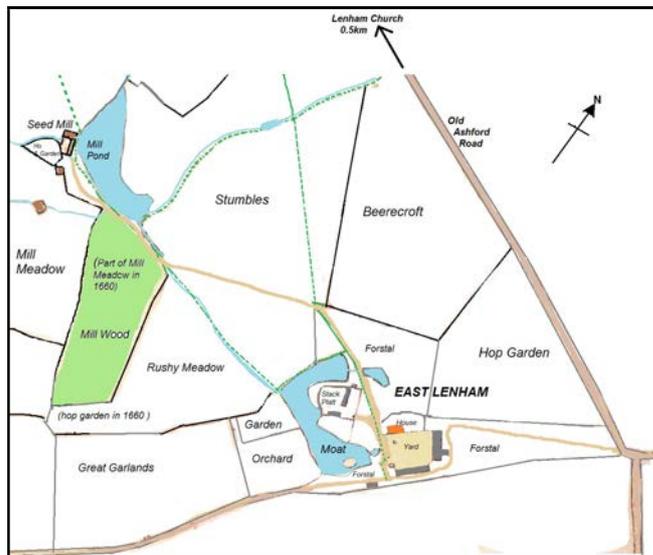


Lenham Archaeological Society

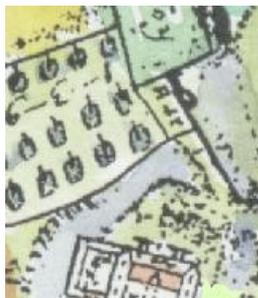
East Lenham

Discoveries and findings of Lenham Archaeological Soc 2003 – 2012

East Lenham Farm house now stands to the south of the lake and the land within the lake was not even registered as a moated site in 2003 when LAS investigations first took place. The 1841 tithe map shows the centre of the lake marked as Stack Platt and two farm buildings are marked. The name Platt suggests at one that it was a cob nut plantation. The very accurate estate map drawn by Thomas Boycote in 1660 shows an apparent Tudor house standing within the moat in the 17th Century. This house either burnt or was just pulled down around the turn of the 18th C and a modern house built in the reign of Queen Anne. That present house appears from the exterior to be Victorian or Edwardian and obviously had a modern make over. The barns to the north and south east are older.



19thC Map adapted from the 1841 tithe map and 1660 map



Tudor house as drawn on 1660 map .

In the early 18thC-19th C Stack Platt was used as a stock yard and still later in 20th C used as a nursery field for young lambs and for chickens. Burials of dead sheep are known to be situated in the southern half near the lake so no excavations extended beyond the bank on which a water pump still stands. One farm building still stands in a SW → NE

position . It is known that the moat has a rag-stone wall edging it beyond this building.

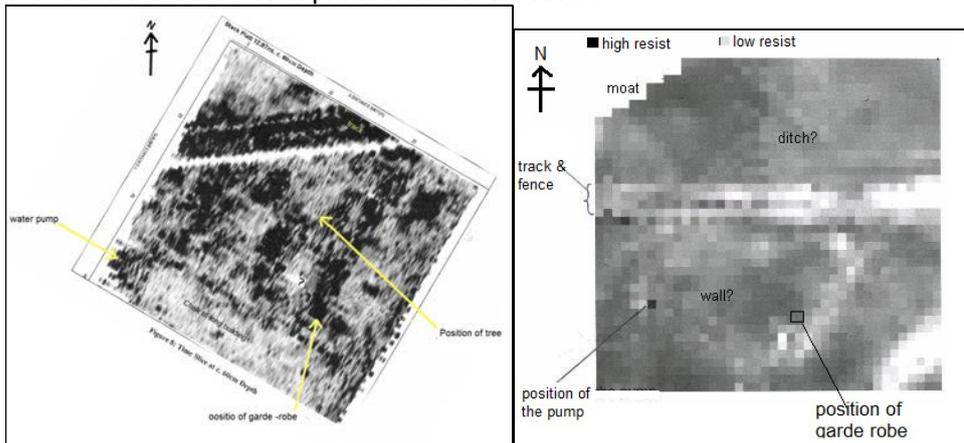


Ragstone dwarf wall supporting the existing building

It was the demolition rubble and imported flint (possibly from a near by Roman road) that made investigations & excavations so difficult . It is now realised that a chalk layer forming the floor of demolished farm v building could at one time have been the walls of a garde – robe at the back of the Tudor house.

