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Prehistory, landscape and heterotopia: a contribution to the Ramsgate Heritage Action Zone

Jonathan Last

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SUMMARY
This report uses the Heritage Action Zone (HAZ) at Ramsgate, Kent, to develop a framework for including the deep time of prehistory in place-making projects. The document is designed to serve two purposes: (a) as a stimulus for general discussion about the inclusion of archaeological data in such exercises; and (b) as a text that can be drawn on to produce popular outputs about Ramsgate's prehistory.

The report first sets out the idea of 'heterotopia' as a way of thinking about the links between contemporary places and the archaeological past, and introduces three stories about the prehistory of the Ramsgate area that develop themes around the creation of community, the relationships between people and place, and continental connections:

- The first narrative covers the Early Neolithic when for around 200 years the Ramsgate area was a centre of activity that included enclosure construction and pit digging, gatherings and feasts, deposition and burial, cattle herding and cereal processing.

- The second considers the placement of the dead in the Early Bronze Age landscape, when the exceptional number of round barrows found on Thanet established relationships between people and places, with the landscape and perhaps also with the heavens.

- The third concerns the interactions between foreigners and locals during the later Bronze Age and earlier Iron Age, especially as evidenced in a remarkable burial pit from Cliffsend. This was a relationship characterised by risk and violence as much as by wealth and conviviality.

A final story takes a different approach, introducing the 'creation geologist' George Fairholme as a figure who links the exploration of Ramsgate's deeper past with the town's 19th-century heyday as a resort, and thereby with its visible historic character.

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CONTACT DETAILS
Dr. Jonathan Last
Landscape Strategy Adviser
Historic England
Fort Cumberland
Portsmouth
PO4 9LD
jonathan.last@historicengland.org.uk

Cover image: Houses behind the Pulhamite rockworks on Madeira Drive, Ramsgate (© J Last/ Historic England)

 24/2019

CONTENTS

1 INTRODUCTION

The Historic England Places Strategy presents a vision for place-making that uses 'the power of heritage' to unlock the value of places (Fletcher 2018, 3). As such it contributes to broader government agendas around economic growth, public value and sustainable development. However, the focus of the strategy is very much on the urban, built environment. Archaeology is recognised in terms of 'our archaeological inheritance' (ibid, 3) but primarily valued for 'the excitement of discovery' (ibid, 13) rather than its intrinsic interest or relevance to other agendas. Similarly, landscape is another peripheral presence in the document, being seen as the setting of 'existing cities, towns and villages' (ibid, 5) – even though, like place and place-making, it is a multi-disciplinary term that helps connect the historic environment with diverse other interests. So how might we better connect archaeology (in particular the 'deep time' of prehistory) and landscape to the urban realm and place-making?

One possible way of doing this is through the idea of *heterotopia* (literally, 'other place'), a term originally coined by the philosopher Michel Foucault (2008) to describe:

> *places that do exist which are something like counter-sites, a kind of effectively enacted utopia in which ... all the other real sites that can be found within the culture, are simultaneously represented, contested, and inverted.*

The examples given by Foucault include places of crisis ('privileged or sacred or forbidden places'), deviation (such as psychiatric hospitals, prisons and retirement homes) and contradiction (e.g. the garden, when conceived as a microcosm of a wider world). Heterotopias are also linked to 'heterochronies' (slices in time) in places such as museums and libraries ('the idea of constituting a place of all times that is itself outside of time'), opening the possibility of adding archaeological sites and landscapes to the list. Foucault explains the function of heterotopias as either exposing or compensating for the illusions and messiness of 'real' life. So heterotopias are always relevant to our understanding of the present.

Foucault left much about this concept unexplored, and work since has drawn out the idea in diverse ways. Here it is taken simply as a useful term for places within and around the built, urban realm that are real and relevant but invisible or hidden, while also carrying a sense of the Foucauldian critique of modern spaces of order and control, which might offer a corrective to some of the more regulatory aspects of place-making and related concepts like place-branding. In a similar vein Palladino and Miller (2015) refer to heterotopia as 'a space or a language in which to think things differently' while Samuels (2010) suggests 'defining heterotopia, for archaeological purposes, as real spaces that, by juxtaposing incommensurate spatial, temporal, or social systems, generate a jarring, disorienting, or disturbing alternate ordering'. In this he follows Hetherington (1997, viii) who points out that by marking these spaces out as 'other', such an alternate ordering 'allows them to be seen as an example of an alternative way of doing things'. This might provide a model for ways of finding contemporary relevance in narratives of prehistory.

In the passages below, therefore, the prehistoric landscape of Ramsgate is presented as a heterotopic presence within and around the town, both resonating with and serving as a counterpoint to aspects of its more recent historic character. This is followed by an attempt to connect urban history and character with deep time through the figure of 19th-century 'creation geologist' George Fairholme. The aims are both to demonstrate conceptually the relevance of the archaeological past to present-day place-making, and to present a set of stories that can be extracted for use in public engagement for the Heritage Action Zone project in Ramsgate.

2 PREHISTORIC RAMSGATE (*c* 3750–300 BC)

Background

The development of the modern town will be discussed in a separate report (Franklin, forthcoming) but in the meantime the *Historic Characterisation of Ramsgate* report provides a helpful summary of the (LUC and Archangel Heritage Ltd 2018, 15–24). Its origin can be traced to the late medieval period, when it became a locally important harbour. By the 17th century a settlement was growing around the harbour, replacing the fishing hamlet that preceded it. In the 18th century the harbour was extended at a time when the concept of the seaside resort was developing, bringing early tourists to the town as well as maritime trade. These developments led in turn to a great expansion of housing, especially on the East and West Cliff, while military installations were constructed during the Napoleonic wars. The development of both the resort and the port continued through the 19th and earlier 20th centuries, despite wartime interruptions.

However, the later 20th and early 21st centuries have seen a decline in tourism, a loss of commercial container traffic and the termination of ferry services. Ramsgate's Heritage Action Zone status is therefore designed to address the resulting socio-economic problems and the neglect of some of its heritage assets. Its central aims are:

- to raise understanding and awareness of the fabric and character of the town's heritage amongst a broad range of audiences;
- to highlight the way in which this unique heritage has created the town's distinctiveness;
- and to harness the potential of the town's heritage in underpinning a vibrant, culturally distinctive, future place and community.

Characterisation is primarily concerned with the visible historic dimension of the present-day landscape, and the report makes it clear that despite the area's long history of human activity 'there is little that manifests in the present landscape until the medieval period' (LUC and Archangel Heritage Ltd 2018, 15). Some older historical events are marked by (relatively) recent structures, including the Viking ship at Cliffsend, which actually commemorates not the Vikings but the 1500th anniversary of earlier landings (supposedly) by Hengist and Horsa in AD 449, and Pugin's church of Saint Augustine, memorialising the arrival of the first Archbishop of Canterbury at Ebbsfleet in 597. While these monuments, along with the Roman

site at nearby Richborough, show the area's long history as a gateway for Continental invaders, traders and missionaries, the even longer prehistory that came before these events is not marked or commemorated.

To understand what we might term the 'hiddenscape' that underlies the visible historic landscape we have to turn to archaeological approaches, principally aerial investigation and development-led excavation. Collectively these allow us to tell a story of another Ramsgate, in fact several others: past landscapes that offer a pertinent counterpoint to the more recent narrative recounted by other components of the HAZ. Put simply, Ramsgate and neighbouring areas of Thanet emerged as a place of significance during the Early Neolithic (around 3750 BC) and over the next three and a half millennia there were at least two further phases when this area was marked out as significantly different from other parts of Kent. The remains of this long period (Table 1) reveal in microcosm many of the patterns of continental connections and insular developments that characterise the prehistory of southern Britain, an oscillation that has continued in one way or another until the present day.

