

The southern defences of Rochester revisited

Early in 1344, the king was presented with a petition from the prior and convent of Rochester. The monks had come up with a plan to reconfigure the defences around the south-east side of the city. Since the city belonged to the king, they needed the king's permission; but that was not all they wanted. The king, they suggested, should give them the existing city ditch, outside the existing city wall, between the east gate of the city towards Canterbury (i.e. towards the east) and the prior's gate towards the south. If the king was willing to do that, the monks, in return, would build a new city wall, at their own expense, on their own land, outside the old ditch (which they intended to fill up), and dig a new ditch, outside the new wall; and they would undertake, for themselves and their successors for ever, to keep the new wall in repair.

The monks' petition (doc 1) does not survive in the original,* but the gist of it is known from three documents which do. These are they:

(doc 2) a letter from the king to the constable of the castle, John de Cobham, dated 28 Apr 1344, ordering him to convene a jury of citizens to inquire into the matter;

(doc 3) the report of this inquiry, dated 12 May 1344, to the effect that the jurors see no reason why the king should not approve the monks' proposal;

(doc 4) an open letter from the king, dated 23 Apr [sic]† 1344, letting it be known that he has given the monks permission to proceed.

Docs 2--3, stitched together, are in the National Archives (C 143/274/16). Doc 4 is in the archive of the Dean and Chapter of Rochester (DRC_T062); there is, as there ought to be, a copy of the letter on the patent roll for this year (C 66/211, cf *Calendar of patent rolls 1342--5*, p 262). All three documents were printed, from the originals, by Hope (1900): I reproduce his transcriptions and translations in a separate file, *ccr-defences-southern-dox.pdf*. Doc 4 had been printed long before -- from a copy (DRC_F01A, fo 28r--v), not from the original -- by Thorpe (1769:551--2); docs 2--3 were brought into play by Hope.

* The petition, I take it, would have been written in French.

† It seems clear from the sequence of events that doc 4 was misdated: apparently the scribe who wrote this letter put "April" where he should have put "May". The entries which follow this one on the patent roll are dated 21 May, 12 May, 26 May. (Hope (1900:21) noticed the discrepancy but left it unexplained.)

The sequel is unrecorded. There is no written evidence which goes

to prove that the monks ever kept their promise.

In the summer of 1345, the prior and convent applied to the king again. This time, we discover, they were planning to build a new wall along the north side of their precinct, from the east gate of the city as far as St William's gate.* If the monks had merely wanted to build a wall on their own land, that would not have concerned the king; but their intention was to put a crenellated parapet along the top of the wall -- and nobody was allowed to do that without the proper licence. So the monks put in their application; and the licence (doc 5) was issued on 5 Aug 1345.†

* We might think of inferring from this that the monks had completed the work which they had promised to do the year before and were now preparing to move on to the next phase; but we are not sufficiently ignorant for that argument to be allowable. We know enough to be sure that things are not so simple.

† It was printed by Thorpe (1769:552--3), from the original, "Autograph. penes Dec. et Cap. Roffen."; there is a copy on the patent roll (*Calendar of patent rolls 1343--5*, p 539). Since Thorpe's time, the original has been lost. (It was already missing when Hope went looking for it (1900:23).)

One local source from which we might hope to get some help says nothing to the point. The bishop of Rochester, Hamo of Hythe, writing his memoirs (presumably after his retirement in 1352),* is happy to tell us about the money he has spent on improvements to the cathedral church, to the bishop's residences, and (out of pure generosity) to some of the priory buildings;† but he does not mention the walls which the monks themselves were building or planning to build. If they had asked him to contribute towards the cost, he might have thought it worth making some remark on the subject: apparently they did not.

* The only known copy of Hamo's memoirs is BL Cotton Faustina B v. It breaks off in Aug 1350. Many extracts from this manuscript were printed by Wharton (1691:356--77). (He misidentified the author as William de Dene.) Bernard Wigan had it in mind to produce a new edition; regrettably -- I do not know why -- that did not come about.

† Perhaps it may be worth saying again that Wharton's dating goes adrift towards the end: after "Anno xvi. regni Regis Edwardi III. [Christi MCCCXLII.]" at the top of p 375, the dates which he supplied in brackets are all one year short. Hope was misled by Wharton; numerous people have been misled by Hope.

The prior who had instigated these projects, John of Sheppey, continued in office till early 1350, when he applied to the pope for permission to resign. His petition survives as a copy in one of the many thousands of papal registers, and the calendar of entries relating to the British Isles compiled for the PRO reports the gist of it as follows:

John de Scapeya, S.T.P. prior of Rochester for sixteen years. He has freed the priory from burdens <debts> laid on it by his predecessors, has built the refectory, hospice, and vestibule

of the church, has repaired the dormitory, infirmary, and cellars of the prior at great expense, and has added to the lands and rents of the church, obtaining a confirmation of the same from the king,* he has inclosed the whole with a strong wall, and now, feeling it is he can do no more, prays for licence to resign the priory <"priorate" rather> and have apportioned to him a yearly pension of 40l. to be paid at Michaelmas and Easter. (Bliss 1896:192)

The petition was granted on 1 Feb 1350 (Bliss and Johnson 1897:319), and Sheppey's resignation took effect some time after that.† This evidence was overlooked by Hope (1900).‡ As far as I know, the first person writing about Rochester to cite it was Fowler (1926).

* Quite true. In fact prior Sheppey had obtained two charters from the king, dated 2 Jul 1335 and 16 Mar 1336 respectively (*Calendar of charter rolls*, vol 4, pp 341--2, 354), the second including a clause which was missing from the first.

† Before Nov 1350, when he is called simply "monk" (Bliss and Johnson 1897:48). He needed a letter from the king as well before he could be sure of his pension (*Calendar of patent rolls 1350--4*, p 41, 21 Feb 1351).

‡ It was also overlooked (less excusably, I think) by Jones (1963).

*

To dispose of one side-issue first. The wall which the monks obtained a licence to crenellate (doc 5) was intended to run along the north side of the monastic precinct, "between the city and the garden of the prior and convent", all the way from Eastgate to St William's gate. Though neither of these gates is still standing, the sites of both are known -- exactly for the former, approximately for the latter.*

* St William's gate was in Black Boy Alley, but I do not think we know how far it was set back from the street.

A long stretch of wall was discovered in 1887, in the open space created in 1864 by the demolition of the old prebendal house which had formerly fronted the street here.* (This is the space between 76 and 78 High Street.) The city surveyor, William Banks, was instructed to look for some remains of the old corn-market cross. He did not find that; but he did accidentally come upon this stretch of wall, which ran across the site, parallel with the High Street, and about 15 feet away from it. From the information supplied to him by Banks, Arnold (1889:201) wrote up a short account of this discovery: it was Arnold, I suppose, who identified Banks's wall as the one which the monks were planning to build in 1345. Both Livett (1895:57--8) and Hope (1900:22) refer to the same discovery, but neither knew anything more about it than what they learnt from Arnold's note.

* This was the house annexed to the second prebend. It became redundant in 1840 (when the first prebend was abolished and the house which thus became vacant was earmarked for the second prebendary). In 1841 the dean and chapter obtained permission to pull this house down (*London Gazette*, 9 Apr 1841, 941--2), but they did not go ahead with that plan till 1864 (*South Eastern Gazette*, 23 Feb 1864, 6).

To the west of this space, the wall is reported to have turned up again in 1894, when a new Post Office (70--70A High Street) was built across the entrance to Black Boy Alley (Livett 1895:57), and in 1902, when the intervening row of shops (72--76 High Street) was built (Payne 1905:lxvii--viii); but these reports are too vague to be relied on.

I have my doubts about Banks's wall. We cannot suppose that the excavation was done with much care; it was certainly not recorded with much accuracy. What worries me most is the absence of any indication as to the thickness of the wall. If it was 5 feet thick, we might find Arnold's interpretation convincing. But was it 5 feet thick? Was it perhaps nothing more than the rear wall of whatever building it was that became the prebendal house? Until the site is re-excavated, these questions will not be answerable. I am less doubtful about the wall located by Harrison in 1969, in the garden behind 110 High Street, and identified by him as part of this precinct wall. This is indeed a suitably substantial wall: the foundation (all that survived) was 5 feet wide and more than 4 feet deep. But this wall is much further away from the High Street -- "its northern edge was 52 ft from the pavement" (Harrison 1973:122) -- and differently aligned from Banks's wall (Flight and Harrison 1987, fig 1).* How Harrison's wall and Banks's wall join up, if they do join up, has yet to be determined. There is at least one obstacle in the way (Bacchus 2010:213--15).†

* Why Arthur thought of looking for it where he did I do not know (because I never asked). Extrapolating the line of Banks's wall, as Livett and Hope had done, I would have expected to find it further north -- or rather would not have expected to find it at all, since the shops here all had basements.

† I am sceptical about the discovery reported by Chaplin in the cellar of 88 High Street (*Archaeologia Cantiana*, 76 (1962), lxxiii, Harrison and Flight 1969:80).

It would not be surprising, however, if the northern boundary of the precinct were not a single straight line. The monks had been acquiring land here in a piecemeal fashion since the twelfth century (Hope 1900:8--9), and that process might well have created a zigzag boundary. There would, of course, always have been a wall to separate the precinct from the city: a monastery had to be surrounded by a wall.* What the monks planned to do in 1345 was to replace the existing wall with a thicker, higher wall, with a crenellated parapet on top of it.

* There are references to "the cemetery wall" circ 1220, "the garden wall"

circ 1290 (Hope 1900:26--7).

But did they do what they were planning to do? If we thought that the monks did indeed go ahead -- did indeed build a wall of the size that they had in mind -- we should have to wonder how the wall could vanish so completely, without leaving any obvious trace in the topography of the city. Perhaps if we tried we could think of some explanation. But are we at the point of wanting to try?

*

Only three years after doc 4 had been put into print by Thorpe (1769), somebody tried to work out what it meant. One of the contributors to *The history and antiquities of Rochester* (Fisher 1772) attempted to match up the topographical facts mentioned in this letter with the facts existing on the ground (see below).* He failed. Further attempts were made by Poste (1848, 1859), Livett (1895), Hope (1900), Harrison and Flight (1969), and Flight and Harrison (1987). The last paper offers two alternative interpretations, both of which, as it seems to me now, are wrong. To put it bluntly, every attempt has failed, for one reason or another.

* This writer misattributed the letter to Edward I and misdated it accordingly to 1290. That error persisted. It seems that Livett (1895:58) was on the point of repeating it when Hope warned him against it. The dating clause -- "in the year of our reign of England the 18th, but of France the 5th" -- is enough to prove that this is a letter of Edward III.

The Ordnance Survey 1:500 map. One essential prerequisite was a reliable map; and no such map existed before the 1860s. The plan which illustrates the paper by Poste (1859) is embarrassingly inaccurate;* but he cannot be blamed for that.† Everything changed with the publication of the Ordnance Survey's 1:500 map of Chatham, Rochester and Strood in 1866--7. (The surveying was done in 1861--3.) I have said before that I am astonished by the results that could be achieved with nineteenth-century equipment by surveyors who knew their business, and I am not in the least reluctant to say it again, in a different context. This map of Rochester is a superb piece of work.‡ Subsequent plans of the city (Livett 1895) and priory (Hope 1900) are based on it -- and could hardly have existed without it.

