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Editorial

The 1979 Bulletin, Volume Number 22, has a new look which we hope will please. Early Bulletins up to 1966 had illustrated covers showing County and Borough coats of arms and both faces of the Camulodunum coin depicting the wheat-ear and the horse. Subsequent Bulletins, which were smaller overall, had only the Greek key patterned border for decoration. The new larger size gives scope for illustration and we have chosen for our symbol the stamp of a Roman potter from Colchester. The original can be seen in the Castle Museum and a note on the stamp and its archaeological importance appear on page 13.

Another series of excellent lectures has been arranged for winter 1979-80 and details are below. It requires much effort and determination to organise such a programme and it is hoped that members will attend regularly and bring their friends if possible. Please bring the programme to the attention of anyone you think may be interested. Apart from the fact that the lectures are so good we need the entrance fees to go toward the lecturers' travelling expenses - no lecturers charge a fee.

The Editorial Sub Committee⁺ is glad to consider material for publication and a page of guide lines for contributors is available on request.

Editor

⁺Mrs K. de Brisay FSA
Mr G.M.R. Davies MA AMA
Mrs K.A. Evans - Editor

Forthcoming group excavations

During 1979 we shall be excavating at the side of the Roman road at Easthorpe and helping the Central. Excavation. Unit, D.O.E. at the multiperiod site at Ardleigh.

THE RED HILL AT TOLLESBURY, ESSEX

FINAL REPORT

Kay de Brisay

The excavation of this site was begun in April 1977 and a full description appears in Vol. 21 of this Bulletin.⁽¹⁾ A trench 15m long and 2m wide was put down at TL 96411282. A plan of the marsh in the vicinity of the site was duly completed by Mr. Paul Brown and members of the Maldon Archaeological Group (fig.1, below). The whole area was marked out in 5m squares using the southern edge of the trench as a base line and extending 40m north and south and 40m east and west. From this the extent of the briquetage spread was determined. Levels were taken at regular intervals relating to BM 1.49m at the sluice to the north of the site; omitting those taken on the sea wall, these ranged from 1.38 to 2.73m - the latter being the level of the eastern corner of the trench. From the plan it can be seen that much erosion has taken place here and the central part of the Red Hill has been washed away. This is borne out by the apparent collapse of the old sea wall and the subsequent erection of later and more substantial embanking. Additional evidence of this is the incidence of briquetage in the drainage ditch bordering the inland field. This would also account for the shallow 0.6m depth of red infill at the western end of the trench and 1.55m at the eastern end where the gully was found (see section, fig.2, below).

In spite of bad weather it was possible to remove the remaining briquetage in the process of which the remains of many broken up hearths were found in the western end of the trench. A sample of red infill, carbonised wood and silt was taken from beneath a definitive layer of white silt in the northern baulk; this was dispatched to Mr. A.J. Clark in the hope that some results may be obtained from examining contents such as seeds or beetles, or from a residual magnetic dating. Nothing has been received as yet.

The excavation finished on 15 July - an appropriate day in view of the large amounts of rain experienced throughout the excavation; the following two weekends were spent filling in.

The finds and conclusions for the two seasons are summarised below:

The first point to be made when considering the Red Hill at Tollesbury is that it appears to be a transitional site. Whereas Osea Road⁽²⁾ apparently used pedestals only and Peldon⁽³⁾ hearth walls only, this site seems to have used both; also there was a great variation in the pattern of the pedestals (fig. 3, below). The discovery of the sluice or filter⁽⁴⁾ was a new departure as were the small crucible-like vessels thought to have been salt moulds⁽⁵⁾. The firebars were very numerous and many of them were of an unusually fine design and workmanship. Indentations of firebars were found on some hearth wall fragments, many of which were of very heavy construction. As has been said, no trace of evaporation tanks were found but these could well have been where the central basin is now (fig. 1 below). Altogether it was a rather disappointing excavation; the difficulty of access did not encourage workers and so the excavation had, of necessity, to be restricted to the single trench and it was fortunate that so much was found under such unpromising conditions and when much time was wasted restoring the damage done by vandals.

THE BRIQUETAGE

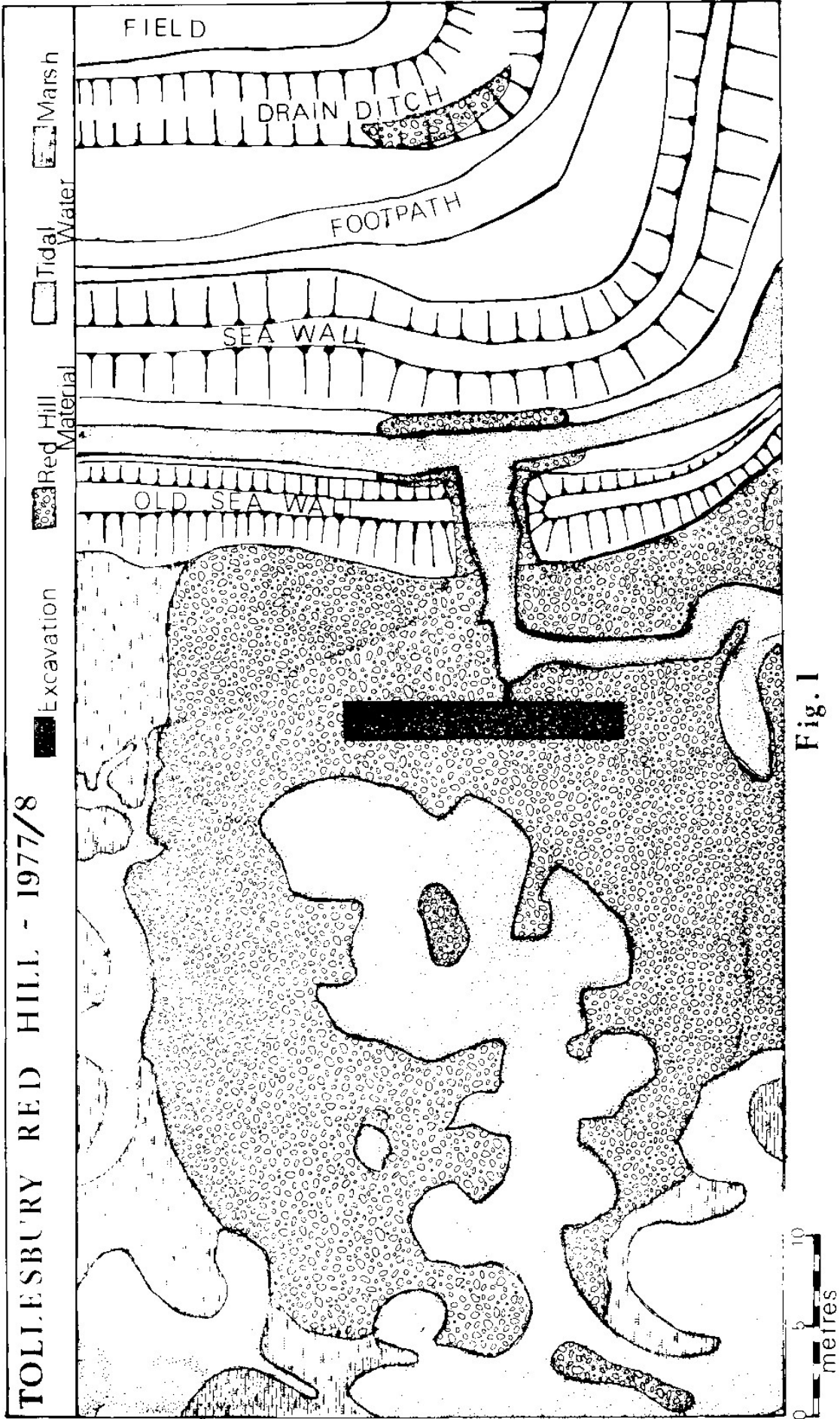
The Fire-bars

As described above the very high standard of manufacture of the fire-bars on this site was most noticeable. The number of recognisable fragments is as follows:

- Sharp-pointed ends - 18
- Square-pointed ends - 17
- Middle sections - 10
- Other fragments - large 35, small 27

The Pedestals

The interesting variety of pattern is illustrated (fig.3 below). The difference in size and the shape of head is particularly apparent in (c) and (d). The fabric of the latter was a very bright red at the top with the lower part coated in green glaze. Item (e) is the only base found and, instead of taking the normal circular shape, it is rectangular.



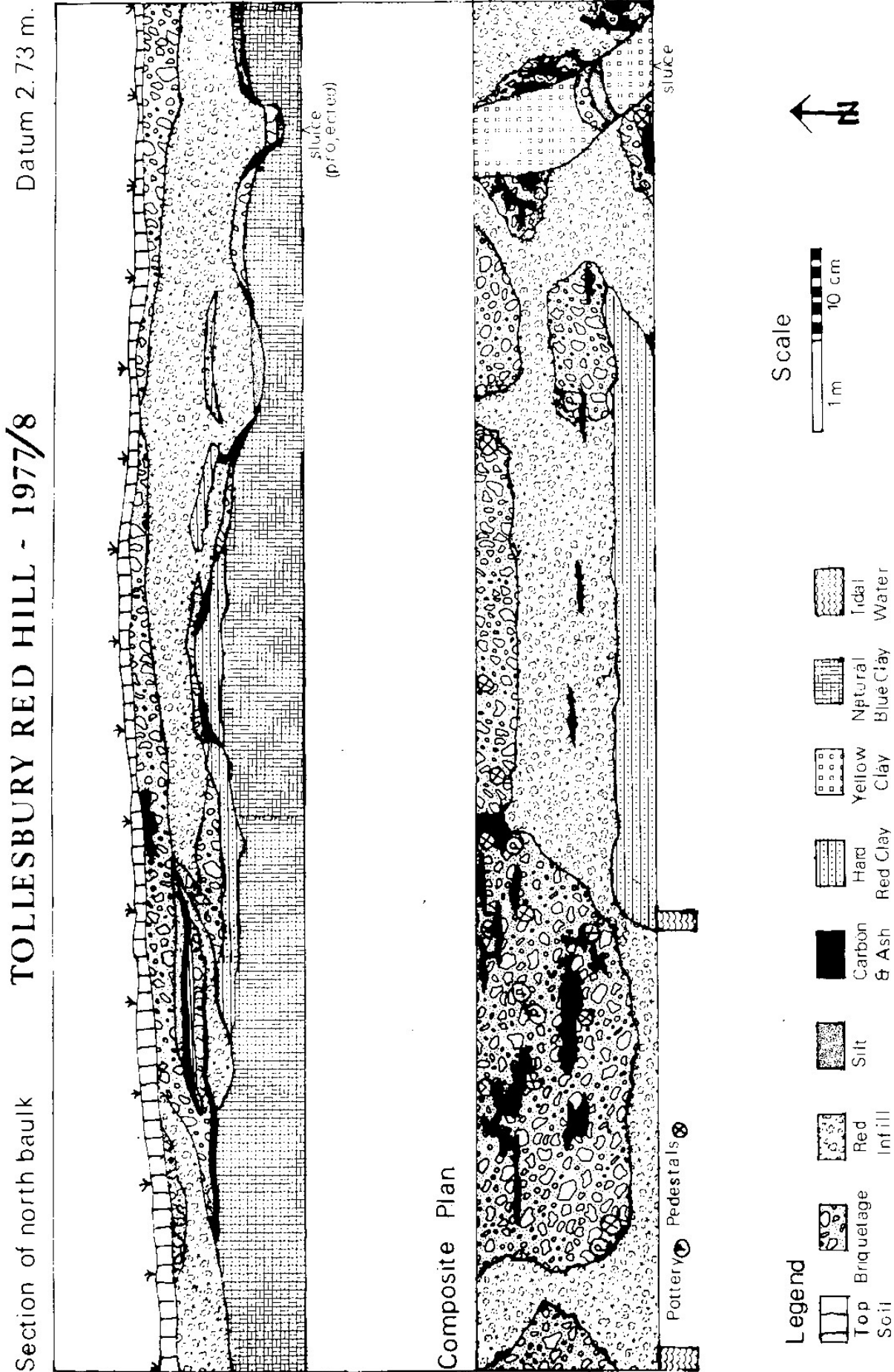
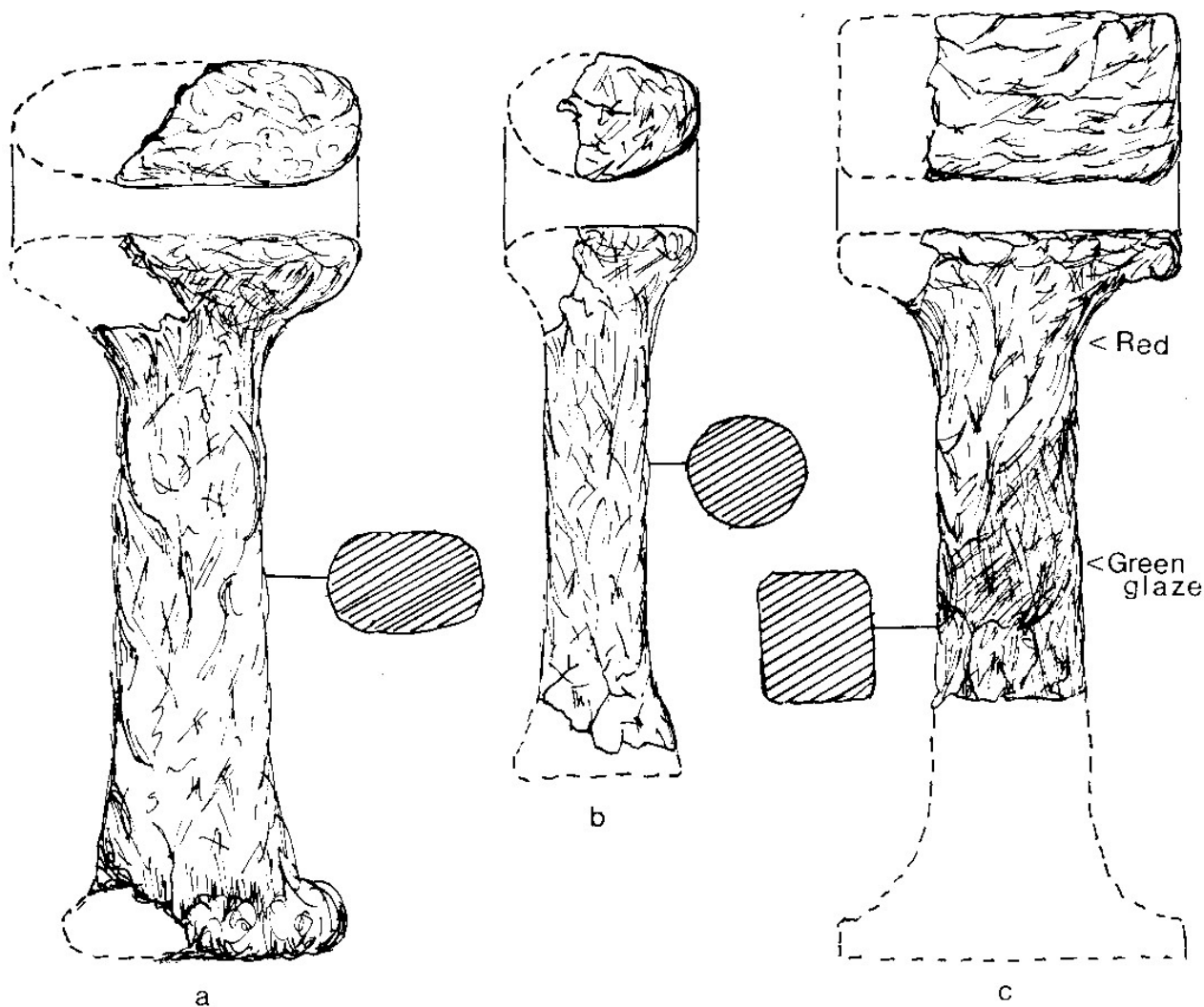


