



Colchester Archaeological Group

Registered Charity No. 1028434

ANNUAL BULLETIN VOL. 6 1963

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PART TWO JUNE 1963

On pages 21 & 22 of this issue Mr. L.H. Gant gives an account of discoveries at the White Hart Inn site and on page 16 an article on 18th century wallpaper at No. 8 East Hill. We feel that these records of such changes in our Town are of great value and we are grateful to Mr. Gant for supplying them and hope that other members will let us know of similar occurrences however slight they may seem to be. On pages 17-20 Mr. J.P. Smallwood describes Roman sites west of Halstead and there are the usual Notes and Comments together with a description of the Group exhibition at the Tendring Hundred Show.

PLEASE NOTE this proposed Bronze Age excavation. A ring-ditch was discovered last year by Mr. F.H. Erith on land belonging to Martells Hall, Ardleigh. The crop-mark has surprisingly shown up this year, although there has been no lack of moisture in the soil. Indeed the markings are clearer this year than in last year's drought, for this year two patches are visible near the centre, besides the patch near the ring due east. As this ring-ditch is in a field in which gravel digging has recently been started, it is obvious that the site should be investigated fairly soon. Permission has been given for the Group to excavate after harvest both by the landlords and the tenant. Mr. Erith has marked the position of the ring by pieces of broken slate in the standing corn. MARKING OUT the site will be done on SUNDAY 15th. SEPTEMBER 2.30-3.30 pm, when all members will be welcome. Plans for the actual excavation will be made then, to follow immediately.

Enquiries to the Hon. Secretary, Mrs. K. de Brisay, Corner Cottage, Layer de la Haye, Telephone Layer 274 (evenings).

18th. CENTURY WALLPAPER IN A COLCHESTER HOUSE.

by Leonard H. Gant.

Although not mentioned in the Report of the Royal Commission on Historic Monuments, but included in the Supplementary List of historic and interesting houses, No. 8 East Hill, the home of Mr. Norman Warner, contains material re-used from a former building on the site.

Speed's map of Colchester (1610) shows houses to the east of Moor Lane (now called Priory Street), and it is certain that the present early 18th. century house followed other dwellings on that site. The house was formerly called Priory House, and is so styled in the Deeds of the property, which go back to 1713.

The present owner is tastefully restoring the proportions of the original rooms by removal of stud and plaster partitions erected at the end of the 18th or beginning of the 19th century, and in stripping numerous layers of wallpaper., some notable 18th century wallpaper was revealed.

There are two designs, one pasted on the other, and the first firmly pasted to a smooth plaster, which originally was finished with a hard skin of a sealing material and painted pale green. Later distemper was of the familiar "Georgian Blue", and a piece of azure laid writing paper of this period was found used as a lining paper on a boarded section of the partition.

The earliest wallpaper is in terra cotta monochrome and shows an ornamental door head, brickwork, and a gothic window surrounded by elaborate moulding. Canopied by moulding, recesses with diaper pattern brickwork flank the window. The mid-18th century wallpaper is of the "grounded" type, having a uniform grey distemper background, with a geometric design block printed, 22 inches wide, in black and white. The design represents moulding, formed into polygons, rectangles and diamonds., with an intricate scroll work background. The diamond shapes are also filled with delicate scroll work, suggesting relief pargetting.

The dining room contains an early 19th century firebasket and mantelpiece, set in an earlier rounded fireplace. A similar fireplace, hidden by a modern brick wall has also been revealed, but, as the levels of the floors vary considerably, this appears high up on the south wall of the room. In the attic, sections of 17th century moulded wainscot are fitted to form a partition, and evidence of re-use of Tudor bricks suggest the earlier dwellings on the site. The staircase, moved from its original position from the ground floor to the first landing, is typical of the 18th

century, and has a nice carved motif on the rise ends. The ballusters are of square section and the hand rail is brought down in graceful curves.

A leaded light with the original quarries of glass lights a small room and cased beams adorn most rooms.

The cellars, which are extensive, were not examined, but the attics and the exposed roof timbers were interesting, for the roof is made of rough lengths of unplanned sapling, and the tie beam is 10 inches by 2 inches, roughly adzed. Oak battens hold the usual red tiles and the gulleys are leaded.

ROMAN SITES WEST OF HALSTEAD.

by J.P. Smallwood, M.A.