* Some details suggest that it was based on the plan drawn by Sale (1816) for the second edition of Fisher's *History* (Wildash 1817), which was based on the plan drawn by Baker (1772) for the first edition (Fisher 1772). Baker's plan gives a fair impression of the shape of the city, but it did not pretend to be accurate in detail.

† He can, however, be blamed for the paper itself. If it had been published in 1759, it would have attracted a few rude comments, and then it would have been forgotten. Because it was published in 1859, it was treated with far more respect than it deserved, even after Poste was dead. (It is "valuable and vivid in its description of the Roman castrum". So Livett (1895:64): I can hardly believe that he said it, but he did.)

‡ I have made some montages of this map, one of which, map-southgate.pdf, covers the whole area under discussion here.

The Roman wall. With hindsight one can see that nobody had much hope of making sense of this evidence before the line of the Roman wall on this side of the city had been traced out. It is a puzzling fact that the best surviving stretch of that wall, behind the Eagle Tavern (124 High Street), had to wait a very long time before it attracted any attention. Much of the facing is intact (Livett 1895, pl I, no 6, Harrison 1973, pl IV), and the curve where the wall starts to swing around towards the west is as obvious as it could be, once one thinks to look for it. The 1:500 map shows something of a curve here,* and Hope (who lived in Rochester from 1881 till 1885) came close to understanding what it meant. The wall, he supposed, turned west at this point and headed off in the direction of Prior's Gate.† (He did not recognize the wall as Roman, however: he thought that it was Norman.) In 1886, the KAS was planning to hold its annual meeting in Rochester, and in advance of that meeting, at Hope's (1900:10) suggestion, a trench was dug at the bottom of the Deanery garden, across the line where he expected this ("Norman") wall to be found. It was not found. If that trench had been extended far enough to the north (and if it had been dug deep enough), it would have struck the surviving stump of the Roman wall. Unhappily the trench was extended southwards instead. A wall was eventually discovered -- but this was "a mere boundary wall" (Hope 1900:12),‡ not the city wall which was being looked for.

* In fact there is more of a curve than appears in this map. Hope's (1900, pl V) plan does not make the necessary correction, and the line of the Roman wall through Miss Spong's garden is misrepresented for that reason.

† "Immediately opposite the Williamson schoolhouse is Eagle Alley; and from the back-court of a house on its western or right-hand side a curved portion of the Norman City wall may be observed. Mr. W. H. St. John Hope suggests that the original Norman wall turned westward at this point" (Robertson 1887:xii). The idea that the wall was Norman seems to have been started by Irvine (*Journal of the British Archaeological Association*, 31 (1875), 472).

‡ Reexcavated and reinterpreted by Livett, this wall became the "later-Norman extension of the city" (Livett 1895:48--50). About this there is really nothing more to say. So much (or so little) of the wall as is known to exist is -- just as Hope said -- "a mere boundary wall", not an extension of the city's defences; and it is quite certainly not of twelfth-century date (Harrison and Flight 1969:63--4, fig 7, Flight and Harrison 1987:12.)

After this near miss, only a few more years had to pass before the Roman wall was identified once and for all. The credit for this belongs mostly to Payne (who moved to Rochester in 1888 and stayed there for the rest of his life). Looking at the wall behind the Eagle, he thought that it was Roman; but (because it had no courses of tiles)* he did not feel certain. For a second opinion he consulted a friend of his, the architect and archaeologist E. W. Loftus Brock, and Brock seems to have said straight away

that the wall looked Roman to him.†

* "It is not improbable that most observers, when perambulating the walls of Rochester, have been thrown off the scent of their true history by not finding courses of tiles" (Payne 1895:10).

† "At the east end of the city in rear of Leonard's shop [120 High Street] exists a fine portion of the wall, with its facing stones remaining, and terminating in a bold rounded angle. The peculiar character of the masonry, which is quite distinct from any other to be seen in Rochester, had often attracted my attention. I subsequently shewed it to my friend Mr. Loftus Brock, and we both inclined to the opinion that it was Roman work" (Payne 1895:4).

Looking at the map, Brock had another thought. This east-facing wall, he suggested, if it took a tight enough turn, might come into line with a ruinous south-facing wall,* some distance further west (between the Deanery and Mackean House -- Canon Pollock's house, as it was at the time).† If Payne could excavate at some intermediate point, he might be able to prove the connection.

* On the 1:500 map, this stretch of wall is labelled (not very aptly) "Cathedral Wall (Remains of)". But Payne (1895:4) says that he and Brock were looking at the 1:2500 (25-inch) map, which I have not seen.

† Mackean House takes its name from one of Pollock's successors, William Herbert Mackean (d 1960). It has been part of the King's School since (I think) the 1930s.

Acting on this suggestion, Payne raised the necessary funds,* and recruited the help of Livett (who lived in Rochester from 1887 till 1895).† The first excavations were made, with Dean Hole's permission, at the bottom of the Deanery garden, north of the point where a trench had been dug unsuccessfully in 1886. Because he was looking in the right place, Payne had better luck: "at 4 feet from the surface" he found exactly what he was hoping to find -- the razed Roman south wall. "No facing stones remained, but the core, which was 2 feet high, measured about 8 feet in width. This we followed for a few yards, as far as was possible, without disturbing the lawn" (Payne 1895:4--5). Next he got permission from Ellen Spong to dig a large hole in her garden (behind 118 High Street). "In the course of a day or two we laid bare the continuation of the great curve into the garden for several feet and at considerable depth, thus proving conclusively the point at issue" (Payne 1895:5).

* "This I subsequently carried out by kindly permission of the Dean (Dr. Reynolds Hole), my friend Mr. Humph~~re~~y Wood, F.S.A., with his accustomed liberality, supplying the funds to enable me to prosecute the research" (Payne 1895:4).

† "Since the last Annual Meeting your Honorary Secretary, assisted by the Rev. G. M. Livett, has been prosecuting researches in connection with the ancient mural defences of the City of Rochester. The discoveries made are of the first importance, and shed an entirely new light on the history of the

city walls" (*Archaeologia Cantiana*, 20 (1893), xlvii, annual report for 1892--3). "To Mr. Livett I am greatly indebted for his invaluable assistance throughout the whole of these researches" (Payne 1895:15).

Having settled that point, Payne headed west, to the ruined stretch of wall which had inspired Brock's suggestion in the first place.

Portions of [the Roman wall] were readily detected in the stable-yard of Canon Pollock's house, where a fine piece of core may be seen forming the back of the ash-pit. This pit was cleared of its contents during our investigations, when we had the satisfaction of seeing the foundations of the wall to a depth of 8 feet from the surface, 2 feet being visible above ground. From here it is again met with in Canon Jelf's garden,* where it formed the southern boundary of the cloister garth of St. Andrew's Priory, and was moreover made use of by Ernulf, who built the wall of his refectory upon it. At the present time the Roman wall exists between Canon Jelf's and the Choir School. On the northern side it has been refaced, but on the southern some of the original Roman facing stones remain, although naturally not so weathered as the more exposed portion on the east side of the city. In Canon Jelf's stable-yard the wall comes to an end. At this point it measures 6 feet in width and 9 feet in height, and has been refaced. (Payne 1895:5--6)

So Payne had not just proved the existence of the wall: he had proved that it was earlier than circ 1120 -- which effectively meant that he had proved it to be Roman.

* Canon Jelf's was "the ugly yellow brick house" (as it is twice described by Hope (1900:46, 1900:81)) which straddled the south-west corner of the cloister (the western range of which, more or less intact till then, was demolished to make way for it). It was built circ 1800--10 -- "begun by the reverend Mr. Foote, and finished by Dr. Strahan" (Wildash 1817:85) -- and pulled down in 1938 (Forsyth 1939).

Hope (now living in London) was invited to revisit Rochester "for the purpose of going round the walls with Mr. Payne" (Livett 1895:58). He came; he saw; he concurred. Apparently he also confessed to being cross with himself for not anticipating Payne's discovery. The clue had been there all along, in

the great thickness of the north wall of the refectory. It is 7 or 8 feet thick, while all the other walls are from 2½ to 3 feet thick. The discrepancy had been noticed previously, and if anyone had thought of explaining it the Roman walls might have been discovered years ago. (Livett 1895:48--9)

This echoes, I suppose, some rueful remark of Hope's.

Westwards from this point -- westwards from the north-west corner of the refectory -- the rest of the Roman south wall has become

invisible. One long stretch of it was totally destroyed when the castle ditch was dug. Between the refectory and that ditch, the wall was razed to the ground; and that happened, it seems, before the west range of the cloister was built (i.e. rebuilt in stone), and before the bishop's palace was built. The north wall of the palace was set up against the outer face of the razed Roman wall (Payne 1895:6, Livett 1895:43, Payne 1905:lxx, Harrison and Williams 1980, fig 1). Inside the castle, the south wall of the twelfth-century keep was similarly set up against the inner face of the Roman wall. Did anyone ever wonder how it could have come about that the keep had exactly the same orientation as the cathedral? If they did, they now had the answer, thanks to Payne: because the keep and the cathedral both took their bearings from the Roman south wall.

The Deanery Garden ditch. Again: with hindsight one can see that nobody could hope to make sense of the documentary evidence unless they knew of the existence of a huge ditch, parallel with the Roman wall, filled up so completely that on the surface no trace of it remains. It was discovered by Harrison and Flight (1969) during their excavations in the Deanery Garden -- with fortuitous assistance from the contractors who were building two new houses nearby (just north of line p1) and shifting far greater quantities of earth than we were. Having proved its existence here, we suggested that the ditch continued westwards on the same line (between the Roman wall and line p1) as far as the point where it was separated by a causeway from the ditch around the castle. Though that prediction has still not been put to the test, I stand by it.

As to the existence and probable extent of this ditch, there was never any significant difference of opinion between Arthur and myself. As to its dating, there was. Knowing that a great ditch was dug around the city in 1225, knowing the the monks planned to dig a new ditch around this side of the city in 1344 (and fill up the old ditch with the spoil from the new one), at first we both thought that the evidence was easy to interpret. It seemed obvious that the DG ditch should be identified with the former and the KO ditch with the latter (Harrison and Flight 1969). Arthur held to that view;* but I came to think -- and do still think -- that it faces insuperable objections. A ditch dug in this position in 1225 would have made the monastery uninhabitable: the offices serving the refectory -- kitchen, bakehouse, brewhouse -- would all have been wiped off the map, and some alternative site would have had to be found for them. Since that did not happen, the DG ditch must be earlier (by some margin) than the expansion of the monastery beyond the line of the Roman wall which is known to have taken place in the time of bishop Ernulf, circ 1120. As an alternative interpretation, I suggested that the KO ditch was the ditch dug in 1225 (Flight and Harrison 1987); but Arthur saw insuperable objections to that idea -- and finally I have come round to thinking that he was right in this respect, as I was in the other. Neither of those interpretations is acceptable.

* On this interpretation, the Roman wall remained intact till 1344, and Harrison and Williams (1980:25--6) were accordingly obliged to infer that the bishop's palace was not built till after that. (It is clear, I think, from the language they use, that they were not altogether comfortable with this conclusion.) A circuitous argument leads me to think that the palace was built circ 1190 (Flight 1997): I would allow that it might be earlier, but can hardly imagine that it might be later.

