



# Colchester Archaeological Group

Registered Charity No. 1028434

## ANNUAL BULLETIN VOL. 9 1966

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This copy has been scanned from the original, which was first published in quarto size, and has been reformatted to A4 size. Page numbers in brackets refer to the original edition, and should correspond to pagination given in the Bulletin Index.

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one was left with a feeling of regret that so many have now gone and a realisation of the importance of preserving the few that remain.

The speaker at the meeting held on March 14<sup>th</sup>, in the castle was the well known archaeologist and lecturer, Mr. John Wachter, who gave an illustrated account of the excavations of the Roman town at Cirencester, tracing its history from its beginning as a small fort to the final abandonment. Mr. Wachter described the development of the basilica, the growth of the shops and the industrial area, the settlement in the amphitheatre outside the town and discussed the mysterious catastrophe which must have lead to the end of the town with bodies lying unburied in the streets. A lively discussion followed the end of a very interesting and stimulating lecture.

## PART TWO JUNE 1966

### CURRENT & FORTHCOMING EVENTS.

#### EXCAVATIONS.

Our excavation at 26, Lexden Road, Colchester, began a week later than arranged due to the very inclement weather. Work is still going on and is expected to continue for some weeks on Saturdays and Sundays as previously announced. It would appear that a find of some importance has been made, that is, unmistakable traces of a major Roman road. This is to be investigated further and a full report will appear in this Bulletin at a, later date. Meanwhile any members who would like to come and see what we have got so far will be welcome,

Due to the developments outlined above the exact date on which we shall begin the excavation of the Iron Age site at Vinces Farm, Ardleigh has not yet been fixed but this is likely to be early in July. Diggers who wish to do so can just transfer from our present site to the new one. Anyone else interested should get in touch with the Secretary early in July.

#### MOBILE HEADQUARTERS.

It is with pride and pleasure that we announce our recent acquisition of a caravan to be used as our mobile Headquarters. This generous gift was made by Mr. R.W. Palmer; fully fitted out it can be towed to any site where it is wanted and will afford welcome shelter, hot meals and storage space for equipment.

#### OUTINGS.

On Saturday the 18<sup>th</sup> of June - an all day outing to visit High Ongar, Chipping Ongar, Greenstead Church and Waltham Abbey. Meet at Lexden Church at 9.45 am ready to leave at 10 am. Please bring a packed lunch; arrangements are being made to have tea at some suitable place en route.

On Monday, the 18<sup>th</sup> of July - an evening outing to Cressing Temple Barns and White Notley Church, Meet at the Sheepen road car park at 6.20 pm - leaving at 6.30 pm.

The meeting places for these outings are on the Corporation 'bus routes so that lifts can be arranged for those who do not have cars.

#### HELP WANTED

The Secretary has received no replies whatever to her urgent request for offers of assistance in typing the Bulletin and the Editor is finding this increasingly difficult. Any suggestions will be welcome. All enquiries and material for inclusion in the Bulletin should be sent to the Secretary, Mrs. K. de Brisay, Corner Cottage, Layer de la Haye, Colchester. Telephone - Layer de la Haye 274 (evenings).

PRELIMINARY REPORT ON THE EXCAVATIONS  
IN THE GARDEN OF ST. MARY'S RECTORY, COLCRESTER, 1965.

by P.R. Holbert.

INTRODUCTION.

The site lies to the north of and borders on to Church Street, which coincides roughly with the line of a Roman street east - west leading to the south-west Postern. There would appear to have been no previous investigation of this area except perhaps the reference in Hull - "Roman Colchester" p. 192 Insula 25 (91)(92)

At the time of these excavations the site was due to be developed and in the interest of finding out quickly the possibilities of the area, it was decided to sink a series of pits.

In all, ten pits 6 ft. x 6 ft. were sunk to varying depths. (In this report pits are numbered in order of digging. See plan on page 12) Numbers 1, 2, 5, 6 and 9 were positioned at the southern end of the site. It was hoped that by digging here we might come upon possible buildings fronting on to the street. Pits numbered 3, 8 and 10 were positioned to find traces of a north -south street noticed by Mr. John Bligh while excavating recently on the southern side of Church Street. Pits numbered 4 and 7 were positioned in the hope of picking up any features in the general area between the aforementioned pits and the Balkerne Gate complex.

