

Notes and News

A MEDIEVAL COLLECTOR ?

Mr C. W. PHILLIPS writes :—

We are told that antiquarianism is a sign of a stationary or decaying civilization. However this may be, it has itself a very respectable antiquity which is attested by the occasional discovery of signs of the enthusiasm in Ancient Mesopotamia, to say nothing of the Roman Empire. Even Medieval England seems to have had its collectors, and a stray glimmer of light is thrown upon this matter, and on the sinister methods of one such, by a curious entry in the Hundred Rolls under the date 1270. When the Commissioners examined the recent affairs of Lincolnshire and heard complaints of oppression and usurpation of the Royal rights they encountered a case which, though unimportant, must be difficult to parallel at such an early date in England.

The translation of the entry runs¹ :—

Further, it is alleged that Robert de Stretton, deceased, aforetime Preceptor of Temple Bruer, unjustly took from Adam Lewyn of Rauceby half a mark of silver, with which sum he bought a gold denarius from Catherine de Rowston, found by the said Catherine, and it is not known by what warrant he did this.

By 1270 the Crusades had all but collapsed and the Knights Templars were rapidly getting the evil reputation for greed and extortion which afforded a handle to their suppressors, Edward I of England and Philip the Fair of France, some four decades later.

As Preceptor of Temple Bruer the offending Robert was the most powerful Templar in Lincolnshire, if not in all England, and he is likely to have had foreign experience in the Near East in the course of which he may have acquired antiquarian tastes.

The district round his Preceptory was a wild heath right down to the end of the 18th century and its passage was so difficult owing to its flat and featureless character that it suffered the indignity of the

¹ *Rotuli Hundredorum*, 1, 280.

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erection of a land lighthouse, which still stands as Dunston Pillar by the Lincoln-Sleaford road, though its former purpose is changed and it now supports an effigy of George III.

The Ermine Street runs northwards from Ancaster to Lincoln right through the whole length of the Heath and passes close to Temple Bruer and the two villages of North and South Rauceby.

Rowston, the home of the finder of the coin, lies six miles east of the Street, rather more than half-way between it and the Car Dyke, and close to Ashby de la Launde where remains of a Roman building were found in 1831.² It is improbable that a gold coin found in this district before 1270 would be any other than Roman.

Dr G. C. Brooke of the Department of Coins and Medals in the British Museum has kindly informed me that the only medieval gold coin minted in England before 1270 was the gold penny of Henry III which appeared in 1257, but went out of currency soon because of its unsound ratio to the silver of the day.

He says :—‘ The use of the term “ gold denarius ” in the charge suggests that this is the coin referred to. The Roman gold coin would more naturally be called solidus. On the other hand it seems incredible that anyone should ever have been fool enough to steal half a mark of silver (6s 8d.) in order to buy a coin which was then current at two shillings. Perhaps the currency of the gold denarius led to the word “ denarius ” being used loosely for the Roman coin ; if it was a solidus of 120 grains its metal value would have been 5s 4d. and its antiquarian value was therefore assessed at about a quarter as much again, which seems not unreasonable ’.

COLCHESTER

Mr CHRISTOPHER HAWKES writes :—

The Colchester Excavation Committee’s second season this year lasted from 24 August to 3 October. Last year and this spring it had been established that a pre-Roman native settlement of great size and importance stretched all along the foot of the low hill which rises southward of the river Colne on the west of the modern town. Casual finds had previously been made on the hill itself, and it was expected that this would prove on excavation to have been the effective centre

² Edward Trollope, *Sleaford and the Wapentakes of Flaxwell and Aswardhurn* ; London and Sleaford, 1871, p. 41.

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of native habitation. This may yet be found true of its summit, but it has now been revealed that a large part of its northern slope was untouched by British settlement, and was chosen as a camping-ground by the Roman Expeditionary Force on the fall of the native capital A.D. 43. The great defensive ditch of the camp, some 35 ft. wide and 11 ft. deep, was excavated along a substantial portion of its eastern stretch, and proved to have been deliberately filled in, in two stages, within a short time of its original excavation. Inside the line of the rampart corresponding to it lay a wide belt covered with hearths, middens, and deep rubbish pits, foreshadowing the cooking areas backing on to the ramparts of later legionary fortresses. Inside this again were timber-framed wattle-and-daub barracks, the prototypes of the familiar elongated L-shaped buildings of later forts, of a size each to hold one century, with the centurion's quarters at the end. These buildings are represented by the post-holes that held their uprights, and by the narrow slots dug in the natural sand as bedding for the foot of their wattle-and-daub walls. Flanking the most fully excavated building was a metalled road with a ditch or kennel along it.