In regard to the King's Orchard ditch, this disagreement replicates the earlier disagreement between Livett (1895) and Hope (1900). I would not discourage anyone from reading those papers, but they need to be read circumspectly. Even on its own terms, Livett's interpretation is oddly incoherent. The defensive ditch dug around the city in 1225 was dug, he thought (though he does not show it on his map), alongside a wall which he knew quite well was only 3 feet thick ("a mere boundary wall"). Because he thought that, he found himself forced to suppose that the wall built by the monks in 1344 was built obliquely across the line of that ditch -- that is, across a ditch which had only just been filled up. "Which", as Hope (1900:22) politely put it, "is certainly contrary to practice."* Hope's interpretation, where it diverges from Livett's (and from Payne's, as far as the Roman wall is concerned), comes back into line with Poste's (1859) -- a paper which Hope does not cite but presumably must have read. He was, however, in no better position than Livett to prove the existence of a wall on line pl, nor to fix the date of it. And the very idea that the "strengthening of the city" in the 1220s included the construction of a new defensive wall, or some stretch of one, relied on a single word -- *rogis*, "lime-kilns" (Hope 1900:13--15) -- which need not mean much at all. Even slight repairs to the Roman wall (which Hope now knew to exist, though Poste had perversely denied it) would have called for some quantity of lime.

* Translation: No builders with their wits about them would ever do such a thing; no archaeologist with his wits about him would ever believe that such a thing was done.

	Poste 1859	Livett 1895	Hope 1900	Harrison and Flight 1969	Flight and Harrison 1978 A B	Flight now
DG ditch				1225	1225	c.1070 c.1080
KO ditch	1225	1344	1225	1344	1344	1225 1344

Suggested dates for the two great ditches
on the southward side of the city.

After thinking about this problem for fifty years (on and off, not all the time), I think I see my way towards an acceptable solution. In all previous attempts, it has been assumed that the interpretation has to accommodate the ditch that was dug around

the city in 1225--6. There is no doubt that such a ditch was dug. We know that it was started on 14 Feb 1225 and finished on 7 Feb 1226. We know who was in charge and how much it cost. I have gone through the evidence in a separate paper,* and anyone who wants the details can find them there. In that paper I made a suggestion which I had never thought of before: that the ditch was dug only on the northward side of the city -- around the part of the city which belonged to the citizens, not the part which had been taken over by the monks. If the word "city" was being used in this narrower sense, as it certainly sometimes was, there is nothing to prove that the ditch continued around the southward side of it, either around or through the monastic precinct.† Adopting that suggestion, I propose to look at the evidence yet again, for the third and (I am sure) the final time.

* ccc-defences-1225.pdf.

† Unless the gift of Hartlip church is thought to prove that, as it was by Hope (1900:16). It seems sure to be true that the monks were being compensated for some loss which they would suffer when the ditch was dug; but they owned much property, in and around the city, which was not inside their precinct.

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Thinking things over yet again, looking at the schematic maps (Flight and Harrison 1987, fig 3, cf Flight 1997, fig 21) which I drew more than thirty years ago, I think I see more clearly what the DG ditch is about. There are three conclusions, it seems to me now, of which we can feel fairly sure.

(1) The DG ditch is an offshoot from the castle. The plan was to incorporate the city (suburbs excluded) into the same system of defences as the castle by digging a ditch -- commensurate in size with the castle ditch -- around the Roman wall.

(2) That was the plan -- but the plan was not completed. The DG ditch extended eastwards as far as the south-east angle and (presumably) northwards as far as Eastgate; but it never extended any further than that. Beyond Eastgate, the city ditch is (as I am now convinced) the ditch which is known to have been dug in 1225, and that is distinctly narrower than the DG ditch.

(3) The plan had been abandoned altogether by around 1120, when bishop Ernulf was allowed (or allowed himself) to extend the monastery southwards, demolishing part of the Roman wall and filling up part of the ditch (see below). By this time, so far from there being any thought of completing the ditch, there was a wish in some quarters that it had never been started.

As regards the castle, I dissent from nothing that was said by Flight and Harrison (1979). Given the strategic importance of the place, it seems very likely that the castle at Rochester was one of the castles which bishop Odo and earl Willelm are reported to

have built in 1067, while the king was absent in Normandy.* Given Odo's connection with the place (see below), the probability amounts almost to a certainty. But there is one thought that occurs to me. I suspect that the original castle, thrown up in a hurry, had fortifications of fairly modest size,† and that the huge earthworks described by Flight and Harrison result from some later (but only slightly later) enlargement. At first, I suppose, the Roman wall would have formed part of the perimeter: but then, in this subsequent phase, the ditch was carried around the south side of the castle, with the result that one stretch of the Roman wall ceased to exist and the rest of it was buried in a mass of broken chalk (Flight and Harrison 1979:31, fig 2, profile 2). On this view, moreover, the enlargement of the castle and the demolition of the Saxon church (Flight 1997, fig 19) might have happened at about the same time. The original ditch, not being so wide, would not have come so close to the church.

* "And Bishop Odo and Earl William were left behind here, and they built castles widely throughout this nation, and oppressed the wretched people, and afterwards it always grew very much worse" (ASC-D, transl. Swanton 1996:200).

† Though I do not press the point, I wonder whether the feature interpreted by Harrison as "perhaps ... a marking-out bank" (Flight and Harrison 1979:34, fig 5, section A--B, layer 4) may not be the inner tail of the original rampart. (The site where Arthur got to dig had been horribly disturbed. Between towers 2 and 3, the foundations of the wall were exposed, circ 1840, to a depth of about 10 feet, when this section of the ditch was transformed into an additional burial ground for St Nicholas's parish. The best place to cut a section through the defences would be in front of tower 2; but anyone who wants to try that should bear in mind that the trench might need to be 20 feet deep to reach the bottom of the ditch.)

As earl of Kent, bishop Odo had a special interest in Rochester. Unlike Canterbury or Dover, it belonged entirely to him (Flight 1998). Both the city and the castle were his.* In Odo's time (and probably also in that of the earls who preceded him), Rochester was (so to speak) the capital city of the earldom of Kent.†

* In 1088, when Odo revaged the lands of his enemies, he "brought all the goods into his castle in Rochester" (ASC-E, transl. Swanton 1996:223).

† No one has ever doubted this -- no one, that is, except Brooks (2006). Having seen a draft of that paper, I did explain to him that "ep's" (DB-Ke-2ra49) had to mean the bishop of Bayeux, not the bishop of Rochester. But he published the paper regardless.

In that context, it does not seem difficult to believe that Odo might have wanted to make some vast investment of labour, not just in the fortification of the castle, but also in the fortification of the city.* If that is right, it is not going to require much effort from us to explain why the work was interrupted: it was interrupted, no doubt, because bishop Odo, in 1082, was arrested, carried off to Normandy, and imprisoned in Rouen. And that is why I now feel able to conclude, with a fair degree of confidence,

that the DG ditch should be dated to circ 1080.

* Was it intended to fortify Strood as well, to protect the western bridgehead? Perhaps the question is worth asking, even though we have no hope of ever knowing the answer.

*

The accompanying plan is an attempt to show the lie of the land as it was in 1344. It is based on the plans in Flight and Harrison (1987) -- which were based on Hope's plan of the precinct -- but extends further to the south. There are three long straight lines running across the map. The northernmost (p1) is nearly parallel with the Roman wall, because it follows the outer edge of the Deanery Garden ditch; the lines to the south of it (p2 and p3) are not so tightly constrained. Two of these lines (p1 and p2) have been part of the discussion all along; the southernmost line (p3) is off the edge of Hope's plan, as it was also of Livett's,* but I think it needs to be brought back into the picture.

* "There are also remains of one wall, perhaps of two, of still later date" (Livett 1895:38). I suppose that "perhaps of two" alludes to line p3, but Livett does not say anything more about it. (Even in what he does say, he is making an assumption which seems fallacious to me: that a wall which is further south must therefore be later.)

This line as I draw it runs along the north side of Vines Lane. Towards the west it coincides with the south wall of the garden behind the Archdeaconry. There is, at present, no visible sign of a medieval wall anywhere on this alignment. In the eighteenth century, however, there was still something to see.

(i) As was mentioned above, one of the contributors* to Fisher's *History* (1772) had been looking at the charter of Edward III just recently published in Thorpe's *Registrum Roffense* (1769) and trying to work out what it meant. Very diffidently, he suggested that p2 might be the wall existing at the time, p3 the new wall which the monks were promising to build.

The present south wall [p2] within this field seems to be the original wall which the monks had liberty to remove; and the wall [p3] without the said field appears to be that which they then built; it is indeed about twice the distance from the old wall which was prescribed by the grant, but the monks might encroach a little on this occasion, or measure from the outward edge of the broad ditch without the wall. They might also think it less trouble to build a wall with new materials, than to demolish the old one, for that purpose; they therefore might permit the old wall to continue as a double security to their property, which being thicker than the new wall still remains, whilst this last is almost entirely demolished. Its length in all probability extended from the east gate round the south east angle of the said fields called the Vines, and so on to the south-west angle in the road to St. Margaret's,

near which in the old wall probably stood the Prior's Gate.
(Fisher 1772:4)

At the eastern end of the Vines field, "not many yards from the elm-trees",† there were, according to this writer, "marks of the foundation of the east wall", running alongside Crow Lane.‡

* Probably William Shrubsole.

† Meaning the seven trees which stood close together at this end of the Vines. They are marked individually on the 1:500 map. Much weakened by age and the weather, they were taken down in 1963.

‡ Phippen (1862:139), commenting on this passage, casually agrees that there are some "stone foundations" to be seen near the elm trees.

(ii) One of the contributors* to the third edition of the *Kentish traveller's companion* (Gillman 1790), conducting the reader up St Margaret's Street, points out, on the left,

an ancient stone wall which bounded the grange yard of the priory to the West, part of it is the wall of the Archdeacon's garden, at the end of which is a lane leading into the new Maidstone road. The South wall of this garden terminates at a dilapidated wall that enclosed the vineyard of the Monastery, and the field retains the name of the vines. (Gillman 1790:145--6)

By the 1860s, the south wall of the Archdeaconry garden had been totally rebuilt in brick, and the "dilapidated wall" which continued beyond it had vanished.†

* Probably Samuel Denne.

† "Some foundations of walls were met with many years since, running diagonally across the Vines for some distance towards the south-west" (Poste 1859:71--2). I do not know what this might mean.

These reports are vague, but to me they seem definite enough. There was a wall along this line (p3) which formed the outermost boundary of the monastic precinct. Nobody who has looked at the evidence more recently has agreed with the interpretation suggested by the first writer, which is indeed sure to be wrong. But it might be some comfort for him to know that everyone else, by one route or another, has arrived at the same conclusion: whatever the monks did, it was something very different from what they had promised to do.

With regard to The Vines, the reservations which I expressed a few years ago (Flight 2010:223n14) have fallen away since then. Now that I have looked at the catalogue entries for some of the early leases issued by the dean and chapter, I am satisfied that "The Vines" is an authentic name -- not, as I had feared it might be, an antiquarian invention. Again, now that I have changed my mind

about the 1225 ditch, I am no longer worried by the thought that the digging of that ditch would have necessitated some drastic reorganization of the monastic precinct -- including, perhaps, a change in the location of the vineyard. Those doubts having dissipated, I see no reason not to think that the piece of land which formed the monks' vineyard in the twelfth century was (largely) the same piece of land which is called The Vines today.