Period	Phase	BC
Mesolithic	Early	9000
	Late	7500
Neolithic	Early	4000
	Middle	3400
	Late	2900
(Beaker		2400)
Bronze Age	Early	2200
	Middle	1500
	Late	1150
Iron Age	Early	750
	Middle	400
	Late	100

Table 1 Approximate start dates for the main periods of prehistory mentioned in the text

A key point is that while the observable record of prehistory, in the form of cropmarks visible on aerial photographs (Small, forthcoming), as well as excavation archives and objects, tells us about the landforms and monuments that preceded the development of the modern settlement, so the contemporary townscape, through its processes of change and the affordances arising from that, has itself influenced the patterns of archaeological discovery which inform this discussion. Prehistoric Ramsgate (or at least our current understanding of it) is therefore just as much a creation of the modern town as it is the legacy from which the town developed;

another facet of the inter-relationship between past and present that is conveyed by the idea of heterotopia.

Topography and geology

The study area under consideration comprises 30 sq km, roughly centred on St Lawrence, and stretching from Manston and Cliffsend in the west and south-west to East Cliff in the east and Westwood in the north (Fig 1). Landscape cannot be reduced to topography but it always has a topographic component. This area lies on the southern side of the Isle of Thanet, an outcrop of Upper Chalk separated from the North Downs by the Wantsum channel, which is now infilled but which for much of the period under discussion would have divided Thanet and the mainland; Pegwell Bay lies at the eastern end of the former channel. Between Pegwell and Ramsgate, and round towards Broadstairs, the chalk cliffs reach a height of *c* 20m, behind which the land rises to over 50m OD around Northwood and Westwood, capped in places by Tertiary (Thanet) sand and Quaternary brickearth, with head deposits (weathered material that has moved downslope) infilling a number of dry valleys.

While the geological 'background' might seem like a common factor linking prehistoric and modern Ramsgate, various geomorphological processes have operated between the end of the last Ice Age and the present day, affecting both the character of the place during the periods under discussion here, and the subsequent survival or otherwise of earlier features. These include:

- the opening of the Wantsum channel – it is unclear exactly when the Wantsum became a navigable tidal channel that cut off Thanet from the rest of Kent, but it was probably open by the Neolithic and certainly by the Early Bronze Age, remaining so until the medieval period when it silted up and the 'Isle' of Thanet was reconnected to the mainland.
- ongoing erosion of the chalk cliffs by the sea – if we extrapolate from recent rates of erosion, the cliffs around Thanet could have receded by 1–2km since the Neolithic. While erosion would not have been uniform over time or space, it is nevertheless clear that Thanet was larger in prehistoric times than it is today, and that many former coastal sites have been destroyed or submerged.
- continued alluvial and colluvial processes leading to the accumulation of deposits in the valleys and bays – partly reflecting soil erosion caused by early clearance of woodland and medieval open-field agriculture on the chalk plateau.

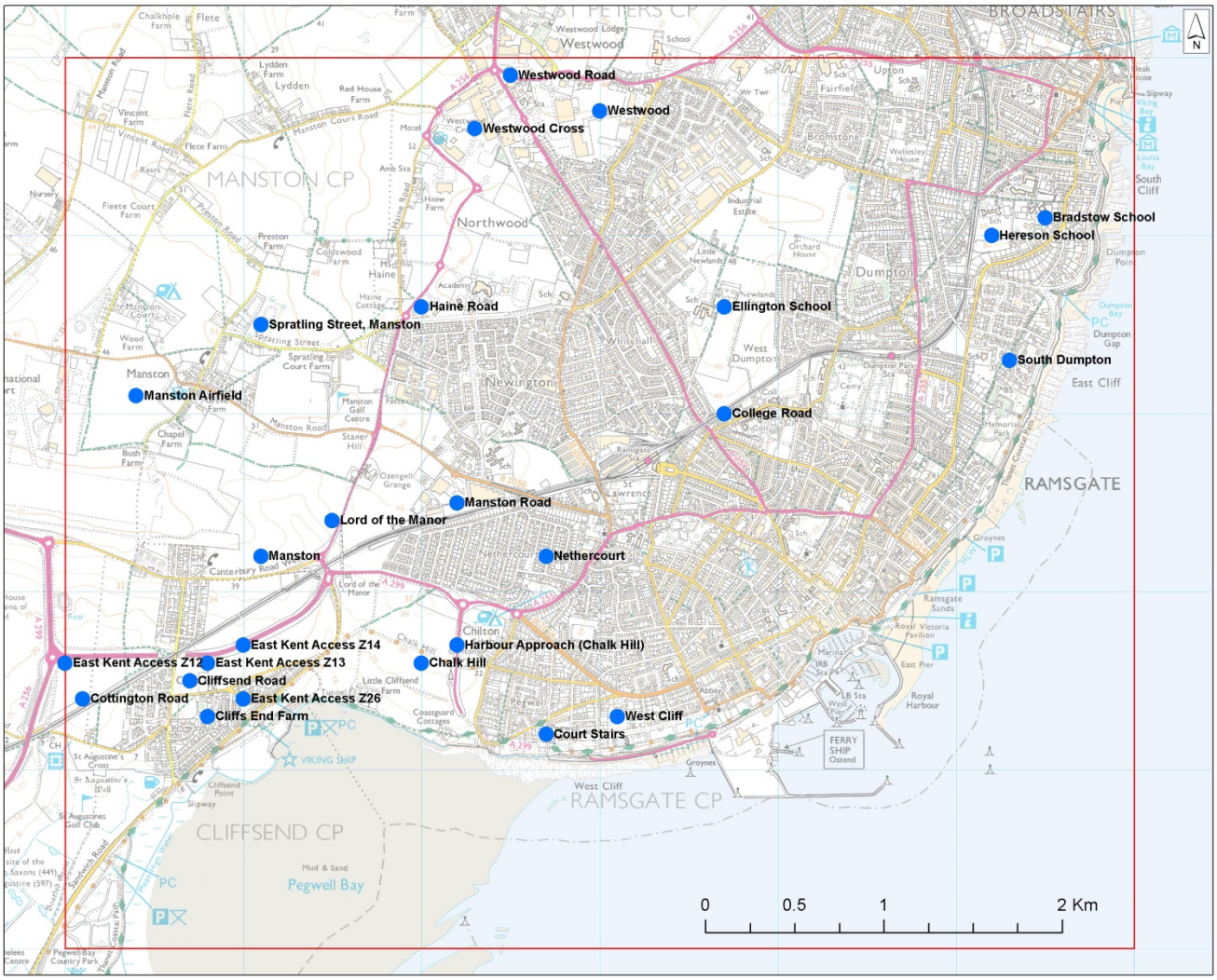

Figure 1 The study area and key sites (© Historic England; Base map Crown Copyright and database right 2018. All rights reserved. Ordnance Survey Licence number 100019088.)

The Early Neolithic: enclosures, deposition and community

The Neolithic arrived in southern Britain around 6000 years ago as a group of incomers, a set of ideas about the world and humans' place in it, various new technologies, and some imported species of domesticated plants and animals. Archaeologists continue to argue about the number of migrants involved, their exact place of origin, and the degree of contribution to Neolithic communities from the indigenous Mesolithic hunter-gatherers, whose flint tools have been found in excavations around Ramsgate. Kent was probably one of the first places where they encountered the new arrivals, since it has some of the earliest evidence for Neolithic activity in the country – the longhouse at White Horse Stone near Maidstone and the megalithic tomb at Coldrum, which were both in use during the 40th century BC (Whittle *et al* 2011, 383).

So far Thanet has not yielded any Neolithic remains that can be dated quite this early, but it has a lot to tell us about the next major development, the appearance of causewayed enclosures, monuments which are characterised by an irregular curvilinear form and interrupted or segmented ditches. Along with long barrows, these enclosures are one of the defining features of the British Early Neolithic, although their origin or inspiration lies in earlier examples from the continent, mainly in the Chasséen and Michelsberg cultures of north-eastern France and western Germany. Given this continental inspiration, it is interesting that the first British enclosures are found around the Thames estuary, and statistical modelling of radiocarbon dates suggests that the earliest of all may be at Ramsgate (Whittle *et al* 2011, 691, 897).