SUMMARY

On investigation, the cultural sequence of the site proved to be predominantly first and second century with traces of fourth century and medieval. In terms of structural remains the first and second centuries were represented by clay floors of hut type buildings.

The red tesserae floor (very much damaged) and wall foundations of a dwelling house appeared to be much later, probably fourth century.

Much evidence of a first century pottery kiln was found in pit No. 4, including "wasters" of mortaria bearing the stamp "SATURNINUS".

Dating evidence for the above features was obtained from the great number of sherds found in association.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.

I am much indebted to Mr. M.R. Hull for his invaluable help in dating the pottery and to Mr. F.H. Erith who is currently dealing with the smaller proportion of Samian sherds.

THE TRIAL PITS.

See plan of site and individual plans and sections.

The pits are divided into three groups. All measurements of stratigraphy are measured in inches from the modern surface level.

Group 1. Pits 1,5,6,9,2.

Pit No. 1.

At 30 inches in north-east corner, detached red tesserae on a layer of mortar, much broken up, adhering to a clay foundation. Beside this feature, robber trenches of two walls roughly at right angles, running north-south and east-west. Digging continued to clear these trenches and at 36 inches, in the south-east corner of the pit, in a pocket of softer earth, three fourth century coins. At 60 inches in this south-east corner, a thin layer of rubble and mortar, this being the base of a wall running east-west. The north-south robber trench

continued down to its limit at 71 inches where fragments of its lower course were evident. This work left exposed, in the north-east corner, the foundations of the tesserae floor mentioned above. After cleaning this was found to consist of alternate layers of gravel and clay.

Pit No. 5. (adjacent to I.)

At 32 inches red tesserae in position, covering appreciable area of pit. Some disturbances made by later pits down into clay foundation and robber trench of east-west wall continuing through from pit No. 1. A large black 'sagging bottomed' pot was found to be recessed and cemented into the floor beneath the baulk between pit 1 and pit 5. This baulk was removed. The floor at this point appeared to be a repair, made good with whitish cement.

Pit No. 6. (adjacent to 50)

Tesserae floor continues into this pit and against eastern baulk the lower courses of a masonry wall foundation running north-south. Finally the baulk dividing pits 5 and 6 was removed to expose more of the tesserae.

Pit No. 9.

This proved to be an abortive effort, only a few displaced tesserae, although some trace of the clay foundation was in evidence. The floor quite plainly extends in this direction but has been completely destroyed.

Pit No. 2.

At 46 inches a clayish layer across full area of pit, a later robber pit (17th century?) dug through this in south-west corner. Many sherds, some Samian, in and under this clay layer. At 66 inches a clay floor level 9 inches thick against the west wall, the edge of which runs north-south and extends an average of 12 inches into pit. (The later rubbish pit just penetrates through this floor and contains several clay pipes) Immediately below this floor a stony layer on top of another, thinner, (2 - 3 inches) clay level. The remainder of the pit area at this level presented a peculiar shapeless mass of hardened clay which could possibly be collapsed clay wall. Below this, down to 78 inches, dirty disturbed sand with some sherds, natural sand occurring at approximately 96 inches.

Group 2. Pits Nos. 3, 8, 10.

As this group as a whole proved fairly conclusively the presence of a north-south street, I propose to quote from notes made by Mr. E. May who was present at the final stages and very kindly made his own investigations.

Pit No. 3.

The chief feature appeared to be a ditch along the east side of the pit the bottom of which was of clay to the east, burned red in patches. On the west side of the ditch there were pieces of septaria in very soft yellow mortar on about seven inches of pebbles, possibly gravel or concrete, and the upper part of the septaria was plastered. A trial trench in the north-west area showed loose grey sandy mortar at a depth of 60 inches. In this material, at a depth of 64 inches, a small piece of concrete was found which appeared to be in place. A trial trench in the south-west area only showed the loose mortar at a depth of 71 inches,

Pit No. 8.