Having come that far, I am willing to go much further. One of the monks who helped to compile the new cartulary, circ 1220, identifies this "land where the vineyard is", *Terra ubi vinea est* (Domitian, fo 183r), with a piece of land given to the church of Rochester, circ 1080, by Odo bishop of Bayeux. Another monk (the man I call scribe V), in putting together a list of the church's benefactors, includes an entry to the same effect: "Odo bishop of Bayeux and earl of Kent gave the land where the vineyard is" (Thorpe 1769:116).

There is no contemporary record of this transaction. After 1088, however, when Odo was dispossessed and banished, the validity of the donation came into question. The king thought that he was entitled to take the land back. To prevent that from happening, the bishop of Rochester, Gundulf by name, had to promise to hand over some other piece of land, equal in value to the piece donated by Odo; and two documents relating to this transaction survive as copies in the monks' cartularies. One is a letter from the king to the sheriff and his officers letting them know that he has consented to this exchange; the other is a letter from the bishop to the sheriff and all the king's barons of Kent informing them that he has fulfilled his side of the bargain (Privilegia, fos 211v--12r, Domitian, fos 183r--v, Flight 2010:222--3).

The date of this transaction can be fixed within a few years. It happened after the "battle of Rochester", the siege of the castle in 1088, the final episode in Odo's English career. The king's letter (one of the witnesses to which is "Robert the chancellor") has to be earlier than 1094 (when Robert Bloet became bishop of Lincoln). The bishop's letter is presumably only a little later than the king's: having persuaded the king to agree to this exchange, Gundulf would have wanted to get the business settled without delay, before the king had a chance to change his mind. For our purposes, closer dating is not required. It is enough to say that the exchange took place circ 1090.

The king's letter does not tell us much, except that the land in question is the land "which the monks have enclosed within their garden", *quam ipsi monachi infra ortum suum habent inclusam*. The bishop's letter is more informative -- or at least it tries to be so. The land, we are told, comprises three acres given to the church and monks by the bishop of Bayeux "so that the monks could make their garden there", *ad faciendum ibi ortum suum*, "which are now enclosed with a wall on every side", *qui iam inclusi sunt muro circumquaque*. Where was this land located? It was "next to the

wall on the outside,* towards the south part of the city outwards", *iuxta murum deforis uersus australem partem ciuitatis forinsecus*. I doubt whether we could make much sense of these directions without the guidance we get from the thirteenth-century monks; but they seem to have been sure that the land given by Odo was the land which had subsequently been converted into a vineyard, and I think we can be sure that they were right.†

* Hope (1900:5) prints *deforis* as two words (as in Hearne 1720:215) and translates it as "outside the gate". It does not quite mean that.

† As to the location of the land given to the king in exchange for this, I have not the least idea.

At the time when this donation was made, the Roman wall was still intact, as far west as the lane curving around the edge of the castle ditch. The newly constructed church stood well inside the wall, parallel with it; the wooden buildings intended to accommodate the monks stood between the church and the wall (Flight 1997, fig 21). That arrangement left no space for a garden of adequate size; so Gundulf asked Odo for a piece of land outside the wall, and Odo obliged. Originally, this piece of land was quite separate from the monastery itself. When the monks turned it into their garden and enclosed it with a wall, they had to build a wall on all four sides of it -- literally *circumquaque*, "on every side". The walls surrounding The Vines (the space between p2 and p3) came into existence, so I suggest, as the walls which were built, circ 1080, to enclose the monks' garden -- the monks' vineyard, as it later became (see below).

There is more. I have now come round to supposing that the strip of land to the north of this (between p1 and p2) was the land given to the monks, circ 1120, by Hugo son of Fulco -- "my land of Southgate which is next to their granary", *terram meam de Sutgate quae est iuxta horreum eorum*, as Hugo's charter describes it (DRc_T310_1). At first, the monks had to pay a rent of 12 pence for this land; but the rent was remitted by Hugo's son, Fulco of Newnham, circ 1150, and thanks to that we have another charter (DRc_T310_2) which tells us what had happened in the interim. By this time the land was "enclosed by the monks' wall, next to their vineyard, where also their bakehouse is placed", *que muro illorum inclusa est, iuxta vineam suam, ubi et pistrinum eorum positum est*. Agreeably with that, the scribe who copied these charters into the early thirteenth-century cartulary identified the land in question as "the land where the bakehouse is", *De terra ubi pistrinum est* (Domitian, fo 135r); and scribe V records that Fulco of Newnham "forgave 12 pence from the land where the bakehouse is" (Thorpe 1769:117).

The acquisition of this intervening piece of land is linked to a general reorganization of the monastery which began in the time of bishop Ernulf (1115--24). The Roman wall ceased to be the city wall: part of it was incorporated into the new stone buildings constructed by Ernulf for the monks, part of it was razed to the

ground (Flight 1997, fig 23). The ditch alongside the Roman wall was partly filled up, and the whole expanse of land to the south of it (between p1 and p3) became merged with the monastic precinct.

Among all the other changes which were taking place, the monks decided that they now had room for a vineyard. Having made themselves a new garden in some convenient spot, they planted the old garden with vines. On the evidence of Fulco's charter, we can be sure that the vineyard was in existence by circ 1150.

There is one other mention of it which may be a little earlier than that. A paragraph added to the cartulary by a mid twelfth-century scribe (*Privilegia*, fo 202r--v) is a record of the donations made to the monks (in the presence of witnesses but not in writing) by Scotland of Nashenden.* "He gave us", says this scribe, "a certain piece of land next to the wall of our vineyard on the eastern side", *quandam terram iuxta murum vineae nostrae ad orientalem plagam*. This land, we discover, was held by Scotland from Helto:† that is, it was part of the manor of Great Delce belonging to Helto son of Ansgot. Since there is evidence to show that Scotland and Helto were both dead by circ 1150,‡ we cannot be going far wrong if we say that the donation dates from circ 1140. At that time, the eastern wall of the vineyard (the eastern wall of the eleventh-century garden) was some distance west of Crow Lane: I imagine that the monks demolished that wall and built a new one to enclose this extra piece of land.§

* His name is written "()cotlandus de Eſcedene", with space for a coloured initial. "Eſcedene" is a genteel spelling for Nashenden: the first element is properly *hnæsc*, "soggy", not *æsc*, "ash-tree".

† *Ipse autem et haeredes eius acquietabunt eam cum caetero feudo suo quod tenent de Heltone erga ipsum Heltonem et haeredes eius*. Helto's father, Ansgot of Rochester, is reported to have given the church "a certain little piece of land which is enclosed within the monks' wall towards the south", *quandam particulam terrae que inclusa est infra murum monachorum uersus austrum* (*Privilegia*, fo 197v, replacement leaf). If that is the same piece of land, Scotland was not so much giving it as giving it back.

‡ Scotland's son, called Thomas of Nashenden or Thomas son of Scotland, occurs for the first time in 1153 (BL Cott Faustina B vi, fo 101v, <http://durobrivis.net/kent/sheriffs.pdf>). Helto's son, called Willelm son of Helto, occurs for the first time in 1145×50 (CCA-DCC-ChAnt/S/313).

§ The same piece of land (so I suppose) was (re)granted to the monks by a subsequent owner of Great Delce, Ernulf Biset (occ 1165--87). In Ernulf's charter it is described as "a certain small piece of land which lies between Crow Lane and their vineyard", *terrulam quandam que iacet inter Crowlane et vineam eorum* (Domitian, fo 155r). Scribe V refers to it as "the small piece of land which is called Croft" (or, perhaps, "a croft"), *terrulam que vocatur Croft* (Thorpe 1769:118). It is heard of again in 1305 (Thorpe 1769:582--3), when it was reckoned to consist of 0.45 acres (one quarter plus one fifth).

The vineyard, we happen to know, was still producing grapes at the

end of the fourteenth century. "A strong wall that surrounded it was partly repaired at the cost of the cellarer in 1384-5" (Hope 1900:66, from Soc Ant MS 178). The cellarer drew up his accounts every year, but this is the only roll of the kind which was still in existence in the eighteenth century. (It is not in existence now.) Because it survived that long, because it was transcribed for John Thorpe, because Thorpe's papers found a safe home with the Society of Antiquaries, this particle of information is still available. But it is chilling to think how easily it might have vanished.

All this, I stress, follows from my rejection of the idea that a ditch was dug around the southward side of the city in 1225. The fact that so much begins to make sense which was hard to understand before is a strong indication, it seems to me, that at last I am on the right track.

*

The twelfth-century expansion of the monastery did not entirely obliterate the Roman wall, nor the ditch outside it -- the Deanery Garden ditch discovered by Harrison and Flight (1969).

By 1344, as the monks told the king, the wall "in divers places has been destroyed and prostrated to the ground, and in some places for defect of mending and repair threatens ruin". There is, no doubt, some exaggeration here (the monks were making a case), but the wall was 1100 years old and one would not expect it to be in perfect condition.

The ditch was also still there, but much degraded. For more than 200 years, it had served as a sump for rainwater and sewage from the monastery. Nevertheless, it was still recognizably a ditch -- and it was still the king's ditch unless the monks could prove that it was not. Could they prove that the ditch had been given to them by some previous king?

It seems clear that they could not. There is no indication that bishop Ernulf asked for the king's permission before he expanded the monastery beyond the line of the Roman wall. In their archive the monks had several charters of Henric I (and a few forgeries as well), but none of them says a word about the city ditch. For more than 200 years, so it appeared, the monks had been treating the ditch as if it belonged to them -- partly filling it up, partly turning it into their own private cesspool -- when in fact it still belonged to the king. If the king were made aware of this, the monks might be in serious trouble. If they were hit with a "Quo waranto", they would not have a leg to stand on.

It seems to me that we are tuning in to a conversation which took place between the prior and the keeper of the city. The keeper points out the peril that the monks (through no fault of their own) are in. The prior asks for advice. The keeper suggests that

the monks have only one safe course -- to beg the king to give them the ditch, and turn a blind eye to the fact that they have already effectively stolen it. For that to happen, they will have to volunteer to build a new line of defences on their own land, at their own expense; and they will have to commit themselves to keeping the new defences in repair. That is what the monks' petition proposes. But the monks, I feel sure, would never have made these promises of their own volition. They must have been bullied into them by the keeper.

