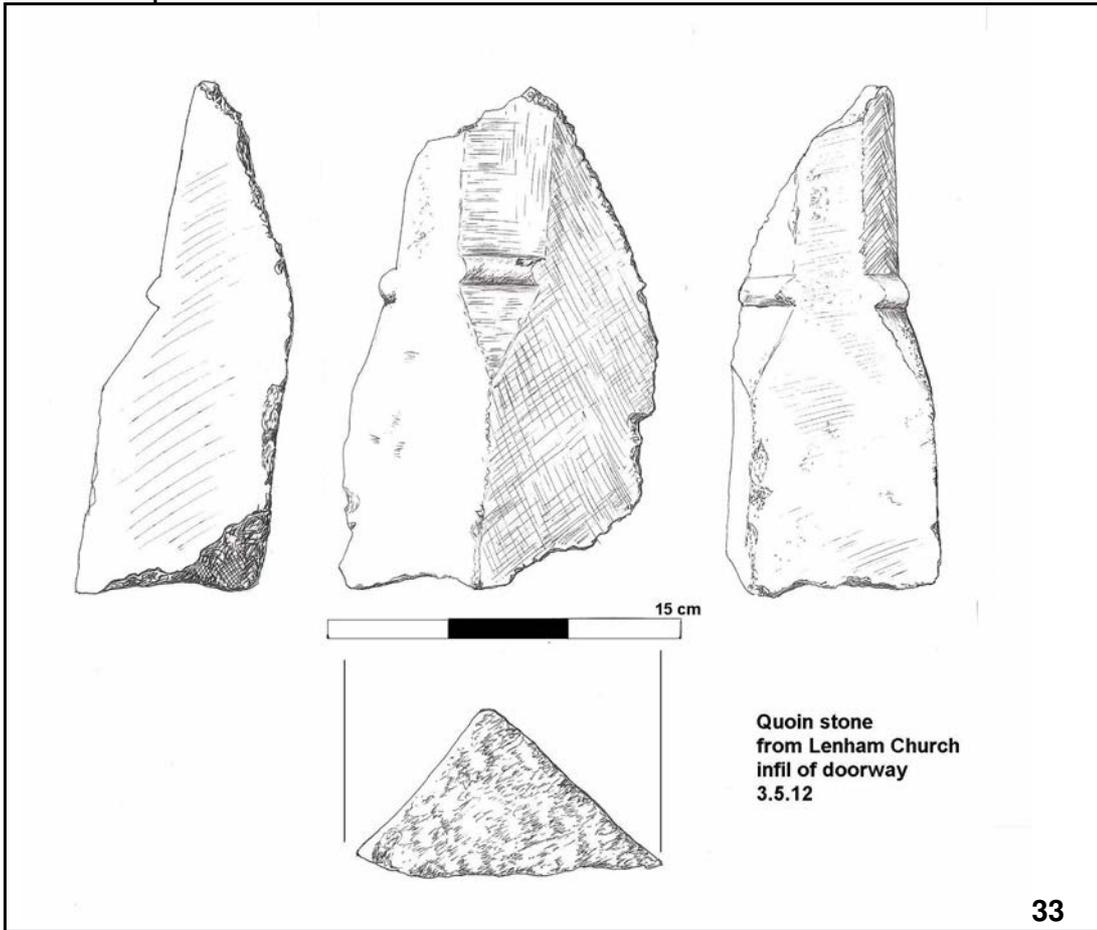
**31**

**32**

The pile of rubble to the left of the window has all come from the knocked through piece of church wall. Most was Kentish rag-stone and knapped flint . Much of the mortar had turned to dust and it was as though the church walls were now held up by the outside flint and inside plaster with mainly a dusty rubble in between !

When the flint and rubble came out of the arch area one of the first finds was this carved piece of Caen stone. It was quite pristine and unweathered and the typical creamy colour of Caen stone , obviously the base of a door pillar and comparable to some of 14<sup>th</sup>-15<sup>th</sup> Century in Boughton Monchelsea church . It matched nothing we have on doorways in Lenham . Where the rest of the door arch is we have no idea. It would fit with an account of an early "Lord of the Manor" who required a door on the south side closer to his house ! Perhaps his house was the footings we found with resistivity near the present barn ?.....more scope for research!