During the past few years a number of new Roman and Medieval sites have been located along the Colne valley in the area immediately to the West of Halstead. None of these sites is particularly important, or has yielded a substantial amount of evidence up to the present; however, taken as a whole, they do suggest an unusual amount of both Roman and Medieval activity occurring in an area of little more than a square mile, which of itself calls for explanation. The list of sites within the area involved is, to say the least of it, impressive.

SITE 1. In the summer of 1961, while a bungalow was being built to the North of the A604, foundation and drain trenches revealed several illegible bronze Roman coins, together with most of a grey, rimless dish of Colchester Form 39. Trial pits dug in the garden of the bungalow failed to produce evidence of Roman occupation levels but did produce a few sherds of pottery including the rim of a flanged dish Colchester Form 305. Such evidence as there is from this site would suggest a third or fourth century occupation.

SITE 2. Scatter of Roman pottery, brick and tile visible on surface of field after ploughing. Trial trenches dug in October 1959 at point indicated on plan on page 19. At one point vague traces of a Roman occupation level in the shape of a shallow pit were found. The material recovered from this trench included a fragment of a millstone, one unidentified piece of iron, probably furniture strapping, and a small fragment of a glass vessel of probable first century date. Amongst the sherds of pottery recovered was one fragment of a small bowl with a series of diagonal impressions made with a comb together with pieces of plain Samian ware. A first century date is probable for the pit while the material recovered from the field suggests an occupation range of something like A.D. 60-160. Unfortunately the subsoil of the field is of a light sandy gravel and it is unlikely that any structures or further occupation levels will have escaped destruction by the plough.

SITE 3. In 1960, drainage by the farmer of a piece of marshy ground revealed a substantial deposit of late thirteenth to fourteenth century pottery of a type produced in large quantities in kilns of that period found at Halstead, Gosfield and Sible Hedingham. There is no evidence in this case as to whether this new site should be regarded as domestic or industrial.

SITE 4. When a ditch running down to the brook was cleaned out in 1961 several sherds of Roman pottery were found. Amongst these was a fragment of a crude imitation of T.S. Form Drag. 38 (Colchester Form 316 B) This form is datable to the second half of the fourth century.

SITE 5. A grass field. During the summer of 1960 unusually dry conditions revealed traces of a crop-mark in the form of a streak of lush grass running in a North-East South-West alignment close to the assumed track of the Roman road from Braintree to Long Melford. It could conceivably indicate the presence of a road ditch. In the corner of the field close to the road junction, the rim of a dish Colchester Form 37, datable to between 70 and 150 A.D. was found. Finally, in 1961, a narrow strip was ploughed to grow kale for sheep. Here a scatter of sherds was found, some Roman, some Medieval, most difficult to identify.

SITE 6 and bank of River Colne. This site includes the area surrounding the former Domesday Manor of Hepworth Hall., which was as important as Stanstead Hall at the time of the Domesday Inquest. It is now a farmhouse. In 1911 the remains of a Roman vase were found somewhere to the North of the road leading up to the Hall, probably as a result of the opening of the sandpits. The neck of a flanged rim flagon of assumed late Roman date was found in 1921. Unfortunately neither vessel can be traced. More recently, dredging of the river has brought to light a number of flint scrapers of probable Bronze Age date, Roman-British pottery of all periods and Medieval pottery dating from the twelfth to-the fourteenth centuries. The quantity of Roman and Medieval material recovered from the area indicated on the plan (page 19) has been large and indicates heavy occupation in both periods. Furthermore what appears to be a rectangular building of modest dimensions lies buried close to the river to the South-West of Hepworth Hall. No attempt has been made to excavate this feature as yet, but its position on the edge flood plain of the river makes it possible that it may mark the site of one of the two mills mentioned in Domesday as belonging to the Manor of Hepworth Hall.