This is the site of Chalk Hill, on the western outskirts of the town, which was discovered and investigated when the Royal Harbour Approach Road was constructed in the late 1990s (Whittle *et al* 2011, 371–7; Clark *et al* 2019). The site lies on a flat plateau about 400m from the cliffs on the north side of Pegwell Bay (Fig 2). The enclosure comprises three concentric arcs of interrupted or causewayed ditch with a maximum diameter of 150m, though it is not known if they formed a complete circuit, since the eastern side of the enclosure has not been identified on aerial photographs. Most causewayed enclosures in England did comprise full ditch circuits, at least in their final form, but there are a number of incomplete examples, some of which may have used natural features, such as rivers or slopes, as boundaries. As in many other cases, the ditch segments at Chalk Hill seem to comprise sequences of amalgamated pits rather than uniform features like many of the later ring-ditches and field boundaries discussed below. By analogy with sites that survive as earthworks, the enclosure would have had banks inside the ditches, though at Chalk Hill, as with most sites in arable landscapes, these no longer survive.

Radiocarbon dating indicates that the first ditches at Chalk Hill were dug around 3700 BC, and the site was used for about a century. During this time, deposits of occupation refuse were made in the ditch segments, including (undecorated) pottery, struck flints, charred plant remains, animal bone (cattle, sheep, pig and roe deer) and shellfish. There were also some more carefully selected items including cattle leg joints, a complete skull, and a few human remains. As at other causewayed enclosures, parts of the ditches were recut and a few pits were dug in the interior, their fills containing a similar range of finds.

Why was the enclosure constructed here specifically? One reason may be the presence of a large palaeochannel (20m wide and 4m deep) that ran north-west/south-east across the northern part of the excavation site. Although infilled, this hollow could still have been a notable landscape feature in the Early Neolithic and might have influenced the choice of this location. Another reason may be the views afforded across Pegwell Bay and out to sea, though we do not know whether Chalk Hill was open or wooded at this time.

If it is indeed the earliest monument of this kind in Britain, the Chalk Hill enclosure sets the pattern for their construction and use, with the sense of a site that developed gradually or episodically, rather than being planned and constructed as a

coherent project, the presence of diverse material remains in the ditches, and only limited evidence of structures or features within the enclosure. This all fits the idea of a mainly pastoral society (though cereals were also cultivated) in which people did not usually construct permanent dwellings but moved with their livestock – primarily cattle – and gathered periodically at enclosures and other places for exchanges and ceremonies, these gatherings often involving feasting, followed by deliberate deposition of the residues.

Figure 2 View from Chalk Hill towards Pegwell Bay (© J Last/Historic England)

It would be easy to conclude that each causewayed enclosure was associated with a particular social group or tribe and its territory. But the common occurrence of pairs of enclosures in close proximity (such as at Kingsborough on the Isle of Sheppey) suggests a more complex social and territorial arrangement. We now know that Ramsgate was one of those places with more than one enclosure, since another arc of interrupted ditch was found in advance of a development at Court Stairs Lodge, less than 1km south-east of Chalk Hill, (Moody 2007a).

This site is closer to the sea than Chalk Hill and the enclosure appears to have opened in a southerly, seawards direction. It has a projected diameter of about 100m but far less has been excavated – just parts of two segments totalling around 25m in length. Nevertheless enough was investigated to show some similarities to and differences from Chalk Hill. The similarities include the nature of the ditch segments, with connections between the two sites suggested by the form of specific deposits, including the presence of complete cattle skulls and shellfish remains. On the other hand, the presence of decorated pottery at Court Stairs suggests a slightly

later date, which is supported by a radiocarbon date centred on the mid-36th century BC, so the sites may not have been in contemporary use.

While having two enclosures in such close proximity may not be greatly unusual, having three or more would seem to be unique in England. An intriguing discovery, therefore, is another arc of causewayed ditch less than 1km to the west of Chalk Hill, between Sandwich Road and the A299. This feature has been seen on aerial photographs (Small, forthcoming) but has not been investigated on the ground. It appears similar in size to Chalk Hill and as with that site only the western arm of the enclosure is visible. Although its date cannot yet be confirmed, it is notable that just to the north-west, near Cliffs End, a group of Neolithic pits was discovered during excavations associated with construction of the A299 East Kent Access Road (EKA Zone 14). Like the ditches at Court Stairs these contained decorated potsherds and one pit was dated to the later 37th or early 36th century BC, perhaps contemporary with the abandonment of the Chalk Hill enclosure (Andrews *et al* 2015, 26).

In addition, it has been suggested that an oval pit containing two human burials and a plain Neolithic pot that was excavated at Nethercourt Farm during construction of the housing estate (Dunning 1966) might be part of yet another enclosure. Even if this is not the case, it is further evidence of widespread Early Neolithic activity in the vicinity, along with a number of pit clusters at Ellington School (Carruthers 2012), Westwood (Poole and Webley 2008), Westwood Cross (Stevens 2011) and Manston Road (Hutcheson and Andrews 2009). These features variously contained pottery, flints and charred grain, with the earliest dated pit at Ellington belonging to the mid-38th century BC, while the large grain deposit at Westwood Cross is dated to the 38th or early 37th century. The Westwood examples may be rather later, given the presence of some decorated pottery.

At Ellington School there was evidence for the deposition of 'burnt offerings' in the base of two pits, one of which also contained a large assemblage of worked flint and some potsherds (Carruthers 2012). The charred plant remains comprised hazelnuts and processed grain (wheat and barley), all valued food crops. This assemblage is typical of Early Neolithic pits which do not usually contain special objects, as found in some deposits of later periods (see below), but rather a selection of the material in everyday use, as if it was important to mark the location of settlement with a deposit that represented the range of domestic activities taking place.

We can begin to construct a chronology for the excavated sites, with the earliest pits at Ellington School followed by the enclosure at Chalk Hill, the grain deposit at Westwood Cross and the burial pit at Nethercourt, then slightly later by the sites with decorated pottery at Cliffs End, Court Stairs and Westwood. For maybe 200 years the Ramsgate area was a centre of Early Neolithic activity that included enclosure construction and pit digging (which were probably two sides of the same coin), gatherings and feasts, deposition and burial, cattle herding and cereal processing.

Direct evidence of these early Ramsgate-ians in the form of human remains is more sparse than for the later periods discussed below, but we know that the people

buried at Nethercourt Farm include a middle-aged individual (35–45), probably male, who had lost a number of teeth, and a young adult of uncertain sex. We also know that the human bone fragments from Chalk Hill came from people whose diet was rich in meat or dairy but who consumed little fish or shellfish (despite the presence of shells in the enclosure ditches). This group includes a young adult female and a child.

So in the second quarter of the 4th millennium BC, Ramsgate became for a while a centre of Neolithic sociality: a place of gatherings, collective labour, feasting and deposition. This landscape, now hidden beneath the skin of the modern town, was very different in many ways; it was not a world we would feel comfortable in if we could not dig a pit, knap flint or handle a cow. But in other ways it was very familiar, since the sites and features revealed archaeologically were all about creating a community, exactly as we attempt to do in our towns and neighbourhoods today, drawing on and referencing the past as well as looking to the future. By showing us different ways of life, the archaeological record paradoxically also emphasises what we as human beings all have in common, whichever time period we were born into.

The Early Bronze Age: an island of the dead?

For the next thousand years or more we have little evidence of what was happening around Ramsgate, though we know from occasional finds of a different style of decorated pottery (Peterborough Ware) at Chalk Hill and Cliffsend that people were still present in the later part of the 4th millennium BC. These finds include a pit from Chalk Hill that contained Peterborough Ware (Cleal in Hearne *et al* 1995, 283–6), suggesting a continuation of the same kind of activity as in the Early Neolithic, but at a reduced intensity. Then during the Late Neolithic, around 2500 BC, there is indirect evidence of people in the form of hill-wash deposited in Pegwell Bay, the result probably of trees being cut down and land cultivated (Bateman 1998).