This had been excavated to depths shown on the drawing on page 22. The 52 inch area seemed to be dirty clay with a thin layer of stones on top and slight traces of gravel. The 54 inch area was much the same but without stones. A small trial pit to the south of the 52 inch area showed about 3 inches of dirty clay followed by 3 to 4 inches of the same mixed with white mortar. Below this was concrete 12 inches thick,

Pit No. 10.

Mainly a very hard surface of coarse gravel to a depth of 40 to 41 inches. The area north and south of the gravel was of dark made earth, suggesting pits, but were not excavated more than a few inches deeper than the gravel. A small trial pit to the north of the gravel showed a depth of gravel of 13 to 14 inches down

to a layer of whitish concrete which extended over the bottom of the trial pit. I cannot say whether the gravel was stratified in any way. The gravel sticking out of the west side of the main trench is a bit awkward to account for.

Group 3. Pits 4 and 7.

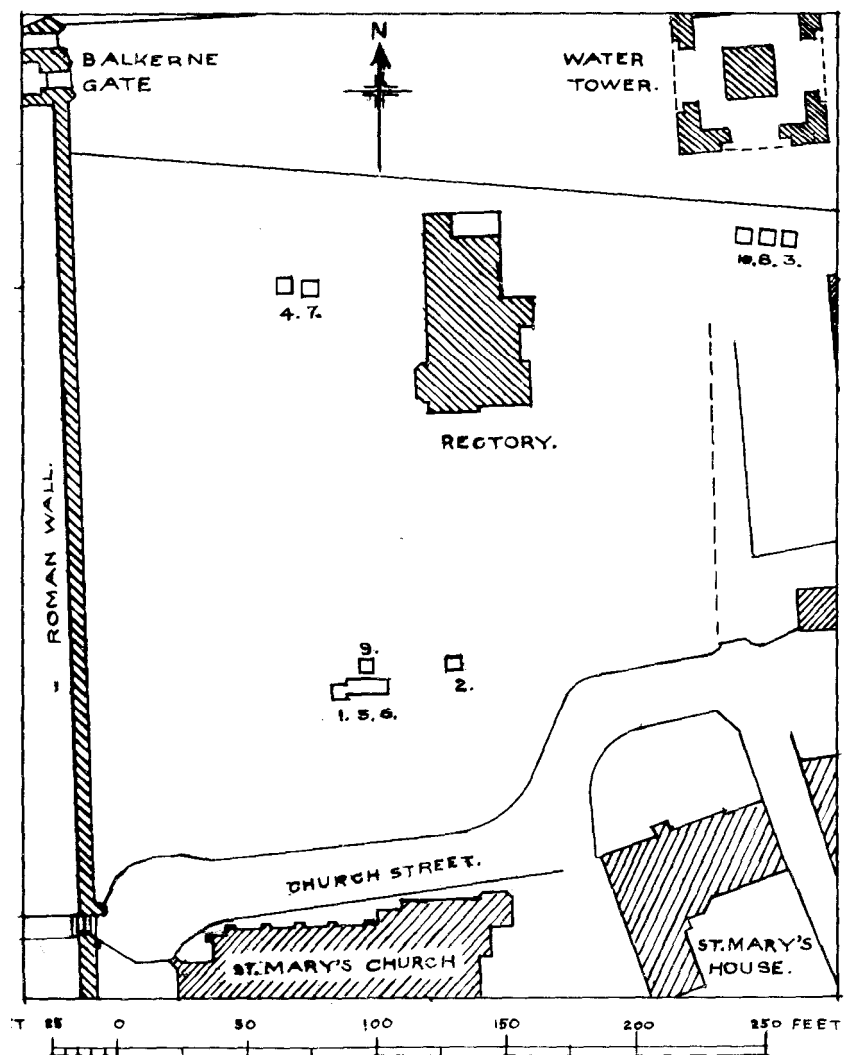
Pit No. 4.