Fig. 2



Pedestals
Tollesbury 1978

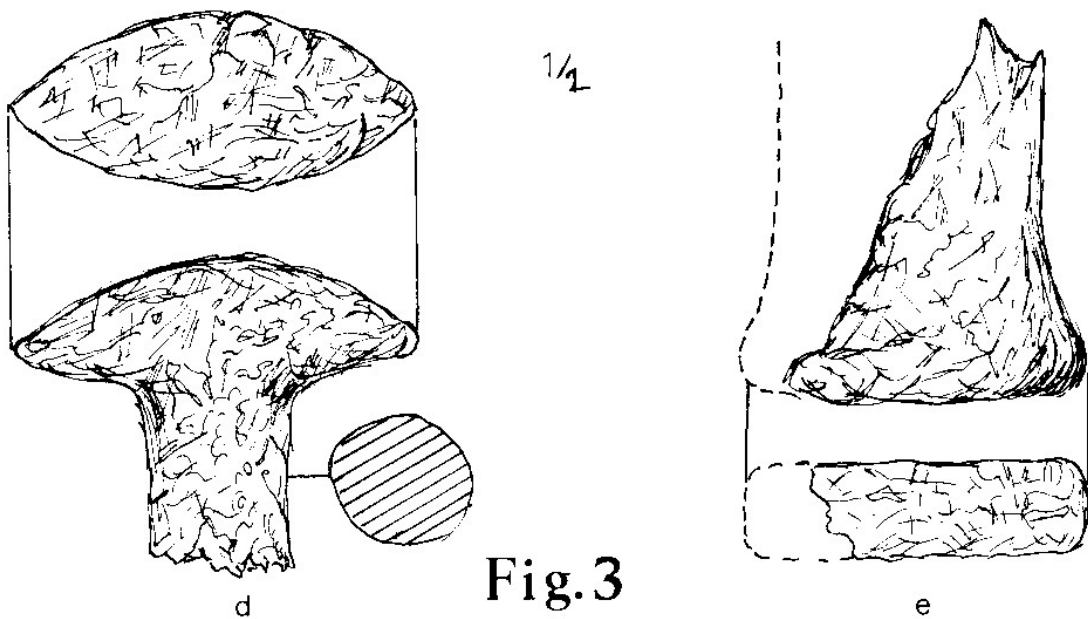


Fig.3

Tollesbury 1978

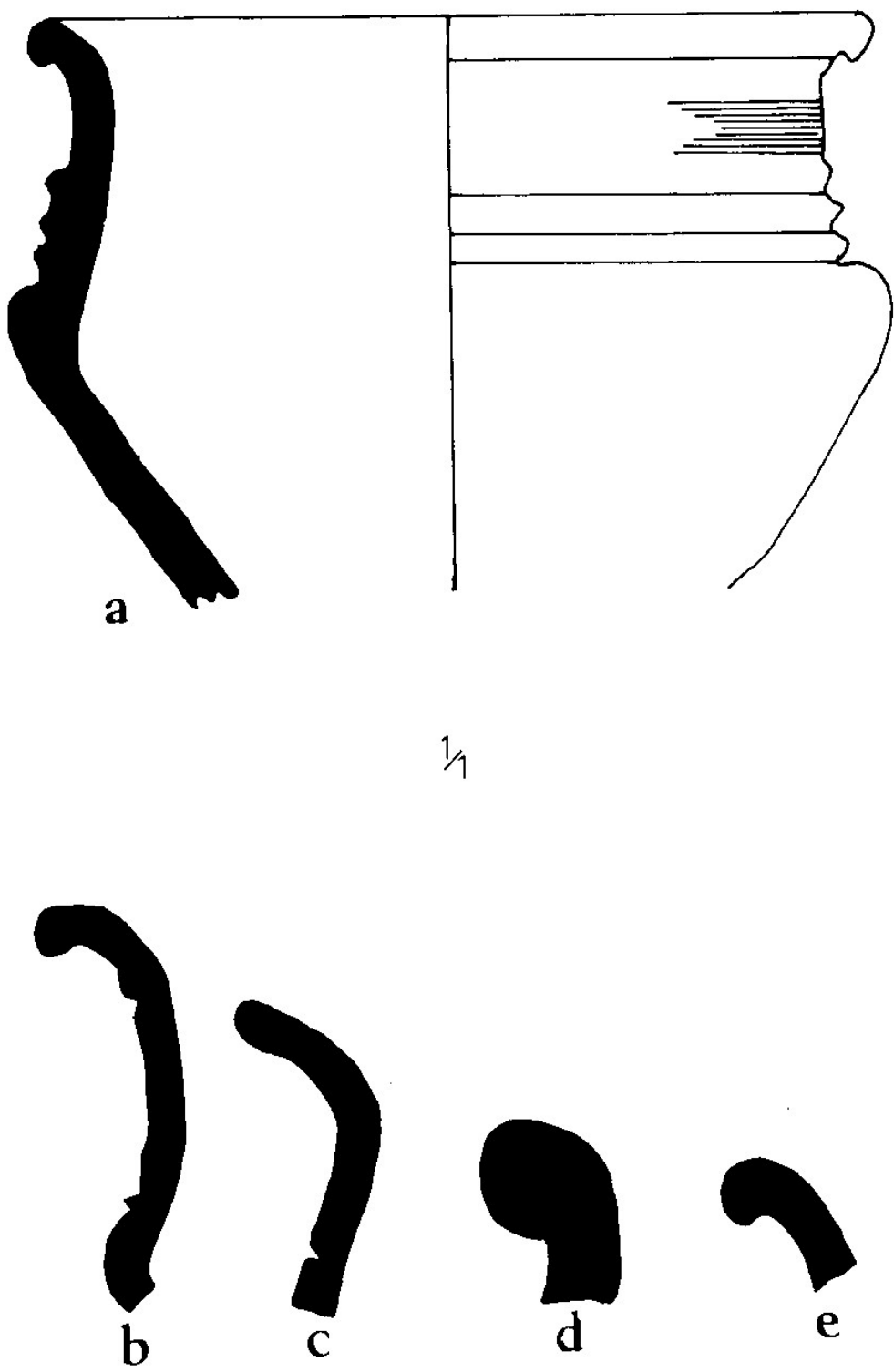


Fig.4

Stem and Head - 6
Head only - 5
Stem only - 8 (including one in red clay, rectangular in shape).
Base - 1 (rectangular)

Other Briquetage

Hearth Walls - 24	Hearth Plates - 8
Plain Container Rims - over 100	Decorated Container Rims - 23
Container Bases - 11	Wattled Container Bases - 3
Fragments of 'Salt moulds' - 8	Pinch Props - 3
Conduit or Drainage fragments - 2	Lumps of Fused Clay - 25

The Pottery (fig. 4 above)

1. A large sherd of a black Iron Age small bowl with a broad burnished neck and two cordons above the carination point. Diameter of rim 13.4cm; height 10.5cm approx. It was not possible to find an exact match in Camulodunum but 215 A or B appear to be the nearest (see Cam. Plate LXXV). The bowl was finely made, apparently burnished all over originally although this has worn off at one place where the black has turned to brown. (fig.4a)
2. A smaller fragment similar to the above but badly abraded with much flaking and the black worn to brown, particularly on the rim. (fig.4b)
3. Rim sherd of a larger bowl, markedly out-turned, much worn and now brown in colour. (compare with Cam. 227 in Plate LXXVI) (fig.4c)
4. Small thick rim of a large vessel, too small properly to assess, surface rough and black. (fig. 4d)
5. Two small rim sherds, colour grey, very hard and burnished. (fig.4e)
6. Three sherds of black burnished ware, all from centre portion of small carinated bowls similar to 1 and 2 above.
7. Two base sherds of black burnished ware which could belong to bowls similar to 1 and 2 above, abraded to brown in parts. Both have foot-rims with circular lines on the base. They compare well with the same Cam. Nos. 215 A and B.
8. Two very small black burnished sherds showing double cordons.
9. Ten very small black burnished body sherds.
10. Two sherds with a rough brown surface, brown inside.
11. Two thick, rough, black body sherds.
12. Two very thick red-brown rim-sherds, much organic admixture, similar to briquetage but inner surfaces indicate wheel-thrown pots.
13. Two thin briquetage rim-sherds possibly from a 'Swinnerton dish' type vessel (6).

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Our grateful thanks are due to Mr. Desmond Drake and Mr. Robert Frost of the Tollesbury Yacht Berthing Co. for permission to excavate; to Mr. Paul Brown and members of the Maldon Archaeological Group for excavation and survey work and to Bertha Beasley, Mel Cordery, Daphne, Ron and Liam Dark, Maureen Dunn, Kath Evans, Margaret and Roger Ginger, Ann Hampton, Adrian Koval, Ingegerd Sarlvik, Christina Tracey and Mr. Ramus.

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OSEA ROAD RED HILL - Additional Note

Kay de Brisay

On 4th October 1978 heavy machinery was noted operating on the site of the Red Hill field, Maldon, excavated in 1971⁽¹⁾ and 1972⁽²⁾. It will be recalled that the whole of this field (some four acres) consisted of red hill material. On the day in question it was a shock to find a large and untidy bank of upcast material stretching right across the field to the far boundary parallel with the road and some 15m from it; at the foot, between the bank and the road was a recently filled-in trench with a very large, deep hole near the western end out of which a pump was extracting water. Part of the shuttered side was exposed revealing a deep section consisting of 1.5m red infill at the top, below this 1m of blue clay - which we had thought was the lowest level - beneath which now appeared nearly 3m of gravel with water at the bottom. One of the workmen reported that this water was salt - this at 5-6m below surface level - and when the tide came up the river the water level rose with it. This raises some interesting queries as the river is at least 300m distant at this point and has been embanked for about three centuries.