This is a time when circular monuments known as henges (open enclosures surrounded by a ring-ditch with an external bank and one or more entrances) were constructed across Britain and Ireland. For a long time these were unknown in Kent but in recent years they have begun to turn up, notably at Ringlemere near Woodnesborough, some 10km south-west of Ramsgate (Needham *et al* 2006). Here a henge monument was subsequently converted into something more like a round barrow with the addition of a central turf mound or platform. It is possible that something similar happened at Lord of the Manor in Ramsgate, since among a number of round barrows, discussed further below, are some large monuments with diameters of 30m or more and two or three concentric ditches. One of these is Lord of the Manor site 1 (LOM1), which was excavated in the 1970s (Moody 2008, 73–6). Although this was subsequently used as a burial monument (see below), it may have begun as a henge, associated with Late Neolithic Grooved Ware pottery. However, that is far less certain than at Ringlemere since the Grooved Ware could well be residual, the bank appears to have been internal to the ditch rather than in the proper henge arrangement, and although the middle of three ring-ditches is

penannular, there is no causeway across the large outer ring-ditch which is assumed to represent the henge phase.

The debate about Late Neolithic monuments was revived recently during work in EKA Zone 13 (Andrews *et al* 2015, 38–46). Less than 1km south-west of the main Lord of the Manor group, two ring-ditches on a small spur of high ground overlooking Cliffsend and Pegwell Bay were excavated. The larger of the two had a single ring-ditch with an external diameter of 43m. Although assigned to the Early Bronze Age there is evidence for recutting of an earlier circuit, which could possibly be Late Neolithic. However, once again this is speculative and as yet there is no unequivocal evidence for circular monuments on Thanet that predate what is termed the Beaker phase, at the very end of the Neolithic. On current understanding, it is the appearance of Beakers that initiates the next remarkable phase of Ramsgate's prehistory.

Beakers are a style of pottery that originated on the Continent in the first half of the 3rd millennium BC and became a pan-European phenomenon, appearing in Britain around 2400 BC and spanning the last couple of centuries of the Neolithic and the first part of the Early Bronze Age. As this transitional dating suggests, Beakers are one part of a network of changes associated with the introduction of metalworking into Britain. As with the start of the Neolithic, archaeologists have long debated the extent to which physical migration of people was involved, as opposed to the spread of ideas and exchange of artefacts. More pertinent to the Ramsgate story, however, are the changes in burial rite. While Neolithic human remains are rare, in the Beaker phase and the Early Bronze Age the dead literally took centre stage, usually placed within circular monuments comprising a mound surrounded by a ditch. These round barrows may not have been all about burial but they usually contain at least one grave, and often more.

In contrast to the Neolithic activity discussed above, which was focussed on the ceremonies of the living and the deposition of residues of occupation and feasting, the Early Bronze Age saw the development of a landscape of the dead. Although the first Beaker burials were associated with rather small monuments, as the Bronze Age progressed larger and more visible barrows were built, sometimes expanding existing Beaker sites. At the same time burial rites also changed, with a gradual shift from inhumation to cremation and new, insular styles of pottery accompanying the dead.

The earliest Beaker burial in the Ramsgate area, which has been dated to the 23rd century BC, lies just outside the study area at Beauforts, North Foreland Avenue (Hart and Moody 2008). This was the burial of a woman, about 40 years old, with a Beaker placed at her feet, within a ring-ditch 12m in diameter, which had probably been covered by a small mound. Within the study area, Beaker graves have been excavated at five sites, all of them also within ring-ditches less than 20m in diameter. One of these was at Chalk Hill, to the south of the causewayed enclosure, where the burial of a (possibly) female adult with a Beaker has been dated to the first quarter of the 2nd millennium BC (Clark *et al* 2019). Two other sites lay in the same area, south-west of Ramsgate. At Lord of the Manor site 7 (LOM7), an oval ring-ditch, cut in six distinctly separate segments and with evidence of a mound,

contained a burial of uncertain sex accompanied by a Beaker, a jet button and a flint knife (Perkins and Gibson 1990). This burial probably took place in the 21st or 20th century BC. The second one was at Cliffsend (Macpherson-Grant 1968), apparently a flat grave without evidence of a barrow, though it was found in a drainage trench, so the circumstances were not ideal; apart from the Beaker the burial was represented only by a few leg bones.

The other sites lay in the north-eastern part of the study area. At the former Dumpton Park Greyhound Stadium on Hereson Road an adult was buried with a (plain) Beaker vessel within a ring-ditch which also enclosed a second burial that lacked grave goods (Philp 2002, 196–7). The most complex site was found at South Dumpton Down (Perkins 2004), where five crouched adult inhumations (three men and two women, one of the men accompanied by a Beaker), a teenage boy with a different style of pot, known as a Food Vessel, and an infant were buried in succession at the centre of a small segmented ring-ditch with a maximum diameter of 9m. Following the final burial a capping of flint nodules was placed over the grave pits. This site shows how monuments which began in the Beaker phase were often reused in later stages of the Early Bronze Age. Similarly the unaccompanied remains of an adult and child were interred within the Beaker monument at Chalk Hill in the second quarter of the 2nd millennium.

Although the Beaker phenomenon is often associated with supposedly 'male' activities including archery, drinking and metalworking, it is notable that none of these graves contain classic male Beaker artefacts – though there are two examples from north Thanet, one with an archer's wristguard and one with three flint arrowheads. A collection of flint tools and flakes from a barrow at Cliffs End includes similar arrowheads, though this material appears more like a domestic assemblage than the carefully selected groups of objects that were placed in graves (McKinley *et al* 2014, 18).

As mentioned, these early Beaker graves represent precursors to the main phase of round barrow construction which probably spans the first quarter of the 2nd millennium BC. Round barrows are found across virtually the whole of Britain, but they are unevenly distributed and what makes Thanet unusual is the sheer number of these monuments. As with the Neolithic enclosures, little evidence of them remains above ground in an area that has been subject to intensive arable agriculture from the later prehistoric period onwards, but aerial investigation and mapping has revealed the scale of the barrow landscape, leading to suggestions that Thanet could have been a 'sacred island' to which Early Bronze Age people from a wide area were brought for burial (Perkins 2010).

Aerial photography has shown that Thanet has at least 480 barrows, of which around 50 have been excavated. They are organised into about 40 cemeteries or groups, each containing between three and 33 monuments. In general the barrows cluster above the sea or valleys leading to the sea. The barrow cemeteries have themselves been grouped into six large clusters by Perkins (2010), one of which (his Ozengell-Pegwell 'super-cemetery') lies on the west side of Ramsgate, centred on Lord of the Manor (Fig 3). At least 51 barrows and ring-ditches are known here, of which 17 have been investigated by excavation (Hammond 2010, 236). The

barrows lie along an escarpment to the east of a broad shallow valley known as Hollins Bottom, which runs south-east for about two kilometres and is cut by the cliffs of Pegwell Bay, although prior to the erosion of the last 4000 years the valley floor probably descended to the beach. It may be that these barrows and ring-ditches form the eastern end of a more or less continuous distribution stretching for around 7km along the southern edge of Thanet – since the gap in the present-day distribution may simply reflect the presence of Manston airfield, which could have obscured sites in this area.

Figure 3 Google Earth image of ring-ditches and roundabouts at Lord of the Manor (© GOOGLE.EARTH.COM ACCESSED 25-MAR-2019)

The average Early Bronze Age ring-ditch measures 20–25m in diameter, larger than the Beaker monuments. However, the Lord of the Manor complex also includes three very large monuments with diameters of 30m or more. One of these is LOM1 with an outer ditch 30m in diameter which encloses two other ring-ditches measuring 19m and 12m. This has been discussed above in the context of the somewhat tenuous evidence that it was a Late Neolithic henge. It seems more likely that the monument was gradually enlarged and thus the largest ring-ditch represents the barrow's final form. The enlargement of earlier (often perhaps Beaker) monuments is seen in a number of other cases. For example, LOM8 began with a small ditch, measuring just 9m in diameter, which contained possible Beaker sherds and was subsequently expanded with a much larger outer ditch 28m in diameter. And whatever the sequence represented at LOM1, by the time this monument fell out of use at least ten Early Bronze Age burials had taken place within it or close by: eight crouched inhumations, the deposition of disarticulated bones and the cremation of a child (Hammond 2010, 241–2).