This off-the-record compromise, negotiated between the keeper and the prior, is one reason why these documents are difficult to understand. It was agreed that the monks did not need to tell the whole truth; they should simply inform the king that the existing city wall was beyond repair. When the keeper was asked to look into the case, of course he did not disapprove of the monks' proposal; and the local jury did not need to be pressured into saying that it sounded to them like a very good idea. It was a good idea. For longer than anyone could remember, the city had been vulnerable to an attack from the south by "enemies and other evildoers". (From their grandfathers the citizens would have heard stories about the dissident barons' attack on Rochester in Apr 1264.) If the monks were willing to build this new city wall -- not just pay for it now but pay for its repair in the future -- the citizens were all in favour.*

* The king had asked to be informed "how much the ditch so to be filled up contains in length and width by the number of perches or feet of ground"; and the answer came back "that the aforesaid old ditch ... contains in length 54 perches and 14 feet and a half [905½ feet], and in breadth 5 perches and 4 feet [86½ feet]". (In doc 4, presumably by clerical error, the breadth becomes "5 perches and 5 feet".) These measurements, no doubt, were perfectly correct, but -- since we do not know what lines they were measured along -- I do not see that we can attach any particular significance to them. (Livett's (1895:59--60) calculations involve the unacceptable assumption that the distance which he calls the "breadth" was being counted twice: first as itself, and then again as one component of the "length". As for Hope's (1900:21) assertion that "there is no other line to which these dimensions can be applied", that is simply not true.)

Faced with this display of unanimity, the king saw no reason not to grant the petition, and the monks were issued with the necessary letter, authorizing them to go ahead. The king's letter is specific in some respects, but on the whole it seems rather loosely worded. There is no time limit, no provision for the progress of the work to be monitored, or for its completion to be reported. In any case, this letter only tells us what the monks were permitted to do; it is not going to tell us what they did.

*

One large discrepancy is obvious straight away. The king's letter assumes that the monks will commence operations at the east gate of the city -- but the monks, as far as we can tell, never had it

in mind to do that. They left the eastward defences as they were and started at the south-east angle.

It seems that they demolished the stretch of the Roman wall which ran westward from that angle, presumably as far as the point where it had been integrated into the monastery buildings. Though they did not have explicit permission to pull the wall down, they might reasonably suppose -- since the land on both sides of the wall was now theirs, since the wall itself would shortly become redundant -- that the king would not object. It would look like a sensible plan to demolish the wall first of all, so that the rubble could be disposed of by throwing it into the old ditch.

The monks certainly did hire a contractor to start digging the new ditch, in the strip of land (between p1 and p2) given to them long before by Hugo son of Fulco (see above). Though the shape of it has been transformed by subsequent landscaping, the ditch is still distinctly a ditch.*

* In 1541 it is referred to as the Upditch. This was one of the parts of the precinct reserved for the king's use: "and also the land called 'Le Uppdyche' with the orchard there enclosed", *ac eciam illa terra ibidem vocata 'Le Uppdyche' cum quodam pomario ibidem incluso* (Rawlinson 1717:13, Hope 1900:68). It came to be called the King's Orchard.

The new ditch was begun -- but it was not finished. When a new assembly hall was built for the King's School in 1965--6, on a site carved out of the garden of Mackean House, Arthur Harrison watched the foundations being sunk.* This is his report:

The area of the Hall was levelled to about 35 ft. above O.D. and at this level four rows of holes were dug for concrete piles. The southernmost row of holes was sunk throughout into undisturbed gravel, also exposed to the south, where the surface had been dug away; the other three were on the line of the 1344 Ditch and those to the east were dug into a filling of black earth. At a point about 50 ft. from the roadway this changes to brown silt. The end holes of each row, i.e. those closest to the road were, however, sunk into undisturbed gravel. It seems virtually certain therefore that the ditch ended at this point. (Harrison and Flight 1969:74--5)

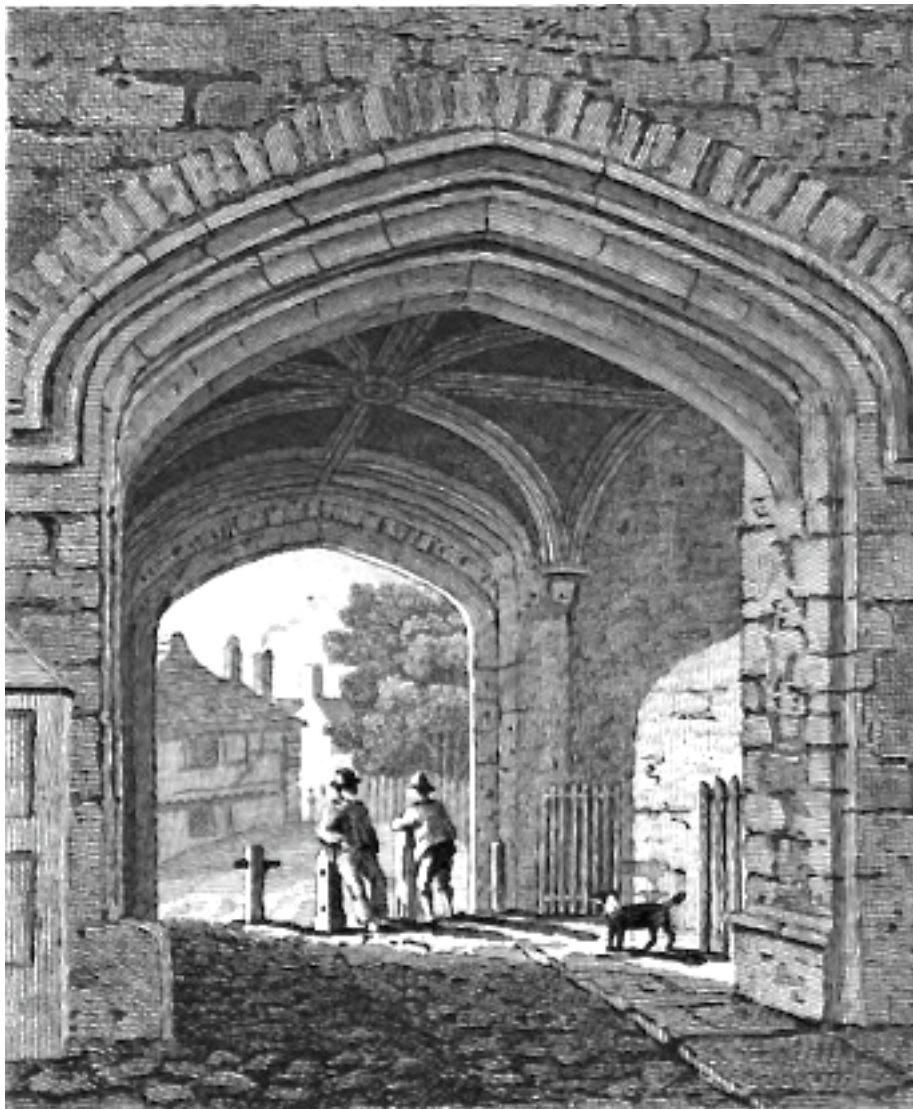
Despite some previous quibbling on my part (Flight and Harrison 1987:15), there is, it seems to me now, no reason whatever for doubting that conclusion. (I am also happy with the dating of this ditch.)

* So that no one is misled by the plural pronouns in Flight and Harrison (1987:15), I should stress that these observations are to be credited to Arthur alone. I was elsewhere at the time.

It is also certainly true that they used the spoil from the new ditch to fill up and level off the old ditch. The excavations in the Deanery Garden (Harrison and Flight 1969) leave no room for

doubt on this score. I have nothing to add, except for one verbal point which may perhaps be worth noting. As the king explains things to the keeper of the city, the monks are proposing "to fill up the ditch with dung and earth", *fossatum ... fimis et terra implere*. Hope (1900:18--19) translates this as "rubbish and earth", but I doubt whether that is allowable. The word *fimis* means "dung",* and that is how the PRO calendar translates it. The monks were admitting, I think, that they had already gone some way towards filling up the ditch with the effluent from their latrine: they were asking the king to condone a *fait accompli*. But enough on the subject of dung.

* "Dung" in the mass: in correct usage the word does not have a plural. But the plural does sometimes occur.



Prior's Gate, seen from the north. Engraved by John Greig from a drawing by Henry Gastineau for Thomas Cromwell's *Excursions in the county of Kent* (1822). Published 1 Dec 1820.

The new wall which the monks had promised to build was to run along the strip of solid ground between the old ditch and the new one (i.e. on line p1). It is certain that some part of this wall was built, fairly certain that some part of it was not. Like the new ditch, it seems, the new wall was not completed.

The gate which is nowadays called Prior's Gate is a fifteenth-century structure,* but I think we can be sure that it occupies the same site as the (probably twelfth-century) gate that existed in 1344. The wall which abutted on it from the east has been torn away, and the wound which this caused has been patched. In silhouette, however, the wall is still there. Even the outline of the parapet can be distinguished. This is Livett's description:

On the east side of the gate the marks of the wall are still visible. They prove that the wall was 5½ feet thick and about 16 feet high, and that it was crenellated. Above the vault of the gate there is a guard-room, and from the room a narrow door formerly led on to the ramparts. The doorway is blocked. (Livett 1895:61)

Except that the doorway has been unblocked, that description remains valid.†

* This is Hope's dating -- "earlier half of the fifteenth century" (1900:54) -- based (as it has to be) on the style of the architecture. (Livett thought otherwise. "The architectural details", he thought (1895:63), were "slightly earlier in character" than those of the towers in the east curtain of the castle, which are known to have been built in the 1360s. His idea was that the monks had rebuilt Prior's Gate, in or soon after 1344, at the same time that they built the new city wall. (The same divergence of opinion exists regarding the other two gates, Cemetery Gate and Sextry Gate. Livett (1895:70) dated them to the third quarter of the fourteenth century, Hope (1900:24--6) to the early fifteenth.) Hope and Livett both knew far more about these things than I do, and I do not presume to decide between them. In fact, it makes no difference to me which dating is correct. It is agreed that the gate existing now is not the gate existing in 1344; so it is, either way, an open question whether the former stands on the same site as the latter. Only excavation could prove the point; at least it would show whether the existing gate was of one build with the wall, or whether it was (as Hope supposed) inserted into a preexisting wall.)

† My thanks to Philip Talboys for access to the garden behind his house.

The wall ran eastwards from Prior's Gate, on a line (p1) parallel with the Roman wall. There was a range of buildings inside the wall here, between it and the refectory, which survived the dissolution of the monastery.* Not wanting them for himself, the king allowed them to be assigned to the dean and chapter, who used them to accommodate the minor canons, lay clerks and other inferior members of the new cathedral establishment.† A survey made in the 1640s describes "Canon Row" as "all that long row of buildings within the wall, consisting of eighteen several low rooms and five upper ones" (Hope 1900:75, from Fisher

1772:98--9).‡ In 1698 the dean and chapter decided that this whole area should be cleared of buildings;§ and that, presumably, is when the wall was razed to the ground. A new row of houses for the six minor canons was completed in 1723; a seventh house, for the organist, was added to the east end of the row in 1735. (To the east of that, the dean built himself some new stables; they were demolished later.)

* The wall excavated by Payne and Livett (1895:49--50, pl I, no 8) in the shrubbery at the eastern end of Minor Canon Row was part of this range of buildings. (Livett's interpretation may not have seemed perverse at the time, but it certainly seems so now.)

† A new organist appointed in 1588 was assigned rooms "at the east side of the long gallery called the Cannon Place" (Hope 1900:75, from Shindler 1892:93, from the lease book DRc_Elb_001). Some unwanted space here, leased out in 1605, is described as being "on the south side of the woodhouse south of the minor canons' houses and north of the great wall dividing it from the Hoghawe" (DRc_Ele_120_1). The name "Hoghaw" refers to the block of land between p1 and p2, bounded on the east by the road leading to the Vines (see below). (The north-south wall alongside this road was regarded by Livett (1895:71--2) as a post-dissolution feature. Though Flight and Harrison (1987:17) thought otherwise, in the end I am inclined to agree with Livett's interpretation. Hope (1900:65) seems to be saying that part of this wall, between p1 and p2, is medieval, but does not mark it as such on his plan.)