The alignment of buildings and road runs obliquely to the defensive ditch, and the camp cannot have been rectangular. The full extent is a matter of conjecture, but the season closed with the location of its western gate, a complicated structure which will be fully excavated next year. The internal buildings seem to have continued in use after the levelling of the defences, and no doubt served as a base for the building of Roman Colchester in and after A.D. 50. Huts also appear over the filling of the ditch, and also over that of a smaller ditch running outside (*i.e.*, west of) it, which is very possibly that of the original 'marching' camp of the army that must have preceded its semi-permanent winter-quarters. Outside the main western gate, remains of a timber defensive system appear, which are either outworks belonging to it, of most peculiar type, or else belong to native fortifications which may be awaiting excavation on the adjoining ground higher up the hill. At any rate, the sequence here of native city, Roman camps, and Roman colony, side by side and each apparently distinct, is affording a chain of evidence for the story of 'Romanization' hitherto without parallel, and pottery, coins, brooches, etc., have been obtained in very large quantities. We understand that full publication of the material already obtained in all parts of the native site is to be undertaken within measurable time, and that a series of detailed reports will thus be inaugurated. Meanwhile it is good to know that no part of the site

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is now threatened with immediate road-building, and that the Excavation Committee is likely to have secured a reasonably long start over the pioneers of future 'development'.

Mr HAWKES was in charge of operations, assisted by Mr R. W. HUTCHINSON, F.S.A. Major BUSHE-FOX acted as consultative director. There was a volunteer party of workers, and paid workmen up to a maximum of 39 were employed. Some financial assistance was given by the Corporation of Colchester, and co-operation was maintained with the Colchester and Essex Museum (Mr M. R. HULL and staff).

SALMONSBURY CAMP, GLOUCESTERSHIRE

Mr G. C. DUNNING, Director of Excavations, reports:—

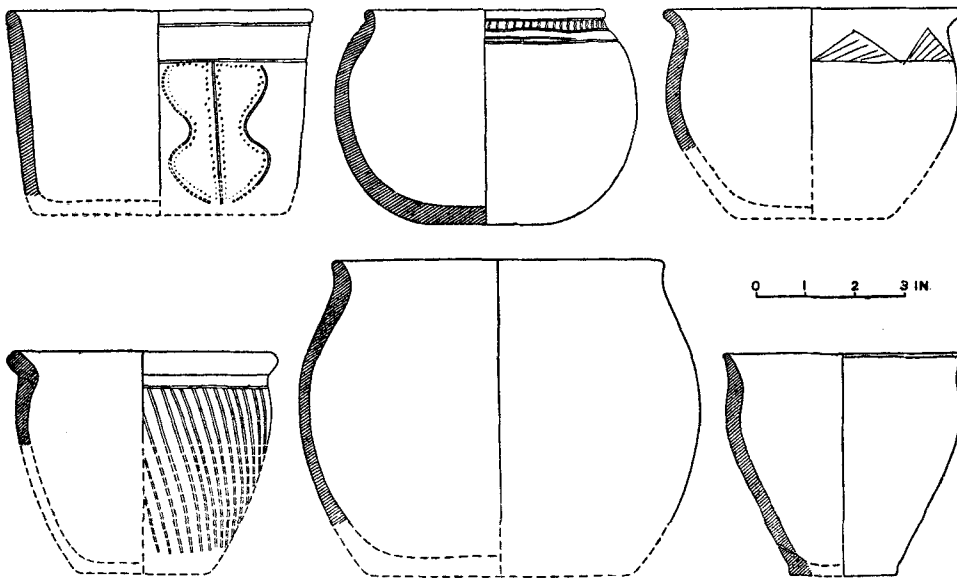
During July and August 1931 the Anthropological Society of University College, London carried out preliminary excavations in the fortified settlement of Salmonsbury, $\frac{1}{4}$ mile east of Bourton-on-the-Water. The work was made possible largely by the generosity of Mr A. S. Owen, of Keble College, Oxford, and subscriptions to a local fund. Great help was given by members of a local committee and by the owners of the land, to all of whom sincere thanks are due for their valuable cooperation.

