

Archaeological Excavations at 36-38 The Drove Way, St Margaret's At Cliffe, Kent

Interim Report

NGR Site Centre: TR 3657 4473

Planning Application Number: DOV/17/01137



Report for

Easton Builders

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14/06/2021

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Interim Report

1 Introduction

- 1.1 Swale & Thames Archaeological Survey Company (SWAT Archaeology) were contracted by Easton Builders to conduct an archaeological excavation at 36-38 The Droveaway, St. Margaret's At Cliffe (NGR) TR 3657 4473. The excavation was conducted under the direction of Geoff Morley (SWAT Archaeology) between 14th September and 13th November 2020 in accordance with requirements set out within an Archaeological Specification (SWAT 2020) and in discussion with the Archaeological Officer at Kent County Council, Heritage & Conservation (KCCHC).
- 1.2 A planning application (DOV/17/01137) for the: 'Erection of two detached dwellings, detached garages, formation of vehicular access and associated landscaping (existing dwelling to be demolished)' was submitted to Dover District Council (DDC) whereby Kent County Council Heritage and Conservation (KCCHC), on behalf of DDC, requested that a series of archaeological investigations be undertaken to determine the possible impact of the development on any archaeological remains.
- 1.3 The archaeological evaluation follows earlier phases of work which include a Desk Based Assessment (CAT 2017) and an archaeological evaluation (CAT 2019). The evaluation was carried out in the autumn of 2018, by Canterbury Archaeological Trust, and consisted of four trenches, each measuring between 4.5 and 15m in length. The evaluation recorded linear ditches and some pits including two, and possibly as many as four, burials (Figure 1). These burials added to another six recorded in the adjacent property that produced significant Anglo-Saxon grave items, representing a male equipped with a spear, shield, knife and buckle, and a young child provided with a Kentish disc brooch and a necklace (CAT 2014).
- 1.4 A subsequent watching brief was therefore carried out during the demolition of the existing house undertaken in August 2020 by SWAT. This revealed one large and three smaller pits including, possibly, two more burials. It was suggested that the remains of the Bronze Age Barrow of Snag Barrow Mount may be present on site.
- 1.5 Considering the results set out above, an archaeological excavation was required. The preliminary results of the excavation are set out in this Interim Report, which has been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the generic KCC Specification for Archaeological Excavations and as such forms the initial phase of post-excavation reporting. At the present time, a full post-excavation assessment is being prepared, which will include

an assessment of the archaeological record, along with an Updated Project Design and recommendations for further analysis/publication, if required.

2 Aims of the Fieldwork

2.1 The aims of the archaeological excavation were:

- to locate any remains of the possible Bronze Age Barrow postulated to be on the site,
- to establish the size of the area covered by the potential early medieval cemetery,
- and to establish the presence of any other potential archaeological features which may be impacted by the proposed development.
- The aims of the investigation were to determine the scale and significance of the archaeological activity on this site with particular reference to the graves and other features found during the evaluation without prejudice to any earlier history of the proposed development area and also any other prehistoric or later archaeological activity (SWAT 2020).

3 Summary of Results

3.1 A small variety of archaeological features were recorded during the archaeological investigation which was dominated by the presence of a graveyard of early medieval date. These features included graves (16 No.), ditches (2 No.), post holes (5 No.), and a single possible pit. The post holes were arranged as one pair of large holes, for which another two are likely to have been removed during landscaping in the 19th century or earlier, and the remaining three appeared to form no particular shape and may be related to the graves. The two ditches may also relate to graveyard features, and the possible pit was very shallow and may have been of Bronze Age date.

3.2 Interim grave concordance, which presents tabulated grave data, is provided in Appendix A. Selected plates are provided within this report (Plates 1-4).

Periods Represented

3.3 Initial dating of the archaeological features has been provided by spot dating ceramics, lithics and the presence of metalwork within the graves (Appendix C). At present, two and maybe three chronological phases are represented including:

Phase 1 Bronze Age

Phase 2 Pre-Christian early medieval 'A'

Phase 3 Pre-Christian early medieval 'B'

Phase 4 Christian period early medieval

- 3.4 As the finds assessments are carried out, additional phases or sub-phases may become apparent. Therefore, the broad phasing above is considered as preliminary.

