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## Kent historian's collection now accessible to all



Anne Roper in WW2 in the uniform of the Mechanised Transport Corps  
(Kent Archaeological Society ref AR1-003)



Anne at home in 1972. (Kent Archaeological Society ref AR1-004).

A collection of thousands of documents, ephemera and photographs accumulated over a period of nearly 60 years by a Kent historian and author who died 25 years ago has been donated to the Kent Archaeological Society for the benefit of future generations intent on studying the county's past.

Born in Liverpool, Anne Roper claimed descent from Sir Thomas More through his daughter Margaret Roper of Canterbury, and came to Kent from Cardiff in the 1920s to convalesce when a hockey accident forced her to abandon her university studies.

After discovering the New Romney Archives, Anne became immersed in the history of the town and subsequently that of the whole of Kent. She joined the KAS in 1929.

Prominent in public life, Anne was vice president of Romney Marsh Historic Churches Trust; Hon Archivist to Hythe Corporation; a governor of Southlands School, New Romney; a trustee of Southlands Charity; Lord of the Manor of Eastbridge (one of Romney Marsh's 23 manors); Group Secretary of the East Kent Federation of Women's Institutes; and the first woman president of the Association of Men of Kent and Kentish Men.

In WW2 Anne was Army Welfare Officer for troops stationed on Romney Marsh and the area's district representative for the Women's Land Army. Her duties included arranging entertainments by 'ENSA' (The Entertainments National Service Association), giving hundreds of lectures, and recruiting and billeting 'land girls'. She was appointed OBE for her war work.

Anne lived at Littlestone on Sea, Kent, at the Red House and, from 1968, Flag Cottage and ranged far and wide across the county researching, writing and lecturing.

She published books and pamphlets about Aldington, Brookland, Burmarsh, Ivychurch, Lydd, Newenden; Old Romney and St Mary in the Marsh; 'The Gift of the Sea' (an official guide to Romney Marsh); and 'The Hooden Horse of East Kent'.

One of her pet subjects was pubs and inns and she was co-author with H R Pratt Boorman of 'Kent Inns, a Distillation', published by the Kent Messenger in 1955.

Her archives are stored in 62 boxes and catalogued by theme and subject, including east and south Kent's ports, towns and villages; smuggling, agriculture and sea defences; and Edith Nesbit, author of 'The Railway Children', who lived at Jesson, on Romney Marsh, died in New Romney and was buried in St Mary in the Marsh churchyard. Anne died in 1988 at the age of 85.

The catalogue can be downloaded from [www.kentarchaeology.ac](http://www.kentarchaeology.ac) ('Library and Collections Catalogues' page). The collection can be consulted at the KAS Library in Maidstone by appointment with Pernille Richards, library secretary, email [pernillerichards@gmail.com](mailto:pernillerichards@gmail.com)



Jesson, Romney Marsh.  
An undated photograph from Anne Roper's archive.  
(Kent Archaeological Society ref AR35-001)



Anne, seated third from left, with Army colleagues and Chevrolet trucks  
at a parade in Canterbury in 1945.  
(Kent Archaeological Society ref AR1-001)



Anne turning the first sod for the foundations of her new home, Flag Cottage, Littlestone on Sea, in July 1968.  
With her are architect Cyril Griggs (right) and builder Leslie Whiting, far left, with three of his workmen.  
(Kent Archaeological Society ref AR1-005)