The camp is on a large patch of gravel at about 450 ft. O.D. in the angle between the rivers Dikler and Windrush, and originally seems to have been bounded on two sides at least by a swamp or lake. The camp is nearly square and covers about 56 acres. On the east side, two curved banks prolong the line of the ramparts for about 500 feet; these may be in the nature of causeways running out into the marsh between the camp and the river Dikler.

A section, 240 feet long and 12 feet wide, was cut through the defences on the east side. The rampart is here 60 feet wide and $2\frac{1}{2}$ feet high, built of loose gravel thrown out of the main ditch, which is 34 feet wide and 12 feet deep. The outer bank is about 40 feet wide and has been much ploughed down; beyond this is an outer ditch, 19 feet wide and 9 feet deep. The ditches are v-shaped, and steeply cut in the gravel. The old turf line was found underneath both banks, and under it were unexpectedly found a number of pits about 6 feet in diameter, filled with a stiff red clay (plate 1). A few sherds of Hallstatt pottery, some with finger-nail marks, were found on the old turf line, and flint flakes only in the pits. A few slabs of

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oolite occurred near the crest of the main rampart, and a considerable quantity of similar stones was found in the lower filling of the big ditch; these seem to be the remains of a dry-built retaining wall, such as is still visible elsewhere in the rampart. Evidence of ploughing in Roman times was found in the ditch, and it seems probable that the rampart was lowered and the stone wall thrown down into the ditch during this period.

