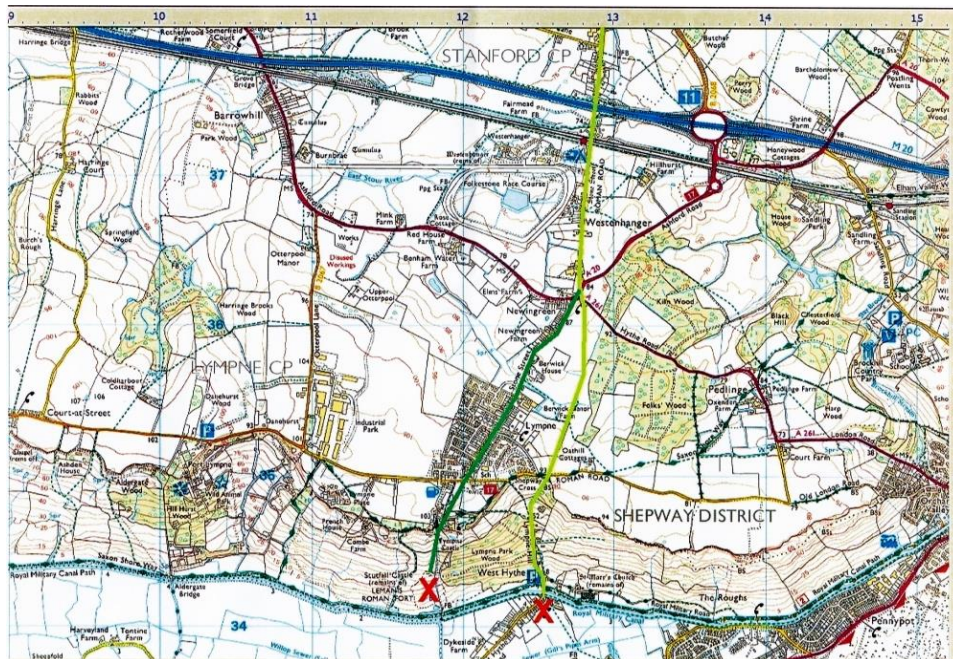


## A Walking Tour of Stutfall Roman Fort



On 11th August 2018, I, along with fellow HLHG member David Paton and around 20 members of the public, went on a guided walk around the remains of the Roman (Saxon shore) fort, known as Stutfall Castle (sometimes named Studfall). The guided walk was organised by SHAL (Studying History & Archaeology in Lympne) and was conducted by the well known Archaeologist, Keith Parfitt, from the Canterbury Archaeological Trust.



Map showing a possible alternative course of Stone Street, in light green.

With his very easy style, Keith showed and explained to us, all the main details of the remains and the previous excavations, including one carried out earlier in the year by SHAL. He spent some time at the beginning of the tour, explaining that it was becoming more likely that a previous fort, which was known to have been built, may not have been in the same location as the now visible ruins but about half a mile further east at the foot of Lympne Hill. He also thought that the last section of Stone Street, the Roman road from Canterbury to the harbour known as Portus Lemanis,

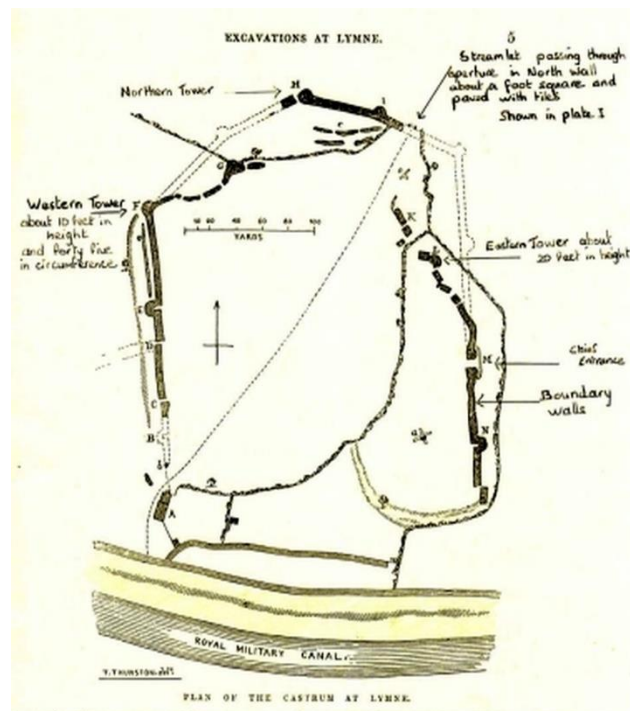
originally went to this earlier fort, via Shepway Cross and it was only after the ‘new’ fort was built that the course changed at Newingreen to go through what is now Lympe.