For the record this trench houses a new sewer for Maldon and an inspection chamber with a man-hole 2m below the surface will be installed so cultivation of Red Hill field can be carried on as before.

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BLIND KNIGHTS, LAYER DE LA HAYE

M.C. Wadhams

The recent change of ownership gave the opportunity to make a thorough inspection of this house, and ascertain details of its development.

The name is first noted in the mid 14th century, but it was part of the holding in Layer de la Haye, confirmed to the priory of St. Botolph, Colchester, by Richard I in 1189. At the dissolution it came into the hands of Lord Chancellor Thomas Audley.

HOUSE

Early 14 century hall house, with later alterations. Timber framed and plastered, with red plain tile roof. Two storeys, 1,2,1,1,1 window range on ground floor, 1,3,3,1 on first floor, all modern casements. Centre section is one full bay of early 14 century open hall, with massive arch bracing to tie beam, four armed crown post and heavily sooted rafters and collars. Now 1½ storeys due to first floor insertion, presumably in the 16 century, and there is now a gabled dormer at both front and rear. Immediately to west is a gabled and jettied cross-wing, and adjoining range, all 2 storey, added in 20 century. At east end of hall is an early 14th century gabled and jettied cross-wing. Most of the frame is exposed internally, including stop chamfered beams, widely spaced studs and two very fine ogee door heads. Diamond mortises for one ground floor window are visible. Floor joists are jointed with bare faced soffit tenons. The original roof remains with four braced crown post.

Adjoining on the east, is a further range with long wall jetty, of early 15th century date, with frame exposed internally, and a fine semi-circular headed entrance doorway. Roof is a simple two armed crown post. Large rear chimney stack, with extensive re-used 15th and 16th century material.

CART LODGE

Late 16th century timber framed cart lodge, with red plain tile gabled roof. Hay loft or tackle room over, supported on stop chamfered tie beams and hanging knees, fastened with forelock bolts.

BARN

Early 13th century, black weather-boarded and thatched 6 bay barn, largely rebuilt in 14th century and altered and re-roofed in 17th century. A number of original tie beams and main posts remain with mortises and chases for passing braces. Top plates have simple halved scarfs. Hipped midstrete.

Note

Colchester Borough Council recently placed a building preservation notice on the house. The Secretary of State has indicated that it is intended to list the building and confirmation of the listing is awaited.

Editor.

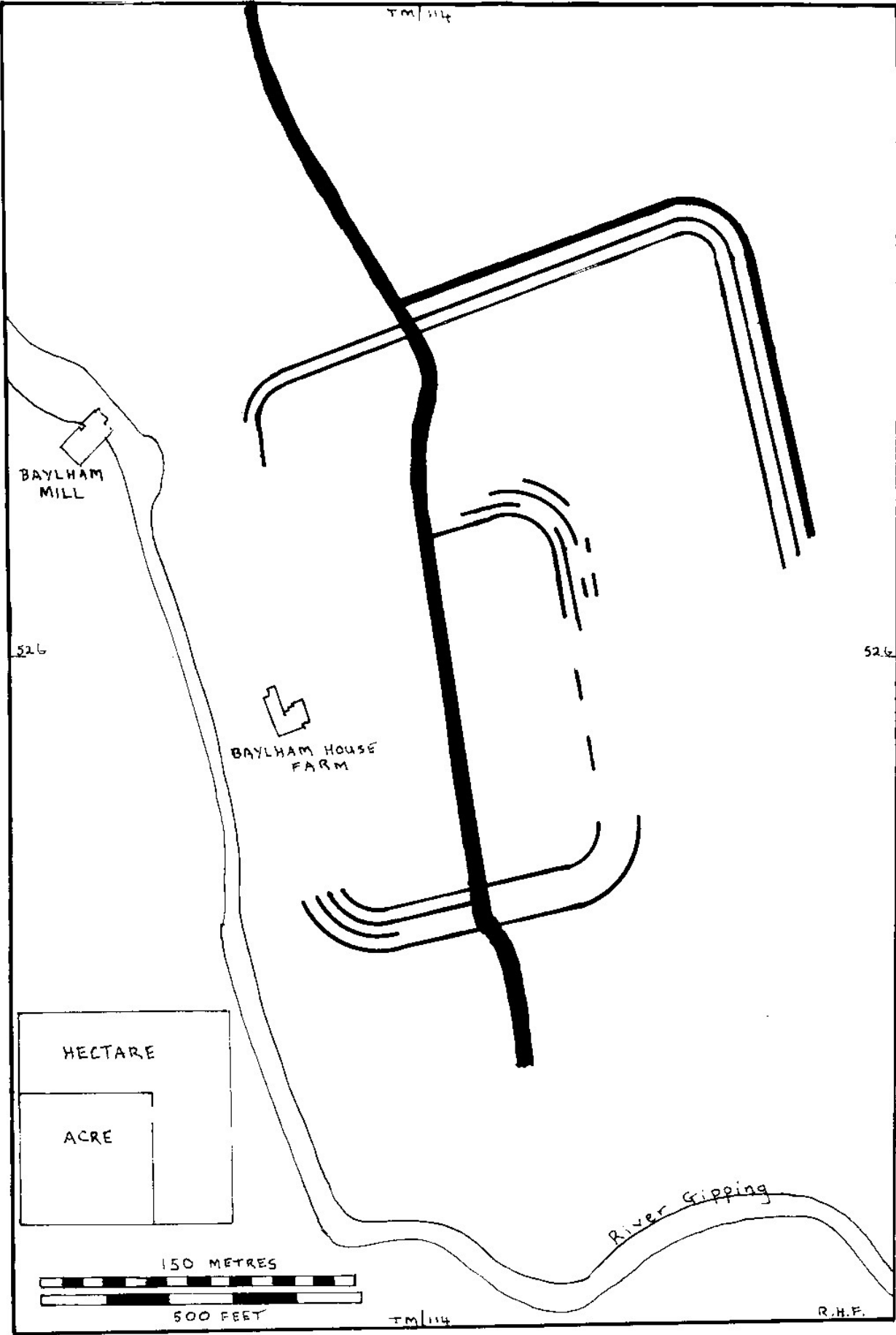
COMBRETUVIUM

R.H. Farrands

The wet spring and summer of 1978 was not conducive to the production of many cropmarks and results have been disappointing especially after a sequence of years in which outstanding results have been obtained. The site of Combretovium, where previous years' cropmarks (1,2,3,4,5) had indicated the existence of two possible Roman forts (TM 114526) where the Roman road from Norwich to London crosses the River Gipping(6,7), was no exception. No cropmarks were visible which was not surprising as the area is permanently under grass and only exceptionally dry conditions are likely to produce any results.

However, the year produced an unexpected bonus in the discovery of evidence from a source previously uninspected. During a visit in early May to the Ordnance Survey office at Ipswich to obtain an up to date 1/2500 map of the Combretovium area, an offer was made to inspect their aerial survey of the new A45 bypass which ran close east of the area. The vertical air survey of the line of the A45 had been carried

COMBRETOVIUM



out on the 5th and 21st July 1975 from a height of 7500 feet. The resulting prints had been enlarged to the scale of 1/2500 which made initial plotting for archaeological purposes very simple. Both surveys revealed astonishing cropmarks at Combretovium and indicated that the flights had, most fortunately, been taken during periods of drought producing parched grass.

The magnificent prints confirmed the outer enclosure as being triple ditched whilst the inner enclosure was that of a quadruple ditched area and not double ditched as previously thought. The inner quadruple ditched enclosure may now be classified, it is suggested, as a fort with an internal area of 2.43 ha (6 acres). The distance between the centres of the inner and outer ditches is some 16.7m whilst the interval length of the enclosed area is some 152.4m.

The evidence of the Ordnance Survey photographs showing the quadruple ditched fort confirms the suspicion of David Wilson, Committee for Aerial Photography, University of Cambridge. In 1977 he thought that the radii of the double ditched corner were so great that it inferred one, at least, if not two more ditches inside. He also thought that a 1961 photograph showed some slight evidence for two more inner ditches.

The Ordnance Survey photographs confirm the outer enclosure as being triple ditched which may indicate a fort or, if not, a road station. Unfortunately the new photographs appear to fail to give evidence for the return of the south side and its relation to the smaller fort thereby leaving open to question the relationship between the two enclosures both in form and in time.

The Ipswich museum has correspondence (8) from 1957 between Mr. Smedley, Curator at that time, and Mr. Rigold, Ministry of Works, and also in 1958 between Mr. Smedley and Mr. Phillips, Ordnance Survey, concerning an R.A.F. photograph showing a possible fort at Coddendam. The photograph showed evidence for the outer triple ditched enclosure but not the inner enclosure. Unfortunately the photograph is no longer in existence.

A letter of thanks dated 30 May 1979 was received from the Archaeological Branch of the Ordnance Survey at Southampton for pointing out the evidence on their photographs for a fort or forts at Coddendam and stating that this information would have the distinction of being the final addition before publication of the new edition of the Map of Roman Britain.

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NOTE ON A CROPMARK AT MOUNT BURES, ESSEX

Ida McMaster

During the course of aerial survey a linear double ditched crop mark has been observed on several occasions at TL 90683225 on land at Hall Farm, Mount Bures, Essex. It is not normal farming practice to have a ditch on each side of a hedge and most aerial archaeologists are familiar with the many single ditched crop marks which denote a removed field boundary/hedge line. Therefore the circumstances which produce this type of double feature seemed worth examining, especially since the north-west end is aligned towards the Motte vicinity. In addition, the south-east end, if projected 200m, arrives at a site (TL 90853180) where pottery of the 1-4th centuries, quern fragments also roof and hypocaust tiles are constantly noted. In the field adjoining to the north-east a Roman tile kiln was excavated.(1)

An old map of Mount Bures Hall estate of 1800 (in the writer's possession) shows a field boundary running along the line of the crop mark, but this had been removed by 1840 in order to take in surplus land from the construction of the railway which was cutting the field immediately to the east. These fields are all ancient demesne lands of the manor.

A 1m wide trench placed across the crop mark showed two ditches each 1.8m wide. Between them was a berm or now levelled bank measuring 1.9m across, which consisted of undisturbed natural gravel soil. The same undisturbed gravel occurred on the outer side of both ditches. The feature thus measured 5.5m overall.

The ditch on the east 1m deep had been infilled in one operation with clean top soil, no doubt during the 1840 reorganisation. The more shallow western ditch 0.8m deep was of very mixed soil and appeared much disturbed. However, at 0.45m depth flints appeared running across the width of the trench over the course of the ditch and these could be seen in each section, whether for post packing or root protection it was impossible to see. Whatever the ditch contained its construction or removal left a continuous feature. Had the bank space (or beret) between the two ditches been somewhat wider the appearance from the air would have been typical of an ancient trackway. A trackway probably incorporates drainage ditch, cartway and hedge, not necessarily two hedges.

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A POTTER'S HAND STAMP

Kath Evans

The potter's stamp illustrated on the bulletin cover was found on Hilly Fields, Colchester. It is now in the Castle Museum, (acc.no.11. 1957) and we are grateful for kind permission to reproduce it.

The stamp is mushroom shaped with a somewhat bossed or raised centre to fit the interior curve of a bowl. It is in strong relief and depicts Triton blowing a conch and the figure is so arranged that it approximately fits into a circular space. Hull (1) considers it typical of the work of the Colchester potters which, at times, had a fine disregard for detail and accuracy. For example, the disproportionate size of the hands. At the back of the stamp is an almost cylindrical handle and the whole is made of a particularly fine grained clay which is very hard.(2) One other such stamp with a leaf design is also preserved at Colchester and there is a possibility that a third was found though its whereabouts are not now known.

Method of using hand stamps

The stamps were used on moulds for decorated sigillata (samian ware). A mould to reach the sides of a bowl to the limit of any decoration on it was prepared in soft clay, and after turning but before drying, the stamp was impressed on the inner side of the mould. When the mould was fired, clay for the bowl was spun into the mould by the wheel, thus a positive version of the stamp was taken on to the outer surface of the bowl, the inner surface of which was finished by wheel. The mould was then left until its contents had shrunk sufficiently to be removed easily (some moulds had a central hole to facilitate this). Once removed from the mould the bowl was given a rim and a footring. Stamps and moulds could be used many times.

The Colchester samian kiln

Decorated sigillata was obviously produced at one kiln in Colchester (3) where characteristic moulds, and the tubes and potters' rings now recognised as belonging to the technical process of sigillata, were also found. Some 400 mould fragments were found; none of them were signed but Hull(4) says they are easily separated into two groups by marked differences in shape, use of clay and style of decoration, indicating that they were the work of two different potters. His impression is that both potters worked on the same site (not necessarily contemporaneously) because they used the same stamps and the same clay. Hull has designated them Potter A, over 50 of whose mould fragments have been recognised, they are thicker with a heavier beaded rim and a more rounded shape than those of Potter B. He produced a finer surface both inside and outside his bowls and his decoration is recognised particularly by the deep finely cut grooves close to the decorated zone at the bottom of the bowl. His work seems rather more sophisticated than Potter A's, maybe he was, in fact, his successor. Our stamp of Triton is undoubtedly the work of Potter A.