A clay layer at 45 inches containing several flagon necks. At 48 inches a peculiar square patch of red burned clay in the south east corner; off this dark earth with patches of wood charcoal and numerous sherds. At 60 inches, in a strip running north-south across the centre of the pit, much evidence of a kiln, wasters, fused clay etc., and many sherds. Excavations continued down to 72 inches plus. There would appear to be three distinct occupation levels - at 48 inches, 60 inches and 72 inches approximately.

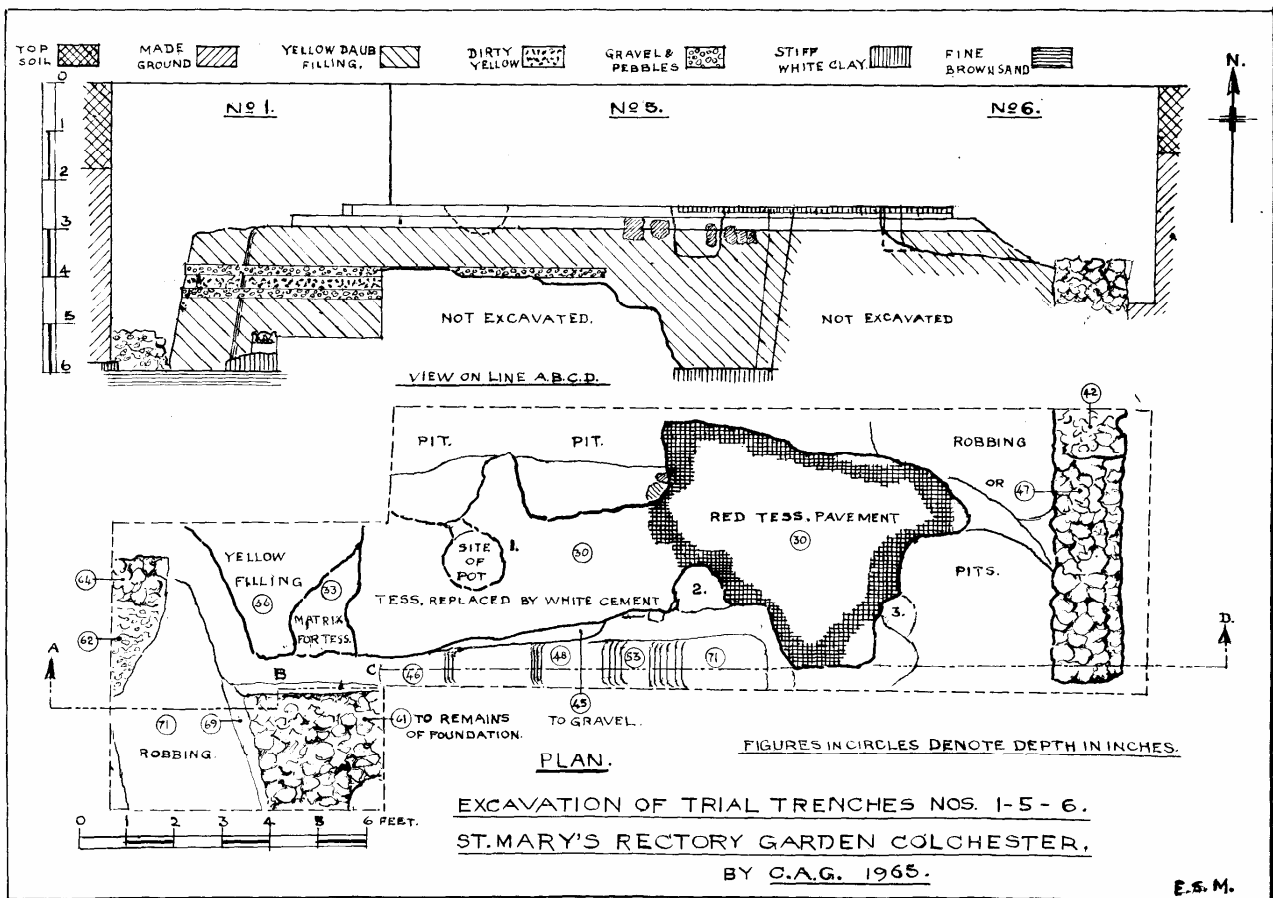
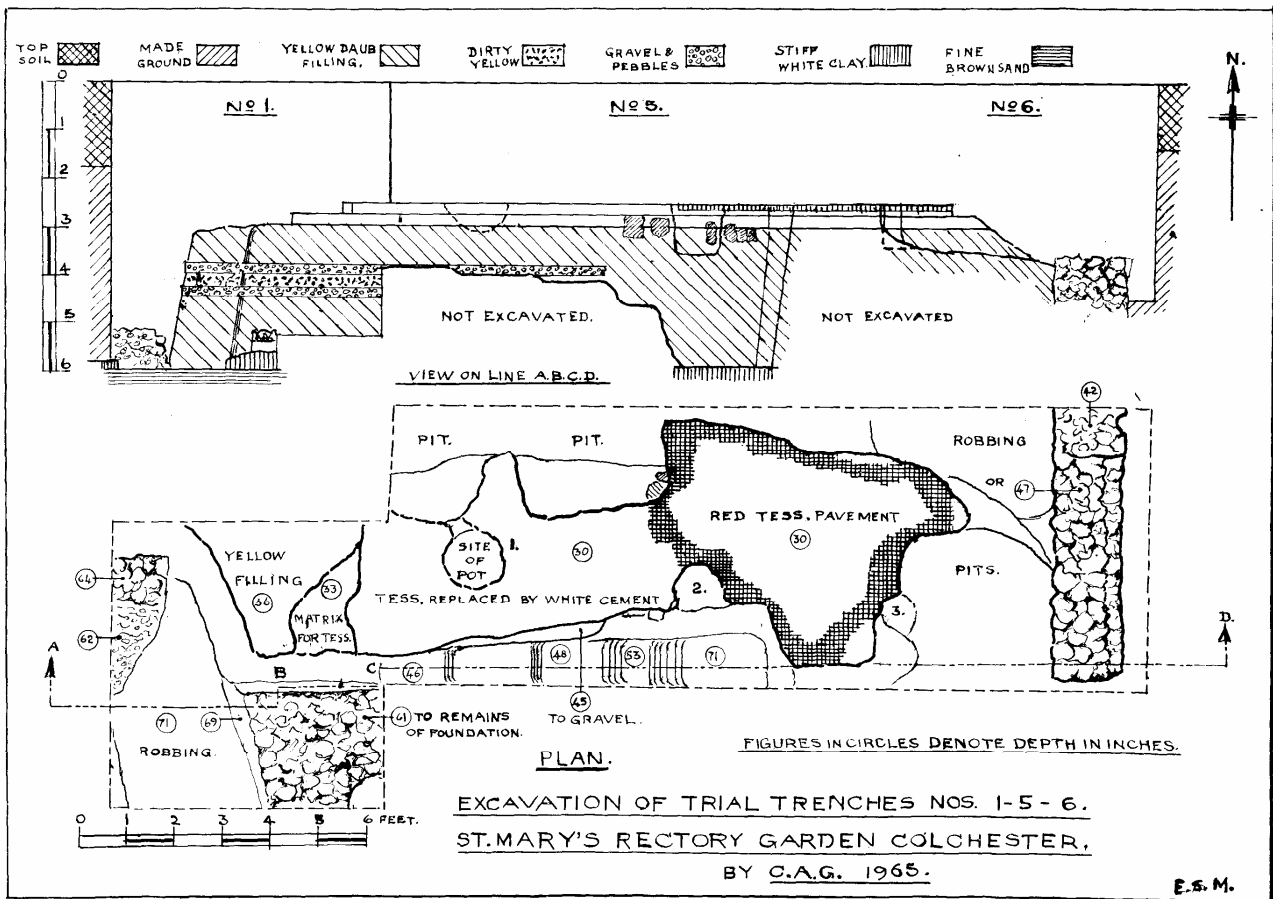
Pit No. 7.

