

# **Community Archaeologist Job Application**

## **Background document**

**June 2025**

This document is designed to provide background information to help inform applicants for the Community Archaeology post.

### **1 Job role**

The 'Whose Hoo' project (22.2 hours per week, 36 months, fixed-term) is a wide-ranging National Lottery Heritage Fund supported community project on the Hoo Peninsula in Medway. The role involves planning, arranging and carrying out community archaeology activities related to the project.

The successful applicant will be part of, and supported by, the Heritage Conservation team at Kent County Council but they must be able to take the lead on planning, arranging, conducting and reporting all the activities without hands-on support from other team members.

The work will involve a significant amount of evening and weekend work as core work.

### **2 The 'Whose Hoo' project**

The 'Whose Hoo' project is a wide-ranging community project focused on the Hoo Peninsula in Medway. A range of partners, led by Medway Council and the RSPB, will carry out projects aimed at raising awareness of the Hoo Peninsula, supporting community development and conserving the Peninsula's remarkable environment. The project is supported by the National Lottery Heritage Fund and will operate from 2025 to 2028 (although a delayed start may allow the project to continue to 2029).

The heritage strand of the project involves four community archaeology projects.

### ***The Stop Line on the Hoo Peninsula***

This sub-project will focus on the Second World War Stop Line that ran across the Peninsula. It was constructed during the Second World War as a defence line against invasion. Originally a highly visible complex of pillboxes, bunkers, trenches and redoubts, today its remains lie only partly visible, being buried in the fields and woods of the Peninsula. Volunteers will research the original line of the Stop Line using archive materials, new LiDAR data and walkover survey. We will record surviving elements, clearing some to make them more visible and incorporate them in trails to be produced by the Medway Swale Estuary Partnership and in wider project interpretation. We will also provide detailed maps to landowners so that they can care for the remains more effectively. Areas of particular focus will be Lodge Hill Camp (owned by Homes England) and the site of major First and Second World War complexes, and Shorne Marshes (owned by RSPB), where the Stop Line reached the west coast of the Peninsula.

### ***The Defences of the Hoo Peninsula***

This is a related but separate element in which the crucial wider military role of the Peninsula will be studied by the volunteers. Working in partnership with the RSPB we will research the 19<sup>th</sup> century Shornemead Fort. The fort is in poor repair at present, and we will accompany the RSPB's Whose Hoo project with recording, photography and limited clearance. We will also study a remarkable collection of graffiti that has been photographed at the site and which reveals the history of military units and personnel who have used the site over the last 150 years. We will also seek to study Grain Air Station, the scene of early British experiments with airships and credited with the invention of the aircraft carrier. Activities we will carry out will include archive research, photographic and ground survey. At Cooling we will also survey the remains of Cooling Radio Station, a crucial means of communication between the UK and US during the Second World War. From that war we will also carry out excavation work to clear, record and safeguard a gun pit at Lodge Hill Anti-Aircraft Battery, believed to be the world's first fixed anti-aircraft gun emplacement and at Cobham Anti-Aircraft Battery which defended the south-west of the Peninsula and the approaches to London.

## ***Industries of the Hoo Peninsula***

This element reflects that the Peninsula has been a place in which people have lived their working lives, leaving traces of their professions behind them since earliest times. To explore the Peninsula's ancient past, we will study the Roman salt mounds that are dotted around the marshland, focusing on the RSPB reserve at Northward Hill. These can be seen from aerial photography but have never been surveyed in detail. If time and resources permit, we will also carry out limited excavation to understand the history of these remarkable survivals. In recent centuries the Peninsula has been the scene of much extraction and, particularly around the coastline, the remains of these industries survive in the form of bases of kilns, quarry pits and former gunpowder and cement works. The volunteers will research and survey a sample of these remains to better understand what they can still tell us and how they illustrate the industrial history of the Peninsula. Similarly, the coastline of the Peninsula has also been the location of much employment and economic activity in the past. To better understand this the volunteers will walk, photograph and record the entire coastline of the Peninsula, ensuring that the hulks of the barges and other watercraft that lie abandoned around the coast are recorded together with key land sites such as the coastguard stations and wharves and jetties.

## ***Archaeology of the Hoo Peninsula***

This project will address four archaeological questions that have always intrigued researchers into the history of the Peninsula. 'Barrow Hill' is a possible Bronze Age barrow on Shorne Marshes. It was excavated in the 19<sup>th</sup> century and a crouched burial discovered. It has never been clear, however, whether it really is a barrow and whether it is really Bronze Age. If so, it would be an important site and the only true barrow in the area. The volunteers will survey the site and then re-excavate the (clearly visible) 19<sup>th</sup> century archaeological trench to reassess the date and nature of the site. The second focus of activity is also at Shorne. At Higham there was once a Tudor blockhouse built to defend London again river attack. The blockhouse is now believed to be beneath the river but a causeway across the marshes that linked the site to inland parts may still survive. Using earthwork survey techniques, the volunteers will try to track its route inland in order to understand how it fits into the wider context of the Peninsula and, perhaps, shed more light on where exactly the original blockhouse was located. Thirdly, in the north-west of the Peninsula, the village of Cliffe is a place to which many stories have attached themselves. It was said to be the site of two major Saxon synods and to have been largely destroyed by a fire in AD 1520. It is certainly medieval in date. To investigate its history, we will carry out a Big Dig test-pitting project. Villagers will be invited to participate by