Resistivity and ground radar surveys were conducted over the central area of Stack Platt and they both indicated a possible long structure under the bank 20m x 3m and a square structure 20m x 20m (in a related alignment) to the NE that would appear to be the foundations of a house.

Radar is difficult to interpret as it only shows differences in the consistency of different areas. We found the earth resist printout easier to follow .



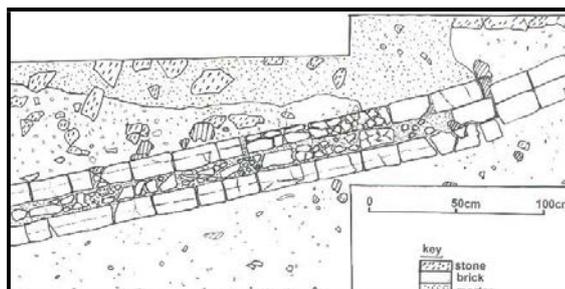
Radar printout

Same area with resistivity

Early excavations showed that the long building under the mound had NE and both E and W walls with a stone foundation . The south wall was apparently missingbut could have been an open faced barn . Other explanation is that the south wall had long been robbed out . The layer of chalk over most of this building we later discovered could have come from the demolition of the garderobe of the Tudor house .



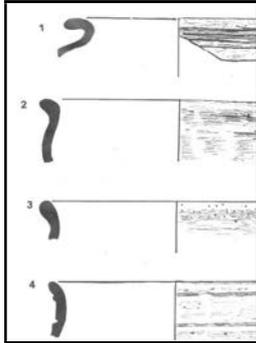
Digging in 2007



Plan of the wall found – possibly a garden wall

The wall discovered here is not the wall of the long building (the line of that can be seen above the central digger, John) instead it seems to be a garden wall in a different alignment that is not correct for the house either ! All a bit confusing !

Underneath that wall were much older sherds and pieces of iron slag (Romano British !)



The wall of the southern long building with chalk floor was discovered in the first dig of 2004 . NO dating was discovered for this stone wall and it is thought it was the back wall of an open



fronted 18th C barn :-

This first investigation is described in LAS publication "Discovering Ancient Lenham " vol 1 2006. available from Lenham Library .

Later attempts at discerning the depth of the chalk layer resulted in finds of yellow roof tile which dated the chalk floor as being after the house was demolished. Dating this roof tile by thermoluminescence would give an accurate date for its manufacture .



Dig resulting in the tile finds beneath the chalk floor !

The garde-robe was not discovered till 2012. It lay in the SE corner (of the square house indicate on the surveys.)

Layer upon layer of excrement /soil was found with glass finds, small animal bones, pigeons and fish remains. The base was 60cm beneath the present top soil and water from the lake was seeping in.



Garde-robe with soil and glass tazza showing



Fish caudal vertebrae from the garde-robe ...centrum 14mm in diameter (I.D. still under debate Cod, Salmon, or Carp ?) In any case it is a huge fish estimated in excess of 1m , which seems too large to be a pond fish .

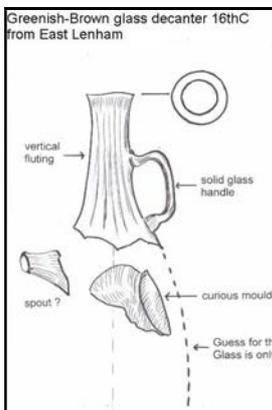
GLASS FINDS:-

Listed below are all the finds from this amazing base of the garderobe.

(Copyright for all these photos and pictures is held by the author L Feakes)

This evidence from the base of the garde-robe suggest a rich and important house .

1. Masses of small animal bones . Chicken , pigeon , rabbit and fish and mole.
2. 2 tazze . Venetian circa 1600
3. Window glass with picture of an archbishop circa 1400 (maybe earlier)
4. Glass wine bottles with twisted necks 15th Century]
5. Brown glass decanter 15th Century.