The two excavated monuments to the south near Cliffsend, in EKA Zone 13, have also been mentioned above. In this case only the smaller one had evidence for burials, with at least eight graves dug between the two ring-ditches. Radiocarbon dating suggest they range from the 20th or 19th century to the 15th century BC (Andrews *et al* 2015, 39–43).

Elsewhere in the study area, barrows have been excavated at Bradstow School, Broadstairs, where Bronze Age ring-ditches and burials were associated with an Anglo-Saxon cemetery (Moody 2007b), while others have been mapped from aerial photographs near Westwood Cross, south of Lydden, and at West Dumpton. There may well be more barrows that have been lost to or survive hidden beneath the built-up areas of Ramsgate and Broadstairs.

This recital of ring-ditch and burial details makes the important point that round barrows are frequently rather similar, and certainly conform to a recognisable type, but at the same time each monument has its own unique character and history. Equally importantly, we need to remember that each burial represents a person who had family, friends and a community that would have missed and mourned them. Only a relatively few people would have received formal burial of this kind in the Bronze Age, and how they were chosen remains uncertain, but the presence of individuals of both sexes and all ages suggests that it may not have been simply a question of status or power.

While we need to consider barrows and the people buried in them individually, we also have to look at their collective organisation in the landscape, since these monuments often display relationships to topographic features, such as ridges and crests. Certainly many were placed to be seen from particular vantage points and an analogy may be drawn with Anglo-Saxon times, when we know the Wantsum was an important routeway to the Thames and the east coast, safer than navigating North Foreland. At this time many cemeteries were visible from the sea and would have often appeared on the skyline, especially at Ozengell and Cliffs End. It is suggested they served as symbols of power to travellers passing through the area (Stoodley in McKinley *et al* 2014, 272–3), and the same may have been true of the Bronze Age monuments in similar locations.

Apart from Beakers, the pottery styles of the Early Bronze Age are of insular derivation. However, there are a few hints of wider connections which may indicate travellers moving along and across the Channel during this period. At Ringlemere, on the other side of the Wantsum, the barrow constructed within the henge monument produced a rare gold cup, part of a group of Early Bronze Age 'precious cups' that spans southern England, Brittany and north-west Germany (Needham *et al* 2006). Although nothing similar has been found on Thanet, excavations at Lord of the Manor produced a slotted pottery vessel of a type known as an 'incense cup' (though their precise function is not clear), which has a similar distribution along the south coast of England (ibid, 65–7).

As well as marking prominent places in the landscape, barrows were also located with reference to one another, as shown by the linear arrangements seen in the

Lord of the Manor group (Hammond 2010, 239–40). It could be that the prominence in the landscape of large or complex ring-ditches served to attract further barrow building and led to the development over time of the groups and cemeteries, but the relative chronology of barrows within a particular group is often hard to establish archaeologically.

A key difference between the Early Bronze Age and more recent periods is that even though we may talk about barrow 'cemeteries', they were not cemeteries in the modern sense of an enclosed burial ground. Instead the dead were widely dispersed across the landscape, deliberately placed to be viewed or encountered by the living in the course of their daily life. We may conclude that round barrows represent exercises in Bronze Age place-making, establishing relationships with one another, the landscape and perhaps also the heavens: Hammond (2010, 279) has suggested that the large monuments from the Lord of the Manor group are arranged in a similar layout to certain constellations. It may be more pertinent, however, to see these monuments as representing the social world: if barrows are about marking or connecting places, then perhaps we can see the dead people within them not just as individuals deemed worthy of an elaborate burial but also as representative of a wider community. This has resonance with modern place-making exercises, which face similar issues of reconciling the different needs and perceptions of individuals and social groups.

The later Bronze Age and earlier Iron Age: special deposits and foreign bodies

While burials in and around barrows continued into the Middle Bronze Age, after 1500 BC, at this time we see a major change in the landscape of Thanet (and indeed southern Britain as a whole), with the development of field systems. For the first time the landscape was divided up in an archaeologically visible way, with the barrows of the previous phase often serving as landmarks and sightlines for this new agricultural landscape. Typically these field systems are described as 'coaxial', with the major boundaries sharing a prevailing orientation.

Remains of fields, droveways and enclosures are widespread across the study area and beyond, developing through the late 2nd and early 1st millennia BC. For example, around Cottington Hill, just to the west of the study area, an extensive coaxial field system with a predominantly east-west alignment originated in the Middle Bronze Age, then saw the addition of droveways for livestock in the Late Bronze Age, and finally the insertion of a major palisaded boundary, aligned north-east to south-west, in the Early Iron Age, after 800 BC (Andrews *et al* 2015, 96).

Within the study area at Chalk Hill, two parallel ditches, aligned north-north-east to south-south-west, cut across the infilled Neolithic enclosure and appear to be part of a field system, perhaps flanking a trackway or droveway of some kind (Clark *et al* 2019). Field boundaries and trackways of Late Bronze Age date have also been found nearby at Manston Road, where the longest boundary is aligned north-west to south-east (Hutcheson and Andrews 2009).

Further north at Haine Road a complex of late prehistoric boundary and enclosure ditches was orientated north-east to south-west; the generally low level of finds from the excavation suggests it does not indicate settlement (Powell 2010). At the Tesco site, Westwood, a later Bronze Age field system included a major ditch, also aligned north-east to south-west, with double-ditched boundaries running off it that may have enclosed banks or hedges. Individual fields seem to have been rather variable in size and shape, measuring up to 120m across. Again there was no evidence of settlement in the immediate vicinity of the site (Poole and Webley 2008). To the east, excavations at Ellington School revealed later Bronze Age fields and trackways in two distinct areas, generally with orientations close to north-south or east-west (Boden 2007).

Among the field systems and droveways are some Middle or Late Bronze Age enclosures. Some of these appear to represent settlements, for example a Late Bronze Age enclosure at Chalk Hill, measuring 57m across, which produced human remains dated to the 9th century BC but also contained postholes, pits and other evidence of domestic settlement (Clark *et al* 2019). At Westwood Cross a Middle or Late Bronze Age enclosure which included quantities of mussel shell was found in association with a field system (Gollop 2005). At South Dumpton Down, Broadstairs, a large Middle Bronze Age enclosure containing a number of pits lay adjacent to a possible trackway (Moody 2008, fig 56). And at Ellington School signs of settlement included drainage and enclosure ditches, post-hole structures and alignments, domestic refuse pits and 'industrial' pits, cremation burials and evidence for bronze-working (Boden 2007). Near Cliffsend an enclosure was found in EKA Zone 26 which contained two pits with complete MBA jars, possibly used for processing or storage, while a D-shaped enclosure of Late Bronze Age or Early Iron Age date was found in Zone 14 (Andrews *et al* 2015, 95ff).

Field systems and enclosures have also been mapped from aerial photographs though without direct dating evidence it is often hard to distinguish Bronze Age fields from those of Iron Age or Roman date. Some of the extensive and variously orientated cropmarks south of Manston Court Lane, Lydden, probably relate to the excavated features at Westwood and Haine Road, while ditches mapped beneath the modern housing at Nethercourt, with a north-east to south-west orientation, are provisionally interpreted as Iron Age or Roman (Small, forthcoming).

These various remains show the extent of the later Bronze Age transformation of the landscape across the whole study area, though rather than any form of central planning, the 'fieldscape' probably arose from the piecemeal application of common principles, as shown by the general similarities but local differences in layout and orientation.

Within this ostensibly more familiar landscape of fields and farmsteads human burials and other unusual deposits are less common than in the Early Bronze Age, but still found occasionally. The Haine Road field system produced a Middle or Late Bronze Age pottery vessel placed in a ditch terminal (Powell 2010), perhaps to mark a particular location or boundary, while Middle Bronze Age burials without grave goods were found at EKA Zone 13 (Andrews *et al* 2015, 94–5).