Carved piece of Caen Stone :-

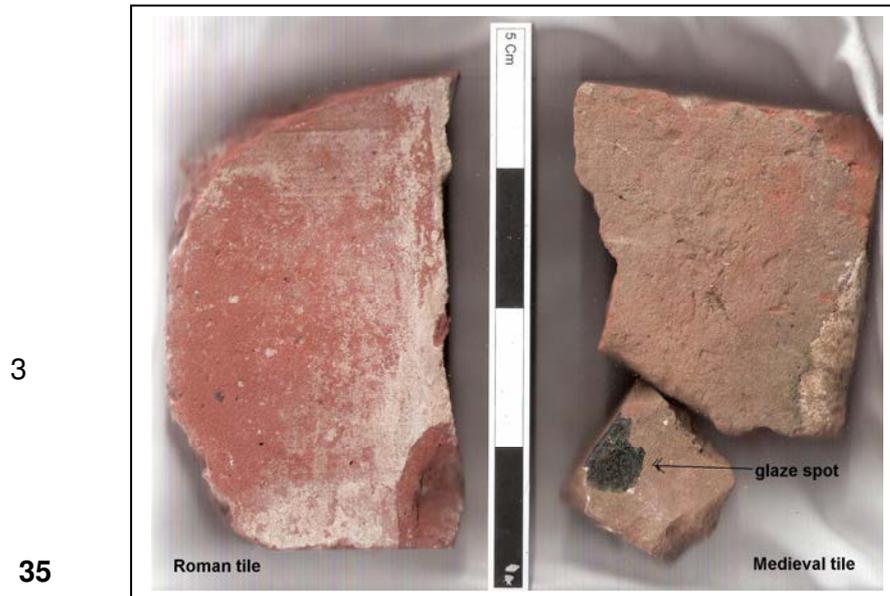


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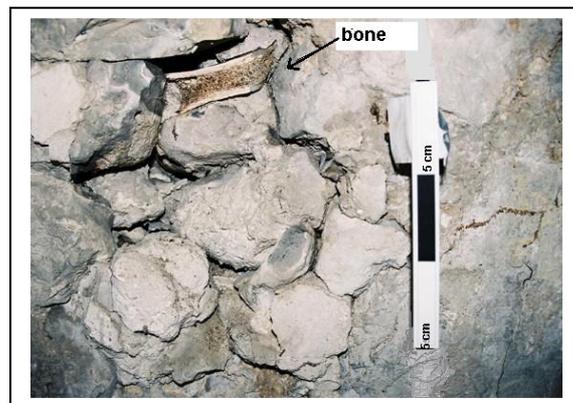


34

MORE finds of note were pieces of Roman tile found at the base of the archway and a piece of possibly Medieval tile 14th Century. Medieval was 36mm thick (whilst the "Roman" pieces were 33mm) and with very slightly rougher finish and one spot of greenish black glaze.

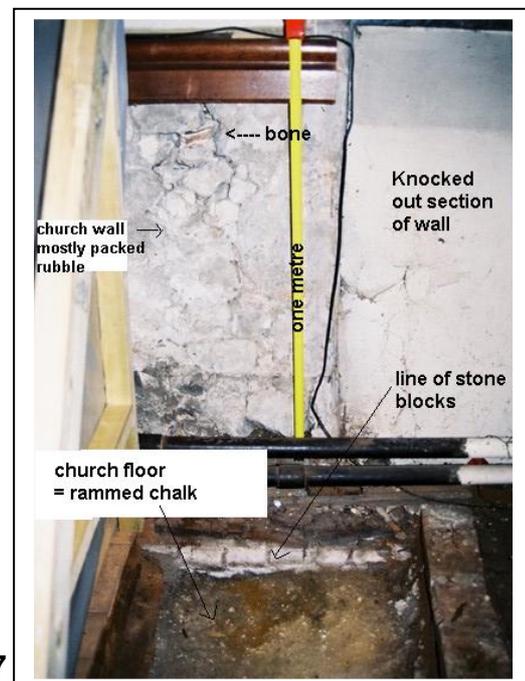


One very unexpected find was a piece of bone in the actual fabric of the church wall just to the left of the arched doorway and just behind the wooden panelling