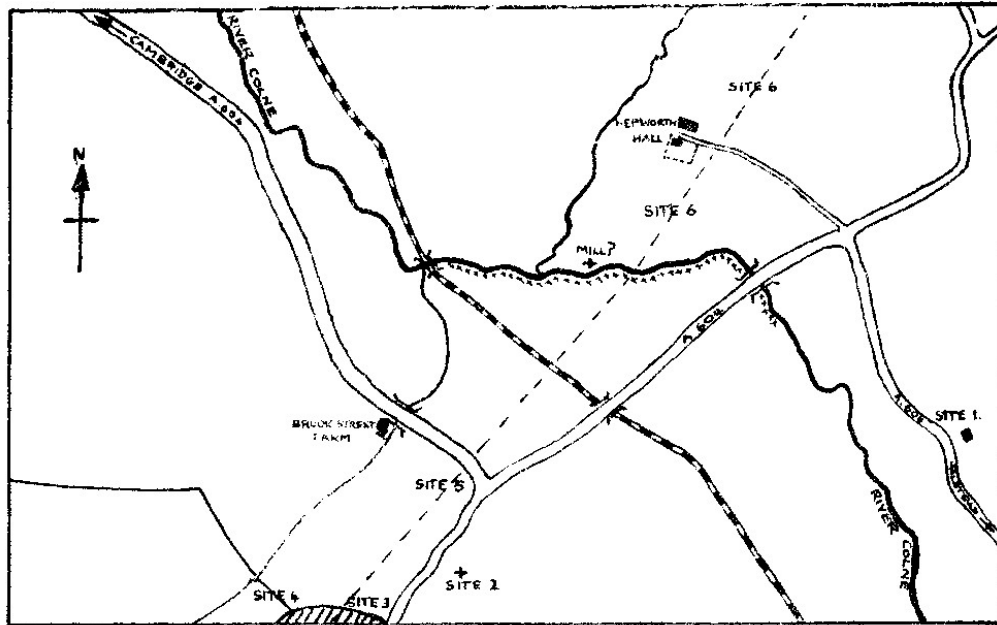
A series of trenches have, however, been dug in the meadow in an effort to determine the extent and nature of the settlement. The results have been disappointing. The soil is light and sandy and it seems from the way in which much of the evidence has been disturbed that the field was under the plough for a long period in its history. Everywhere Roman, Medieval and later fragments of tile and pottery are found churned up as a result of cultivation. In no place has more than a thin layer of Roman material been found undisturbed. The finds have, however, been extensive. Much Roman pottery date from the late first century to the end of the occupation. One trench produced a fragment of jet stamped with concentric impressions. Another produced three coins, one a small, heavily-corroded late fourth century bronze issue, the other two barbarous radiates. There is clearly much more to be learnt from this site.

So Much Roman material from so small an area clearly demands an explanation. A clue may be found in the fact that somewhere within it two important Roman roads must have crossed. Unfortunately, since no trace of either road has been located in any trench dug in the area, it is still necessary to guess as to the course these roads took. Acquaintance with the geography of the area suggests at once the probable course of the North-South road from Braintree to Long Melford. In order to avoid long traverses over marshy ground it must have kept directly clear of the brooks which run more or less directly along its shortest possible course. On both sides of the valley it must have taken advantage of higher and dryer ground. This means we must look for the road either to the East or to the West of the tributaries of the River Colne. The area to the West of these tributaries has produced no Roman material. That to the East has yielded much. It is virtually certain, therefore, that the North South road ran very close to the course predicted for it on the plan. (page 13)

The problem of the East-West road, the so-called Via Devana, is rather more difficult. Here the problem is to decide how far up the valley the road ran. The matter was discussed at length in Jack Lindsay's book 'The Discovery of Britain'. At the moment it is impossible to add anything to the views expressed there. The possibility of other roads meeting in the area must not, however, be ignored. A branch road from the Via Devana to Great Chesterford is not out of the question, nor is one through the recently discovered site near Pebmarsh to join the road running North from Colchester near Copdock.

It seems at least possible, therefore, that the area formed an important centre of communication. The settlements, as far as they can be judged at the moment, seem to be of native type. There are no signs of buildings of substantial construction such as exist on nearby villa sites. Nor at the moment is there any real clue to the economic significance of those settlements. As yet no signs of industrial activity have been detected. However, since the amount of excavation undertaken has been so limited, it is not unreasonable to expect that further work may yield the information necessary to make interpretation possible.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS - I wish to take this opportunity to express my thanks to the farmers, Mr. Letham of Sloe Farm, and Mr. Anderson of Hepworth Hall, who kindly allowed me to conduct investigations; also to Mr. J. Lindsay and to Mr. Hull for their kind help and advice and to all those who have assisted in excavation.



Plan showing distribution of sites

KEY

Part of river producing heaviest concentration of finds during dredging. xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx

Assumed line of North-South Roman road -----

NOTES AND COMMENT.