‡ I note (since it took me some time to realize this myself) that "low rooms" means rooms on the ground floor. (The upper rooms were occupied by the old men -- there were supposed to be six in all -- for whom the dean and chapter were obliged to find board and lodging. I do not know what happened to them when the dean and chapter were evicted.) This survey was made in 1649 (not 1647) by order of the commissioners for the sale of church lands; after the restoration the manuscript passed into the possession of the dean and chapter (DRc_Esp_1). Somebody should take a close look at it.

§ The minor canons, it seems, had been voting with their feet -- renting out their rooms and finding themselves more comfortable quarters in the city. The subtenants who moved in were "indigent and disorderly persons" (Fisher 1772:99), who found this a desirable location because it was outside the jurisdiction of the city constables.

It seems certain, therefore, that this stretch of wall, as far as the east end of Minor Canon Row, did get built, and did remain standing until the end of the seventeenth century. The base of the wall is apparently still in existence, running across the gardens behind these houses. Livett (1895:62) says that he found it with his probe. Though I have not seen it myself, I am told that some of the masonry is exposed in the easternmost garden. I am convinced of that much; but I am not convinced that the wall ever continued further east than this.

It is not safe to assume that a wall which was started was finished. On the contrary, one does not have to look very far -- no further than the cathedral -- to find examples of building projects which were never completed in the manner originally intended. It seems to me a perfectly plausible idea that the

monks, being short of money (as they always were), decided to build the wall one section at a time. Suppose that they hired a mason who undertook to build them a stretch of wall 10 perches (165 feet) long; suppose that they meant to build another section (and another section after that) as soon as they could afford to, but never actually did so. Is there anything far-fetched about that? I do not see that there is.

It also has to be remembered that the new wall, for at least some part of its length, was taking the place of an earlier (probably twelfth-century) boundary wall. The existence of a gate implies the existence of a wall:* since we know that "the prior's gate" existed in 1344, we have to infer that a wall existed too. For that reason, the evidence adduced by Livett, even if it is all reliable, is not going to prove the existence of the new wall which the monks had promised to build, only of some sort of wall along some part of this line. This is what he has to say:

In the shrubbery on the east side of the gardens, opposite Canon Pollock's house, Mr. Payne dug a trench across the line. The solid foundations had been removed, but the foundation-ditch full of building-refuse was clearly marked in the trench. Following the line further eastwards its exact position was recovered in Canon Pollock's garden, where it was defined by a difference in the colour and quality of the grass, easily distinguished when the grass first grew after being sown afresh at the time when a cinder tennis-court was converted into lawn. Passing through the quick-set hedge that separates the Canon's garden from the Deanery garden the foundations of the wall were traced once more with the probe. They lie under the path, the borders of which are so gaily decked with Dean Hole's flowers. Their presence in the ground accounts not only for the peculiar position of this path in the garden, but also for the fact that the path forms a ridge, the ground falling from it on both sides. The ridge runs on as far as the old sundial, which is marked in the Ordnance Map, and there it suddenly ceases and the probe fails to strike the foundations. (Livett 1895:62)

None of that seems to me to prove the point; some of it may be no more than wishful thinking.†

* Unless the gate is wedged into a line of buildings -- as was the case with Cemetery Gate, for instance.

† "The foundations of the former wall in the Dean's garden before alluded to, according to information from a person accustomed to work there, are often struck against by the pickaxe and the spade in the usual cultivation of the soil" (Poste 1859:70) But this person would not have dug underneath the path. Confronted by a deranged clergyman, he worked out what he was being asked to say and then said it (and pocketed his tip).

When Harrison cut a trench across this path in the Deanery Garden, well to the west of the sundial mentioned by Livett, all he found

was a post-medieval gully (or something of the sort) 12 feet wide and not much more than 3 feet deep (Harrison and Flight 1969:65--6, fig 8).* The wall "was simply not there" (1969:80). Up to a point, I am sure that this is right. Both Livett and Hope believed -- because they both relied too much on Poste (1859) -- that a defensive wall had been built along this line (p1): they disagreed about its dating, but agreed about its existence. Harrison proved that no such wall existed.† And yet it is not impossible, in my view, that this path followed the line of a vanished boundary wall -- a wall which at one time formed the southern boundary of the dean's garden, but which was demolished, even down to the footings, when the garden was extended beyond it.‡

* This was Arthur's work. I was away at the time, but saw the trench before it was backfilled. (I have never trusted Livett's probe since then.)

† An attempt of mine to explain this evidence away (Flight and Harrison 1987:13) is too strained to be worth considering.

‡ The ground called the King's Orchard was the subject of a dispute between the dean and the prebendaries which lasted for more than thirty years but in 1710 was finally decided in the prebendaries' favour (Fisher 1772:87--8). "Part of what is now the dean's garden, is taken out of the king's orchard; a lease of it for forty years was granted in trust by the chapter, for the use of the deans of Rochester, soon after the decision in chancery, and was renewed at the expiration of that term" (Fisher 1772:88). The second lease -- as Alison Cable has kindly confirmed for me -- is DRc_Emp_14_4, dated 4 Jul 1751.

It should not need to be stressed that a city wall is a very different thing from a boundary wall. The new wall which the monks proposed to build would have needed substantial foundations; a boundary wall would not. We have precise specifications: the new wall was to be 16 feet high (not counting the parapet) and 5½ feet thick; and these, one assumes, are the smallest figures which looked as if they might be acceptable. Having taken advice -- perhaps from the keeper of the city, perhaps from a mason who knew about these things -- the monks were hopeful that the king would be satisfied with a wall of this size; they doubted whether he would settle for anything less. But a wall much smaller than this -- a wall only half as high and half as thick -- would still be a perfectly adequate boundary wall, if the intention was merely to enclose the monastic precinct. (It is not just a question of size. A city wall has a front and a back, obvious at first glance. With a boundary wall, by and large, there is nothing in the design of it to distinguish the outside from the inside.)

Prior Sheppey's petition to the pope needs to be read in this light. If he had seen to it that the precinct wall was repaired, or rebuilt where it could not be repaired,* he was perfectly entitled to tell the pope that he had "enclosed the whole monastery with a strong wall". He was not speaking of the city wall. His petition is a list of the projects which he has brought

to a successful conclusion, not of the ones which remain to be completed by his successor.

* That some such project was under way is proved by a passage in the will of John Hethe, rector of Freckenham, dated 5 Oct 1346: "Item, I bequeath 40 shillings for the work of the new walls around the priory of Rochester", *Item lego ad opus novorum murorum circa prioratum Roffensem xl. s.*" (Johnson 1914--48:793).

There is probably not much point in asking why the work was left unfinished. Some possible reasons are easy to think of -- a shortage of funds, an absence of supervision. Nobody had been told to keep an eye on things, and the monks always had some reason to procrastinate.

I doubt whether the Black Death should get the blame (Hope 1900:22, echoed by Harrison and Flight 1969:80). As far as I know, we have not the least idea what impact the plague had on Rochester -- the city or the monastery. The people whose careers we can trace did not die. There were deaths in the bishop's household (at Halling and Trottiscliffe, not at Rochester), but the bishop himself did not die of the plague. He resigned in 1352 and survived for several years after that. The prior did not die of the plague. He resigned in 1350, lived on his pension for two years, and was then appointed bishop of Rochester. He died in 1360. The keeper of the city and castle did not die of the plague. He resigned in 1354 and died in the following year. Besides, even if we thought that the Black Death might have caused the work to be interrupted, we should still have to explain why it was not resumed.

*

For whatever reason, the monks did not finish the job which they had promised to do in 1344. Some time later, when a further attempt was made to strengthen the defences of this side of the city, a different plan was adopted. Instead of turning west along line p1, the new wall continued south, to the point where it intersected with line p2. At that point the wall was terminated with a circular bastion.

The wall running westward from that bastion is not thick enough or high enough to be counted as a defensive wall.* It is a boundary wall, originally built (as I have suggested) in the late eleventh century, but repaired or rebuilt any number of times since then. It only looks like a defensive wall because it is attached to a bastion. The existence of that bastion may suggest, perhaps, that it was intended to continue the new city wall along this line, all the way to St Margaret's Street; but that did not happen.

* "One wonders, indeed, whether the walls of the post-1344 extension are worthy of the name of city-walls" (Livett 1895:67).

Between Eastgate and the Roman south-east angle, the Roman wall

was repaired, I believe, at the same time and in the same way as the Roman wall north of Eastgate -- that is, in the 1390s, by builders working for the keeper of the city, Sir William Arundel (see below). The repair described by Harrison (1973:125) south of Eastgate is exactly what one would expect to see if one excavated inside the wall in the garden behind "La Providence". From excavations on the outside of the wall (Harrison and Flight 1969), we know how the fourteenth-century masons set about their work: they hacked away any parts of the Roman wall which were not sufficiently solid, and then built their new wall on top of it. On the inside, therefore, one would expect to find an undulating horizontal joint, where the fourteenth-century wall was superimposed on the Roman wall. And that is what Harrison described, and what anyone now can see -- although neither the Roman nor the medieval builders intended their work to be visible.*

* The inner face of the wall here was first exposed in about 1903, "when Miss Spong's house ... was converted into a shop after her death" (Payne 1905:lxx, 1909:lxxxix). Since the demolition of the shop, this part of the wall has become easily accessible.

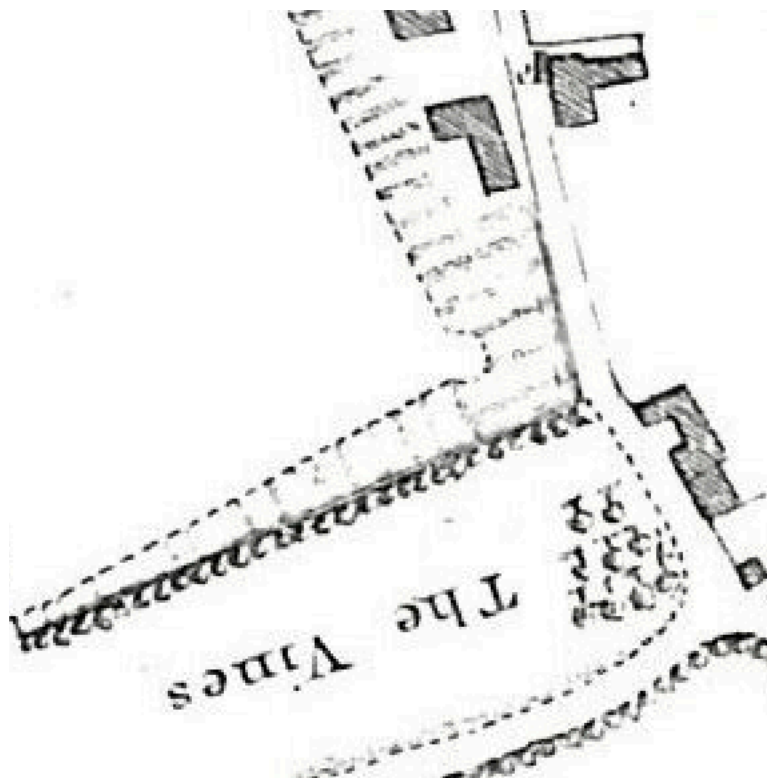
Another point of resemblance exists which has not been given the emphasis which it deserves. Both north and south of Eastgate -- but nowhere else -- there was, and mostly still is, a raised strip of ground inside the wall, flat on top,* and 15--20 m wide. To the north, this surface is known to coincide with the surface that existed in the 1390s, because there is a doorway at this level giving access to the north-east bastion. Though the Roman wall did have a bank behind it, that bank does not survive to a height such as this in any other part of the circuit. Most of the embankment here was, it seems, the work of Arundel's builders; and I take it that the same was true to the south of Eastgate, in the garden behind 118 High Street -- Miss Spong's garden, as it was in the 1890s. (This bank is the reason why her house was called "Mount Hill House" or something similar.) Significantly, the embankment does not stop at the Roman south-east angle:† it continues beyond that point, for a distance of about 10 m, and that, I suppose, marks the end of the stretch of the defences reconstructed in the 1390s. Why Arundel's builders would have wanted to have this bank of earth inside their wall is a question I come back to later.

