

FRANK JENKINS MA, PhD, FSA,

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Born in Canterbury in 1915, Frank left school at 14 and entered the Post Office as an engineer, retiring in 1977 after 41 years service. His last job was forecasting the demand for telephones in East Kent so he called his house 'Janus' the two-headed Roman god. When I visited him in the evening he would be working in a corner of his through living room with his four daughters doing their homework and his wife Winnie ironing or sewing. His interest in archaeology developed early and blossomed when the Canterbury Excavations Committee was founded to work on bombed sites after 1942; among his fellow-workers was John Boyle, then Town Clerk of the City.

Frank soon became interested in Romano-Gaulish figurines, small votive plaster statuettes; he found his one in 1947 on a dig on the site of the United Reformed Church. A Leverhulme scholarship of £500 in 1954 enabled him to pursue his researches in France and Germany and eventually led to his award of a PhD by the University of Kent at Canterbury who had already honoured him with their first Honorary M.A. for his work on the archaeology of Canterbury.

In 1957 he had been elected a Fellow of the Society of Antiquaries.

No full-time professional unit existed in those days so Frank's week-end digs were invaluable supplements to Mr (later Professor) Sheppard Frere's school holiday digs. Among the sites on which I was one of his team were St Pancras Church on the St Augustine's site, a bastion on the City Wall, Bekesbourne Jutish cemetery and the Roman villa at Wingham. Reports on these digs would appear in *Archaeologia Cantiana* and form the basis of pamphlets on pre-historic, Roman and Saxon Canterbury. Frank was a tireless lecturer; for many years he ran courses for the Oxford Delegacy for Extra-Mural Studies as well as contributing to summer schools.

In the early 1970's Frank was the leader of the Stour Valley Excavation Group whose digs included one on Barham Downs when the dual-carriageway was built. One of my most vivid memories is driving Frank out to the site of the Graveney boat, a 10th century clinker-built vessel found in the marshes. Experts supervised its careful lifting and it is now in the National Maritime Museum. Frank wrote the first chapter of the book about this important find.

As a committee member of the Canterbury Archaeological Society (the predecessor of CHAS) he lectured regularly about his work. He was among those who saw the need for a full-time unit in the City as development was planned and other historic cities founded professional units. His local knowledge was invaluable in setting up the Canterbury Archaeological Trust in 1976; he became one of its Directors. When Frank died in 1991, Dr Paul Bennett, Director of the CAT wrote:-

'Frank's contribution to the study of Canterbury's Archaeology cannot be over-estimated. His numerous excavations and publications, the many lectures, the study tours to places near and far and foreign – particularly the Roman frontier of the Rhine, a place he thoroughly enjoyed – have entertained, delighted and enlightened generations of Canterbury citizens.'



Left to right: Tim Tatton-Brown, Prof. John Wachter, Dr Paul Bennett, Prof. Sheppard Frere, and Frank Jenkins

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