ANIMAL IMPRINTS IN ROMAN TILE. - Mr. L. H. Gant writes:- Following up a recent appeal in the Bulletin for specimens of human finger prints in Roman material, a piece of Roman building the bearing what was thought to be human finger prints was submitted to Dr. J.W.L. Croftill, who formerly worked in the forensic laboratories of Scotland Yard, and he very kindly made a positive cast in rubber of one set of prints. Those turned out to be of a large dog (Dr. Croftill says "the possibility of a wolf cannot be dismissed") and the rubber cast clearly shows two parts of the foot.

THE BALKERNE GATE - in our Bulletin Volume V, No. 2, various suggestions were made for the improvement of the surroundings of the Balkerne Gate and we are very pleased to note that the reservoir has now been filled in. Some members followed the work from day to day and several sherds of Roman pottery were found during the removal of the bank. When a drainage trench was dug just before completion a very dense concentration of oyster shell was seen in one place extending for two - three yards. We look forward to further developments.

WOLVERSTONE PARK - 15th September. In view of the excavation of the bronze Age ring-ditch now arranged for this date the outing planned to visit Wolverstone Park and other places of interest in the vicinity has had to be postponed and will now probably take place in October. Details will be given in our next Bulletin.

Winter Meetings. These will begin on Monday 14th October with the Annual General Meeting followed by a short talk, and thereafter weekly up to and including the 16th of December. After Christmas meetings will begin again on Monday 13th January up to and including the 16th March, 1964. The programme is under preparation and will be published in our next Bulletin. As before, we shall meet at St. Runwald's School, Oxford Road, Colchester at 7.30 p.m.

THE WHITE HART INN, COLCHESTER
by Leonard H. Gant.

James Boswell, in his "Life of Johnson" recorded under the date August 5th 1763 "at supper this night he talked of Good Feeding with uncommon satisfaction". This relates to no less a personality than the celebrated Dr. Samuel Johnson, and the occasion was his stay at the White Hart Inn, High Street, Colchester.

When it was learned that the site of this old coaching inn, which stood facing the High Street, and extended to Culver Street and beyond, was to be cleared for the erection of a modern outfitting shop and offices, hopes ran high for the discovery of clay tobacco pipes and other material. Part of the site of the old inn was cleared for the erection of Barclays Bank in the 1930's, when a general collection of pottery was found.

Modern mechanised excavation, however, gave little opportunity for detailed examination of the site and one had to rely upon co-operative workmen for the recovery of such material as was seen. With the incessant demands of a huge iron bucket, signalled by an electric bell, there was little time for careful excavation of the very few shards found, for the work was undertaken on a "bonus scheme" and the men were working against the clock.

A few sherds of Roman pottery and medieval glazed ware were found and a few clay tobacco pipes, ranging from 1600 to 1800. Among the former were pipes bearing twelve different stamps on the feet, including a "Gauntlett" pipe with the West Country line, leaning well forward from the stem. All these early pipes (Oswald type 4a - A.N.L., Vol. 7, No. 3, 1961) were found in a small pit, sealed by an old brick wall, and date from 1600 - 1640. Some were almost complete, but as there are no local records of pipe makers in the early 17th century, one cannot claim that local makers are represented in the many different marks, which include a capital "P", "A.S." (parallel found at Battersea, London) (A.N.L. Vol. 7, No.8, 1962 page 183 - "Makers' Marks on Clay Tobacco Pipes found in London" by D.R. Atkinson), and many more, which wide enquiry has failed to identify, the marks apparently being the first recorded. It is interesting to note that the Gauntlett pipe bears the stamp of a gauntlett without the usual surrounding shield, but, as Laurence S. Harley says in his treatise on "The Clay Tobacco-pipe in Britain" - Essex Field Club Special Memoirs, Vol. VIII (1963), the "Gauntlett" pipe was very popular in the 17th century, and many thousands were then made by three generations of the family. Atkinson asserts that many of the "Gauntlett" marks are not genuine, and he himself has identified some 22 types!

A number of "churchwarden" pipes of the 18th century were found, and one bearing the stamp of Stephen Chamberlain, who worked in Colchester during the latter half of that century, and two bore the initials "L.A.", whose kiln was situated in Maidenburgh Street, on the site of the Tesco Stores.