* Which seems to imply the existence of a retaining wall.

† The junction between the medieval wall and the curve of the Roman wall was excavated internally by Payne and Livett (Payne 1895:5, Livett 1895:63). I think it ought to be looked at again, from the outside as well as the inside.

From this point the existing city wall runs southwards, traversing the two great ditches which get in the way (the filled-up DG ditch, the open KO ditch), and ending at the bastion which forms the south-east angle. In height and thickness, this wall fits the definition of a defensive wall; presumably it once had a parapet,

but that has gone. The bastion -- described in detail by Bacchus (1993) -- is a sorry-looking ruin by now, and even in its pristine state would have been no more than a feeble imitation of the bastion built at the north-east angle in the 1390s.



The south-east angle -- detail (inverted) from the map of Rochester drawn for Fisher's *History* (1772).

There is, at present, no sign of a ditch around the new south-east angle.* But I do not entirely rule out the idea that a ditch or part of a ditch may once have existed. In the plan of the city drawn by a surveyor named F. Baker as a frontispiece for Fisher's *History*, the eastern ditch is shown extending southwards beyond the south-east angle, and the strip of ground to the west, between p2 and the Vines, is marked with hachures of the same kind that are used for the eastern ditch. I do not know whether the plan can be relied on in this respect: it is far from being perfectly accurate. A single trench across this strip of ground would be enough to settle the question. If the opportunity presents itself, I hope it will be taken.

* "No attempt was made to surround the post-1344 wall with a ditch" (Livett 1895:67). According to Hope (1900:22), a new ditch "seems to have partly cut on the east side, and there are signs of its having been begun along the south side". I have never understood what he meant by that.

Despite the lack of documentary evidence, I think we can be sure that this work dates from the interval circ 1400--20.* Because it

seems obviously to represent a rather half-hearted continuation of the work begun in 1397, it cannot be earlier than circ 1400; and a date any later than circ 1420 appears to be out of the question, for reasons which will shortly become clear.

* The defences of Canterbury were being renovated at just about this time, apparently at the citizens' own initiative (*Calendar of patent rolls 1401--5*, p 185 (26 Oct 1402), *Calendar of patent rolls 1408--13*, p 104 (14 Aug 1409)).

The work begun in 1397 was carried out under the direction of the keeper of the city and castle, Sir William Arundel, the prior, John of Sheppey,* and Robert Rowe of Aylesford (who was involved for many years in the management of Rochester bridge).† The keeper, Arundel, appointed in 1394, had (as far as is known) no previous connection with Rochester, but he and his wife seem to have become attached to the place, enough that they chose to be buried here, behind the high altar of the cathedral (Hope 1898:309--10). On Arundel's death, in Aug 1400, his brother Sir Richard Arundel was appointed in his place; and he eventually chose to be buried here too, in the south transept (Hope 1898:295).

* The second prior of that name. The first John of Sheppey was prior from 1333 till 1350, when he resigned (see above); the second John of Sheppey was prior from 1380 till 1419.

† I have gone over this evidence more thoroughly in a separate paper: [ccr-defences-1397.pdf](#).

The stretch of wall which we are discussing results, I suppose, from some negotiation between Sir Richard Arundel and prior Sheppey, along similar lines to the negotiation between a former keeper and a former prior which took place in 1344. Though the prior was not personally culpable, the monks had blatantly broken the promise made by them to the king on that occasion. If the king found out, the consequences might be severe. The monks should do something to make amends, while they had the chance. Prior Sheppey took this advice -- and found the money to build this stretch of wall.*

* Prior Sheppey is known to have received one very large donation, £300, in May 1407 (DRC_T322); but there is, unluckily for us, no indication how the money was going to be spent. (The donor was the judge Sir William Rikhill, who had bought the manor of Islingham in Frindsbury as his country home. When he made his will, just two months later, he asked to be buried in the south transept of Rochester cathedral, "next to the stone where John Sheppey now prior of that church has appointed himself to lie" (Hope 1898:295, Duncan 1906:60). Sir Richard Arundel joined him there twelve years later.)

Arundel died in Jun 1419 (prior Sheppey died two months later), and nobody was appointed to replace him. The keepership of the city and castle of Rochester went extinct. Priorities were shifting. In the 1390s, government still thought it worth spending large sums of money improving the defences of the castle and city. By the 1440s, government had lost interest. When the

citizens obtained a new charter from the king, on 1 Jun 1446,* they were, unconditionally, given the ditch around (the northward side of) the city and the ditches around the castle (including Boley Hill), with permission to "erect houses of stone or wood, and have the profit of the grass and pasture" growing in those ditches. It was no longer thought worth maintaining the defences, let alone spending money to improve them.

* RCA_C1_01_05; cf *Calendar of charter rolls* 6:61--4).

The defences of Rochester are never going to merit more than a footnote in a history of medieval warfare, and I have no wish to pass myself off as an expert on the subject. I have, however, seen it suggested that this was just the time, circ 1420--30, when improvements in the manufacture of cannon, amplified in their effect by improvements in the manufacture of gunpowder, meant that artillery became powerful enough to punch holes in a stone wall (Rogers 1993). In a short space of time, city walls became obsolete. The new fortifications which had begun to be built at Rochester in the 1390s were, at the time, a showpiece of up-to-date military architecture; and even then it seems to have been thought necessary to reinforce the wall with a massive bank of earth behind it, in case it came under bombardment by artillery. Fifty years later, fortifications of this type were merely ornamental.

*

In 1344, when the monks offered to build a new defensive wall on this side of the city, they made it clear that they intended to stop at Prior's Gate; and everyone seems to have thought that this was fair enough. To the west of the gate, the wall was not the monks' responsibility: it was part of the boundary enclosing the bishop's palace. If anyone was going to rebuild this wall, the bishop would have to do it. (Because of Boley Hill, there was never any question of digging a new ditch here.)

The wall south of the bishop's palace is shown in Badeslade's (1719) view of the city, and was apparently still intact towards the end of the eighteenth century (Gillman 1790:145, Simmons 1799:150). By the 1860s (when the 1:500 map was made) it had nearly all been razed. Only one small slice of it was still standing, cut away towards the east when a piece of ground outside the line of the wall was added to the garden of Prior's Gate House,* cut away towards the west when the road was realigned. The surviving slice -- which survived long enough to be seen by Hope and Livett† -- was demolished in 1901, when the road was widened again (Payne 1902:lxix). Nothing is now to be seen of this stretch of wall; but its foundations are probably still in place, partly under the roadway and partly in the garden of Prior's Gate House.‡

* Apparently this happened before 1826 (Livett 1895:45). It looks as if an

exchange took place: the bishop gave the city this corner of his precinct, and the city gave the bishop this triangle of land outside the wall. But I have not seen any record of such a transaction.

† "The face has been patched up at different times, but it still retains enough of its original character to fix its early-Norman date beyond doubt. It is exactly like the bit of Gundulf's walling which is to be seen in the south aisle of the nave of the cathedral" (Livett 1895:41, cf 1895:24). More wishful thinking, I fear.

‡ "The line of the southern wall, as it ran eastwards, is marked in Mr. Arnold's garden by a ridge in the ground where the foundations still remain" (Livett 1895:41).

From a point just west of Prior's Gate, a wall ran south along St Margaret's Street, forming the western boundary of the monastic precinct. This wall too is shown in Badeslade's (1719) view. A passage from the *Kentish traveller's companion* mentioning this wall has already been quoted (see above). Continuing their imaginary tour, that writer and his reader go to visit St Margaret's church, and then they head back towards the city: "Returning down St. Margaret's-street, and turning on the right through a breach in the wall, we enter the precincts of the priory" through Prior's Gate (Gillman 1790:146). In Baker's (1772) plan of the city, two buildings are shown abutting on the inside of this wall; in the modified plan drawn by Sale (1816), those buildings are still there. Not long after that -- mostly because of the construction of a new building for the grammar school in 1842 -- this wall was razed to the ground, all the way between p1 and p2. Beyond p2, where it encloses the space which used to be the garden behind the Archdeaconry, the old wall is still standing; but it would be hard to say how much of it is medieval.

The "breach" which is glancingly referred to in 1790 must presumably have been created by the demolition of some sort of gateway giving access to the back yard of the priory. This was Hope's idea -- "in which was a gate" (Hope 1900:65) -- and I am happy with it. On his plan, however, he does not show this gate: instead he makes the wall bend inwards, halfway between p1 and p2, so that it hits the south-east corner of Prior's Gate (Hope 1900, pl V). He had no justification for doing that.*

* He did it because he needed to evade an argument advanced by Livett. The argument was that a gate in the position of Prior's Gate would have been "enclosed and rendered useless" by a wall on line p2 (Livett 1895:61). If the "wall of 1344" was on that line (as Livett must apparently have known that Hope intended to suggest), there would have been no point in rebuilding Prior's Gate -- not in the 1340s, when it was about to be "enclosed and rendered useless", not at any subsequent date, when it had already been "enclosed and rendered useless". For Hope's interpretation to be right, the existing gate would have to be significantly earlier than 1344 -- and plainly it was not. That is the thrust of Livett's argument, and Hope's attempt to dodge it does him no credit. There are better responses than that. What I would say is that different parts of the precinct were not all equally

secluded. During the day, outsiders who had deliveries to make would be admitted to this yard; but the area inside Prior's Gate was an area to which only the monks and their servants had access.

Throughout this paper, I have been assuming that St Margaret's Street has existed since before circ 1080. That is another novel assumption on my part. In the past, I was more or less willing to suppose that the road approaching the city from the south was diverted around the earthworks on Boley Hill, whenever it was that those earthworks came into existence. That was the suggestion made by Livett, in an outline plan of the Roman town drawn to illustrate Payne's (1895) paper; and the same theory was developed later by Wheatley (1927, 1929:134).