However, three key locations produced important finds of Middle Bronze Age metalwork. At South Dumpton Down a pit cut into the ditch of the enclosure mentioned above contained a carefully placed arrangement of objects with a bronze bracelet and palstave axe overlying a slab of tabular flint and four more palstaves (Barber 2001, 163; Roberts 2007, 146; Weller 2014, appendix 3). In the 1890s a skeleton was found between Hollicondane, then a separate hamlet, and Dumpton, accompanied by three bronze armlets (one now lost) and a bracelet (Payne 1897, li; Piggott 1949, 118–21). The two surviving armlets have incised decoration comparable with finds from northern Germany, while the ribbed bracelet also has parallels in that region. It is notable that furnished inhumation burials are very rare in the British Middle Bronze Age so the person (presumably a woman) interred at Ramsgate may have travelled from the Continent (Roberts 2007, 150). Nearby at St Lawrence College, building work in 1929 led to the discovery of a pit containing three decorated bronze pins of French ('Picardy') type as well as a complete Middle Bronze Age pottery urn (Hawkes 1942).

These items hint at developing Continental connections in the Middle Bronze Age, but it is towards the end of the Bronze Age that we find the most direct evidence of cross-Channel contact. Just as Chalk Hill provides the key site for the Early Neolithic, and Lord of the Manor for the Early Bronze Age, the focus in this period also appears to lie to the west of Ramsgate, at Cliffs End Farm (McKinley *et al* 2014; Fig 4). About 1km south-west of Lord of the Manor, this was already the site of a barrow cemetery, as mentioned above; there is little evidence of Middle Bronze Age activity but intense occupation took place in the Late Bronze Age, starting in the 11th century BC. This took the form of two or three sub-square enclosures; a midden, which accumulated between *c* 1100 and 700 BC; and, beginning slightly later, a large mortuary feature. While the enclosures could have been used for settlement or ceremonies, the quantities of material from the midden, especially pottery and animal bone, seem to support the latter interpretation, suggesting feasting was occurring on a regular basis. Structures of this shape are unusual in the Late Bronze Age so it is notable that a rectangular post-built structure was found at Manston Road (Hutcheson and Andrews 2009); although a few similar examples are known from southern and eastern England, its parallels to structures in the Low Countries are intriguing.

The mortuary feature at Cliffs End Farm shows this was a place for ritual: it began as a large pit containing the remains of five people, the first of whom to be interred was an elderly woman, probably shortly after 900 BC. Also deposited were the burnt remains of young lambs. There was then a gap before further burials took place some 300 years later in the Early Iron Age (5th century BC) and again at the start of the Middle Iron Age (4th century BC). In total the excavated burial group from these three phases of activity represents 25 people, at least seven of whom had suffered traumatic injuries, including the elderly female who was buried first – she had been killed by several blows to the head with a sharp weapon and may have been a sacrifice. *Post mortem*, many of the human remains had also been manipulated in some way, including the exposure of corpses to scavengers and the deposition of body parts (McKinley *et al* 2014).

Along with the evidence for violence, the other remarkable feature of this group of people is that many of them were foreign to the Thanet area, and indeed to the British Isles. Analysis of chemical isotopes in their bones provides evidence of the kind of environment in which they grew up. From this it was determined that 14 of the people interred at Cliffs End Farm were migrants – some probably from Scandinavia and others from a warm area south of Britain, perhaps Iberia (McKinley *et al* 2014, 143–4).

Figure 4 Digging in the suburbs: excavations in progress at Cliffs End Farm, Ramsgate (Photo by Wessex Archaeology/CC BY)

It is interesting that well before the discoveries at Cliffs End Farm, Dave Perkins (2000) had suggested Thanet could have been a 'gateway island' in prehistory, by which he meant a specialised trading and seafaring community. The remarkable discovery of a Middle Bronze Age boat at Dover (Clark 2004) provides an example of the sort of sewn-plank, paddle-driven craft that may have been used before the advent of clinker-built sailing vessels, perhaps in the later Iron Age.

The presence of the Scandinavians and Iberians at Cliffs End Farm, representing either end of the 'Atlantic Bronze Age', is an equally spectacular demonstration of the long-distance contacts embodied in the prehistoric communities here, while the continuity into the Middle Iron Age shows the longevity of these links. This does not necessarily mean that Perkins' model of a gateway community is entirely correct, but it does indicate that some people here were migrants, and that they were associated with unusual rituals and ceremonies, both convivial (the feasting) and violent (possible human sacrifice). Needham (in McKinley *et al* 2014, 219) notes that Thanet was 'a fulcrum within the maritime highways of north-western Europe', placed as it is between the North Sea and the Channel, adjacent to the Thames

estuary. As an island, perhaps retaining the significance acquired from the burial monuments of the Early Bronze Age, it could have been an appropriately liminal location for a mixed community of foreigners and locals. And by this time the southern mouth of the Wantsum was more than 2km wide, with the coast on the Thanet side more sheltered and welcoming than the exposed western shore.

Perkins (2000) suggested his proposed prehistoric seafaring community could have been a kind of 'craft guild', where the daily risks and frequent losses of boats and crews would make comradeship and community loyalty essential. He drew an analogy with Ramsgate's large 19th and early 20th century fishing community. Though their boats were far superior to those of the Bronze Age, they still found the waters extremely hazardous, with economic imperatives dictating that fishing went on through the winter, so that losses were inevitable even among skilful sailors. Perkins noted their deep religious conviction coupled with superstitions, taboos and a profound fatalism. Perhaps Bronze Age mariners had a similar outlook?

Whether or not we are dealing with a guild of sailors, or a place of interaction with travellers and seafarers, there is clear evidence of something special going on, shown also by a concentration of Late Bronze Age metalwork hoards from around Ebbsfleet Farm, south-west of the study area (Andrews *et al* 2015, 115–8). Unlike the Early Bronze Age, when metal was rare and used for prestige items found mainly in graves, by this time bronze was part of the everyday economy, largely replacing flint and stone as the principal material used for tools and weapons, but also frequently taken out of circulation in the form of hoards, which perhaps served as offerings to the gods or the land. Raw metal and finished metalwork were both key items of long-distance exchange in the later Bronze Age but the system was fundamentally disrupted with the appearance of iron in the 1st millennium BC. Was the 'sacrifice' of the elderly woman a reflection of local tensions between migrants and the indigenous community, or of much wider economic problems at the end of the Bronze Age?

There are other signs of later prehistoric ritual structures on the west side of Ramsgate. An unusual square building with a sunken floor was found at EKA Zone 13 inside a trapezoidal enclosure (and also within the large ring-ditch discussed above, though that is a much older feature). It contained Early Iron Age material, as well as a human skull with a weapon wound that was dated to the Early Bronze Age and had perhaps been dug up from a burial associated with the ring-ditch (Andrews *et al* 2015, 157–9). Was this an inadvertent disturbance or a deliberate referencing of an ancestral past? Unlike the regular Iron Age roundhouses, square buildings from this period are often considered to be shrines or temples. Another unusual feature that might support this interpretation is a nearby horse burial of Middle Iron Age date (Andrews *et al* 2015, 165).

Unlike the Early Bronze Age 'landscape of the dead', the ceremonial features of later prehistoric date were set within the more organised agricultural landscape described above. There was still some oak and hazel woodland in the vicinity but clearance continued during this period, as evidenced by another episode of soil erosion at Pegwell Bay around 1100 BC. Pollen recovered from the Wantsum channel has provided some insight into the changes in the landscape that took place during the

Bronze Age and Iron Age (Scaife in Hearne *et al* 1995, 303–13). In the lowest levels, which are Middle Bronze Age or earlier, there is evidence for oak and hazel woodland with no unequivocal sign of cereals; molluscan remains also suggest an open damp woodland with limited human activity (Allen in Hearne *et al* 1995, 318–20). This was followed by deforestation and increased agriculture, accompanied by secondary woodland with ash, oak and hornbeam.

