

## **Kent Underground Research Group**

### **AGM 2022 Annual Reports**

#### **Secretary's Report**

##### **Investigations since the 2021 AGM**

London Road, Sittingbourne: Private individual request

A small team of Field Officers responded to visit a void in a back garden close to the house. A combination of desk research and the visit plus evidence of cast iron pipes with a makers' name resulted in a decision that it was a well with a cistern added, with a pump on top. A full report was sent to the home-owner, who was happy that there was nothing to worry about.

Lion Road, Bexleyheath: Private individual request

A Field Officer visit investigated a small hole, leading to a domed chamber in the middle of a back garden. There was no evidence of it being a denehole or well, and was most likely to be a now-disused cesspit. A detailed report and advice was given regarding safety measures, given there were young children in the family.

Swanley: Private individual request

A small group of Field Officers visited to inspect a possible air raid shelter. The shelter stairway had been collapsed into itself to create a pond. No access was gained, and no further action was required.

Canterbury: Private individual request during building works

A Field Officer visited a hole in the ground in Canterbury and determined that it is a small brick built cistern. The owner has decided not to fill it, but after finishing building works may pump it out and remove the debris. There is now a secure manhole cover over it for safety reasons as it was discovered open underneath rotting timber decking.

Godmersham: Farming group request

A couple of Field Officers visited a WWII tunnel. A return visit with different equipment is required in due course.

Boughton Aluph: Individual farmer request

A farmer requested help when his tractor struck a brick capping over a deep hole while ploughing. A small group of Field Officers attended and ascertained that it was a well. After discussion, the farmer is now planning to preserve the well and cap it to facilitate human and bat access.

Walderslade: Private individual request

A home-owner asked for information regarding a well near his property. Extensive desk research was done, and a brief visit undertaken. A report was given to the home-owner, and no further action required.

Challock: Private individual request

A hole suddenly appeared in a home-owners driveway, causing her great concern that it might be a deep dene hole. A small group of Field Officers attended quickly, but discovered that it was shallow, small, and most likely to be a cistern for rainwater. No further action was required from KURG.

Maidstone: Commercial contractor request

An urgent request came in to investigate a hole which has been exposed by groundworks excavations by a building contractor. Field Officers attended that same day to survey, measure and assess the hole. It was deemed to be a small, domestic-scale sand mine and a report was prepared and sent to the contractors.

### Upcoming projects

Lewisham: We have in the past been invited to look at a well in the crypt of St Mary's church in Ladywell (Lewisham), with a view to seeing whether we could dig it out. This would be a very interesting winter dig (it is undercover with electricity and water readily available). However, issues have arisen surrounding the need to obtain a "faculty" under church law for the process. In September we were contacted again about the possibility of such a project - the local historians involved have produced a nice video of the church and the well down to its presently accessible depth. Contact is continuing.

Dover Area: KURG has had a small project with the National Trust at the White Cliffs of Dover to try to track drainage systems and cable ducts at the D2 heavy anti-aircraft battery and the "Jane" 15" gun emplacement at Wanstone. This has been well-received and we are invited to do more work at D2, "Jane" and "Clem". There are also more conventional digging projects at Fan Bay and Wanstone being discussed to enable access to a Fan Bay magazine and also to work out how the drainage systems at Wanstone operated.

Quex Water Tanks: The Quex Head Gardener would like help identifying and assessing water tanks that she has reason to believe are under some of the buildings in the Walled Garden. Also we are requested to look at some other manholes and the pump house for the pond. The pump house might be the remains of the early ice house that was referenced in 1880s journals.

### Digs this year

Boxley Abbey . Again this was very well attended, with around 10 KURG members making appearances at various times over the week; whether attending some of the presentations, digging for archaeology or making further investigations of drainage channels and the reredorter. Work done by KURG at Boxley Abbey over recent years has been summarised in the KAS Newsletter and more recently in the British Archaeological Journal for Sept/Oct 2022. It is likely that KURG will be invited back in 2023.

### South East Cave Rescue Organisation (SECRO)

SECRO is manned by volunteers and these include some members of KURG. It covers all of the south east of England, London and parts of Essex although SECRO members are ready to attend other areas if called upon. We are pleased to report that there have not been any incidents or call-outs this year in the SECRO area.

Training events and practices have taken place near Reading at the Emmer Green Chalk Mine, near Godstone in the series of stone mines, and in the Forest of Dean for a multi-agency training day both below and above ground. These were all well attended.

### Bat Inspections for Kent Bat Group

KURG members again helped the Kent Bat Group gain access and investigate dene holes and other structures mainly on the North Downs to count bats and check on their health.

### Subscriptions and insurance for 2022

- These are due before the end of the year. The membership subscription will be unchanged for 2022. We have not yet heard from BCA regarding their membership/insurance fees.
- Emails with full details will be sent to you in good time before the end of the year.
- Please note that BCA insurance has no 'grace period' and expires on 31<sup>st</sup> December, so unless you renew promptly, you will not be covered from 1<sup>st</sup> January 2023.
- We currently have 59 members of KURG. 55 have Active Caver insurance and 4 have Non-caver insurance.

### Web Report

A massive thanks is due to Stuart Fraser who stepped forward as our webmaster at last year's AGM after we had been searching for one for many years.

Since that time he has migrated the entire site to a new, off-the-shelf platform and this gives us the benefit of it being easy to amend or add things, plus, importantly, a very good system that enables visitors to the site to contact us. We have been receiving a steady flow of requests for investigations and queries.

Additionally, the new platform makes creating reports easier, should we need any.

### Newsletter Editor's Report

Thanks once again for the great variety of articles submitted over the last 12 months to the KURG newsletter. It's great now that we are able to include so many pictures in the digital format as it really helps to bring the reports to life. Plenty of time to submit something for the December edition - in whatever format is easiest. Also happy to receive any critique or suggestions to freshen up the format.

### Equipment officer report

All equipment is serviceable, but does not get much use!

Both gas meters have been calibrated, serviced and repaired as necessary (sensors replaced as necessary at end of life).

New calibration gas cylinder purchased which I use to recalibrate the Honeywell meter myself.

<b>KURG Accounts ending</b>		<b>31/12/21</b>	
<b>INCOME</b>		<b>EXPENDITURE</b>	
Cash in Bank	8,972.00	Newsletter	64.24
Subscriptions	1,339.00	Equipment	0.00
Donations	148.25	Secretary	48.72
Interest	0.76	Materials	84.00
		Web hosting	78.03
		AGM costs	50.00
		BCA Insurance	678.00
		KAS sub	25.00
		NAMHO sub	20.00
		CIO costs	51.00
		Bank Charges	88.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,488.01</b>		<b>1186.99</b>
<b>Cash in Bank</b>	<b>9273.02</b>		
<b>Surplus</b>	<b>301.02</b>		
Prepayments of 2022 subs received by 31/12/2021 £1,027.00 So total cash in bank £10,300.02			

## Kent Underground Research Group - Year ending

31/12/21

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