

RICHBOROUGH EXCAVATION 2008

Update 1: progress for 1-14 September 2008

Work on the site began on 1st August. All of the excavation to date has been carried out by hand, so progress has been relatively slow. Already we can see that the archaeology is going to be deep, and the site has produced some surprises. So far we have opened up Trenches 2, 3, and 4.

Trench 2 was planned to examine an apparent piece of Roman standing wall between two blocks of the collapsed east wall of the fort. We thought that the collapsed east wall of the fort had come down on it and broken it. Instead this wall has proved to be medieval and survives to a height of at least 2m. It seems to be built to utilise the fallen wall as a riverside frontage. A complete, long, clay pipe found pushed under the fallen wall at a much later date seems to be contemporary with the building of the adjacent railway, probably deposited by a navy taking shelter by the wall!



Trench 3 was excavated around an apparent Roman wall running east-west and terraced into the slope towards the town above. However, this wall was also medieval, probably 13th century, and utilises the fallen fort wall as a foundation. Together with the wall in Trench 2, this gives us a wholly new and unsuspected medieval phase at Richborough. It has been assumed previously that Richborough ceased in the 5th century to be succeeded as the main port of the area by Sandwich.



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Trench 4 has so far revealed a post-medieval pathway. This sits on a thick layer of hill-wash.



Cleaning of the collapsed wall of the Saxon Shore fort has revealed several important details of its construction and facing. There is certainly an element of in-situ Roman building upon which the wall has collapsed. This remains to be examined.