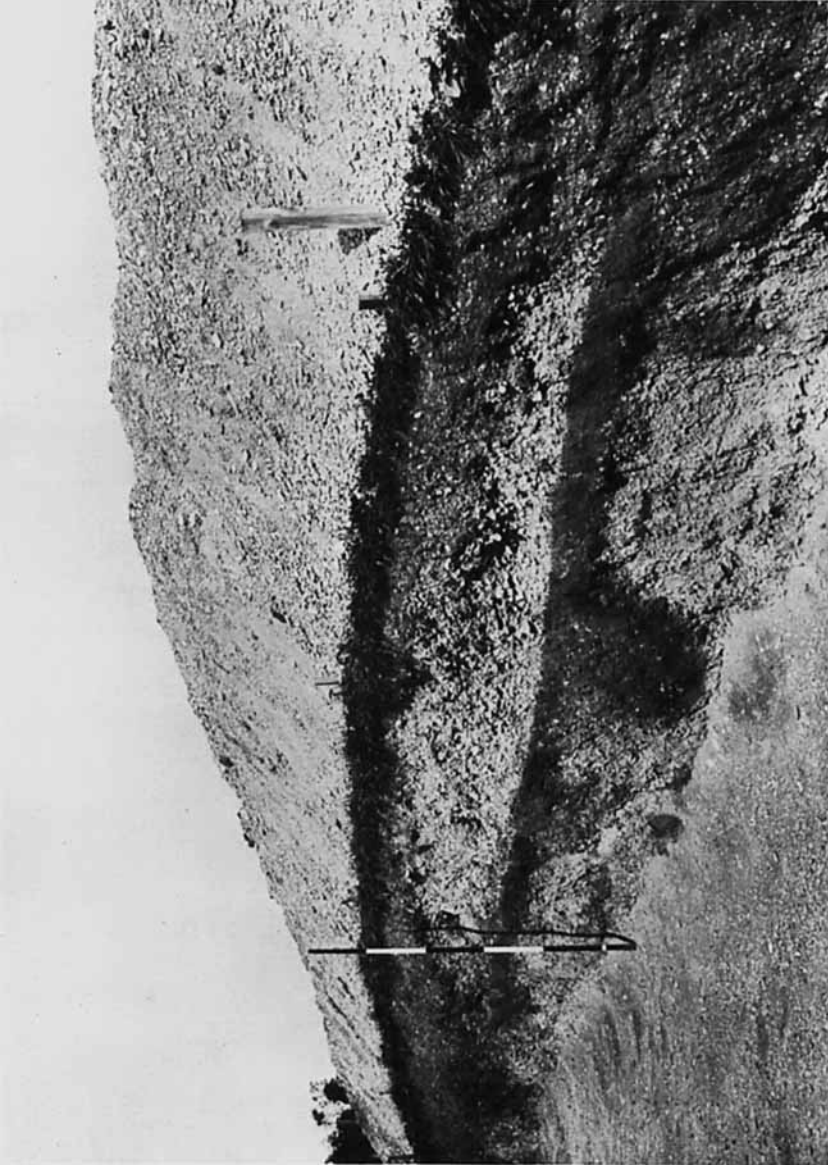


POTTERY FROM SALMONSBURY CAMP (1)

A circular hut-site was found inside the camp, close against the inner slope of the rampart. The hut, 22 feet in diameter, consisted of a ring of eighteen post-holes, on an average 3 feet 9 inches apart, and three central holes for poles supporting the roof. The entrance, 8 feet wide, was to the southeast. (Plate II).

Most of the post-holes were vertical and comparatively shallow, and probably held uprights about 6 feet high, supporting a conical roof of reeds or rushes. There was no inside fireplace, but two built-up stone hearths were found 12 feet south of the hut. On two sides of the hut was a drainage ditch, 2 feet wide and 1 foot deep, which passed beyond the excavation to the south, and probably served to

PLATE I



SALMONSBURY CAMP, GLOUCESTERSHIRE : SECTION OF RAMPART

facing p. 490

PLATE II



SALMONSBURY CAMP, GLOUCESTERSHIRE: CIRCULAR HUT-SITE, FROM NW

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carry away rain-water from the roofs of a row of huts along this side of the camp. This ditch was filled up with rubbish, including pottery and a large number of broken animal bones. A large pit, 4 feet 9 inches in diameter and 2 feet deep, had been dug close to the south side of the hut, and seven more similar pits were found on the west side of the drainage ditch, that is, behind the hut. The pits were neatly cut in the gravel, and averaged 4 feet in diameter and 1 foot deep. They appear to have been storage pits, later filled in with rubbish, which included a human skull and the skeletons of two infants.

On the northwestern side of the camp, an area of 60 by 30 feet was cleared inside the rampart, on the site of a small gravel-pit in which a hoard of 147 iron currency-bars was found in 1860 (*Proc. Soc. Antiq.*, series 2, xx, 183; xxvii, 69). Here four more pits were found, similar to those in the larger excavation. In the filling of one pit was the skeleton of a woman, laid on the right side in a loosely flexed position. Near the pits, a shallow grave dug in the gravel contained a man's skeleton, also lying on the right side, tightly crouched, with knees drawn up to the chest.

The pottery found in the hut-trench and pits consists of hand-made bowls of globular shape, with thin outbent rims, some decorated with incised hatched triangles or curvilinear designs of shallow grooves and dots. All the pottery is placed in the Iron Age, probably in the first century B.C., and may be compared with similar material at Glastonbury and Lydney.

It is hoped to continue the excavations next year, when further areas will be dug inside the camp, and an examination made of the entrance.

TIMBER PALISADES AT HOLLINGBURY

Dr CECIL CURWEN writes :—

' In *ANTIQUITY*, March 1931, pp. 71-2, Mr Christopher Hawkes refers to the rarity of evidence regarding timberwork in the ramparts of Early Iron Age hill-forts in Britain, and cites Cissbury and the Caburn (Sussex), and Uffington Castle (Berks) as the only known instances where even a hint of such methods of construction has been obtained. Since Mr Hawkes' article appeared, the present writer has been engaged in excavations in Hollingbury hill-fort (Sussex) for the Brighton and Hove Archaeological Club, and was fortunate enough to come upon very definite evidence of timberwork, which forms a close

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parallel with that from Uffington Castle. On removing a section of the rampart down to the undisturbed chalk two parallel rows of post-holes were discovered, about 7 feet apart, each hole also averaging 7 feet from its neighbour. The holes were about a foot in diameter and had been sunk about $2\frac{1}{2}$ feet below the original turf-line. In two cases it was possible to determine the actual diameter of the posts that originally occupied the holes, *viz.*, about 6 inches. The posts must have projected above the rampart and have formed the basis of a double fence of some sort. Quite clearly they did not form part of any scheme for revetting the material of which the rampart was made. The date provisionally assigned for this work is about 300 B.C.