But in 1933 when the samian kiln was uncovered no trace of the stamp itself had been found, nor had its imprint on mould fragments been recognised. However, at least three pieces of the actual decorated ware were known.(5) It is of interest to compare the stamp itself with the impression on the decorated ware; obvious shrinkage has taken place in the drying and firing processes and the degree of relief and dimensions of the figure vary according to how deeply the stamp was impressed on the mould.

Some 25 pieces of decorated ware, which were undoubtedly the work of one man who Hull has called Potter C, have been found. Although he seems to have worked in Colchester none of his moulds have been found.

Native Samian ware in Britain

Most Samian ware found in Britain was imported from Gaul but imports virtually ceased at the end of the 2nd century (6) when the Gaulish industry was disrupted by war. By this period the Colchester kiln was active and its discovery confirms that such ware was produced here, though it is unlikely that the potters were native Britons. Hull (7) suggests the figures of men in the decoration are Roman in character, though the animals, vines and tendrils are in more native style. The industry was short-lived; Frere (8) thinks because the clay was unsuitable and the production poor - he does not say whether it was material or workmanship that cause poor production. Hull(9) writes that local clay was unsuitable and probably firing it was difficult, but Hartley(10) thinks the clay, which needed to contain the mineral illite to produce the glossy finish, was imported. So perhaps a regular supply was not possible. There is evidence of a small samian

ware industry in London, though probably later than at Colchester (11) and again the industry lasted only a short time.

The importance of Colchester pottery

Colchester was a flourishing centre for pottery manufacture and although the samian proved unsatisfactory many products were highly successful; for instance the mortaria which was supplied to the armies in Britain. There were many potters who were well organised and archaeological finds demonstrate their expertise. Dunnett(12) comments that Colchester pottery was different in various ways from that made in the south-east, even that produced as near as Chelmsford and Kelvedon.

As for the decorated sigillata, if this was first produced in Colchester, then perhaps Potter A's workshop was the first of its kind operating in Britain. Since the industry was so specialised and so short-lived and since only two of these unique hand stamps are known, the Triton stamp is of considerable archaeological significance - and a seemly symbol for our bulletin cover.

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ACCESS ROADS TO MERSEA ISLAND

A.A. Doorne

It is popularly believed that, in Roman times, the only means of communication with Mersea Island by land was the road we know today as the Strood. Local people, many of whom are descendants of families rooted in the past of this area, suggest that this belief may not be correct.

The contention is that there were at least three routes:

1. The present road known as the Strood.
2. The road, or rather what is now a footpath, from Langenhoe old village to East Mersea across the Pyefleet Channel which, it is said, was once known as the East Mersea Road.
3. From Peldon village along Newpots and Sampsons Lanes, across Ray Island and then to Mersea village (Ray Island is only separated from the mainland at very high tides. A footpath from the Strood across the marshes to Ray Island, though very muddy, is walkable at low tide).

These three routes are shown on the accompanying map, and there is evidence from various sources which supports their existence in the past.

Sea Level

It is certain that in the past the sea level was lower than it is today^(1,2) and that now the fleets and rivers have altered in width and depth. The coast line itself was probably very different and some of its features will have changed and settlements disappeared. Study of early maps indicates little change during the past 100 years though it is difficult to learn of changes in depth of the channels.

Documentary

Dr. Reaney,⁽³⁾ quoting from old documents, states that the Strood Channel was called Strodesflete in 1455. The Pyefleet Channel was known for part of its length as Pyefletmersch in 1378, but in 1683 it had become Pyefleet Creek. The eastern end was known as Brace Creek or Fleet and as Breste Fleet in 1577.

The change of name from Pyefletmersch to Creek suggests that the western end of the Pyefleet Channel may have been more of a tidal marsh than it is today, with a narrower channel. It is therefore possible that somewhere in this area there was a track to East Mersea.

Etymological

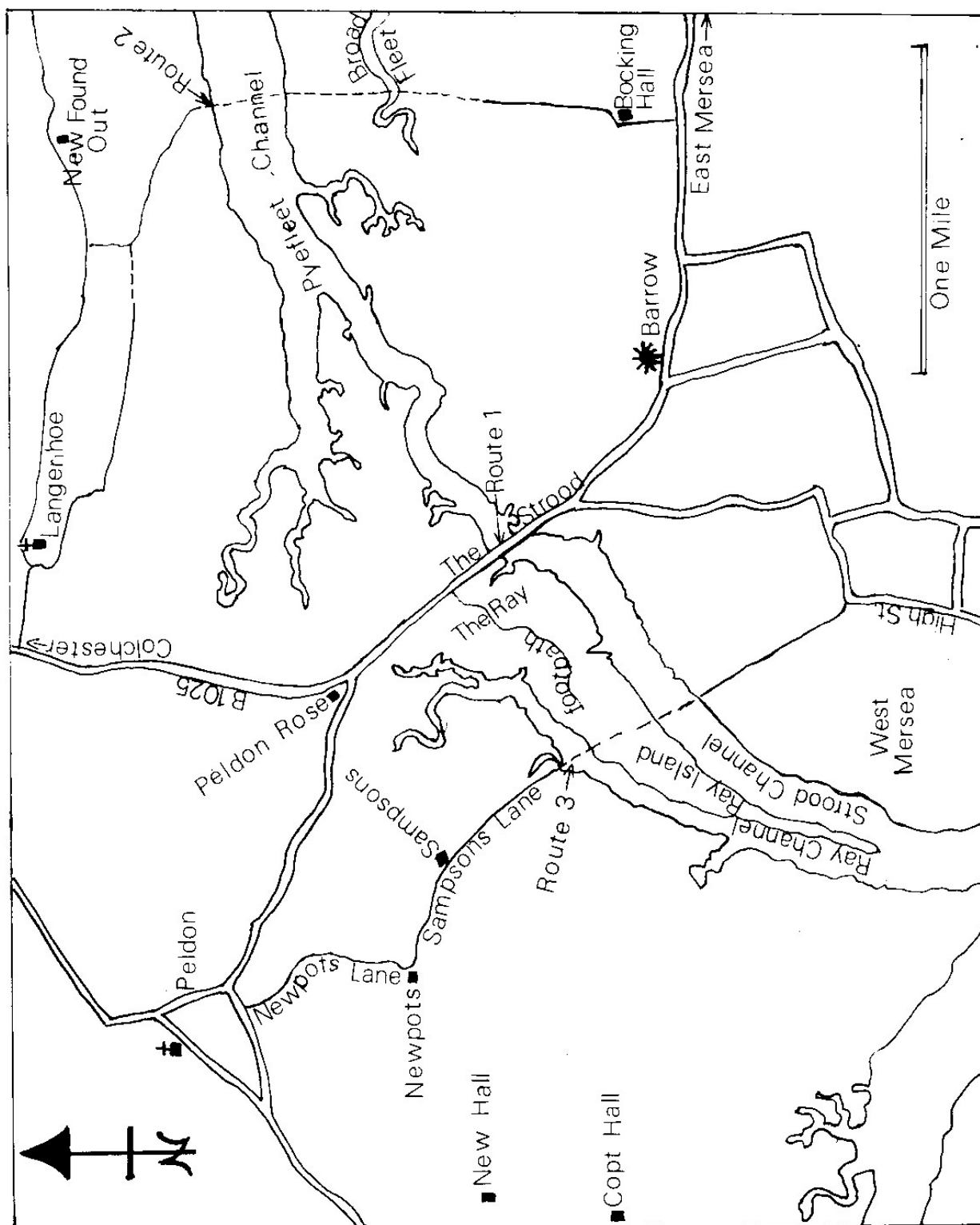
The word Strood is derived from the old English word Strod meaning "marshy land overgrown with brushwood."⁽⁴⁾ If, however, it could mean "marshy land covered with brushwood" it might be a description of a manmade causeway. Such a description could well apply to each of the three suggested routes.

Causeway building

It is suggested that where the Romans had to negotiate marshy ground they laid the 'r roads on embankments or causeways constructed of piles and timber.⁽⁵⁾ However, in the Netherlands where Celtic races were at one time the indigenous population, defences against the sea were constructed of crude clay and sand banks, occasionally protected by wooden stakes. Therefore, if the causeways across to Mersea Island were pre-Roman, one might expect to find evidence of such banks. However, the Romans were apparently responsible for much of the dyke construction in the Netherlands, giving us the basic type of construction seen today. The use of brushwood mats appears to belong to a later period when the sea began to encroach.⁽⁶⁾

In 1978 the laying of water pipes across the Strood exposed large old piles about 2m below the present day road surface, road building material actually below the piles was only about 0.25-0.50m in depth. Because the road has been thought to be of Roman origin it was postulated that the piles might also be Roman and one of them is being dated by dendrochronology.⁽⁷⁾ However, as recently as 1868 the West Mersea council bought 1000 piles, so the dating of the piles will be of great interest.

ACCESS ROADS TO MERSEA ISLAND



Route 1 - The Strood

If the present Strood was a Roman road and had a name, then this like many other road names is not known. There is no real evidence that it is, or was, a Roman road though Crummy (8) comments that because it is straight and, in the absence of a known earlier alternative, it has been assumed to be Roman. There is certainly a Romano-British Barrow nearby (see map).

C.R. Hart (9) suggests that in Saxon or Norman times the Strood was known as Dereman's Strete (also Deramy's Strete), after a one time Lord of the Manor of Pete (Peet). The use of the word Strete by Saxon and early settlers may indicate the existence of a paved way, but the author has been unable to discover any evidence of paving.

During its long history the Strood has withstood severe batterings from storms and high tides.(10,11) The present tarmacadamed surface must be recent as it was not until Macadam returned from America in 1783 that macadamising became the recognised method of road surfacing and even then it was not tarred. Surface movement must have taken place, and tides still flood the causeway several times each month, so that items lost by travellers may have found their way into the mud on either side of the present road. It is even possible that the remains of wrecked wagons, their loads and passengers may also be found in the mud. Should finds be made they must be interpreted with caution because over the years material has been brought from elsewhere to make up the road. According to local talk, as late as the 1930's, stone was brought from the Pitfield, Abberton. Pitfield is adjacent to Woodfield where, in 1933, a Roman cemetery was excavated, and the late owner of a house there claims that he turned up many glass urns and much pottery long after the original excavation was finished. It may be that even in Pitfield there could have been artefacts which were carried in the loads of stone to the Strood. Any finds will have to be considered with these facts in mind.

Route 2 - The Langenhoe Causeway

Langenhoe is a well known deserted medieval village site and an early church was destroyed in the earthquake of 22 April 1884. Unfortunately the site of the causeway is no longer accessible to the public or archaeological bodies. The only body to have access is the Department of Defence and no report of archaeological remains on their property has been found to exist. However local people are said to have seen the old road at times when the tides had scoured the mud. It is suggested (12) that the road was paved - although this is unusual. The field through which the path runs at Langenhoe is named Quay Field; the date of naming is not known although it seems earlier than 1838, and other field names in the area indicate considerable age.

Although there is no clear indication in East Mersea that the lane or road continued on that shore, it is interesting to note that it would line up very nearly with the lane to Bocking Hall.

If this route from Langenhoe was a paved way, was C.R. Hart mistaken and, in fact, this is Dereman's Strete.

Route 3 - The Causeway from Peldon village across Ray Island(13)

It seems fairly certain that the main road from Colchester to West Mersea in Roman Times was not the present road. It probably ran along the line of the Berechurch Dyke to Abberton Church, then due south towards Peldon. It seems likely that this will be proved on the evidence available.

From Peldon village the route seems to follow the line of Newpots Lane, along Sampsons Lane (which is at right angles to Newpots) along the edge of the creek to a point opposite Ray Island. It can be picked up again on Ray Island, then through Strood Channel to West Mersea, where today it becomes a footpath to High Street North. In 1923 a gravel road and ditch were located probably along this footpath and about 60 yards to the west of the High Street; (14) at the time it was not considered Roman. Crummy (15) suggests that because of the position of Roman finds, the line of the Roman road may cross the present High Street. If the route up from Ray Island went more or less directly to the Roman Mausoleum (which may also have been used as a lighthouse) it would in fact cross the High Street.

An old inhabitant told me some years ago that the line of the road across the Strood Channel can still be seen at certain states of the tide, and that it was used at low tide by horse and tumbrel (16) up to about 100 years ago.

The route from Peldon across Ray Island seems to be the most logical route to West Mersea, particularly when one considers that there have been finds of the Roman period on the Peldon side, on Ray Island and on West Mersea itself, all apparently approximately along the line of the suggested road. The right angle turn at Newpots and Sampsons Lanes may suggest Roman origin and the existence of a building thought to have been used as a lighthouse at West Mersea suggests the presence of a port there.

