



LYMINGE HISTORICAL SOCIETY – ARCHAEOLOGY – DIG 2012 THE DISCOVERY OF AN ANGLO-SAXON HALL



THE 2012 DIG – TAYNE FIELD

Dr Gabor Thomas and his team returned to Lyminge to carry out a new dig on Tayne Field. This was to be the first of four digs on this site. The major discovery of this dig was the Anglo-Saxon Great Hall. Also found was evidence of Mesolithic knapping.

Summary of what was found

Evidence of three timber halls was excavated. Two shared a south end wall and cut through a sunken feature building (SFB 6). The Anglo-Saxon Hall Building that measured approximately 20 metres by 8.5 metres was the largest hall found, almost by accident as Geophysics had not identified the structure due to the construction having been made of organic materials. Massive doorway post pits were excavated and at bottom of one of the post pits, two large pieces of quern stone were discovered, possibly placed to add support to the structure, or perhaps they were added as carefully placed foundation stones.

According to Dr Alexandra Knox, writing in *Current Archaeology* in November 2013,

“The discovery of the hall at Lyminge ... surpassed anything the team had hoped for during their first open-area foray in Tayne Field. This ‘Great Hall’ serves as a powerful symbol of Anglo-Saxon Kentish royalty, and is a fitting reminder of the role the kingdom of Kent played in forging England. It is often, however, less immediately eye-catching elements that make for a successful excavation. Archaeological impact is not limited to expanding our historical knowledge; it can also help cement communities by bringing them together for a common cause.”





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A major find was a horse harness mount that came from the wall trench of the hall building which helped to date the structure. Part of the harness is gilded and it has a central decoration of an abstract animal, typical of Style 1 animal art. It dates to around 525-575AD. A high status artefact that supports the view of pre-Christian culture in this period based on a warrior society, with horses at forefront of this ideal.

Further Information and Reading:

'*Discovering an Anglo-Saxon royal hall*', Article published in *Current Archaeology* by Dr Alexandra Knox, November 2013