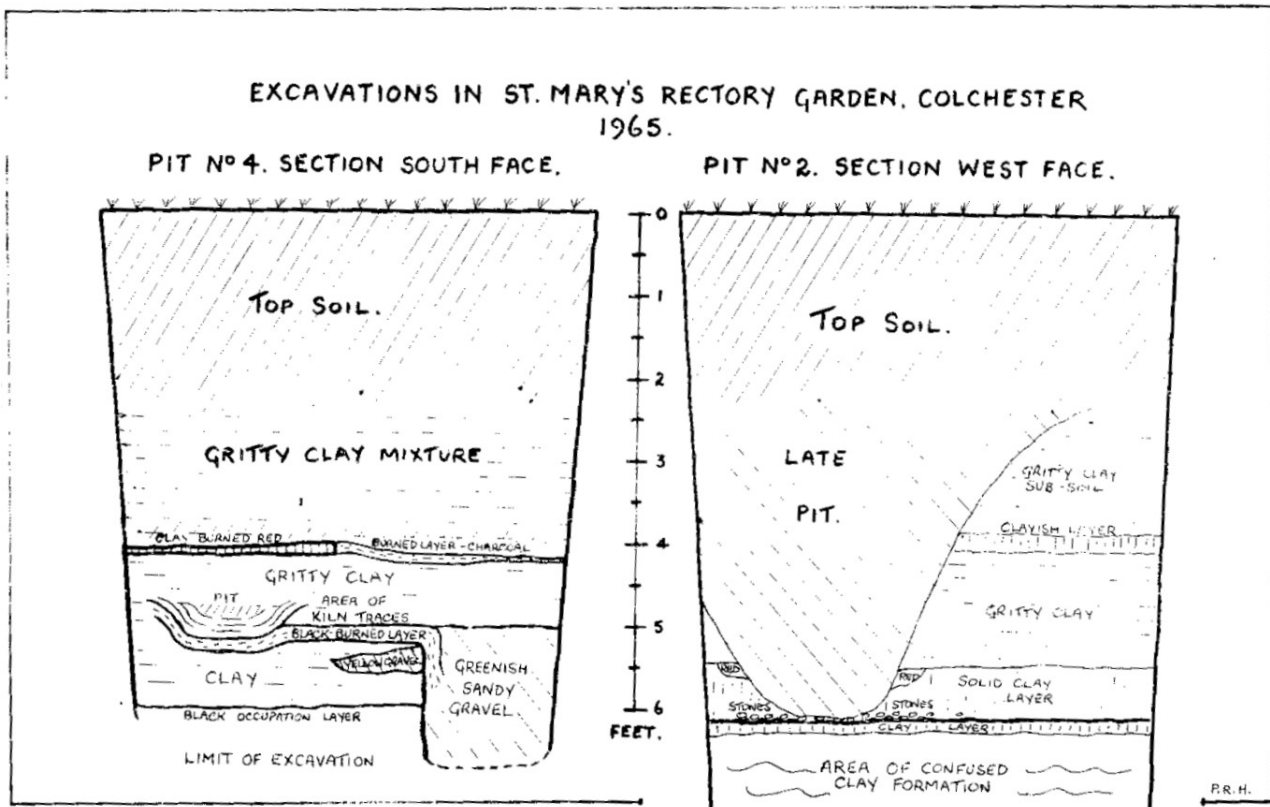
A clayish mortar debris layer at 42 inches; this continues down to 62 inches with some sherds. At 62 inches a clay level, possibly a floor, covers the eastern two-thirds of the pit, with a definite edge running north-south. Some sherds lying on this level and in it. A coin was sealed beneath at 73 inches. The excavation ceased at this point.

This concludes the preliminary report. A second and final report will be submitted at a later date. This will deal with the pottery and small finds generally, their significance and implications.



Sites of Trial Trenches, St. Mary's Rectory Garden, Colchester  
Excavations by C.A.G. 1965 E.S.M.





### THE MOUND AT TENDRING.

by F.H. Erith.

In the Bulletin for September 1965 (Vol. VIII No. 3) Mr. H.J. Edwards referred to a Tumulus that was marked on the 1904 O.S. map, but it was not marked on the 1922 or 1956 O.S. maps.

Mr. Edwards commented that "Miller Christy in 1922 related the "mound" to a possible Roman road, but ..... is it not more probable that it was a Bronze Age barrow and it has been levelled within living memory. Can we find out anything more about it?"