Conclusions

There is considerable evidence for the presence of three routes to Mersea Island but also considerable difficulty in deciding whether any one of them could have been the Roman road. But are we right in assuming that there was only one crossing point? It might be interesting to consider if there were three or more, why only one exists today and this question provides an opportunity for more detailed study in the future.

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- 14 & 15. Crummy, P. op. cit. 9 above
16. Tumbriel - local name for two-wheeled cart which usually had large wheels - diameter about 4', in use up to 1930, also used by Essex County Council then.

1978 CROPMARKS

R.H. Farrands

Due to the very wet spring and early summer of 1978, cropmarks relating to archaeological sites were very sparse. However, where they did appear, reasonable results were obtained. The following list is of such cropmarks that have not been seen in previous years or recorded in issues of the C.A.G. Annual Bulletin:

Barham, Suffolk	TM 136521	Irregular ring ditch. Ditches of an earlier field system.
Beaumont-cum-Moze, Essex	TM 17802440	Small ring ditch.
Bradfield, Essex	TM 126292	Irregular shaped complex enclosure.
Bucklesham, Suffolk	TM 240414	This year one of two adjacent ditched square enclosures photographed in previous years, revealed a ring ditch disposed centrally inside. This ditched square has an entrance mid-length on the east side. Length of side 46m and ring ditch a diameter of 18m, approx. <u>C.A.G.</u> 18 (1975) 24.
Erwarton, Suffolk	TM 24124182	Ring ditch.
	TM 22793472	Ring ditch.
	TM 215355	Part of a ditched circular enclosure. Ditches of an earlier field system.
Harkstead, Suffolk	TM 19423413	Large polygonal ditched enclosure with entrance. Small internal enclosure abutting main ditch.
	TM 19603609	Additional ring ditch to group of three photographed in previous years. <u>C.A.G.</u> 18 (1975) 24
	TM 197363	Ring ditch and ditched trackway.
	TM 20153478	Ring ditch.
Kirton, Suffolk	TM 27924030	Small ovate.
Lawford, Essex	TM 08882938	Small sub-rectangular enclosure
	TM 09502070	Small ring ditch.
Nacton, Suffolk	TM 22383977	Small ring ditch.
St. Osyth, Essex	TM 12251700	Two further lengths of twin ditched straight road leading to settlement. Probably Roman. <u>C.A.G.</u> 21 (1978) 26.
	TM 12001675	Part of large rectangular enclosure.
	TM 11731854	Ditched circular enclosure of some 120m diam. cut by road from Kellands Farm to main road from Colchester to St. Osyth.
Shotley, Suffolk	TM 22143596	Part of rectangular enclosure with entrance. A ring ditch contained within the enclosure
	TM 240364	Ditched field system and trackway
Tendring, Essex	TM 151238	Further two ring ditches visible this year bringing total of group to eight. Cropmarks were in a field of peas where erect green plants contrasted vividly with those in a seared and drooping condition. <u>C.A.G.</u> 19 (1976) 23
	TM 147230	600m length of straight parallel ditches on a bearing of 100/280 deg.
Thorrington, Essex	TM 103198	Trackway and ditches of an earlier field system

RESCUE DIG AT THE KING'S HEAD, "POLLESBURY OCTOBER 1979

Kay de Brisay

Mr. Terry Clark, the proprietor of the King's Head, Tollesbury, invited the Group to put down a trench in the small garden to the east of this establishment and separated from it by the car park. The garden was due to be reinstated and the offer was eagerly accepted as there was a possibility that traces of early occupation might be found at the lowest level. In fact this was never reached. With safety there was only room for a trench 3.0m long, north - south, 1.5m wide. The fill was soft garden loam which was excavated to a depth of more than 2m with no result other than a series of Victorian and Edwardian rubbish pits. Amongst the finds from the pits were five complete and several fragments of glass lemonade bottles with glass ball stoppers, all marked 'MARKHAM, MALDON'; a stone ginger beer bottle; several medicine bottles; one poison bottle in blue glass marked 'Not to be Taken'; fragments of several glass bottles of all sizes, some with air bubbles in the glass; many tins; the remains of nine oil stoves one of which was marked on the regulator handle 'Beatrice Registered Oil Stove No. 157885'; a tin kettle; about 1 cwt of pottery sherds half of which were blue and white Willow pattern; part of a white china fruit stand; a white china base sherd with 'Rd. No. 165' fired on in blue; the head of a small chine dog; a metal tea spoon; two marbles; several clay pipe stems and four bowls, one decorated with fluting and rosettes, three with initials of the makers - 'G.C.' - '? H.' and 'J.J.' - the last identified as J. Jennings of George Lane, Colchester, mentioned in Benham's Directory of 1886. One coin was found - a halfpenny of George V dated 1912.

We are grateful to Mr. Clark for the opportunity to investigate the centre of Tollesbury and it was unfortunate that, in such a small area, it was impracticable to deepen the trench further and we hope another chance may occur so that we can, at least, determine the complete depth of the occupation levels.

BONFIRE FIRING

Kay de Brisay

For some time there has been considerable controversy about the method employed by Iron Age and Romano-British man to make and fire the artefacts and equipment used in the manufacture of salt from sea water. From recent excavations at Osea Road⁽¹⁾ and Peldon⁽²⁾ it seems feasible to accept the theory that the sea water was first evaporated in large clay-lined tanks and the brine thus obtained crystallized over gentle heat. Excavation has proved that the basic requirements for this would have been open or enclosed hearths⁽³⁾, pedestals, fire-bars⁽⁴⁾ and containers⁽⁵⁾ for the brine and salt; other individual variations would, of course, evolve according to local custom. It was therefore decided to conduct a controlled experiment in an attempt to reproduce briquetage similar to the original.

A substantial amount of the blue basic clay was obtained from the Tollesbury Red Hill. This was soaked in fresh water for four weeks; it was then spread out on an old sheet on a sloping surface and large stones and other visible impurities were removed. A bundle of straw was chopped up into 5mm pieces and, when drained, the straw was added and the whole was thoroughly kneaded together. From this the following pottery was made:- a rectangular container with a thick base on a pallet of sticks and the sides added by coiling; a round shallow dish; a long shaped auget and a small pedestal. These were left to dry off in an out-house for two weeks. A collection of old fruit boxes was made for fuel and a hearth made by digging into an existing bonfire mound consisting of a circular hearth 2m in diameter and 0.2m in depth leaving a low wall all round except on the windward side where a funnel shaped channel was left for ventilation. Preparation for firing was made thus:

1. Layer of crumpled newspaper across the entire floor
2. Layer of twigs and small sticks
3. Layer of straw
4. The pottery (upside down)
5. A layer of hay and hedge cuttings
6. A layer of twigs and sticks

Firing started at 9.30 am; this was slow and smoky. Chopped up boxes were added at 10.00 am and the fire began to blaze; then whole fruit boxes were added and a full blaze maintained till 12.45 pm when it was allowed to die down. At 6.30 pm the ash was sufficiently cool to allow the pottery to be removed. This was found to be black and very hard with only a few pale pink patches and there was no sign of lacunae to

show where the straw admixture had burnt out. Clearly this experiment must be judged a failure mainly due to the exclusion of oxygen.

With the view of a second attempt more blue clay was collected from Tollesbury Red Hill and some uncut wheat from a field on Old Hall marsh. The clay was puddled as before; the wheat grains were extracted and the stalks and straw chopped up and added to the clay and the whole was drained and kneaded. When the clay was ready the following were made:-

A rectangular container 23 x 20cm and a shallow 'cream pan' dish diameter 26cm, both on pallets of sticks; a pedestal height 24cm and a fire-bar 37cm long; an auget; two small bowls diameter 10cm; two salt moulds⁽⁶⁾ and a little thumb pot. These were completed on 25 August and left to dry in a ventilated outhouse as before, the different faces being exposed to the air in turn. Meanwhile a wire grill divided into 5cm squares was found. This was placed across the top of the original hearth and the sides reinforced by two iron bars. This left a space beneath of 0.2cm with the ventilation tunnel on the windward side. The briquetage was placed on the grid with the containers and bowls right way up this time and the pedestal and fire-bars on their sides. Firing also followed the same pattern but, on this occasion, the fuel was placed on the floor under the grid with some encircling the briquetage on top of it. The fire was lit at 10.00 am at the lowest level and fed sparsely for the first hour. Fuel was gradually increased until, by 11.30 am, a full blaze was going. This was maintained till 12.30 pm and then allowed to die down. At no time was there any smoke. It was found that the wind blew away the ashes from the grid on which the briquetage was lying so that it cooled more quickly than on the previous occasion and it was possible to handle it by 2.30 pm.

There was a marked improvement in the results; the clay had achieved a satisfactory red colour, except for a few dark patches on the lower sides; the wheat grain and straw had burned out leaving authentic lacunae and the pallets of sticks produced the required wattling effect. The control of the temperature seems to be the main problem - how to produce a clean smokeless flame with enough heat adequately to fire the clay. The surfaces generally seemed to be too hard and too smooth but perhaps burial in salt-impregnated earth for 2,000 years would remedy this.

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3. ibid 40
4. ibid 41-43
5. ibid 49-50
- 6, de Brisay, K. A Red Hill at Tollesbury, Essex C.A.G. Bulletin 21 (1978) 8

AERIAL PHOTOGRAPHY - Preliminary report

The 1979 programme has produced reasonable results after a somewhat slow start. Of particular interest is the continuous north east hedge-line which travels from the vicinity of the earthworks at High Woods, Colchester. This line appears to extend further eastwards along the substantial hedge which forms the entire boundary of Ardleigh. The hedge is then lost in the orchards at Good Hall TM 060307. Only a short distance separates that point from the course of the ancient trackway, or ranch boundary, which is now known to traverse the major part of the Ardleigh complex. The latter trackway is also seen to be continued by an existing lane through Home Faint TM 062298.

Several other interesting cropmarks have been observed and will be reported in due course.

BY THE LIGHT OF THE MIDNIGHT SUN

G.M.R. Davies

Some attention has been paid recently to Colchester's proud claim to be "Britain's oldest recorded town", as expressed on the roadside notice-boards that greet visiting motorists with a certain eye-catching candour. Detailed analysis and critical interpretation of this bold, and to some presumptuous, assertion may seem desirable in the interests of accurate scholarship. However, there is a grave danger of it being taken much too seriously with the net result, after a lot of wasted effort, that its simple message is sadly misconstrued, while its true origins are totally overlooked.

One writer for whom the phrase not surprisingly became a "wearisome canard",⁽¹⁾ has gone so far as to define the meaning of "recorded" in historical terms and to categorize the different types of settlement from the Greek and Latin words used by ancient authors. After considering the literary evidence he chooses to conclude that the "oldest, recorded town" in Britain is "the promontory of Belerion", (1a) which is generally thought to be the Lands End peninsula. This conclusion, however, is supported by no archaeological evidence or authority, though it does concur with the Guinness Book of Records. Nevertheless, such a theory may be discussed elsewhere as it has no relevance to the present case; likewise the second rating before Colchester of Verulamium, despite its being worthy of further consideration by reason of the VER coin evidence.

Among other views expressed on the subject it has been confidently asserted that "the phrase was coined as a tourist advertisement in the 1930s".⁽²⁾ So it may have been, but is that the whole story? A quick glance at the cover of Benham's Guide to Colchester (18th edition, 1932) clearly reveals that it must have derived from the following:

"There is no town in Great Britain that can compare with Colchester in the fact that it is the oldest recorded town that we know of at all in these realms".

These words are attributed to Sir Henry Howarth, DCL, FRS, FS A, and a pre-war illustrated map of Colchester, on which they also appear, gives the date for this quotation as July 1902 when he was president of the Royal Archaeological Institute of Great Britain.

At that time historical information recorded by the classical authors was of almost singular importance since the scientific results of more recent archaeological excavations were not yet available as a complementary source. Even when archaeological evidence was beginning to be unearthed about Camulodunum in the early 1930s, Sir Gurney Benham preferred to start his narrative:

"Colchester can claim to be the oldest recorded town in Great Britain. It occupies the site of the British Camulodunum, mentioned by Tacitus (c55-120AD), Suetonius (c80-140AD), and by Cassius Dio (c150-235AD), the Roman historians".

To compose a piquant phrase that sums up the history of any town or a major phase of its past is difficult enough even for the most practised verbal juggler. Once expressed, it is likely by reason of its brevity to give ample opportunity for criticism, especially if there is any suspicion of an exaggeration. The opening lines of Jarrold's Guide to Colchester (1910) were obviously presumptuous and needed some modification:

"Colchester, the oldest town in England, recognized by all the historians as the Oppidum of the Trinobantes, and half a century later as the royal town of Cunobelin, the Cymbeline of Shakespeare; the first town which the Romans built in Britain, was founded by Claudius about 50 AD, in commemoration of his victory at this place which made him ruler of the South of England. This ancient stronghold was known as Camulodunum".