Artefactual Remains

- 3.5 Quantification of archaeological material is provided in Appendix B. At the time of writing this report, all artefactual remains are with specialists (see Section 5) for assessment.

4 Summary of Potential

- 4.1 The archaeological excavations at St. Margaret's At Cliffe have revealed four possible phases of activity on the site; dated using possible worked flints, the small finds assemblage and grave alignments and goods. The three possible phases are the Bronze Age, pre-Christian and Christian Saxon (early medieval) periods. Ongoing assessment will allow for the interpretation of the various elements into closer dated groups.
- 4.2 With regards to the level of importance, the early medieval burials are of regional interest, if not national, and so particular attention will be given to them and their related grave goods within the forthcoming assessment. This particularly applies to Grave 13 which contained what appears to be a 'platter' shaped from what has been provisionally identified as a skull of a Fin Whale.

5 Staff Structures and Specialists

5.1 Provisional

Name	Position
Paul Wilkinson	Publication Manager
Geoff Morley	Project Manager
Elissia Burrows	Project Officer/On site Osteologist
David Britchfield	Project Manager/Editorial
Kent Osteological Research Analysis	Human Remains Specialist
Lisa Gray	Environmental Specialist
Dana Goodburn-Brown	Finds Conservation/ Small Finds Manager
Paul Hart	Flint Specialist
Paul Blinkhorn	Ceramic Specialist
John Summers/Lisa Gray	Archaeobotany
Digitise This	Illustrations and Survey
SWAT Archaeology	Archiving

Name	Position
Ben Garrard/ John Summers/Julie Curl	Animal Bone/ Mollusca Specialists
Rose Broadley	Dress Beads
Jo Ahmet	Dress Jewellery
Brian Gilmour	Weapons
Damian Goodburn	Mineralised Wood
Jon Iverson	Dover Museum contact

6 Timetable

- 6.1 At the present time, during the COVID-19 pandemic, it is difficult to establish a time frame for the assessments work to be carried out. This is largely due to the isolation of the majority of staff and the limitation placed on the transporting and exchanging of archives.
- 6.2 That said, it is hoped that with the majority of material already distributed, a Draft Assessment Report will be ready within six months of the publication of this Interim Report. A task list (Appendix D) provides the stages and tasks, along with a scheduled work duration required to achieve the project objectives.

7 Acknowledgements

- 7.1 SWAT Archaeology would like to thank Easton Builders for commissioning the project. Thanks, are also extended to Ben Found and Casper Johnson, Archaeological Officers, Kent County Council, for their advice and assistance.
- 7.2 This report was prepared by Geoff Morley MSc, PCIfA, FSA (Scot) on behalf of SWAT Archaeology, edited by David Britchfield BA (Hons) MCIfA.

14/06/2021

8 Bibliography

CAT (Canterbury Archaeological Trust) (2014) Parfitt, K., Richardson, A. and Jedrzejewski, H., Excavations on land north-west of 'Seamark', off The Droveaway, St Margaret's at Cliffe (unpublished C.A.T. archive report).

CAT Canterbury Archaeological Trust (2017) Parfitt, K., Nos 36–38 The Droveaway, St Margaret's at Cliffe: archaeological desk assessment (unpublished CAT archive report)

CAT Canterbury Archaeological Trust (2019) Parfitt, K., 36–38 The Droveaway, St Margaret's at Cliffe, Evaluation trenching (unpublished C.A.T. archive report).