This item was picked up by the Essex County Standard who put in a short paragraph about it on one of their remoter pages. Not so remote however that Mr. Quintin Clarke, a retired farmer, now living at Brightlingsea, failed to read it. Mr. Clarke told me that at the turn of the century his father rented Lodge Farm, Tendring, and in the winter of 1908 he had the mound levelled. Asked if they found anything Mr. Clarke said "Not a thing."

I agree with Mr. Edwards that it was very likely a Bronze Age barrow, in which case there was probably a circular ditch around it at one time. If this is so then it would probably show up as a crop mark in suitable conditions. If a crop mark is revealed, then there is the possibility that an urn lies buried some three feet below the exact centre of the levelled barrows. A member of the Ipswich Flying Club has been asked to photograph this site some time before harvest.

### THE MAY OUTING.

The first excursion of the year was held on Monday, 9<sup>th</sup> May, when about thirty members assembled at the Sheepen Road car Fork and were distributed amongst members with private cars. The cavalcade, led by Mr. A.B. Doncaster, sped through country fresh with spring growth, to the secluded chapel of St. Stephen above Bures St. Mary (the "Burga" of the Saxons) which stands on or near the site of the Saxon chapel in which, in the year 855 the youthful Edmund was crowned King of the East Angles,

The story of that ceremony, performed in the presence of a few soldiers and attendants on Christmas Day, was read by one of the party, the typescript having been found in the vestry by another member. The great tombs of the de Veres, one of whom was one of the "Happy Band of Brothers" who fought with King Henry V at Agincourt, fill the western end of the small chapel. These were removed from Earls Colne Priory some years ago and form the chief visual interest in St. Stephen's Chapel. Fragments of stained glass, also brought from the demolished Priory, adorn the lancet windows, and in an adjoining barn further relics were found.

Returning to the village by the slow flowing Stour, a visit was made to the parish church of St. Mary, which has memorials to another great Essex family, the Waldegraves. The lovely floral displays were also much admired, and the moulded Tudor red brick of the south porch, contrasting with the wooden porch on the opposite side, are architectural treasures.

Remaining on the border of Suffolk and Essex, the party next made its way to the little Norman church of Wissington (locally called and signposted as "Wiston") which is full of treasures and interesting things. The rounded Norman arches of windows, door and chancel arch were connected by a series of wall paintings, much of which is still decipherable. Saints, angels and the Devil, in the shape of a great dragon, gaze down with dispassionate eyes on less ancient carved box pews, organ and choir loft and stone font, but the floral displays and the cleanness of the place reflect the passionate love and care for the lovely old church, which was pleasing to note. The wrought iron candle holders, which could be removed from the fixed iron stem, were, no doubt, carried in procession and were a good example of dual purpose fittings.

All agreed that the evening had been one of immense interest, and, despite the dull and showery weather, one felt the visits had been very rewarding.

THE TENDRING HUNDRED SHOW will be held this year on Saturday, 9th. July and, for the first time, we are to have a tent of our own. The theme of our display will be Country Crafts and we hope members will come and visit us.

NEW COVER FOR THE BULLETIN we think our new cover (just in time for the new volume), will be generally welcomed by members, and we offer the designer, Mr. Keith Mirams, our grateful thanks.

### PART THREE SEPTEMBER 1966

#### COLCHESTER ARCHAEOLOGICAL GROUP

#### WINTER MEETINGS 1966 - 1967.

In the Lecture Room, Colchester Castle, at 7.30 p.m.

GUESTS ARE WELCOME BUT NON-MEMBERS ARE ASKED  
TO CONTRIBUTE 2/6 A VISIT TOWARDS EXPENSES.

- |                                 |   |
|---------------------------------|---|
| 1966 - October 10 <sup>th</sup> | Annual General Meeting after which coffee and biscuits will be served.                                    |
| October 17 <sup>th</sup>        | A.L.F. Rivet. M.S., F.S.A., - Lecturer in Classics, University of Keele - THE GEOGRAPHY OF ROMAN BRITAIN. |