

BOARDFIELD CHURCH a lost church near Otterden TQ9350 5230

This article is basically what was published in our 2008 journal edition 2 of "Discovering Ancient Lenham ". The church land was owned by Fulk de Newnham and given eventually to the nuns of Davington .

Ref. in Wallenberg :-

Burdefeld 1205 RC . Burdfeld 1226Ch.

Burdefelde 1253-4 Fees Kn Arch C XII . 1293 Vis Rolls (Arch Cant 32 p143)

Burdefeld 1269 Feet of Fines of Kent Arch C II-VI 1278 Ass 1305 Pat.

Bourdefeld 1327 Lay subsidy rolls for Kent

Bourdefeld 1348 Feet of Fines of Kent

Meanings : OE feld = open land .Burda birth, descent of high rank.

Charter of Henry II (Gloucester, probably dated 1155)

...lands which she herself purchased (she = Queen Matilda of Boulogne, King Stephen's wife) from Fulcone de Newenham (i.e. Fulco of Newnham) namely Burdifield (sic), and Kingesdonam (i.e. Kingsdown), and Chetham (manor nr. Ospringe) which Richard de Lucy gave to them...

From the above it would appear that Fulco held the first two manors, and Matilda purchased them for the Abbey. This is borne out by the charters of King John and Henry III. King John's charter is believed to date from March 1215. (Ospringe): *and the lands which she herself purchased from Fulcone de Newnham and Fulcone de Newnham gave to them namely Burdefeld (sic), Kyngesdone and the land of Chetham which they hold from the gift of Richard de Lucy.*

The reference in Henry III's Charter is identical to the above. March 22nd 1226.

(Translated by Michael Frohnsdorff in 1994. The originals are in Dugdale, and were collected by Archbishop Matthew Parker.)