SWAT Archaeology (2020), Britchfield, D. and Morley, G., Land at 36 – 38 The Droveaway, St. Margaret's at Cliffe, Kent, CT15 6BZ Specification for a Programme of Archaeological Strip, Map and Sample Excavation

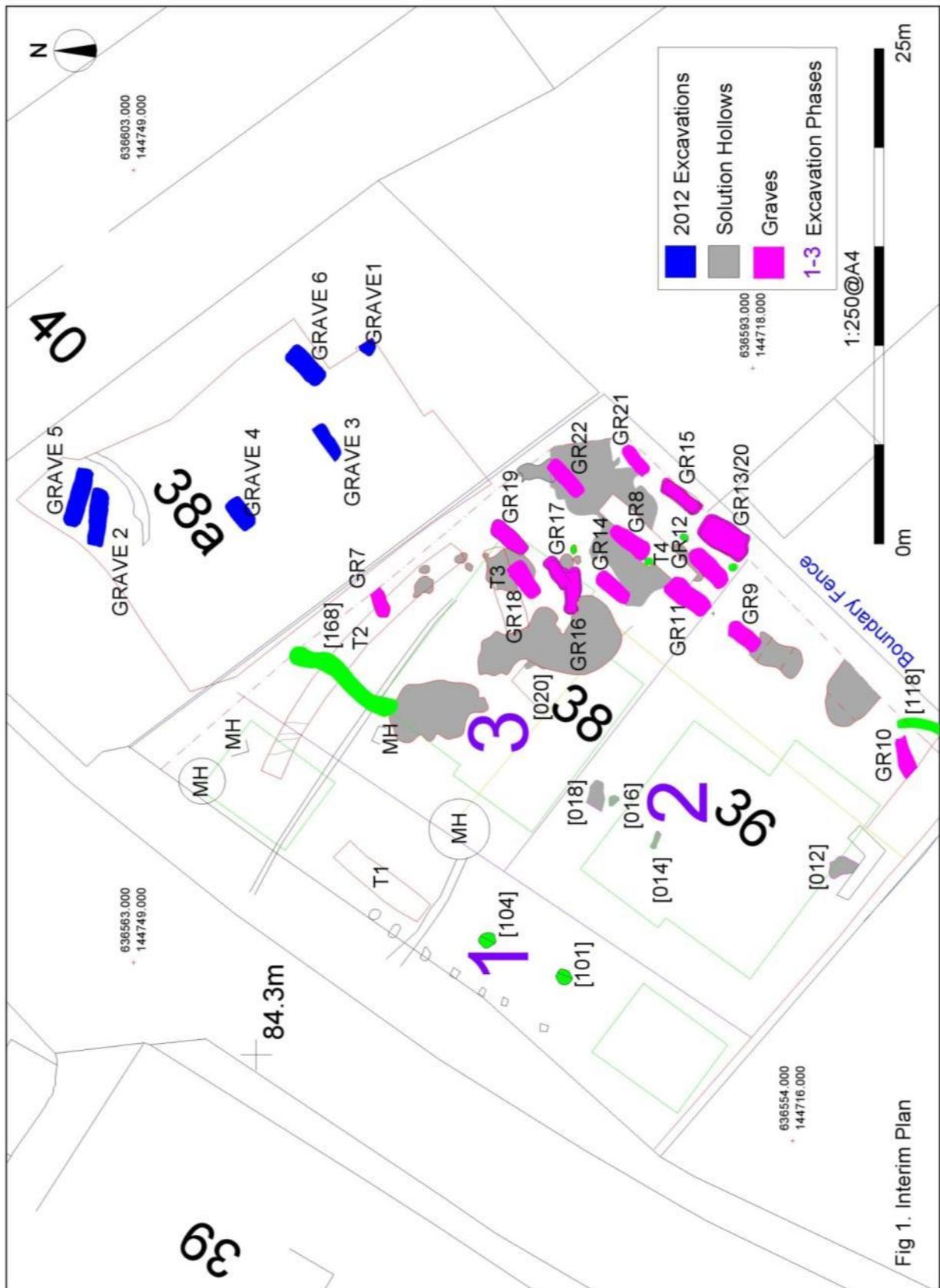


Fig 1. Interim Plan

Figure 1 – Interim Plan

Images

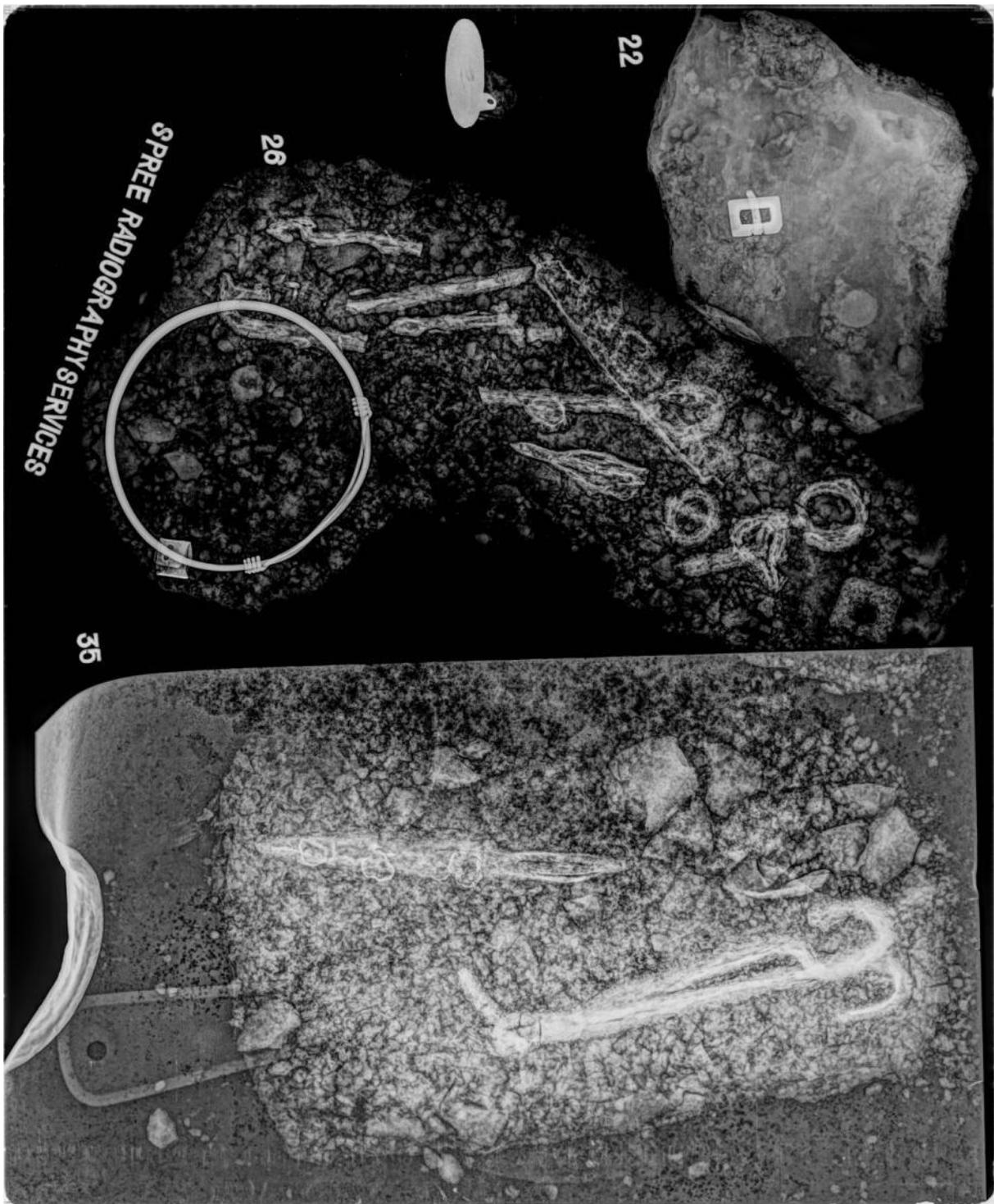