The natural soil is compacted sand, which was found at a depth of 11 feet. The one useful section revealed by spade trimming showed black filling to a depth of 10 feet, with a narrow strata of Roman tile and carbon overlying a 6 inch vein of gravel.

Through those layers, and penetrating 4 foot into the natural sand, was a massive wall, running east -west, built of septaria, Roman building tile, cobbles and shells, 24 inches thick, and built without splay or foundation on the "natural". The wall ran for some 20 feet, and the material was not coursed. The abutting wall., itself of no recent date, had preserved the south face of this ancient wall. The material was bonded by a sandy mortar, and, unfortunately, every vestige was removed.

OUTINGS.

The first of these was on the 17th, of June. Meeting at the War Memorial members visited historic buildings in the town under the guidance of Mr. John Bensusan-Butt, Mr. Leonard Gant and Major A. D. Mansfield. The party proceeded along High Street to Greyfriars and East Hill House, both of which houses, having notable architectural features, were visited. The latter was the residence of Mr. Samuel Wegg, a notable Colchester attorney and

philanthropist. The salon or music room ceiling, wainscote, fireplace and mantelpiece were much admired, and the staircase, rising in graceful curves from a paved hall, is a gem of its period. Greyfriars too, has a number of impressive door frames, windows and fireplaces, and the north facing windows command fine views of the Park and the High Woods beyond. Passing along Priory Street, where many small houses are being demolished, Mr. Gant described the Town wall and bastions and St. Botolph's Priory. The next visit was to the Lucas Chapel in St. Giles Church on the wall of which is the black marble slab commemorating Sir Charles Lucas and Sir George Lisle who were shot by order of Sir Thomas Fairfax on the 28th. August 1648 and we were reminded of the story how Charles II ordered the inscription to be cut deeper. Finally to St. John's Abbey gateway under the guidance of Major A.D. Mansfield where a short climb up a winding stair lead to the roof and a most impressive view of the Town. The party was then entertained to coffee in the Officers' Club, where the Chairman, Mr. Felix Erith, expressed thanks to the organisers and guides for a met enjoyable and interesting evening.

On the 15th of July some of the ancient earthworks were visited under the direction of Mr. H. J. Edwards. The party travelled by private cars to various vantage points where W. Edwards gave short addresses on the features. Commencing Bakers Lane, Braiswick, the party examined the Lexden ramparts, visiting Moat Farm and Glen Avenue. A short diversion to inspect an earthwork at the Lexden end of the by-pass road, and the group viewed the Lexden Park ramparts and the triple dykes on the Lexden Straight Road, which Mr. Edwards said were unique in Britain, and were now thought to be connected with the first Roman camp in the area, dating from the first century. Grimes Dyke was the last earthwork to be described and visited, and the party made stops at Dugard Avenue, Stanway Hall Dairy and at Brickwall Farm where short descriptions and inspections were made. Although only a comparatively small part of this complex system could be covered in the time, members were much impressed by the magnitude of it and expressed their thanks to Mr. Edwards for his guidance.

TENDRING HUNDRED FARMERS' CLUB ANNUAL SHOW. 13th JULY.

Once again the Group was invited to exhibit at this Show. This year the stand displayed a variety of items each of which is the property of a member of the Group and loaned for the occasion to show the wide extent of our activities and to mark the first five years of our existence. Along a screen at the back were ranged a series of explanatory drawings by Major A.D. Mansfield, incorporating the exhibit and showing how it might have been used. A string lead from the picture to the object itself and we give a list of these below.

A piece of limestone containing fossils of the tertiary era. Found in a river bed near Kirkdale in the North Riding of Yorkshire.

A fossil oyster found in a disused gravel pit at Sibyl Hedingham,

The primary Bronze Age- burial Urn from Ardleigh Ring Three.

Iron Age 'C' grave group; one of three found at Vincas Farm, Ardleigh, 1.1.1960.

Part of a briquetage vessel, fire-bars, wedges, pedestals etc. from a Red Hill.

A piece of Roman building tile showing the imprint of a dog's paw, Colchester.

A Roman brooch of silver with a red stone at the centre and the pin intact.

A folded beaker (3rd - 4th century) and a Hunt cup (2nd - 3rd century) both found intact in a garden in Colchester.

A Roman lamp of earthenware. Found in Colchester.

Four examples of Samian ware potters' stamps. Excavated in Colchester.