Looking at the case more seriously than before, I find the suggestion entirely unconvincing. St Margaret's Street is not perfectly straight (it is not like St William's Way), but it does not make any sudden turns until it reaches a point about 40 m from the Roman wall, where it veers abruptly to the left; after which, about 40 m further on, it veers abruptly to the right. (The realignments mentioned above have gone a long way towards rounding off these bends, but they have not made the bends disappear.) The reason for the first turn seems clear enough: the road was about to come up against the outer edge of the Deanery Garden ditch (the existence of which neither Livett nor Wheatley had any reason to suspect). It was forced to turn left at this point; it turned right when it reached the causeway between that ditch and the castle ditch. It was the digging of those ditches, therefore, which caused the road to be diverted. Before that, it would presumably have continued in a straight line as far as the Roman wall, heading for the Roman south gate -- which, on this interpretation, stood somewhere in the middle of the site occupied later (after the Roman wall had been razed) by the bishop's palace.

In the eleventh century, as I imagine things, there would have been houses on both sides of the street, extending southwards at least as far as St Margaret's church,* and forming the suburb called Southgate.† (In the same way, the houses lining the eastern approach to the city formed the suburb called Eastgate.) Some of these houses -- those closest to the wall -- would have disappeared when the Deanery Garden ditch was dug. On the eastern side of the street, between p1 and p3, the occupants would have been induced, by one means or another, to move away (and take their houses with them) when the land was given to the monks. Whatever archaeological evidence they left behind them -- evidence of late Saxon occupation, in an area which soon afterwards ceased to be inhabited -- had a good chance of remaining undisturbed, especially in the Archdeaconry garden, until the 1980s, when three new buildings for the King's School were crammed into this space. As far as I know, the archaeological value of the site was not given any thought.

* St Margaret's church is known to have been in existence by the 1140s;

I assume that it was there before 1066. Except for the tower, it was completely rebuilt in 1824 (Wildash 1833:114), to a design by Sidney Smirke.

† As Hugo son of Fulco refers to it circ 1120 (see above).

*

From the time when the Roman town was first surrounded with defences till as recently as 1924, anyone approaching Rochester from the south had to pass through a gate. But the gate did not stay in the same place. On this side of the city, because of the changes which occurred in the topography, it became necessary, more than once, to choose a new site for the gate. I think that there may have been as many as five different gates which at different times controlled access to the city from the south.

Roman. The existence of a gate on the southward side of the Roman town can more or less be taken for granted; but there is nothing to prove its existence beyond a passage in one of Rochester's Anglo-Saxon charters:

From south gate west along the wall as far as north lane to street, and so east from street as far as Doddingherne opposite broad gate.*

This was construed by Ward (1950) -- correctly, I am sure -- as a clockwise circuit of the south-west quadrant of the city, as it was before the castle existed.† The point from which the circuit starts (and at which it ought to finish) is a gate (presumably a Roman gate) which at the time was called Southgate. The site of it can be determined, I suggest (see above), by projecting the line of St Margaret's Street till it intersects the Roman wall.

* *Fram suðgeate west andlanges wealles oð norðlanan to stræte, and swa east fram stræte oð Doddinghyrnan ongean bradgeat* (Campbell 1973, no 1). The charter is not what it pretends to be, and this is not seventh-century English. Nevertheless, the man who wrote these words presumably knew what he was talking about, and that is all that matters here. Even so, he expresses himself very poorly. The meaning seems to be: "From south gate west along the wall, [and so north] as far as [where] north lane [joins] to street, and so east from [there] as far as Doddingherne opposite broad gate, [and so south to south gate]". "Doddingherne" is not the corner now occupied by the King's Head (as was whimsically supposed by Ward), but the corner across from that; and "Doddingherne opposite broad gate" is the spot on Doddingherne from which one could get a clear view of the north gate, i.e. the spot now occupied by Cemetery Gate. As for the eastern boundary, that, disappointingly for us, is not described at all.

Medieval 1? There is some evidence for a gate at the point where the road which developed around the outer edge of the castle ditch crossed the line of the Roman wall -- that is, about 40 m to the west of the site which I have suggested for the Roman gate. George Payne reports "an important discovery that was made in 1891 during the laying in of a gas-main to Mr Rae Martin's house,* near the side entrance."

The workmen came upon the massive foundations of two walls, each under the gutters on either side of the road, and parallel to it. I was away at the time, but the surveyor of the Gas Company stated that the walls were about 5 feet thick, and described their position to me afterwards on the spot. (Payne 1895:6)

The same masonry was exposed again in 1998, and Alan Ward was able to take a closer look at it. Until I have a better grasp of the evidence, I cannot say anything about it. But the presumption is, in my opinion, that a gate on this site must be later than the castle ditch. It would, I suppose, have been part of the same defensive scheme as the Deanery Garden ditch.

* The house formed from the western half of the medieval bishop's palace. (Payne lived in the other half.) The same foundations had been exposed thirty years earlier. "In the summer of 1861, whilst laying down water pipes from High street to St. Margaret's, ... there were found, opposite the residence of Mr. Wheeler, some stone foundations, conjectured, from the appearance of the concrete in which they were embedded, to have been of Roman origin, whilst others considered it to have been the foundations of the South gate of the city. The rapidity with which the work was necessarily done prevented further investigation" (Phippen 1862:257).

Medieval 2? One surviving stretch of the wall on line p2 forms the northern boundary of the Archdeaconry garden. Towards St Margaret's Street, at a distance of some 30 m from the street, the wall diverges slightly from this line and suddenly becomes thicker. If the return wall to the north were still standing, "it would probably explain these peculiarities. There may have been a good purpose in making the wall thicker and stronger near the angle." This is all either paraphrased or quoted from Livett (1895:66--7). He ventured no further than that; but it seems to me a likely guess that this thicker stretch of wall was originally connected with a gate -- perhaps just an arch across the road, perhaps something more impressive. Until we know what exists underground, it would be pointless to say any more; I am suggesting only that the possibility ought to be borne in mind.

Medieval 3. There is no doubt about the existence of this gate. It was still standing in the eighteenth century. It consisted of a stone arch set across the road, abutting to the north on the wall behind the bishop's palace, to the south on the garden wall of "Boley Hill House".* It is depicted in a partial map of Rochester by George Russell (1717), and in bird's-eye views of the city by Richard Smith (1633) and Thomas Badeslade (1719). In Fisher's *History* the gate is described as follows:

South Gate was near Boly Hill in the road to St Margaret's; the hooks on which the gates hung are still in the wall at the north-east corner of Mr. Gordon's† garden: the gate is about nine feet wide; the arch was taken down in the year 1770. (Fisher 1772:4)

Though the arch had gone, the jambs of the gate were evidently both still in place (one could measure the distance between them).

* This was the house of which part survives as the house now called "Trevine" (Wheatley 1929:137--8).

† William Gordon (d 1776), wine merchant, sheriff of Kent 1763--4, MP for Rochester 1768--71.

That description, it seems, was still true in the 1790s (Gillman 1790:145, Simmons 1799:150--1), but did not remain true for much longer. In Wildash's edition of Fisher's *History*, the verbs are put into the past tense (Wildash 1817:4): the iron hooks had gone by then, and so had the jambs of the gate. Since then, the road across the site has been widened and realigned more than once (Payne 1902:lix); but the foundations are probably still there, and somebody, sooner or later, may have an opportunity to look at them.

There is no sure way that I can see of deciding when this gate was built. For my part, I am doubtful whether this would have looked like a suitable site for a gate till the mid fifteenth century, when Boley Hill began to be transformed into an upscale residential zone.



Fort Clarence archway, seen from the south. Medway Archives (Couchman collection), DE0402_09 (image 12L).

Modern. A new line of fortifications was constructed on this side of the city in 1812 (Wildash 1817:314), some distance further south. On the rising ground beyond St Margaret's church, on the opposite side of the road, a brick fort was built which was given the name Fort Clarence. And a huge brick archway was built across the road, just to the west of the fort.

Fort Clarence is still there; the arch across the road is not. It was demolished in 1924 (Smith 1928:484). Perhaps its foundations remain. Above ground, however, it has vanished as completely as any of the gates which preceded it.

*

The plan which I have drawn to illustrate this paper -- ccr-defences-southern-plan.pdf, to be compared with the pair of plans in Flight and Harrison 1987, fig 3 -- shows the state of the southern defences, as I now imagine them, just before the monks got permission to fill up the old city ditch and dig a new one. The notation is the same as before. **Cd** = Castle ditch, **DGd** = Deanery Garden ditch, **BHd** = Boley Hill ditch, **Pg** = Prior's Gate, **Ag** = Almonry gate, **Sxg** = Sextry gate, **Eg** = Eastgate. No site is marked for Southgate: I am sure that it existed, but doubtful where it was.

I have copied onto this plan, in broken red lines, some of the vanished buildings and boundaries which appear on a plan of the precinct made in 1801 (British Library, K. Top. 17.8). It is signed by the architect Daniel Alexander, but I do not know whether he did the surveying himself; some annotation was added to it by the Dean, Dr Dampier. This is, I think, the earliest map which shows the whole precinct in adequate detail and with tolerable accuracy. I learnt of its existence from McAleer (1993, fig 7); he learnt of it from Mary Covert.

Some features copied from the 1:500 map are marked with solid red lines. **D** = Deanery, **2** = second prebendary's house (Mackean House), * **3** = third prebendary's house (demolished in 1938), **5** = fifth prebendary's house (Oriel House), **6** = sixth prebendary's house (Archdeaconry), **mcr** = Minor Canon Row, **gs** = grammar school (as built in 1842). In the 1890s the Deanery was occupied by Dean Hole, the prebendal houses by Canon Pollock, Canon Jelf, Professor Cheyne, and Archdeacon Cheetham, and the house at the east end of Minor Canon Row by the organist, Mr Hopkins.

* The first and fourth prebends were "suspended" -- in effect abolished -- in 1840 and 1857 respectively.

From the sixteenth century onwards, the area south of Prior's Gate is regularly referred to as the Hoghaw. It was included in the lease of St Margaret's parsonage, the tenant of which had his house and barnyard here.* The whole area came to be thought of as part of St Margaret's parish, though I doubt whether that would

have been true till after the great discontinuity (1649--60) -- the effects of which, not just in this corner of the precinct, are in need of further research (but not by me). In 1717, when the lease of the parsonage came up for renewal (DRC_Egz_074), the dean and chapter seem to have held onto a block of land, just east of the gate, to form gardens for the houses that they planned to build to accommodate the minor canons. The rest of the site was cleared in the 1830s (Drc_Ele_166_1),† and a new building for the grammar school was erected here in 1842. Once hogs had been replaced by schoolboys, the name Hoghaw dropped out of use.

* The house can be seen in the background in Gastineau's drawing of Prior's Gate. (Livett 1895:45--6 was misinformed as to the site of it.) The tenant held from the lessee, not directly from the dean and chapter.

† If Alexander's plan is accurate, it would appear that the western boundary was realigned at this time -- as Livett (1895:64--5) thought it might have been -- to allow for some increase in the width of St Margaret's Street. As nearly as I can tell, the medieval wall would have run from the north-west corner of the Archdeaconry garden to a point about 20 m west of Prior's Gate. The line of it seems to be correctly shown in the plan reproduced by Livett.

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The grammar school in 1816 -- detail from a plate engraved by James Storer from a drawing by Francis John De La Cour for the *History and antiquities of the cathedral churches of Great*

Britain, vol 4 (1819).