Plate 1 - Block lifts of purse contents from multiple graves



Plate 2 - X-ray of Gilt Brooch from Grave 12



Plate 3 - X-ray of Sword from Grave 8

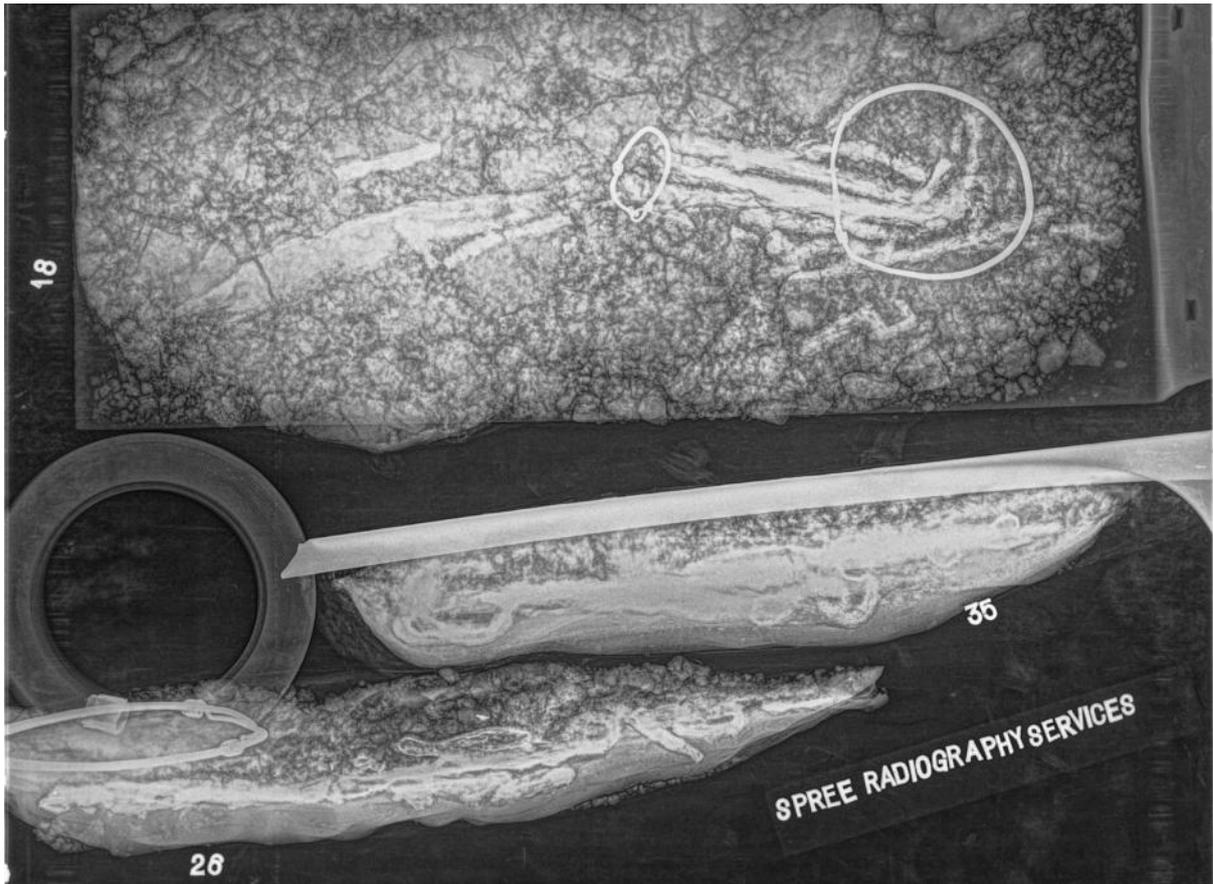


Plate 4 - Whale bone plaque from the side and bunch of latch lifters and possibly a purse.



Plate 5 - Grave 8 Showing Bone stain and Sword



Plate 6 – Spearhead from Grave 11 *in situ*.



Plate 7 – Grave 11



Plate 8 - Grave 13, decapitated burial showing Whale Bone Plaque and significant root disturbance.



Plate 9 – Grave 16 (Christian) cutting Grave 17 showing different alignments.

Appendix A – Interim Grave Concordance

Note: The numbering of graves considers the six recorded in the adjacent property, therefore starting at Grave 7.