The later prehistoric economy was based on mixed farming: the cultivation of cereals and herding of livestock, including cattle, as evidenced by the animal bone found at some sites and features like ponds or waterholes within the field systems. Later in the Iron Age new domestic species appeared, including horses and chickens. Whereas Early Bronze Age communities probably relied largely on herding, so there was no requirement for fields, the revival of cereal cultivation in later prehistory may have necessitated the construction of boundaries and droveways in order to control the movement of animals around arable fields. It is notable that, with a few exceptions, there is still little evidence for the exploitation of marine resources; the sea may have been well-used as a long-distance trade route that connected communities throughout Atlantic Europe, but in general it was not a source of food.

Sites like Cliffs End Farm remind us that however familiar the later prehistoric landscape of fields, settlements and trade routes appears, it was still founded on ideas and beliefs inherited from the earlier periods described above; these relate in particular to the deposition of material culture or human remains in particular places within the landscape. The mortuary feature at Cliffs End demonstrates that social relations were often managed very differently in prehistory.

3 FAIRHOLME'S SCRIPTURAL GEOLOGY

Our final story is somewhat different. It connects the 19th-century growth of Ramsgate as a resort with the beginning of the discovery and consideration of the town's deeper past. The context is the development of scientific thought about geology and archaeology. A generation before the publication of Charles Darwin's *Origin of Species* and the confirmation of the Pleistocene age of the earliest stone tools, the groundwork for both advances had been laid by Charles Lyell, who set out a uniformitarian approach in the first volume of his *Principles of Geology* (1830). Lyell argued that past geological change could be explained by reference to observable present-day processes and, by implication, that all geological processes were based on the steady accumulation of minute changes over enormously long spans of time.

Although Lyell was himself a Christian who later had difficulty with the idea of human evolution, some of his critics saw this advocacy of a long chronology and denial of catastrophic events like the Biblical Flood as a challenge to established Christian doctrine. His work 'destroyed definitively the whole system of assumptions' on which catastrophist Scriptural geology had relied but also forced its advocates to defend their position more intensely (Millhauser 1954) – a rearguard action that continues among certain religious groups even today. The first major

texts responding to Lyell were produced in the 1830s by one George Fairholme (1789–1846), whose life and work has been summarised by one of those present-day young-earth creationists (Mortenson 2004).

Fairholme was born in Scotland, the son of a wealthy banker and was himself involved in banking for a period when he lived in Brussels. He returned to England around 1831 as a man of independent means and lived in Ramsgate with his family for at least a decade. The census returns of 1841 record Fairholme as a resident of Wellington Crescent with his wife Caroline, daughter Elizabeth, son Charles and an elderly female servant, Mary Earle. Coincidentally this is no more than 1km from Paragon, where Charles Darwin briefly stayed a few years later, in 1850. Darwin's week in Ramsgate has been marked by a blue plaque from the Ramsgate Society while Fairholme's decade in the town is not publically acknowledged; such are the vagaries of intellectual advance.

A hint of Fairholme's involvement in Ramsgate's religious life comes from his inclusion on a list of subscribers to an 1836 volume of sermons by George William Lewis, curate of the Chapel of Ease which formerly lay at Chapel Place. Far more significantly, Fairholme published two books himself while he lived in Ramsgate: his initial response to Lyell, the *General View of the Geology of Scripture* (1833), and the less snappily titled *New and Conclusive Physical Demonstrations, both of the fact and period of the Mosaic deluge, and of its having been the only event of the kind that has ever occurred upon the earth* (1837). In the latter book he developed his argument partly on the basis of six years' worth of observation of erosion of the cliffs in Thanet. While Fairholme accepted the general uniformity of natural processes of this kind he argued that present-day activity failed to explain major events such as the formation of continents and creation of valley systems. He believed that these were the result of the Biblical flood, which had laid down all sedimentary rocks, and not the operation of modern processes over millions of years. Fairholme's observations of rates of sea-cliff erosion at Ramsgate and elsewhere, and a comparison with the topography, convinced him that the starting point of this erosion (and therefore the date of the flood) lay around 5000 years ago.

It is ironic that Fairholme's careful observations led him to a date that, while still somewhat too young, was at least of the right order of magnitude for the onset of processes of erosion that can be observed today. What he got entirely wrong was the nature of the starting point, which was not Noah's flood but the onset of post-glacial conditions that involved both terrestrial erosion and sea-level rise, the latter causing the inundation of former dry-land areas in the Channel and North Sea, and eventually the separation of Britain from the Continent. Fairholme's flood was real, in a way; it was just not Biblical.

Here, however, we are interested not in a detailed critique of Fairholme's ideas but in his connections to Ramsgate and observations of the local landscape. He certainly seems to have regarded it favourably:

The well-known watering place and port of Ramsgate, (or Roman's Gate, as it probably was anciently called)[1]*, has evidently owed its origin, as a fishing village, to the sloping and sheltered* embouchure *of a combination of deep and well defined valleys, which meet there from various quarters, and which beautifully proclaim their aqueous origin. To any one who casts a glance from a little distance, at the inclined slopes between East Cliff House and the harbour, it must be very evident, that here, also, as on the west of the town… the slopes, in their yet unbroken state, must have reached the surface of the sea, at but a few hundred yards from the present cliffs… At Broadstairs is also seen a beautiful example of the manner in which a bay gradually becomes more deeply indented into the land, while the projecting promontories remain extended on either hand.*

The following details of one of his observations gives an impression of both his meticulous style and the length of his paragraphs. They also hint at an anxiety about coastal erosion not unlike that of today:

The place …is immediately to the westward of the Royal Crescent at Ramsgate, and extends towards Pegwell and Cliffs End, where the same slopes terminate unbroken in the marshes. [The upper figure] shows the actual inclination of the ground, for a distance of twelve hundred feet, measured from the cliff, nearly up to Ramsgate windmills, the elevation of the base of which, is within twenty-one feet of the summit levels of the island. In the whole of this distance, the surface of the slope is as straight, as if drawn with a ruler. There is a rise of fifty-seven *feet in these four hundred yards; and the cliff, at the lower extremity of the inclined plane, is suffering visibly, year by year, from decay. The lower figure … is a continuation of the same line of slope, until it touches the level of the sea, which it does in the course of one thousand, one hundred and thirty feet, the cliff being seventy feet in height. Now, although … we do not know with that certainty, which we should have done, had fixed marks been established fifty or a hundred years ago, that the exact rate can be depended upon, at which the cliff is now retrograding; yet we do see, on all hands, that the progress of decay is visible, even in the course of five or six years; and all old persons attest, that, within their memory, the loss of land has been very remarkable…*

Fairholme concludes his discussion of Thanet by suggesting that it forms the basis for a global argument:

Here, then, we have, in the Isle of Thanet, a perfect model of a larger island, or continent, and on a scale well suited for easy comprehension and examination. We find it composed of a rock which is admitted to be marine *and* sedimentary. *It was, therefore, at some former period,* under the waters of the ocean. *It is now, however, a dry land, raised one hundred and fifty feet above the level of its native deep; there was, therefore,* a certain day *when it first became dry land. In our endeavours to ascertain that day, we discover that the surface of the whole island bears conclusive marks of having been*

[1] This is incorrect: the name probably means 'Hraefn's [Raven's] gate, or cliff-gap' (Glover 1976).

moulded into its present regular forms, by a power of waters*, draining off the surface of this sedimentary formation, like the tide ebbing from some rounded mud bank; leaving channels in the form of valleys, all ending precisely at the level of the sea…*

As well as observing cliff erosion, Fairholme was also interested in finds of fossilised animal bones:

This aqueous agency, when it ceased to be in force, left this new dry land in a perfectly smooth and rounded form, with its surface every where more or less covered with beds of sand and gravel, which may be seen in all the sections of the cliffs, (especially at Dumpton stairs and Pegwell,) slightly intermingling with the surface of the chalk, in waving forms, like marbled paper. In these superficial beds of sand, &c. termed diluvium*, fossil bones of elephants and of other animals are sometimes found.*

Indeed he collected some of these bones himself:

I have in my possession, a grinder and other bones of an Asiatic elephant, or mammoth*, which were found in this diluvium, in digging the cellar of a house in King-street, Ramsgate… We thus connect these fossils, in the most consistent manner, with the period* immediately subsequent to the excavation of the valleys, and with that of the deposition of the gravel beds. *This, we have just seen, cannot be more remote than* four or five thousand years ago.