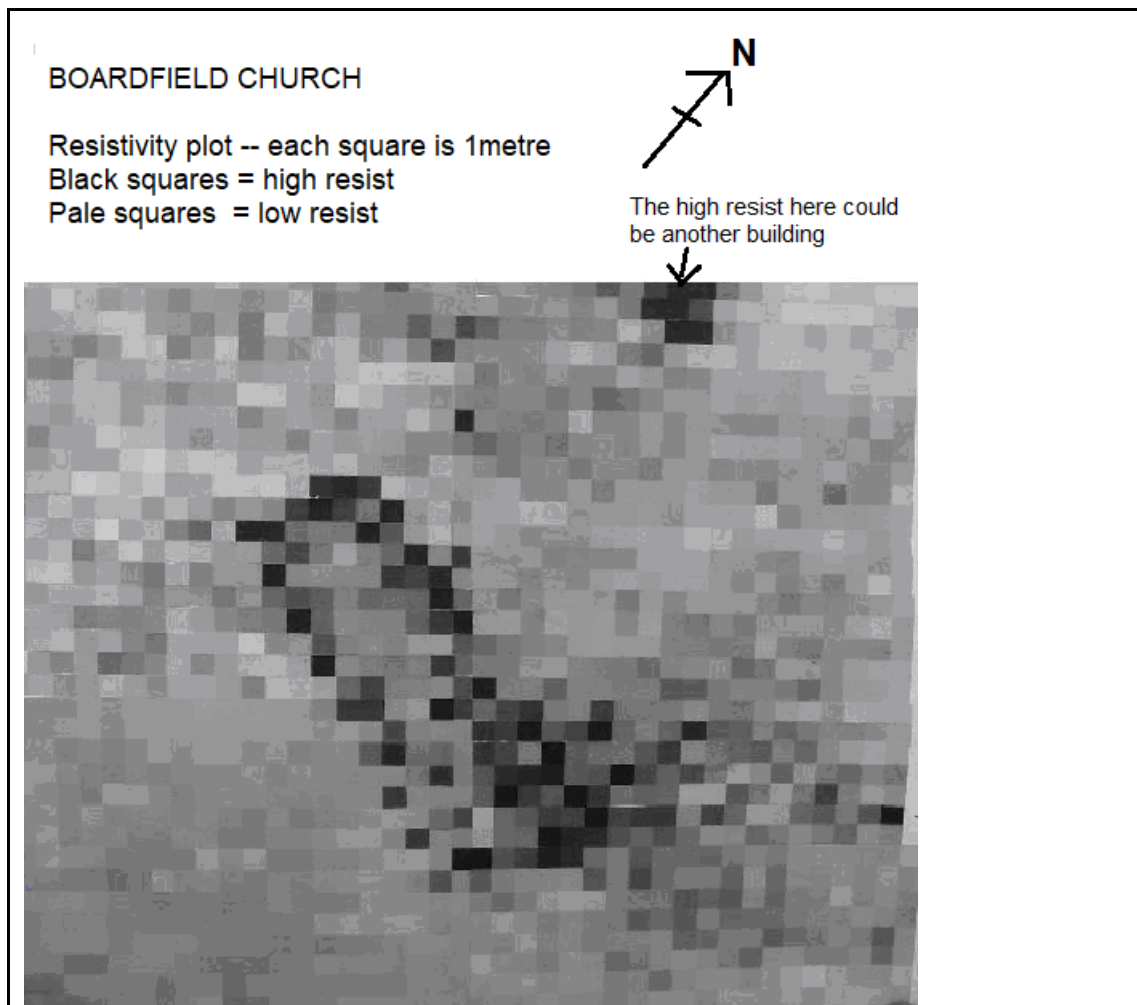


Sarsens from Boardfield Church, now in the adjacent Chalk pit

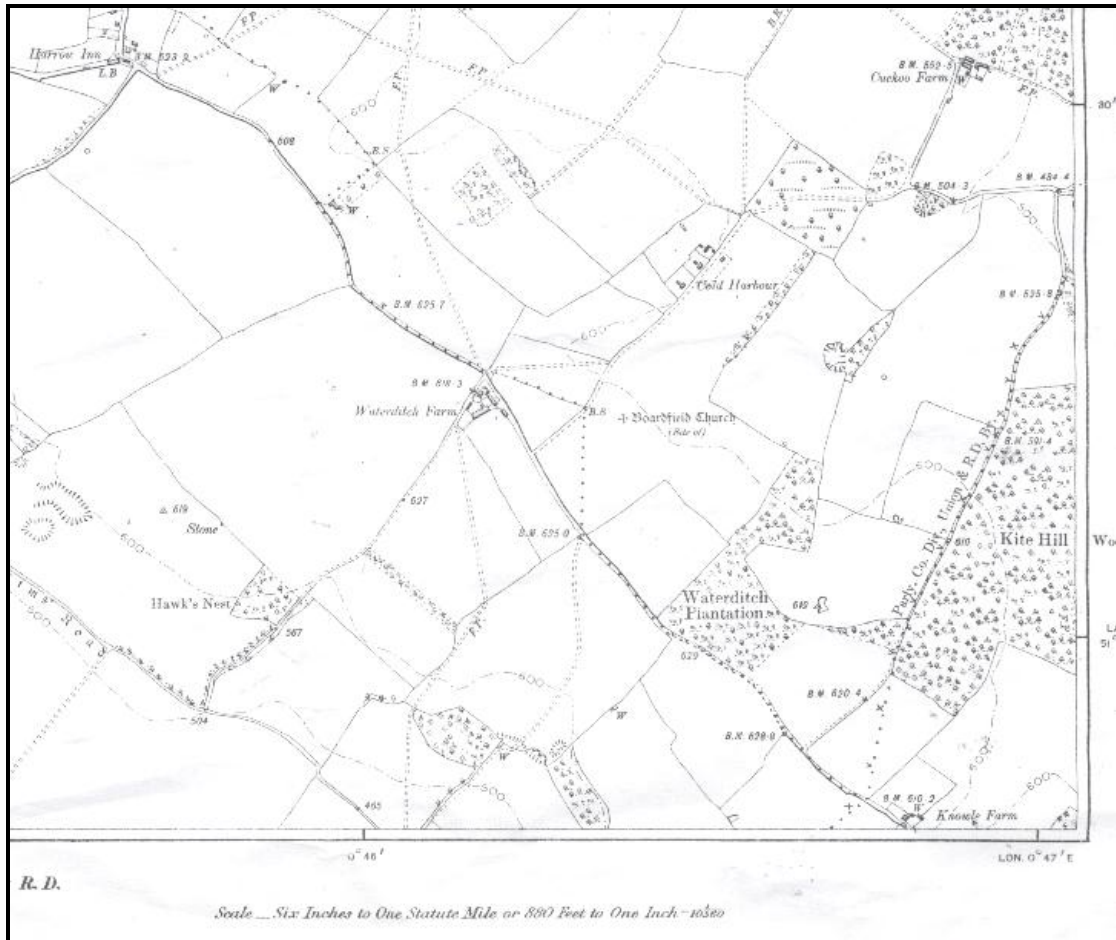
The sarsen stones were moved last century as they interfered with ploughing.

So this 12th century church was built on a spot that had been sacred for thousands of years. We know the position of the church but we do not know the exact position of the stones around it. They could have once been a tomb (as Kit's Coty or Coldrum) or they could have been in a circle or henge monument.

In 2009 LAS did a resistivity survey of the site with the kind permission of the owners. It revealed the position of the church exactly on the position it was listed. It appears to have been a single cell of nave/chancel with no cross wall. There is another small high density block to the NW of the building .



Anyone who is interested in surveying this site further would probably find the owners willing . It is under pasture for horses of a riding establishment . Metal detection, if carried out, should have all finds including iron items recorded exactly using a GPS unit . Even Roman 'grots' on any place on Downs (or anywhere) should have their position recorded. Someone finding just one might not think it important but one or two by each detectorist over the years can indicate lines of finds that may represent a Roman road. If they are not recorded the information maybe lost forever .



This map showing the position of this church was left out of our magazine for some reason , so you can see the correct one here. It also shows the small wood Hawks nest , where there are Roman snails. Please remember unless you keep to marked footpaths many of these sites are on private land and you must get permission from land owners to walk across them.

An interesting follow up the misericord seats in St Mary's Lenham somehow seem out of place . If they were in the original church before 1297 when it was supposedly burnt down why do they not show any evidence of fire ? Were they replaced after 1297 ? Or were they part of the Victorian makeover of the mid 19th Century? Were they clever reproductions of the cabinet making family of Bottles from Harrietsham ? Some people believe that they came from another demolished church or chapel... Royton Chapel ? Or was it Boardfield ?

Curiously they have very plain seats indicating they are modern reproductions ? Or were they misericords from Boardfield , demolished before the reformation? If the latter it *might* explain their simplicity with the nuns not partial to grotesque gargoyle type carvings .



Plain misericord from St Mary's