‘When filling in the excavations, the position of this doublestockade was marked by setting up in the original holes lengths of old telephone poles of approximately the correct diameter, projecting about 6 feet out of the ground. This gives the visitor a very good idea of the nature and position of at any rate the skeleton of the original timber defences. The accompanying photographs show the post-holes visible after the removal of a section of the rampart, and also the reconstructed palisade as it now appears after restoring the same section of the rampart. The same arrangement was found in another cutting adjoining the eastern entrance where the holes in which the gate-posts stood were also discovered. The full report is expected to appear in *The Antiquaries Journal* early in 1932’.

The photographs were taken from the top of a tripod consisting of a 15-foot ladder lashed to two 11-foot poles—a very useful contrivance for photographing excavations and earthworks. The increased height enables one to look down upon the subject and get a greater breadth of view.—EDITOR.

NOREIA

Excavations at Noreia in Styria have resulted in the discovery of thirty dwellings belonging to the prehistoric capital of Noricum: a few of these date from the Early Iron Age (Este III), but the majority from the Late La Tène period. The fortifications of the city, 194 metres in length, have also been investigated; they consist of a stone wall and a wooden palisade 49.8 metres long. The city gate (4.2 metres in breadth) was flanked by two semi-circular towers, and there were four towers along the palisade; opposite the middle tower were

PLATE III



HOLLINGBURY CAMP, SUSSEX
Post-holes of a double palisade found under the rampart
Ph. E. C. Curwen

facing p. 492

PLATE IV



HOLINGBURY CAMP, SUSSEX
Section of reconstructed palisade
Phot. E. C. Curwen

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two Roman siege-towers (1.85 and 2.2 metres in breadth), in one of which Roman potsherds were discovered. Noreia was conquered by P. Silius in 16 B.C.

Traces of camp fires and fragments of vessels have established the site of the camp of the Cimbri at Noreia in 113 B.C.

FLUORESCENCE USED FOR ARCHAEOLOGICAL PURPOSES

Dr FRANZ of the Prague Museum writes :—

‘ Mr L. V. DODDS (ANTIQUITY 1931, p. 235), has a note on the uses of fluorescence for historical purposes; I may point out that a similar method of analysis may serve prehistoric research also. The Dutch scholar, van Ledden Hulsebosch, established by the aid of ultra-violet rays that the bones found in a Dutch megalithic tomb came not from burned bodies but from buried ones (*Archiv für Kriminalogie*, 78, 1926). Similarly K. Hörmann of Nürnberg pointed out the practice of drying corpses in prehistoric times in Bavaria (Schumacher-Festschrift, Mainz 1930, p. 77). I myself claim to have established by the same means the authenticity of the so-called second Venus of Wisternitz, a statuette of a woman of the diluvial period from Moravia.

‘ There is no doubt that ultra-violet rays afford us a new aid to research. Its value for our purposes is no doubt limited, since fluorescence does not result in the case of all bodies or all materials, and it is only under quite definite conditions that it is of use to the archaeologist. I hope shortly to publish a pamphlet on the subject, for I have made many experiments. The most useful work for consultation is *Die Lumineszenz-Analyse*, by P. W. Dankwortt (Leipzig, 1929), and the article by H. Rinnebach in *Museumskunde* N.F. III, 1931, p. 5, is also helpful’.

EARLY FORMS OF TRANSPORT

Dr CYRIL FOX writes :—

‘ Readers of ANTIQUITY interested in early forms of transport may like to know that in Dr A. C. Haddon’s *Study of Man*, 1898, there are two chapters on the evolution of the cart which deal in detail with the invention of solid and spoke wheels, and with the genesis and development of the slide-car. These are fully illustrated’.