excavating a 1m x 1m test-pit in their gardens and the community archaeologist we will recruit, together with specialist support, will help them record any discoveries and artefacts. In particular, we wish to see if there is any evidence of burning in the test-pits or any Anglo-Saxon pottery. If either are found these would be very exciting discoveries. The fourth and final component we will study is the history of the marshes of the Peninsula. The marshes are criss-crossed by drainage ditches, sea walls and creeks, all of which are evidence of the long-term processes of inundation and reclamation of the landscape. The volunteers will use old maps and aerial photographs, as well as specialist records from drainage boards and landowners to reconstruct the history of the marsh. They will also record those historic features of sluices, culverts, flood gates etc that still survive.

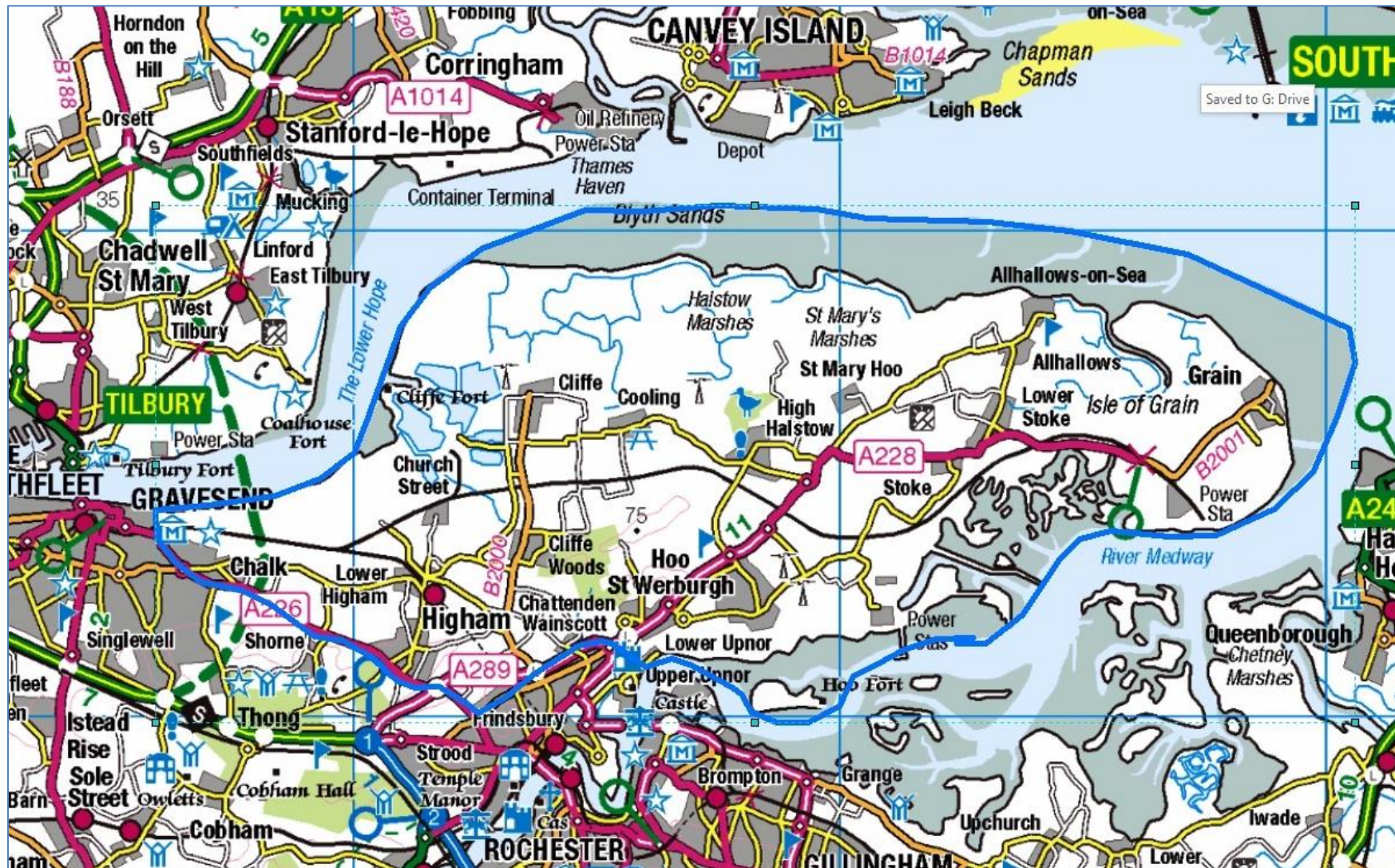


Fig. 1 The Whose Hoo' Project Area'