

Queen Victoria. Even at the coronation of Edward VII they were again given places and carried the National standards.

The main meeting place was at their own Court of Shepway, with two smaller courts of Brodhull and Guestling. The Court of Shepway was presided over by the Lord Warden of the Cinque Ports. The other two courts are now merged into 'The Court of Brotherhood and Guestling' which controls the internal workings of the federation.

Our speaker spoke of various Lord

Wardens, mentioning, in particular, the Duke of Wellington, Winston Churchill and the last Warden, Her Majesty, Queen Elizabeth, the Queen Mother.

He ended by describing various coats of arms and emblems of the Cinque Ports. He mentioned the mace and the pendant still used by the Mayor of Dover, both of which depict St. Martin, the three demi-lions and demi-ships on the shield of Sandwich, the windows in Dover Town Hall and the Queen Mother's banner at Walmer Castle.

## *The January 2004 Meeting*

### **THE RINGLEMERE FINDS ..... *Reported by Derek Leach***



The Ringlemere Cup

*Photo: Dover Express*

Advertised as a talk by Keith Parfitt (Canterbury Archaeological Trust) about the Woodnesborough Gold Cup, it was soon evident that, whilst it was the most important find on the Ringlemere Farm site near Woodnesborough, it was only part of a much bigger story that the site could tell.

On Bodmin Moor in 1837 a prominent mound was spotted by labourers. Inside was a stone lined burial chamber containing a skeleton and a gold cup, now known as the Rillerton Gold Cup, about the size of a half pint mug. This Bronze Age find was unique in Britain until November 2001 when a metal detector enthusiast found something very similar at Ringlemere, albeit damaged by ploughing machinery. It was

classified as treasure and the finder and the farmer each received £135,000. This find was exciting as little had been found in East Kent from the Bronze Age at that time with the outstanding exception of the Dover Bronze Age Boat dating from 1550BC found in 1992.

The next step was to establish whether the cup had come from a burial mound. Such mounds were built by digging a ditch round the site and throwing the spoil into the middle, burying the important personage. A geophysical survey of a low swelling in the field indicated evidence, but a hand dug trial trench revealed nothing in the topsoil except for a few flint tools and pieces of pottery. The best find apart from the gold cup was the handle top of a Bronze Age dagger. A machine dug trench revealed prehistoric rubbish pits with evidence of Stone Age occupation - a village - predating any burial mound. Four thousand fragments of grooved pottery ware

were found, including the largest piece to be found in Kent dating from 2400 to 2800BC. Five hundred flint scrapers for cleaning animal skins were also found.

It would appear that this Stone Age village site had been used again about 1000 years later for a Bronze Age burial mound, but then came evidence of a later Anglo-Saxon village from about 600AD. A large rectangular pit had been cut through the burial mound with post holes round its edge, suggesting a sunken Anglo-Saxon hut. Aerial photographs suggest several more similar circles. Digging continues on this very interesting site.

Keith Parfitt's fascinating talk demonstrated the painstaking work of the archaeologist on such sites when a slight colour change in the soil can be an important clue to its ancient history. The Ringlemere Gold Cup is currently on display at the British Museum and will then go on a national tour including Dover in 2006.



Digging at Ringlemere Farm, Woodnesborough

*Photo: Dover Express*