

## East Kent Coast Discovery Programme

### The stake nets of Sandwich Bay

Since 2019 EKCDP and volunteers have surveyed over 1100 previously unrecorded roundwood stakes along 2.5km of foreshore. These are the remains of late 18th - mid 20th century V shaped fish traps known locally as a stake or keddle nets. The foreshore is highly mobile: these fragile remains are at high risk of loss.

Volunteers Edward Troup and Pete James survey the most recent fish trap. From our oral history with Bruce Brown, who worked on this trap in the 1950s, we know it was last one in use on the site. A newspaper report from 1917 suggests kettle net fishing may, in general, have ceased here by the First World War.

Desk based research by volunteer Tijana Cvetkovic includes an 1870 court case detailing the fisher families, their hereditary rights, fishing methods and species caught. It's helped raise wider, climate change questions on biodiversity and changing fish populations.

As well as collaborating on field surveys volunteers built research questions for the site during workshops and contributed to report writing for the site. Our report will be ready late spring.

CITiZAN volunteers fieldwalking the southern end of the site in November 2021. This systematic survey of the foreshore added three more fish traps and extended the site by 0.5km.

In September 2021 CITiZAN volunteers sampled targeted stakes then learnt about species ID through a workshop with archaeobotanist Lisa Gray. Full analysis is in progress but early results suggest distinct species were being used for different stake nets. This may reflect both changes in woodland management and the different resources available to different fisherfolk.

Further research has shown that the kettle nets of Rye and Camber south along the coast in Sussex are much better documented, such as this cigarette card. They were shaped as -)-) not as a > however. We're investigating the reason for this regional variation: F.M. Davis *Account of the fishing gear of England and Wales* (1958) states that the only stake nets similar to those at Sandwich Bay were at Foulness, Essex.



- CITIZAN surveys 2019-2021
- Stake net stake
  - Metal fencing pin for long line fishing
  - WWII Anti Aircraft Landing Poles
- MSDS data 2018/2019
- Wreck
  - Stake not yet located by CITIZAN
- Basemap: OpenStreetMap

Two lines of stakes remain partially submerged at normal low tide, suggesting sea level has risen since they were in use. **C14 dating** by Historic England of three samples from these has given a 50% probability they date to between 1733-1786AD. Analysis of toolmarks by MOLA's Damian Goodburn suggest they were all cut with the same small axe.

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