Here Fairholme's inferences have gone further awry. The remnant valleys filled with what we now term head deposits are Pleistocene (Ice Age) in date and his mammoth bones must be at least 12,000 years old, probably considerably more. Nonetheless he was looking in the right place: geological mapping shows King Street precisely following the route of a dry valley filled with glacial head deposits (Fig 5). Here is deep time captured in the modern street plan of Ramsgate. (In this context it is somewhat ironic that later in the 19th century, Ramsgate's local authority sought to attract visitors by creating an entirely artificial geological feature in the form of the Pulhamite rockworks of Madeira Walk.)

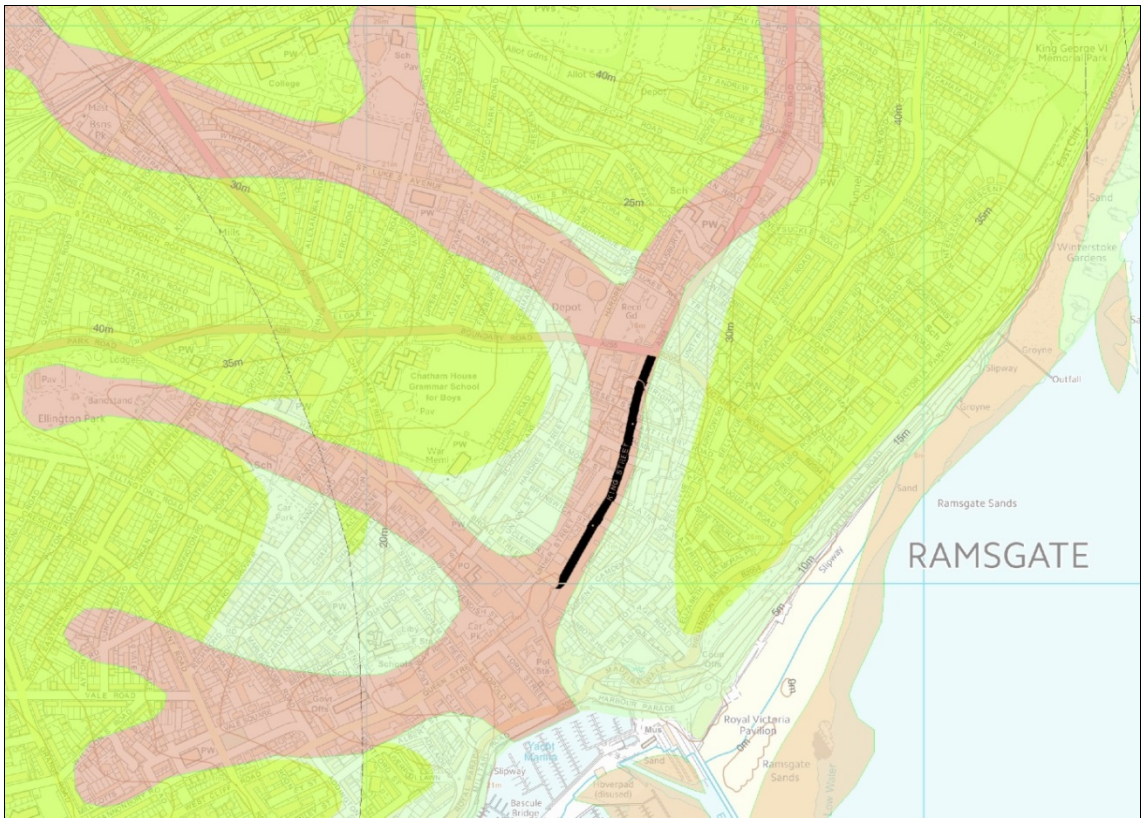

Figure 5 The line of King Street, following a head-filled Pleistocene valley (© Historic England; geological data © British Geological Survey. Base map Crown Copyright and database right 2018. All rights reserved. Ordnance Survey Licence number 100019088.)

Fairholme clearly also paid attention to archaeological discoveries of slightly more recent age. Although his work predates systematic antiquarian interest in Thanet's early history, which really developed in the later 19th century (Moody 2008), he was nevertheless interested in the emerging Roman remains from Ramsgate, which offered a key point of calibration for his theories:

> *we feel convinced … that there has been no change in the relative levels of sea and land; and that we may now walk upon the very same rocks on which the Roman soldiers may have gathered shell fish, fifteen hundred years ago, when stationed on the hill above, where the remains of their entrenchments have been lately found.*

George Fairholme perhaps merits more attention than he has so far received. Though he ended up on the wrong side of the 19th century scientific debate, his detailed observations and arguments from the data are comparable to those of his more secular contemporaries and certainly more convincing than the work of many other 'scriptural geologists' (O'Connor 2007). His presence in Ramsgate shows that the Georgian and Victorian resorts were not just the product of new forms of leisure, as represented in Frith's well-known painting *Ramsgate Sands* (1854), but were also attractive to intellectuals. The poet Samuel Taylor Coleridge had stayed periodically in Wellington Crescent earlier in the 1830s, while not only Darwin but

also Karl Marx were to visit later in the century. Unlike any of these, however, Fairholme was a Ramsgate resident whose ideas were formed by detailed observation of both the local landscape and, in the case of the cellar on King Street, the development of the town itself.

4 CONCLUSIONS

George Fairholme represents a point of contact between the historic settlement of Ramsgate, which is the main focus of the HAZ, and the much earlier archaeological stories. This is not the only way in which Ramsgate's remote past and its more recent history are connected, however. Indeed it is through the development of the town and its infrastructure that most of its prehistory has been revealed. The discoveries of modern commercial archaeology, from which the prehistoric narrative emerges, are entirely the product of the pattern of development work, triggering archaeological investigations through the planning process. The hidden landscapes of prehistory are therefore revealed through the processes of contemporary land-use change.

It is notable that while earlier discoveries nearer the town's historic core may well have gone unrecognised, given the more limited knowledge of such features at the time most of this work was carried out, the development of planning-related archaeology means most of the recent discoveries, which have been recorded, come from the suburban edges of the town, associated with the construction of new housing, retail or business parks, roads and schools. As part of the modern landscape these 'edgelands' are rarely considered historic places, and have instead been the subject of interest from psychogeographers and cultural critics who often use such in-between places to critique contemporary 'hegemonic landscapes'. Historic characterisation exercises have helpfully extended the idea of historic places to the typical and everyday as much as to the special and distinctive, but their focus is explicitly intended to be the present landscape. If we can also bring archaeological stories and deep time into the narratives of place-making, there is the potential to make connections between modern and ancient places and foreground the heritage of the kinds of places that are often considered to lack a significant history.

In conclusion, it appears that the very different prehistoric landscapes which underlie the fabric of modern Ramsgate resonate with aspects of the place-making agenda: the Early Neolithic marking of place through digging and depositing material in pits and ditch segments; the Early Bronze Age barrow cemeteries in which genealogical or community relationships are inscribed in the landscape through burial of the dead; and the Late Bronze Age/Early Iron Age ritual spaces, created within the quotidian agricultural landscape, in which trading relationships between travellers and local communities were mediated and worked out, with no clear distinction between the economic and the social. Intellectually these are engaging stories for archaeologists, but the academic narratives can be dry and lacking in the sensory dimensions that all modern places have. In order to make these past worlds more real and relatable, we also need to convey the experiential dimensions of prehistoric lives. If we can do this, there is much to be gained. At a time of anxiety about contemporary identities, our place in the world and our

relationship with the natural environment, the value of understanding that very different perspectives on these matters once held sway in the same landscapes now occupied by our towns and cities should be evident. If our forebears and predecessors could think differently, then so can we.

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