



Colchester Archaeological Group

Registered Charity No. 1028434

ANNUAL BULLETIN VOL. 1 1958

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PART 3 SEPTEMBER 1958

Our activities and membership have increased considerably. It was decided to call a General Meeting of the Group in order to review its structure. This was held on Tuesday, 5th of August, 1958. Mr Hull kindly took the chair and the following were elected:

Chairman:	Mr M. R. Hull, M.A., F.S.A.
Secretary:	Mrs K. de Brisay.
Treasurer:	Mr H. W. Palmer
Excavations Secretary:	Mr A. B. Doncaster.
Public Relations Officer:	Mr L. H. Gant
Committee Member:	Mr F. H. Erith.

It has not been found possible to make a report on our major activities of this season as these are still in progress. Two sites are being worked upon at the present time; the Bronze Age burial site at Jupes Hill, Dedham, and an exploratory dig in Colchester in the hope of finding some trace of the Roman Amphitheatre. We hope to give an interim report on both of these in our December Bulletin.

Our individual membership now stands at thirty-five with many more "unofficial" helpers. We hope to increase this still further. Please address all enquiries to Mrs K. de Brisay, 89, Maldon Road, Colchester.

EXCAVATIONS AT BULMER SUFFOLK, by Brian Blake

When the discovery of Bronze Age urns near Bulmer was reported, it was thought that the site might perhaps be another 'Ardleigh'. This proved not to be so and three cremation interments only were found. The site (TL/834384) is on a hill top less than a mile to the south east of the Roman site at Gestingthorpe, which may explain the presence on the Bulmer site of Roman material as there is, as yet, no trace of any Roman structure.

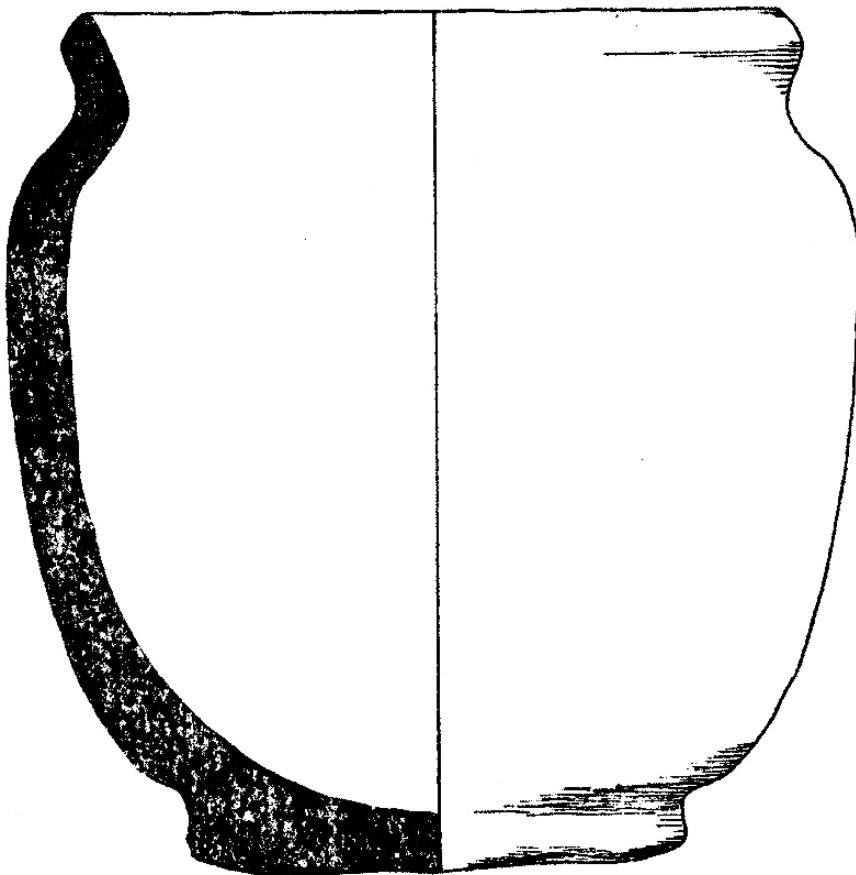
The subsoil of the hill top is a fine soft sand which had, in places, been brought to the surface by the deep ploughing which had disclosed the pottery. The site is well suited for occupation by primitive peoples, a hill with sides rising fairly steeply to flat top some 800 by 500 foot and of oval shape. The soil is light and drains through to a spring line just below the site on the clay of a small valley. A feature that may have significance also is that, at this point in the valley, there occurs near the surface, clay of the Reading Beds. This clay is well suited to the manufacture of both pottery and tile, a fact well attested by the presence at Hole Farm now of a brick and pottery kiln. The owner, Mr L. A. Minter, also farms land nearby and it was whilst his son was ploughing field north of the farm that the site was found. The field was deep ploughed to 14" for sugar beet and this had turned to the surface three patches of black soil containing sherds of pottery.