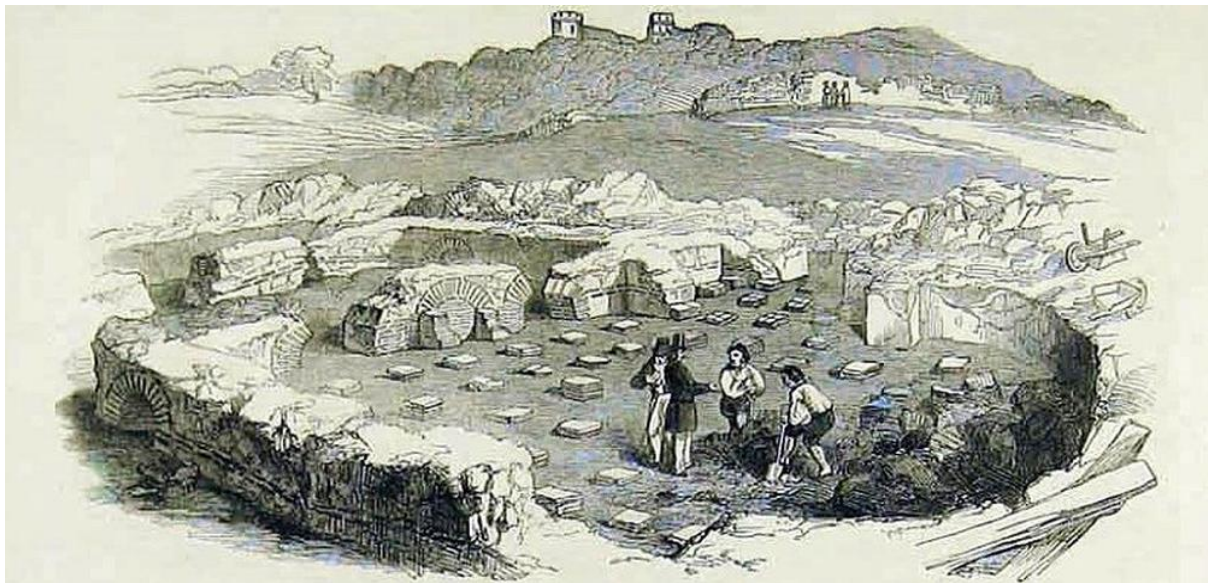
The east gate from the 1978 excavation, looking south and as it is today 2018 looking west



Roman Altar to Neptune, found at Studfall by Mr. Roach Smith.  
(Now in the British Museum.)



We examined the east gate entrance to the fort and were told about an altar stone inscribed NEPTVNO ARAM LAVFIDIVS PANTERA PRAEFECT CLAS BRIT-"For Neptune, an altar [dedicated by] Lucius Aufidius Pantera, prefect of the British Fleet." (dated:c.AD115-135). This was found in one of the gate towers, where it had been used as infill during the construction of the second fort. This stone, which had for some time been in the sea, due to it's being discovered encrusted with salt water barnacles, would indicate that it was from a previous building, probably the first fort or maybe Portus Lemanis? Slightly to the south west of this gate the remains of a bath house (*balneum*), were pointed out, although there is nothing visible.



The bath house excavation 1850



Moving on up the slope, we reached the highest point of the remaining walls. Slightly to the south of the walls, facing across Romney Marsh, is where in 1850, remains of a building were discovered by Charles Roach Smith. This may be the remains of the Main headquarters building (*principia*)





Going to the west side of the fort walls, we saw the impressive and best preserved part of the remaining walls and a well preserved, semi-circular Bastion, showing some of the original surface features, that were not robbed out and re-used in local churches, castles etc.

This concluded the tour but many questions and photo opportunities were had on the return to the car park.





Tiles were used to strengthen the walls as well as adding some decorative features. There are a number of them that bear the stamp of the British Fleet *Classis Britannica*. The stamp fell out of use by the time this fort was built so these must have been re-used, like the altar, probably from the previous building.



I am planning a more detailed study of the excavations and some thoughts of my own, in the near future.

Ron Greenwood