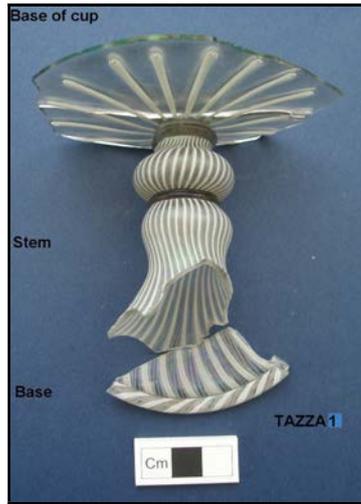


Glass decanter diagramphoto

wine bottle neck and base



First Tazza stem was missing



Tazza with filigree white strands

Two glass tazza were found (they resemble modern sundaes dishes) and they were identified as late 16th Century Venetian . The first one found, unfortunately with only a small fragment of its base and nothing of the actual stem The second one was intricately fashion with twisted white glass strands within the clear glass stem and bowl .

Pieces of window glass were also found . Of course one could not be sure as to when exactly All these items were dropped down the toilet shaft and the piece of glass, with its bishop painting, could be 15th Century.

The curve around the face to the left is the halo . The crozier is on the right resting on the Archbishop's left shoulder .
The design on the mitre is identical to the depiction of a 15th C Archbishop in Canterbury Cathedral .



Note : all these glass items have been published in an article by the author in Glass News 34 July 2014

Floor tile :-

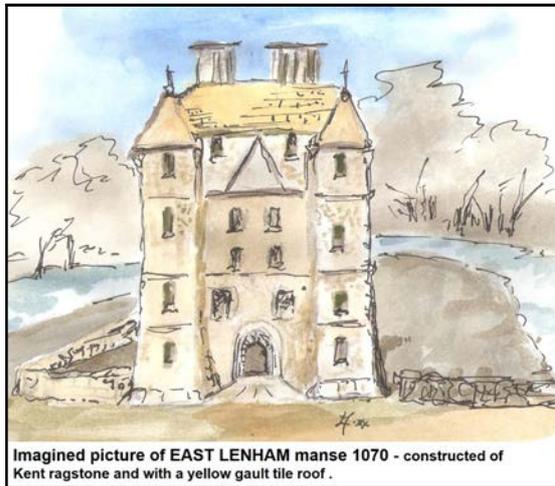
This piece of glazed floor tile was found in the top soil beside the garderobe , It was badly worn but presumably came from the house. Again dating by TL would determine its firing date .



Thickness 2cm

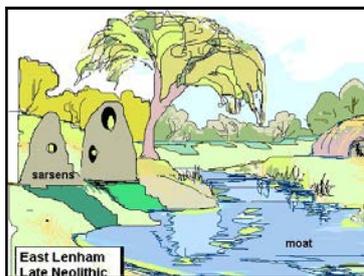
Account of LAS digs at East Lenham on Stack Platt can also be found in “Discovering Ancient Lenham” Edition 3 , 2011. p. 23-25. Edition 2. 2008 p.11-16 and Edition 1 2006, p.23-27 . ALL available for sale at Lenham Library .

1664 Hearth tax :- lists a house at **East Lenham** that had 14 hearths . According to the records on East Lenham (obtained by an Historian researcher) there are deeds available for this house ...but I have not been able to see these . If my calculations are correct the house was probably standing well before Tudor times and was possibly built by Lanfranc in 11th Century .

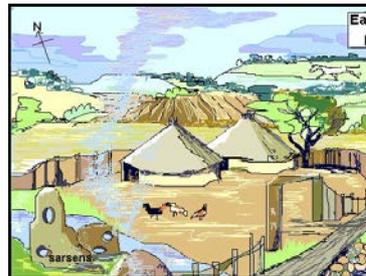


THEORY

There is a tendency for historians to label a site “Tudor” because a Tudor house once stood there but it was discovered using archaeology .It is rare to be able to piece together the whole history when a house is still occupying the land and I am sure future archaeologist will be able to discover a whole lot more on this site . But with a little imagination , given backing of the items found, this is the possible scenario of the past :-



→



The long building with an 'apse' at the western end could have been an early church . More excavation are needed especially to find a possible second Garderobe on the main house.
All find s from these digs will be lodged with the owners of the present East Lenham farm .

Sarsen stones were found on the site and at the head of the drive. As these are naturally found on top of the downs it is logical to assume they were brought down in

Lesley Feakes Nov 2020