Grave	Provisional Date	Orientation	Main Grave Goods	Sex	Age	Position
7	Christian	68°	None	M?	Adult?	Extended
8	Pre-Christian	36°	Sword, belt, dagger	M?	Adult?	Extended
9	Pre-Christian	38°	None	---	Cenotaph	Empty
10	Christian	72°	None	M?	Adult?	Extended
11	Pre-Christian	36°	Spear	M?	Adult?	Extended
12	Pre-Christian	46°	Gilt Brooch, Beads	F?	Adult?	Extended
13	Pre-Christian B	33°	Beads, Keys, Whale Bone	F?	Adult?	Decapitated
14	Pre-Christian	43°	Beads, Brooch	F?	Juvenile?	Extended
15	Pre-Christian	40°	Spear	?	Adult?	Disarticulated
16	Christian	90°	None	?	Adult?	Extended
17	Pre-Christian	56°	Brooches, Key, Beads	F?	Juvenile?	Extended
18	Pre-Christian	55°	Pot, Dagger, Beads	F?	Adult?	Extended
19	Pre-Christian	39°	Buckle, Beads, Tweezers	F?	Adult?	Extended
20	Pre-Christian A	31°	Belt Buckle, Studs, Beads	F?	Adult?	Extended
21	Pre-Christian	52°	Buckle, Spear, Knife	M?	Adult?	Extended
22	Pre-Christian	47°	None	---	?	Robbed/Cenotaph

Appendix B – Archive Index

Item	Number of Items	Number of Fragments	Condition	Location
Context records	19 WB 69 Excavation			MOLES Archaeology & Digitised at SWAT
A1 Drawing sheets	0			
A3 Drawing sheets	22			Digitise This
A4 Drawing sheets	5			MOLES Archaeology
Small finds	530+/-		More may be recovered upon Conservation	DGB Conservation
Digital photographs Watching Brief	192 working 2038 official			MOLES Archaeology & Digitised at SWAT
Digital Photographs Evaluation	66 working 80 Official			MOLES Archaeology & Digitised at SWAT
Flint	8 poss. worked			MOLES Archaeology
Pottery	1 pot (full) 3 sherds	6?	May be more fragmented. Excavation in the lab may show it to be more fragmented.	DGB Conservation & MOLES Archaeology
Fired clay	0			
CBM	0			
Stone	0			
Metalwork	55+/-			DGB Conservation
Glass	0			
Slag	0			
Human bone	14 graves			KORA Kent Uni
Animal bone	3?			DGB Conservation
Soil samples (No.)	39			SWAT Archaeology
Soil samples (bags/tubs)	46			SWAT Archaeology
Soil samples (Monolith)	0			

Appendix C – Spot dating

Provisional spot dating of a brooch is provided below. A full assessment is currently being prepared therefore at present time no further dating is available.

Context	Fabric	Form	Date-range	No of sherds	Weight in gm	Comments
[124] 123		Brooch	c.AD 600		23g	Well preserved. Dating taken from a comparable brooch

Appendix D – Assessment and Analysis Estimate

Cost breakdown for Post-ex processing from the Saxon Period cemetery site at The Droveaway, St Margarets. DSM-EX-20		
Task		Days
Report Writing and Editing		
Assessment Report and UPD		10
Report Writing and Admin. Based on 50% of the days on site		55
3D Image processing and integration		2
Report Editing		2
Illustrations		3
Full HER		1 x Unit
Map Regression		1 x Unit
Records Office Search		1 x Unit
Human Remains		
Preparation of Human Remains for Analysis		13
Human Bone Sample Analysis		3
Human Remains Assessment and Assessment Report		2
Human Remains Analysis and Reporting		13
Finds Assessment		
Flint Assessment		2
Pot Assessment		1
Bead Assessment		4