Twelve Roman coins ranging from Trajan to Constantius II. These were excavated with several others from the same site in Colchester as the tile and Hunt cup and the folded beaker.

Two Tudor Bird calls. One was found in spoil from a workman's trench in Colchester and the other in a box of "Junk".

A pewter chamber-pot with the owner's name "John May" engraved on the side and the maker's initials "T.M" stamped on the base. Late 17th, or early 18th, century. Dredged from the River Colne at Colchester,

A flintlock holster pistol by Knubley of London. (1750--1799) Proof and view marks - Birmingham.

A cannon barrelled flintlock overcoat pocket pistol by Robt. Harvey of London (1690-1725).
Proof and view marks – London.

A gargoyle. Believed to have come from St. Runwald's Church., Middle Row, Colchester.
Found in a garden in Bray Road, Colchester.

Wagon plates and licensed carrier's plate of John Ballin of Chigwell,

A Bellarmine jar. Cardinal Bellarmine (1542-1621) was a theologian who wrote against the protestants. The Netherland Protestants made stoneware jars with a caricature of the Cardinal on the neck. The custom spread to England. This was a late example, probably 18th. century and was found in a farmhouse on the Suffolk-Norfolk border.

A Victorian stereoscope.

A Victorian musical box.

Many of the exhibits described above have been the subjects of articles in past numbers of the Bulletin and Copies of these are still available and may be obtained from the Secretary, price 1/-, postage 3d. Failing this the Secretary will be pleased to put anyone who is interested in touch with the owner of any particular object.

PART THREE SEPTEMBER 1963

THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING will take place on the 14th October 1963 at 730 p.m. in St. Runwald's School, Oxford Road, Colchester. This will be followed by three short talks and will mark the beginning of our winter programme,

SUBSCRIPTIONS. The annual subscription falls due on the 1st October and members are asked to send 10/- to the Hon. Treasurer, Miss S. Mansfield, Clays, Churchfields, West Mersea. Reminders will be sent to those from whom this has not been received with our December Bulletin - after this the membership will be considered to have lapsed.

In this issue there is an article by Mrs. Mansfield on women pipe-smokers, a report on an important crop mark at Langham by Mr. F.H. Erith, a description of Monkwick Farmhouse at Berechurch by Mr. L.H. Gant and an appreciation of Mr. Hull's book on the Colchester Kilns, Details of the winter programme are given overleaf.

May we appeal again for more 'Notes and Comment'? Many members must come across small items which may not seem important at the time but the recording of these may prove invaluable at some later date. Please send these together with other contributions and enquiries to the Hon. Secretary, Mrs. K. de Brisay, Corner Cottage, Laver de la Haye, Colchester. Telephone - Laver de la Haye 274 (evenings).

WINTER PROGRAMME 1963-4

14 th October	- Annual General Meeting - followed by three short talks by MR. Carter, Mr. Edwards and Major Mansfield.
21 st "	- The Excavations at Sutton H Mrs. Clarke (illustrated).
28 th "	- The Archaeology of a Condemned Cottage - Mr. Malcolm Carter.
4 th November	- Colchester Carpenters - Mr. John Bensusan Butt, B.A., R.B.A. ,
11 th "	- Old Colchester - Mr. Bernard Mason, O.B.E. (illustrated).
18 th "	- Members' Finds and Treasures,
25 th "	- Essex Dialect - Mr. Harvey Benham.
2 nd December	- Archaeology and the Amateur - Mr. David Clarke, M.A., F.S.A.
9 th "	- A Hundred Years of Skirts - Major A.D. Mansfield, R.A., F.R.G.S.
16 th "	- FILM SHOW & SOCIAL - Tickets 2/6 from members of the Committee.
13 th January	- The Compostella Pilgrimage - Mrs. Glaister (illustrated).
20 th "	- The Valley of the Stour - Mr. A.E. Horlock (illustrated),
27 th "	- The Road to the Isles . Mr. L.H. Gant, A.I.A.C. (illustrated).
3 rd February	- Roman Gestingthorpe - Mr. H.P. Cooper (illustrated).
10 th "	- Samian Ware - Mr. F.H. Erith.
17 th "	- Essex Church Woodwork - Mr. K.R. Mabbitt, F.S.A.
24 th "	- The Arts of the Japanese Sword - Mr. R.J. Bradley.