Preliminary investigations by Mr Minter found two Late Bronze Age urns of the Deverel Rimbury type; the first shattered, the second preserved by a thoughtful 'first-aid' wrapping of surgical bandage. Subsequent excavation at these points found, within the two 10 ft. squares opened, only one other interment. The burnt bones were in a patch of burnt sand containing no pottery at all. There is no further trace on the surface at present of any more interments or other remains of the same period.

The third spot produced an assortment of Roman tile - fragments of "tegulae" "imbrices" and box flue tile, together with decorated Saxon pottery. Excavation at this point showed the dark soil to be derived by the plough from a layer of very dark soil approximately oval in shape, 9 feet by 11 foot. The soil was "saucer shaped" and contained pottery, specks of charcoal and animal remains together with some few abraded sherds of Roman date - obviously residual.

The spreading of the top by the plough and activities of moles and staining of the sand at the bottom of the layer, rendered its exact shape impossible to follow. This was obviously an occupation layer from its soil and content but no building traces were found at all, no floors being distinguishable within it. The pottery is of 5th - 6th century date and forms an interesting group to be published in detail later. One example is illustrated (actual size) on the next page. The ware is of dark fabric with sand tempering material, oxidised in firing, of a brown tone and smoothed on the outside. All are hand made, most with outcurved rims reminiscent of Iron Age forms.

Thanks are gratefully given to the Archaeological Group who supplied much labour and help on the site and, above all, to the owner of the land, Mr A. L. Minter, and his son who farms it. They have shown great interest in the site and have been more than co-operative. A most promising feature of this site is that Mr Minter is ever vigilant and keen to find more and when the field is next cleared he may well do so.



Actual Size.

A DOMESTIC EXCAVATION by H.J. & B.J.N. Edwards.

Not many archaeologists are lucky enough to be able to excavate without leaving their own premises. In the last Bulletin Mr Erith told us of an outstanding example, but Mr Erith is a farmer and operates on a large scale. Our own digging was done in a small back garden and, though it could not compare in quantity with Mr Erith's, it was nevertheless extremely productive and interesting.

We are taught to study maps before excavating and this was an apt illustration of the wisdom of doing so. It is well known that, before it was diverted to what is the modern Head Street, the road to London left Colchester by way of the Balcerne Gate. It is also known that there is a junction of Roman roads under the present Grammar School. What is not so well known is the line of the road to the Grammar School. The area concerned, "Lord's Land" to the Colcestrian, was largely built over towards the end of the last century.

Mr A.F. Hall, to whom we were indebted for both inspiration and supervision, pointed out that a line drawn from the Balcerne Gate to the Grammar School would pass somewhere by our house, so one day we decided to dig and see what we could find.

We were lucky. In a space about twenty feet by six feet we found a ditch with road metalling on one side and remains of a building on the other. In one corner was a piece of red tessellated flooring. It gives one quite a thrill to realise that where one is living now, somebody else had a house eighteen hundred years or so ago. Human nature then being much the same as it is now, the ditch proved a happy hunting ground for occupational evidence.

Pottery, which was found in considerable quantity, covered a wide range. The majority was of the black 'cooking pot' ware but, at the other end of the scale, was Castor, 'hunt cup', Samian, rough cast and mortaria. Bone pins were fairly common but not many metal objects emerged. Part of one brooch of the 'trumpet' type was found and several unidentified pieces of bronze. A few pieces of glass, making the neck of a small bottle, were put together. Among the broken tiles were two pieces of popular interest, one, with the imprint of dog's paw and one with the tile maker's thumb print. Many bones and teeth, chiefly pig and cattle were found and (need I say it ?) large quantities of oyster shells.

The thing which did surprise me was the number of coins which were found, no less than eighteen identifiable and ten too much worn to be placed. They were scattered about, not in a hoard of any sort. I am sure I should not sleep soundly at night if I thought that twenty eight of my coins were lying about for somebody to pick up!

Taking the coins in order of issue, they start with a fairly clear, though damaged, copper coin of Claudius (41-54) . This is followed by two large brasses of Trajan (98-117) and Hadrian (117-138); the Hadrian very worn; the Trajan with the inscription still quite legible. Then comes a little group consisting of four Antoninus Pius, one of his wife Faustina, and another of their daughter, the wife of Marcus Aurelius, another Faustina. Marcus Aurelius himself is not represented, though his daughter Lucilla, with her distinctive 'bun' is. These coins are all of brass, though the one of Lucilla is much more copper coloured.

The next Emperor is Commodus (180-192) of which we have a splendid example in very good condition (illustrated below). The coin is over 4 mm. thick and the reverse is a "PROVID AUG" type with a very fine and very detailed ship in high relief. One wonders how far the expression "the ship of state" goes back. The detail on this coin is such that the head of the helmsman, which is less than 1 mm. square, can be clearly distinguished from his 'sou-wester' type of hat.

Next there is a group of three 'radiates' in which the emperor is shown wearing a spiked crown which gives the impression that the head is surrounded by rays. The first of these is our only silver coin and fairly debased silver at that, for there is some green erosion on it. It is of Septimus Severus (193-211). The other two are of Tetricus I (267-273) and Carausius, the usurping admiral of the British Fleet, which bears the legend "PAX AUG" on the reverse. Fine sentiments for one trying to seize power!