However, the claim that Colchester is "Britain's oldest recorded town" does basically hold good if appreciated in the proper context of its origin and usage. In origin it reflects an almost flattering assessment of the earliest relevant historical references, and nowadays its use seeks to give visitors an appetizing summary of the town's more glorious past, at the same time displaying some measure of native and adopted Colcestrians' pride in their local heritage.

Nevertheless, to the discerning archaeologist any such assumed or attributed distinction is of little relevance and, as a simple fact, is about as useful as knowing the current market value of the Colchester

Vase, since it is the actual evidence and its significance that is pricelessly useful to him. Rather than criticizing the validity of this trite familiarity, it would thus be much more profitable for those who are genuinely interested in the subject to study all the primary evidence that prompted the remark.

"Why did Claudius make Camulodunum the initial goal of his invading army in AD 43?" "Why was this of all the British oppida so important and how significant was subsequent Roman and native occupation at Colchester, particularly just after the conquest?" These are the most obvious questions that ought to come to mind, whose answers lie in Professor S.S. Frere's pertinent summary:

"It may be hard nowadays to picture Colchester as the capital of Britain; but it is a fact that for a hundred years either side of the beginning of our era developments at Colchester hold a crucial importance for any understanding of the history of our country at that period, and all that we can learn of them by archaeological exploration must be eagerly pursued." (3)

All three of the classical authors mentioned above refer to Colchester while describing events that occurred during the first twenty years of Roman occupation. The latest of them, Dio Cassius (AD 155-240) chronicles the earliest events; the Roman invasion of Britain in AD 43 culminating in Claudius' capture of Camulodunum, which is identified as the capital of Cunobelin.(4) Unfortunately the account of the first six years of Claudius' emperorship that C. Cornelius Tacitus (AD 55-c120) wrote in his Annals have not survived, though he did otherwise manage to leave the most information about Roman Britain. Mention of Colchester occurs three times in the Annals - once relating to the colony's foundation in AD 49 (colonia Camulodunum), (5) and twice in his account of its destruction in the Boudiccan rebellion of AD 60 (colonia Camulodunum, (6) Camuloduni(7)). In the Agricola he merely calls it 'colonia' in both contexts. (8)

C. Suetonius Tranquillus (cAD 75-150), who wrote the Lives of the Twelve Caesars, does not actually name Camulodunum, but he does obliquely refer to it in his biography of Claudius when recounting how the emperor staged, on the Campus Martius in Rome, the realistic storm and sack of an 'oppidum' and the surrender of the Kings of Britain.(9) Another literary source, the geographer Ptolemy (Claudius Ptolemaeus) writing in Greek c.AD 150 mentions "the Trinovantes amongst whom is the city of Camulodunum".(10)

There are still further sources, including inscriptions,(11) but the earliest author known from extant works to have referred to Colchester by name is Pliny the Elder (C. Plinius Secundus, b.AD 23) who in his Natural History says of the midnight sun:-

"They even say it can be seen in Mona (Anglesea) which is about 200 miles from Camulodunum, a town in Britain".(12)

It may be that this distance was known from the campaign of Suetonius Paulinus in AD 60, though it is interesting that Pliny uses the word 'oppidum', referring to the native town, rather than 'colonia', the Roman colony, to describe Camulodunum.

As it happens, 1979 marks the nineteenth centenary of the death of Pliny the Elder who was asphyxiated while on naval duty during the eruption of Vesuvius on 24 August, AD 79. A graphic account of this catastrophe and Pliny's demise was given by his nephew, Pliny the Younger(13) in two letters sent to an older contemporary, the historian Tacitus, whose father-in-law, Cn. Julius Agricola, was serving with great distinction as governor of Britain in AD 78-84. Agricola's appointment had been authorized by the emperor Vespasian, himself no stranger to Britain,(14) who died two months earlier than Pliny on 24 June, AD 79.

These anniversaries deserve some recognition, and under the circumstances this is perhaps not an inappropriate time for the title of "Britain's Oldest Recorded Town" to be recognised for what it really is so that Colchester's true archaeological precedence may be duly appreciated.

Notes

1. Roberts, F. Colchester Mythology in Essex Archaeological News, Winter 1978, 15-16. See also Colchester Myths - a Reply in op. cit., Summer 1979, 13-14.
- la. The friendliest of its inhabitants, who prepared tin and imported it to the Island of Ictis, is described by Diodorus Siculus (v.22) writing in the mid 1st century BC with reference to the explorations of Pytheas in c.330 BC.
2. Rodwell, W. Colchester Mythology - A Comment in op. cit., Spring 1979, 14-15. See also Clarke, D. Colchester - The Same Old Story, op. cit. Spring 1979, 15.
3. Frere, S.S. Introduction in Crummy, P.J., Not Only a Matter of Time, 1975, 3.

4. Dio Cassius History of Rome ix, 19-23
5. Tacitus Annales xii, 32.
6. Tacitus Annales xiv, 31.
7. Tacitus Annales xiv, 32.
8. Tacitus Agricola, 14 and 16.
9. Suetonius Divus Claudius, 17. This agrees with the account given by Dio Cassius (see Note 4 above).
10. Ptolemy Geography, ii, 3, 22.
11. For a full list of sources see Clarke, D.T.-D., and Davies, G.M.R., Roman Colchester (forthcoming).
12. Pliny Naturalis Historia, ii, 187. What is noteworthy here is that this passing reference to Camulodunum is the oldest surviving historical mention of a British town by name.
13. C. Pliny Epistularum V1, 16; V1, 20.
14. Vespasian's part in the invasion of Britain as legate of Legio II Augusta, is described in Dio Cassius, History of Rome, ix, 20; and Suetonius, Divus Vespasianus, 4

LOCAL FINDS

Four recent finds are described and illustrated as follows:

THREE AXES

1. A Mesolithic transept axe(1) illustrated Fig. 1a was found in topsoil close to the north bank of the River Blackwater. The site is just below the 30m contour at TL 85131712 and lies half a kilometre north-east of the Neolithic long barrow cropmark site at TL 84751670(2).

The axe measuring 14.0cm in length and 2.8cm in width at the thickest point is of dark grey flint with some lighter patches. The natural surface of the flint, the white cortex, remains in traces on one side only, at the more pointed end and at the waist. The place where it would have been hafted is obvious.

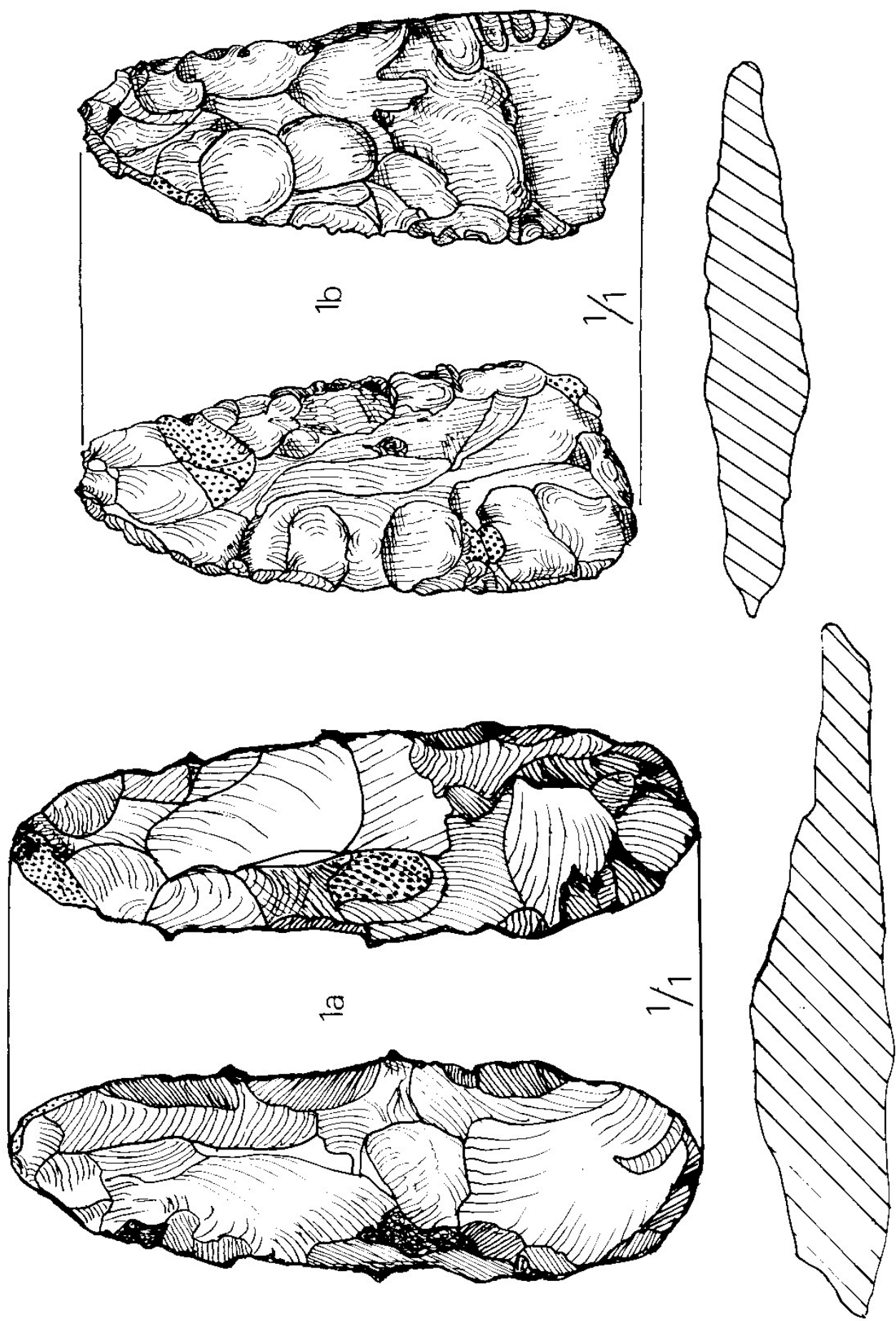
2. The Neolithic axe, illustrated fig. 1b, was found on the surface of cultivated land at TM 192213 to the north-east of Holland Brook and Thorpe Park (3). The flint is of orange mottled appearance, part polished and thin butted with the cutting edge broken in antiquity. Three minor traces of cortex remain; all on the same face on the cutting edge near the pointed end, and at one side. The axe measures 11.4cm in length and is 10.5cm at its widest.

3. The Neolithic polished axe(4) is the third(5) implement of that period to be found at TL 90923255, and as before was revealed after ploughing, in this case Autumn 1978.

The axe measuring 15.0cm in length and 2.5cm wide is re-produced here at approximately 3/4 scale (fig 1c). Only a small portion of the cutting end has been lost, probably in antiquity. The pointed end shows signs of use although the polish of the creamy mottled flint is of the usual high workmanship.

References

1. Found by Mr. Barry Bonner at Hole Farm, Kelvedon and now in his possession.
2. McMaster, I. Cropmarks C.A.G. Bulletin 19 (1976) 22
3. Found by Mr. Tony Bonner whilst beagling in the autumn of 1976 and now in his possession.
4. Found by Mr. W. McMaster at Hall Farm, Mount Bures and now in his possession. The photograph is his own.
5. C.A.G. Bulletin 13 (1970)2, 35. description in local finds, and McMaster I. and Farrands, R.H. Cropmarks in the Year of the drought. C.A.G. Bulletin 20, (1977) 18.



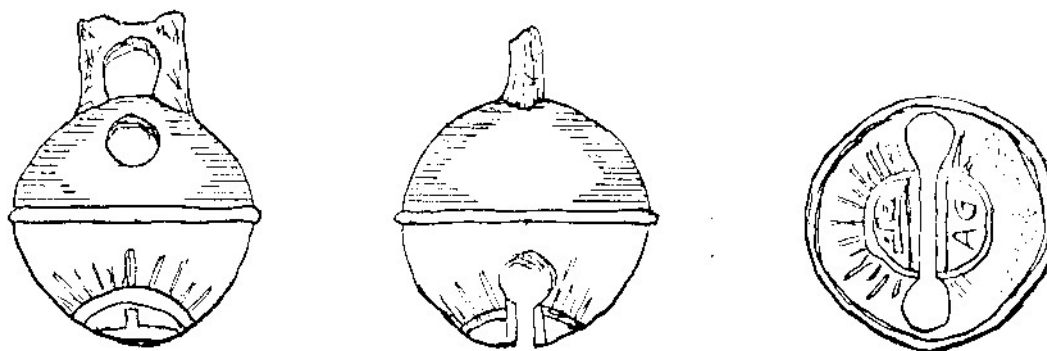


1c

4. A SHEEP OR HARNESS BELL

The small globular or crotal bell illustrated over, (fig.2, below) was found in a field belonging to Mr. C.A. Partner of Easthorpe.