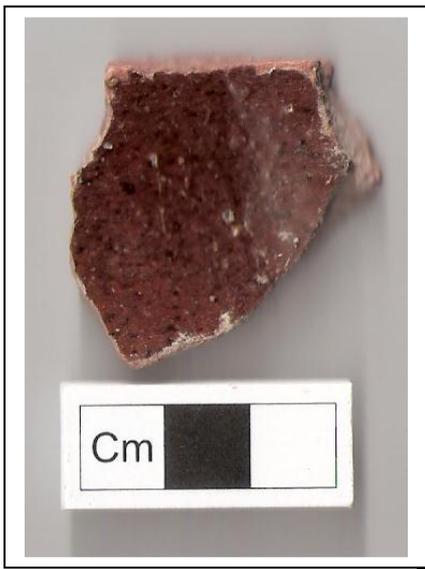
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Additionally, the church floor under the floor boards was interesting it seems to be a rammed chalk and clay surface. (see picture 40)

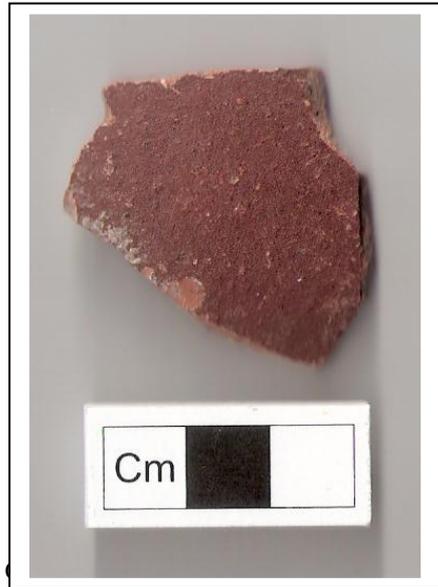


37

The only piece of pottery appeared to be a sherd of 17<sup>th</sup>- 18<sup>th</sup> Century pot, glazed on the inside, terracotta clay. The outside of the sherd has had the glaze carefully wiped off to give a smooth semi matt finish. Late 18<sup>th</sup> C. is the assumed date for the infill of the doorway!



18thC sherd with inside clear glaze.....outside



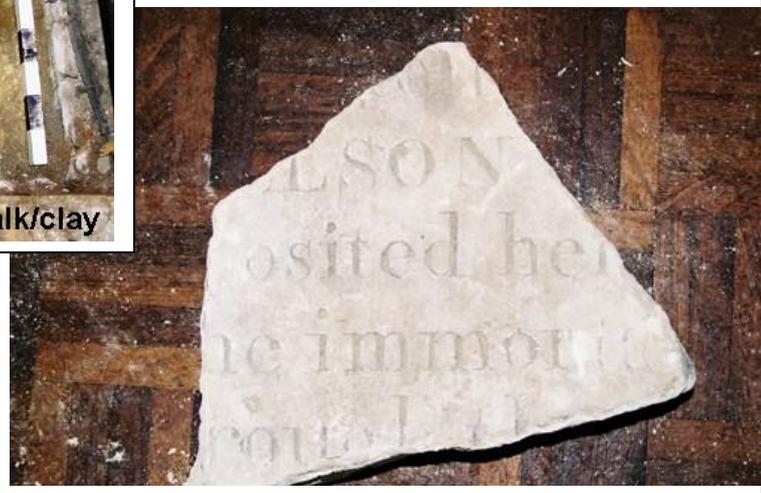
39  
matt glaze coating



Church floor of rammed chalk/clay

40

Further proof of the infill date could be when a certain Mr Wilson was buried , as a section of carved tomb stone was also found in the rubble of the doorway infill.



41

The broken tomb stone of a certain person called Wilson  
(or is it Coulson or Fulson ?)

Report by Lesley Feakes , 2 Old School Close, Lenham  
Member of Lenham Archaeological Society .