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ROMAN VILLA IN CORNWALL

Mr B. H. St. J. O'NEIL sends us the following report:—

Whilst ploughing the field opposite his house in the spring of this year Mr B. Mitchell, owner of Magor Farm near Camborne, Cornwall, found what proved upon examination to be a tessellated pavement of Roman type.

The importance of this find as representing the first recorded Roman structure in Cornwall was at once realized, and under the auspices of the Royal Institution of Cornwall with the co-operation of the Federation of Old Cornwall Societies an Excavation Committee was formed to arrange for a scientific examination of the site after harvest.

Excavation occupied four weeks in September and disclosed a small Roman villa of the common winged-corridor type, measuring in its final state 106 feet from side to side and 55 feet from back to front of the wings, which project 16 feet.

The villa was found to have suffered from the plough and deliberate robbing, probably late in the 18th century, especially in the north wing of which only a few fragments remain, sufficient to indicate that it would no doubt compare in plan and history with the south wing.

The tessellated floor formed the verandah of the villa, facing westwards down the valley of the Red river. The tesserae are of buff-coloured quartz porphyry, locally called elvan, from a short distance away. They vary greatly in size but average 1 inch square and are laid carefully in strips on concrete and fixed with cement. There is no attempt at producing a pattern.

The walls of this part of the house and of the south wing, as originally planned, are of local slate. In one of the rooms during this period two successive floors can be identified, the later one being of the type usual in the house, rammed plaster on quartz blocks with or without a cement crust in all 6 inches thick. At a still later period two gaps were made in the outside wall and three rooms added with granite walls and in one case a fine brick-dust concrete floor, 4 to 6 inches thick.

All the walls were plastered and decorated with a variety of colours and patterns, including a leaf and tulip design, many of them decidedly more artistic according to modern ideas than those frequently met with on Romano-British sites. From various indications it is probable that the masonry was not as a rule carried to any great height, although

PLATE V



ROMAN VILLA NEAR CAMBORNE, CORNWALL
General view from back showing main block and (on left) the south wing
Ph. Messrs Gibson, Penzance

facing p. 494

PLATE VI



ROMAN VILLA NEAR CAMBORNE, CORNWALL
The tessellated pavement forming the floor of the Verandah
Ph. Messrs Gibson, Penzance

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in certain places support other than of wood must have been necessary for the extremely heavy slate roof, much of which was found lying among the debris on the floors.

No 'Samian' ware or mortaria were found and pottery of any kind was scarce. All the datable fragments, whether Roman or native imitations, with a few exceptions of slightly later date, are of the usual types of the latter half of the 2nd century A.D. and the one brooch is of the same period. In the absence of definite evidence these may be taken to indicate approximately the flourishing time of the house, although the probability of the persistence of these particular types, especially in a remote corner of the province, must not be overlooked.

Exactly when the addition was made is uncertain but that the owner was still in residence in 235 is shown by the discovery in a recess in the wall of an inner room of the remains of a hoard of denarii, 13 in all, the latest being of Severus Alexander. The six other coins from the excavation are Antoniniani, ranging from 260–273, and were found in the debris of the fallen roof or amongst the ashes of fires lighted in one of the rooms of the south wing, perhaps by squatters after the departure of the rightful owner. Nothing of later date was found and there was no indication of any connexion with mining.

It is, therefore, suggested that this villa was not the residence of a Roman, retired or in service, but of a native. Most of the natives were in all probability still living in huts similar to those cleared at Chysauster near Penzance. This villa may, however, have been built by a native who as a young man left the district to go eastwards, perhaps into imperial service, and returned home upon his retirement. He was accustomed to seeing and living in houses of Roman type and enjoying the usual comforts of Roman life. He still wanted these and, perhaps, also desired to impress his neighbours. Therefore he built himself a house in the familiar style making the best of local materials, importing some luxuries but going without others, such as baths, more difficult to construct or to obtain. Later, in the 3rd century, the house was probably abandoned through fear of Irish raiders whose influence was beginning to be felt. It does not, however, appear to have been destroyed by fire but to have fallen gradually into decay.