In addition four badly damaged bells of apparently identical design were found in the same place. The complete example has a diameter and height of 3.3cm; there is a raised ring round the centre and the base is decorated on either side of the slot with a 'T' shaped mark on one side and the letters 'A.G.' on the other. One side of the bell is notably smoother as if it had been constantly rubbing against another surface; probably the animal wearing it or the harness to which it was attached.



K. de B.

Made of bronze, such bells were in common use during the 18th and 19th centuries and more often carried the initials 'R.W.' standing for Robert Wells, the well-known bell-founder, who began making them for churches, horses and sheep in 1760 at Albourne in Wiltshire. The foundry continued to use his mark until it was taken over in the 1820's by the Whitechapel Bell Foundry which still uses the same patterns today.

Rumbler bells were in sets of eleven sizes ranging in diameter from 2.5 to 9.0cm which could be tuned to cover two chromatic octaves. These were often split up and used singly in which case they could be attached to the harness of pack-horses or to the bell-wether or leader of a flock of sheep.

It is interesting to note that the field in which these bells were found is immediately contiguous to what was once a Roman road which, no doubt, has been in constant use ever since.

A similar bell was found at Mucking in a modern ditch, and we record our grateful thanks to Mr. and Mrs. Jones who kindly supplied all the above information and from whom further references can be obtained.

WINTER MEETINGS 1978 - 79

Roman Shipwrecks - 23 October - Dr. A.J. Parker, University of Bristol

Nearly all the Roman wrecks were of cargo vessels the build of which has been pictured on monuments and mosaics, sometimes with harbour and lighthouse. Usually the vessel would be divided into three sections; in the stern a high-roofed hut for the storage of the anchor, tools and stores; the main cargo amidships and a cabin in the bow for the crew. Motive power was by sail, though sometimes oars were used.

Dr. Parker described modern methods of underwater excavation; a photogrammetric frame for plotting finds; a submerged rest house at working level and another halfway up for decompression both fitted with compressed air and telephone.

Much of the cargoes were in amphorae; these had been found stacked upright with signs of contemporary plundering at the highest level before a mat of eel grass had grown over the top. Contents of wine, oil or fish paste were often found intact in amphorae, the inside walls of which being painted with pitch to render them impermeable and the cork stopper, which carried the name of the maker, cemented in place. The total number of wine amphorae recovered so far represents a cargo of 400 tons from over 500 cargo vessels dating from 300 BC to AD 450.

Other cargoes include Shantu yellow marble from North Africa, white marble from Asia Minor, building stone, pottery including domestic ware, Saurian and 'Ken Green' colour-coated ware from Southern Spain, coins and metal accessories such as buckles, drinking cups, leather skins and tin ingots.

Inter-continental trade was by river barge which travelled on the main river trade routes such as the Rhine and Danube, connected by smaller rivers; troops were also moved by this method.

Ships were constructed by planks laid edge-to-edge held in place by strakes which were nailed on; the whole caulked with lead or moss and painted with pitch. Small boats were made out of dug-out tree trunks. Dr. Parker mentioned a Bronze Age coin of Cunobelin found recently in Canterbury which bore the picture of a sailing ship.

Southern Britain and the London area - an unstable crust and changing sea level - 30 October - Mr. C.E. Everard, MSC FGS Queen Mary College, London.

In this lecture the vagaries of the sea and its effect on the land were vividly illustrated. Tectonic and eustatic forces influence the irregular surfaces of the great oceans, which in turn, produce local, regional and global changes. Although it is generally accepted today that the land is sinking, particularly on the eastern side of Britain, many other factors contribute to this such as the quantity of water in the seas at any one time due to the freezing or melting of the ice masses; the lunar cycle of 18.6 and the solar cycle of 10.6; volcanic action on the sea bed; atmospheric pressure and storm surges. But the degree and extent of the level of variation is uncertain, though the Atlantic is said to be widening by 2cm a year. If one compares the known tide level at London Bridge in 1791 with that of today, it would appear to be 7cm higher each century but the

consensus of opinion seems to put it at 20 to 30cm a century. However, other factors have to be taken into consideration such as coastal embanking, land reclamation, drainage schemes and the scouring of rivers. All of which makes it very difficult for the archaeologist when considering aspects of man's settlement and land occupation. It seems that the only reasonable assessment of land sinkage is that of Dr. Tooley who is engaged in a comparative survey of archaeological coastal sites where the date of inception and abandonment are known. This survey is expected to be completed by 1982.

The excavation of a prehistoric and Saxon settlement at Bishopstone, Sussex - 6 November - Mr. Martin Bell, Institute of Archaeology.

The talk was on the small hilltop settlement of Rookery Hill, which has seen continuous occupation from Neolithic to Saxon times. Early Iron Age occupation was unenclosed but later a roughly square enclosure of one hectare with two simple entrances was surrounded by a small ditch. Settlement in the southern part of this enclosure consisted of pits and the usual groupings of two, four and six post, but no round houses. Outside the ditch was a field system of positive and negative lynchets containing neolithic tools, flints and flint flakes. Three skeletons were found on the perimeter. The ditch had silted up by the time a late Iron Age settlement was established in the northern half of the enclosure. This continued into the Romano-British period. A mixed farm was in operation at this time evidenced by the mass of animal bones and carbonised plant remains, a C14 date of 270 BC has been obtained. There were traces of bonfire firing and also clay ovens; the clay linings of which contained eocene molluscs which must have come from an outlier of the Reading Beds which are restricted to Sussex. Four thick salt-making vessels with rectangular fire-bars and pedestals indicated salt making, and clay loom weights and spindle whorls added to the picture of a comprehensive, self-supporting community. The fields surrounding the settlement bore this out with evidence of manuring with dung and seaweed. Cultivation continued into the Saxon period after which it ceased.

The History of Woods and Settlements - 13 November - Dr. Oliver Rackham, University of Cambridge.

A welcome return visit by Dr. Rackham produced a full house to hear his paper. He divided woods into five categories; special plantings, parks consisting of trees and pasture created originally to keep herds of deer for meat, Royal forests, hedges - usually of medieval date - and abandoned open spaces. Pollen analysis is used to trace the origin of trees. Hayley Wood, near Cambridge (now National Trust) is being used as an experimental model for arboriculture. Coppicing, where trees are cut back to a stool just above ground level, produces poles from the new growth for use as gates and fencing. Sometimes the height of the cut is increased so that growth is out of reach of browsing deer. In medieval times oak trees were purpose trimmed to provide large straight uprights or beams for building and curving branches were cultivated to provide arches - or gibbets; A good example of the former are the massive oaks used in Ely cathedral and in the four-storied Falcon Inn in Cambridge. Post mills were built of oak trunks and in Austria an entire bridge was built of oak wood. The boundaries of an ancient wood can be identified by pollarding on a wide bank with an external ditch; such a boundary can be seen on the road between Hertford and Royston.

Pollen analysis has shown that the small leaved lime used to be the commonest tree in Neolithic times. Together with the rare oak *Quercus petraea*, wild cherry and the Black Poplar it can still be found at Marks Hall, Coggleshall, and sometimes at Hayley Wood and Welshwood Park in Colchester. Waste land, if left alone, can return to woodland within 80 years. Where the waste has been ridge and furrow ploughed, the trees will establish themselves in the furrows. The old wood and pasture parks very often survive today as village common. The best remains of the Royal forest in Essex are at Hatfield, Hainault, Epping, Writtle, High Woods and Welshwood Park in Colchester. Another interesting survival, perhaps confusing to the archaeologist, is the pillow mound. This consisted of an artificial sandy mound in which newly-imported rabbits could make their burrows. This new arrival was very delicate at first and not used to burrowing so he often died of cold. They were imported by the Normans together with the fallow deer.

Records of woods exist only from medieval times. Mid 13 century charters give 368 woods in Essex and Chalkney wood is recorded in the Court Rolls of Earls Colne from 1598. Place names also evidence the presence of woods; names ending in 'ley', 'hurst' or 'ridding' meaning a clearing in the forest; or 'field' meaning an open space in woodland.

Dr. Rackham has recently published a book on this fascinating subject:- 'Trees and Woodlands in the British Landscape' published by Dent.

Recent Excavations at Chichester - 20 November - Mr. Alec Down, FSA, Chichester Archaeological Field Unit.

Mr. Down gave a comprehensive account of excavations in Chichester covering many years. Although Mr. Down is now a professional, his highly successful team is made up of part-time volunteers and work goes on seven days a week; if ever an argument were needed in favour of such a team - this is it:

Chichester is an ancient walled town divided roughly into four quarters; in the south-west segment is the cathedral, the Bishop's palace and appertaining buildings and in the north-east area the priory, park and municipal buildings. Therefore excavation is confined to the remaining quarters in face of development. Some Iron Age material has been recovered including a coin of Verica and imported Arretine, Terra Rubra and Terra Nigra ware. The main occupation of Noviomagus Regnensum was in Roman times when the walled town was the capital of Cogidubnus. During this period much industry was carried on; metal work, evidenced by the find of a magnificent sword; the remains of bronze workings including belt buckles, uniform and harness fittings and many pottery kilns. The products of all this activity would have been exported through nearby Fishbourne. The main Roman cemetery was found outside the east gate. Saxon occupation began in about AD 830-40 and the most important find from this period was a bell foundry with the clay mould of a bell intact only 80 yards from the cathedral.

Land Management on the Western Fen Edge from Neolithic Times - 27 November - Mr. Francis Pryor, Royal Ontario Museum, Toronto.

Mr. Pryor brought us up to date with the complicated Fengate excavation which some of us had visited in August when we were able to study some of the pottery and artefacts in the site museum, after which we walked round the extensive excavations which we found most impressive in spite of heavy rain. This made Mr. Pryor's lecture all the more interesting. He began by describing the fen area which covers at least 4 million acres. A striking picture of the 40ft drain with a steam pump engine house in the distance kindled the atmosphere and a slide of Holme Fen post, 14ft high, set up in 1851, showed the measure of shrinkage in the intervening years. The site is adjacent to Wicken Fen, now a nature reserve.

The site was first settled in Neolithic times, about 3000 BC. These people were cattle farmers and ranchers and their field boundaries and drove roads were marked by a series of ditches. In one of the ditches lay the skeleton of a man, aged 25/36, with a fine leaf-shaped flint arrow embedded in his spine; at his feet lay the bones of a baby and beyond that the disarranged remains of a young woman. The three bodies have been lifted *en bloc* and are now in the Peterborough museum.

The Bronze Age occupation was for a limited time only and then probably only in the summer months. Besides a very sophisticated field system, for they too were cattle farmers, a large round house was found in one of the larger enclosures with the eavesdrip gully linked with one of the main ditches and post holes inside. Rubbish pits were found which, Mr. Pryor explained, were of three types; primary where rubbish was accumulated at the living point, inside the house; secondary where pits were dug at a distance from the house and containing rubbish which had been carried away from the house and, finally, *de facto* rubbish or the casual remains left when the house was abandoned. The evidence of land snails and the existence of buttery salt-impregnated clay in the ditches suggest that the site was abandoned due to flooding before 1000 BC.

The Iron Age settlement began sometime during the 3rd century BC and was of a permanent nature. These people grew grain as well as farming cattle and a new system of ditched enclosures was instigated. Double ditches provided drove roads to the pastures and several round houses were built. These featured four large post holes on the outer circumference and must have carried the main supports for the pitched, thatched roof. A main drainage ditch filled with split birchwood logs provided an efficient soakaway. Phosphate evidence proved that some of the houses were used by cattle. This period seems to have lasted for upwards of a century followed by a brief inhabitation by the Romans who used it as a cattle station for 30-40 years.

Palaeolithic Mammoth Hunters in Jersey, C.I. - 4 December - Professor C.B.M. McBurney, FSA, University of Cambridge.

This lecture was on the important coastal Paleolithic cave site at La Cotte de St. Brelade in Jersey. Strange, dark marks in a cleft in rocky cliffs were noticed before the First World War and an excavation was carried out from 1914-18. It was not until just before the Second World War that a local teacher recognised

that the deposits continued to lower levels extending to 20ft below the original excavation. Subsequently, systematic investigation was begun and this has just been completed. Professor McBurney explained that the deposits covered the transitional periods from the Acheulian to the Mousterian; approximately 125,000-15,000 BC. At this time the Channel Islands were joined to the mainland, borne out by the tools found; spearheads, cleavers, hammerstones and scrapers made out of flint identified as indigenous to Brittany. However, the final artefacts were made of local stone when the increase in sea level interrupted communication with the mainland. From the twelve occupation levels excavated many bones of mammoth, woolly rhinoceros and reindeer were recovered; it is estimated that these included those of some 300-350 mammoths. Evidence of burning and the cracking open of skulls suggest that these animals were killed for food. The mammoth bones were all of young animals and the supposition is that they were driven over the cliff to their deaths and that this was done in the autumn; stones piled over the jointed bones and the meat left to freeze during the winter. Some of the tusks had been removed in antiquity. The Professor described the difficulties encountered in the removal of the bones; how they were treated with a hardening fluid and finally coated with fibre glass. In answer to a question Professor McBurney said a cave showing signs of human occupation had been found and that the population between Wales and Spain at that time has been estimated at 10,000.