Cost breakdown for Post-ex processing from the Saxon Period cemetery site at The Droveaway, St Margarets. DSM-EX-20		
Task		Days
Weapon Assessment		2
Dress Jewellery Assessment		3
Whale Bone Assessment		2
Keys and Purse Contents Assessment		2
Mineralised Wood Assessment		1
Estimate for Finds Analysis		
Flint Analysis and Reporting		1
Pot Analysis and Reporting		2
Bead Analysis and Reporting		4
Weapon Analysis and Reporting		2
Dress Jewellery Analysis and Reporting		8
Whale Bone Analysis and Reporting		2
Keys and Purse Contents Analysis and Reporting		10
Mineralised Wood Analysis and Reporting		2
Illustration		3
Environmental Assessment		
Environmental Soils Sample Processing Assessment		1
Animal Bone Assessment		0.5

Cost breakdown for Post-ex processing from the Saxon Period cemetery site at The Droveaway, St Margarets. DSM-EX-20		
Task		Days
Molluscan Assessment		1
Environmental Analysis		
Environmental Soils Sample Processing and analysis of plant remains		1
Animal Bone Analysis and Reporting		1
Molluscan Analysis and Reporting		1
Conservation for ID and to Stabilisation Standard		
Small Find X-rays		0.75
Bead Conservation		12.7
Weapon Conservation		12.75
Dress Jewellery Conservation		11
Whale Bone Conservation		4
Keys and Purse Contents Conservation		6
Ceramic Conservation		1.75
Mineralised organics Conservation		2.75
Conservation to ID and to Stabilisation Standard		
Further X-Radiography		1.2
Assessment Report and Conservation Records		2
Archive Deposition		1 Unit

Cost breakdown for Post-ex processing from the Saxon Period cemetery site at The Droveaway, St Margarets. DSM-EX-20		
Task		Days
Mounts for Sword and Whale Bone		2 Units
Liaison with Specialists		1.5
Further Conservation to Museum Standard		
Weapon Conservation		14.5
Dress Jewellery Conservation		12.75
Whale Bone Conservation		1
Keys and Purse Contents Conservation		6
Ceramic Conservation		1.5
Assessment Report and Conservation Records		0.5
Liaison with Specialists		1
Archiving		
Human Remains		1
Boxes		30 Units
Document Archiving		1 x Unit
Human Remains Accession Costs (Dover?)		1 x Unit
Small finds Accession Costs (Dover)		1 x Unit
Miscellaneous		
Transport St Margarets to Faversham		5x Units

Cost breakdown for Post-ex processing from the Saxon Period cemetery site at The Droeway, St Margarets. DSM-EX-20		
Task		Days
Transport St Margarets to Sittingbourne		4x Units
Transport Faversham to London		2x Units
Transport Deal to Northampton		2x Units
Transport Dover to Bury St Edmunds		2x Units
Miscellaneous postage of artefacts and ecofacts		10x Units

Appendix E – KCC HER Form

Site Name: 36-38 The Droveaway, St. Margaret's AtCliffe	
Site Address: 36-38 The Droveaway, St. Margaret'sAtCliffe, Kent,CT15 6BZ	
Summary: PAN DOV/17/01137 A Watching Brief was undertaken on the demolition of the house on this site. This was followed by a full excavation phase which located 16 graves, two were empty and the remaining 14 revealed a startling array of degrees of preservation. Of the 16 graves 13 were thought to be of the Pre-Christian Early Medieval period dated by the finds and their consistent alignment NW-SE. The remaining 3 are thought to be from the Post-Christian period due to their E-W alignment and the lack of grave goods.	
District/Unitary: Dover District Council	Parish: St. Margaret'sAt Cliffe
Period(s): Bronze Age? / Early to Mid MEM	
NGR (centre of site : 8 figures): TR 3657 4473	
Type of archaeological work (delete) Watching Brief Excavation:	
Date of Recording: 14 th September – 13 th November 2020	
Unit undertaking recording: SWAT (Swale and Thames Archaeological Survey)	
Geology: Seaford Chalk Formation	
Morley, G. (2020) Archaeological Excavations at 36-38The Droveaway, St Margaret's AtCliffe, Kent: Interim Report	
Location of archive/finds: SWAT Archaeology/ DGB Conservation	
Contact at Unit: Dr Paul Wilkinson	Date: 13 th January 2021