Rescue Excavations in Western Sweden - 22 January 1979 - Mrs. Ingegerd Sarlvik.

Mrs. Sarlvik described her work in Western Sweden where the terrain was somewhat similar to that in East Anglia. Her beautiful illustrations showed a tree-covered stony landscape in which were found upwards of 300 passage graves dating from 7000 BC with many fine beakers and stone implements. The period dating in Sweden is different from Britain; that referred to as the Roman Iron Age is from AD 0-400, the migration period AD 400-600; both of these being known as Prehistoric. Stone circles and table tombs with cup and ring markings, simple line carvings of boats, carts and horses and men are found. Burials in the Iron Age were in cemeteries with bronze beakers and cups or in large mounds of stone. Settlement sites were similar to those in this country marked by post holes, either circular or rectangular with iron working sites marked by slag and vitrified clay.

Roman and pre-Roman Settlement in the Chelmer Valley - 29 January - Mr. P.J. Drury.

This lecturer discussed Iron Age and Roman sites in the Chelmsford area, notably the mansio and temple excavations in the town and hut circles and field boundaries in the Chelmer Valley.

Handmade Bricks and their place in the Conservation of our Heritage - 5 February - Mr. W. Minter of the Bulmer Tye Brickworks.

This fascinating lecture was on the handmade bricks and mouldings specially designed by Mr. Minter to repair and preserve many famous brick-built edifices so that they may be saved for future generations. He showed how the clay was prepared and fired so that a colour match could be obtained. Over 1400 purpose-made bricks and 180 different mouldings had been made in the last five years. Among the stately homes to have benefitted from his experience were Oxburgh Hall, Norfolk; Sutton Place, Guildford; Parham House, Dorking; Long Melford, Suffolk and Hampton Court. The bricks and mouldings were made from a strata of London clay outcropping on Mr. Minter's land and, although the original Tudor bricks were fired first and then carved into shape ('cut and rubbed'), Mr. Minter made special wooden blocks to shape the clay when wet which were turned out and dried in a hap in seasonal weather (a long narrow open shed) or in a closed shed over a heated floor in the winter. The bricks had to be turned from time to time while drying, and when ready were fired in a down draught kiln. The kiln consists of a central chamber with fires outside and hole in the roof to produce the draught. After firing the contents of the kiln were left to cool *in situ*.

Essex from the Air - 12 February - Mr. J.H. Boyes

Mr. Boyes made a welcome return to lecture on Essex from the Air. His main theme was the development of villages in the vicinity of churches illustrated by colourful slides. Communications by canals and road were demonstrated and industry by wind and water mills. He also featured famous houses and the intricacies of the maze at Audley End.

The speaker for the meeting arranged for 19 February was unable to travel due to the severe weather conditions but, at the last minute, an entertaining quiz was arranged by Mr. D.T.D. Clarke. Slides of

old Colchester from the Museum collection were shown and members invited to identify them. These nostalgic glimpses of the past were much enjoyed and it would be generally appreciated if a pictorial record could be published in book form for the benefit of posterity.

The Vikings and Byzantium - Contacts between the Rus and the Byzantium in the 10th Century - 26 February - Dr. J. Shepherd, University of Cambridge.

A new and refreshing picture of the Vikings in the 9th and 10th centuries was presented. These Scandinavian traders and marauders, originally called the Rus, came by sea from bases in Denmark to the Bay of Biscay to raid Spain and Italy, from Port Trebizond in the Black Sea to trade with Crete and the Arabs at Alexandria; by the Volga to Arab Baghdad using camels; from North Russia to the Caspian Sea and by the River Dnieper north of Kiev to Byzantium (now Istanbul) using hollowed tree trunk boats in convoy; there were seven cataracts on the Dnieper which had to be passed by land portage, a method still used by the Cossacks in 1700. Russian excavations of Rus burial grounds in the upper and middle Dnieper valley of log cabins south and east of Kiev, found weapons, swords, belt buckles, harness, metal fittings from wooden buckets and 10th century coins. Objects traded were furs, wax, amber, slaves and honey; these were sold for currency with which the Rus bought glass beads, gold and silver brocade and thread, silk, flax and other fabrics, also apricots. The lower reaches of the Danube were penetrated by traders as well.

Prince Igor ruled in Byzantium from 913-936. He made trade treaties with the Rus and set out trade laws. He married Olga and their son, Constantine, inherited Byzantium and left records of raids by the Rus, the Steppe Nomads (who later became the Turks) and the Bulgarians. The Rus also established settlements in Spain, Iceland, Normandy and Britain.

Salinae - the Archaeology of Roman Salt-Making in the Midlands - 5 March - Mr. J. Saule, University of Birmingham.

This was a paper on Salinae, the centre of Iron Age and Roman saltmaking at Droitwich. An early conquest fort was found on Dodderhill where now the church of St. Augustine stands. In Bays Meadow to the east traces of two Roman rubbish pits have been discovered. Here also were the remains of Iron Age salt-making consisting of pits lined with wood. The Friar Street site, south of the River Salwarpe, revealed extensive Roman salt-making including two large wood lined pits possibly used for sedimentation. Further Roman evidence was found on the Ricketts Lane site. A substantial salt trade had been built up by Anglo-Saxon times, artesian springs producing brine under pressure which sometimes presented a problem from flooding. In the medieval period records mention Upwich, Middlewich and Netherwich. Pits were dug down to the lower brine levels and containers made from half barrels laid on their sides have recently been found. Brine from the Droitwich area is unusually pure and strong, containing none of the impurities found in marine salt and production continued here until 1922.

Aspects of Plant Remains in Archaeology - 12 March - Professor R.G. West, University of Cambridge.

The peaceful face of Tollund man opened the lecture. So well had the tannins in the peat preserved this 2000 year old body that it had been possible to ascertain what food he had taken in the 250cc meal of gruel 24 hours before his death. This consisted of seeds of barley, linseed, golden pleasure (similar to wallflower), persicaria, fat hen, and bindweed. All these seeds could have been stored over the winter so it is possible he was sacrificed to ensure fertility for the crops during the coming summer. Another bog body found close by and of the same date was Grabaulle man and his stomach contained the seeds of potentilla and ergot. Hazeldine Warren found seeds of blackberry and rose hip in a viscera of Bronze Age date thus proving that the death took place in the autumn. Analysis of the diet of man and beast can also be obtained from coprolites.

The professor demonstrated how all the parts of a plant could be used by ancient man; he could eat the fruit and the seed, fibres from the stalk could be woven into cloth or used with the leaves for thatch, the wood for the structure of buildings or for boats and the roots of vegetables for food. In the Bronze Age trackways of the Somerset levels fossilized seeds with the fibres of hemp and flax have been found and, from the sieved silt had come birch catkins and the pollens of willow, alder, blackberry, buttercup and woad. Lake dwellings, too, have yielded many pollen grains; also pairs of antlers still attached to the skull, probably for ceremonial use, barbed antler horns, birch bark scrolls and pollens of birch, elm, oak, lime, alder and hazel dating back to 8000-3800 BC.

The farmers of 5000 BC cleared parts of the forest, the humble plantain still survives from this time; elms were coppiced and the new shoots used for cattle fodder and other trees were ringed, allowed to die, felled and the new growth used for the same purpose. Samples of disturbed forest show a period when elms had suffered near extinction - perhaps an early example of "Dutch" elm disease. Cultivated cereals of this time were Emmer, Einhorn and Triticum Spelt (wheat); Barley from the Bronze Age; Rye from the Romans who introduced it and oats in more or less modern form in the Anglo-Saxon period. The Vikings built their dwellings on artificial mounds on the edge of the northern salt marshes where cattle were grazed separated from the settlement by a boundary ditch. In this country the indigenous trees are sycamore, chestnut, beech and elm.

The Urbanisation of Roman Britain - success or failure? - 19 March - Mr. J.S. Wachter, FSA, University of Leicester.

At the last meeting of the winter the Urbanisation of Roman Britain was discussed. Compared with Roman buildings on the Continent still standing in their full glory such as the Pont du Gard in southern France and the monuments and public buildings in Trier in the Rhineland, the urban architecture of Roman Britain is mainly underground where the massive foundations alone attest the magnificence which must once have stood above, but the stones which do remain are uniform in size and well dressed indicating some overall design. Mr. Wachter compared the ground plans of various Roman towns such as Wroxeter, Canterbury, Silchester and Colchester with the degree of perfection of the grid system in each. The similarity of these suggested some degree of planning though it was clear that the main labour must have been supplied by the natives as there could have been little Roman civilian labour and the army would not have been expected to take part in such activities. Mr. Wachter queried the cost of the land and materials required to build these towns and the extensive network of roads.

To whom did the land belong and who provided the materials and the money to pay for them and the labour. He estimated the cost of the beautiful villa at Fishbourne if it were to be built today at £3 million. It seems seemed reasonable to suppose that the main building programme began to decline by the end of the second century which would explain why the building of Chelmsford was never completed. The general deterioration of the third century has been confirmed by evidence of the occupation of ruined buildings; by contemporary vandalism and the badly repaired and neglected roads.

Note:

These informal notes are produced as "aides memoires", they are not reports which have been seen by the lecturers.

OBITUARY

Major A.D. Mansfield

It is with real sadness we record the sudden death on 11 June 1979 of Alan Mansfield, a member of the Group for nearly 20 years. He was Chairman from 1963 to 1966 when his lively wit and warm personality were used to full advantage. During this period the Group put on three very successful displays at the Tendring Hundred Show; also from this time began the regular programme of summer outings continued to this day together with a marked increase in membership with many other improvements due largely to Alan's drive and energy. His facile use of the English language made him a compulsive lecturer and his dissertations on Victorian gas stoves, the history of English food, maps, surveying and costume have given pleasure and amusement to many. He was a true friend and his passing leaves a gap it will be difficult to fill.

K.de B

WINTER MEETINGS 1979/80

In the Lecture Room, Colchester Castle at 7.30 pm.

1979

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| 15 th October | ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING |
| 22 nd " | Members will show slides of recent holidays |
| 29 th " | B. Hobley, BA, AMA, FS A, Museum of London: RECENT EXCAVATIONS IN THE CITY OF LONDON. |
| 5 th November | Dr. R.M. Reece, BSc, D.Phil, FSA, Archaeological Institute: NUMISMATICS AND RELIGION. |
| 12 th " | D.N. Hall, MA, Fenland Field Officer, Cambridge: RECENT FIELDWORK IN THE FENS. |
| 19 th " | D.A. Edwards, Anglian Committee for Air Photography: AERIAL RECONNAISSANCE. |
| 26 th " | Miss Jennifer Foster, BA, British Museum: A NEW LOOK AT THE LEXDEN TUMULUS. |
| 3 rd December | R.K. Morris, BA, B.Phil, Research Officer, CBA Churches Committee: RECENT WORK. |
| 10 th " | R.J. Bradley, BA, FSA, University of Reading: AFTER PITT-RIVERS, CRANBOURNE CHASE IN THE BRONZE AGE. |
| 17 th " | CHRISTMAS PARTY. |

1980

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| 28 th January | M.D. Astor, RHS, Dip.Hort. Monmouth: A SURVEY OF HEDGEROWS. |
| 4 th February | C.P. Clarke, BA, Field Officer, Essex County Planning Department: THE EXCAVATIONS IN THE VICINITY OF THE ROMAN VILLA AT CHIGNALL ST. JAMES. |
| 11 th " | A.F.J. Brown, MA: COLCHESTER BAYS AND SAYS. |
| 18 th " | C.J.Young, MA, D.Phil, FSA, Inspector of Ancient Monuments: A ROMAN WATER-MILL IN KENT. |
| 25 th " | T.Gregory, MA, AMA, Norfolk Field Unit: FROM THE ICENI TO THE BOUDICCAN REVOLT. |
| 3 rd March | M.W.C.Hassall, FSA, Archaeological Institute: DEDICATIONS, CURSES AND OTHER EPIGRAPHICAL EVIDENCE. |
| 10 th " | J.Hinchliffe, BA, Central Excavation Unit, Department of the Environment: EXCAVATIONS AT ARDLEIGH 1979. |
| 17 th " | C.R.Partridge, BA, Director of the Hart Archaeological Unit: THE ROMAN SETTLEMENT AT WARE, HERTFORDSHIRE. |
| 24 th " | GROUP EXCAVATIONS AND FUTURE PLANS. |

Non-members are welcome - entrance per meeting 40p.