The remaining four coins are all fourth century. One which is almost certainly Constantius II (323-361) has on the reverse an altar bearing the word "VOTIS", the legend "BEATUS TRANQUILITAS" and the London mint mark "P.LON". (illustrated below - fig. 3).

All this goes to show how lucky we Colchester dwellers are in our opportunities for digging.



FIG: 1.

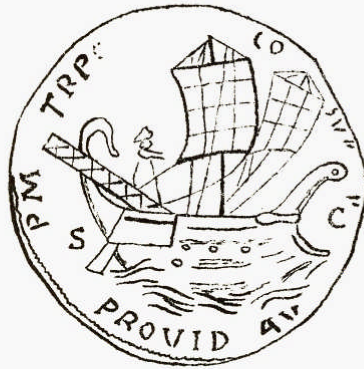


FIG: 2.

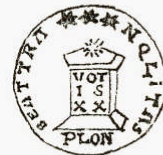


FIG: 3.

Double Size.

LEARNING TO DIG by H. W. Palmer

About twenty four of us, ranging in age from 20 to 50, assembled at Wansfell Adult College in Epping Forest on July 5th for a fortnight's course in Field Archaeology, conducted by Dr. John Alexander of the Cambridge Extra Mural Board, and Mr. Robertson McKay, an assistant Inspector of Ancient Monuments to the Ministry of Works.

This course is primarily intended for those taking the London University Extension Diploma in Archaeology, and about half the students were, attending Extension Classes in the London area for this Diploma. Among the other half were students from Canada, Australia, U.S.A. and Wales.

The course took the form of a dig at Amesbury Banks, an Iron Age hill fort, which could be reached in twenty minutes walk through the Forest - if one had a good sense of direction!

Unlike some courses of a similar nature held at various places during the Summer, this was a 'strictly business' one. The first lecture was after supper on the opening evening, and the following day (Sunday) was well filled with lectures too. Each day was occupied with practical work - digging, surveying, plotting electrical resistivity etc., and the evenings were filled with lectures and writing up the day's work on the site. Visiting lecturers were Mrs Cotton, Mr Frere and Mr Cookson (Archaeological photography).

We were fortunate, in this dismal summer, in having fine weather nearly all the time. An interesting change from the usual routine was a day's visit by coach to other earthworks and the museums at Saffron Walden and Cambridge, at the end of the first week.

A report on a previous dig (in 1956) is given by Mrs Cotton in the Journal of the Essex Field Club and this year's findings will be published in due course. All that needs to be said here is that we found more than we hoped for - the conglomerate and flint revetings of the entrance to the fort.

The keenness and patience of the tutors and the good fellowship of the other students made the course thoroughly enjoyable. It is possible that a similar course will be held at Wansfell next summer.

"Wansfell is a very comfortable place in beautiful grounds with the Forest coming up to the gardens. The catering is excellent and --- well, go next year and see for yourself!

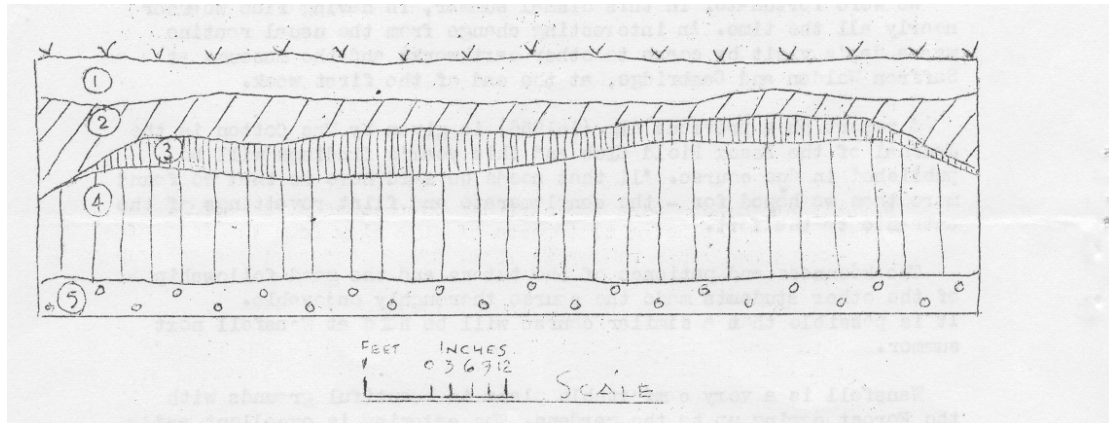
ROMAN ROAD AT STANWAY, COLCHESTER.

Some years ago a drain was dug on the Colchester - Halstead road, on the north western fringes of the town. Mr Hull noted at the time a section of a Roman road resting on faggots. This section was exposed at a point approximately 290 yards to the west of Lamb's Cross. Another section of the same road was also found in the field to the south east of Iron Latch Bridge.

In May of this year, on Mr Hull's suggestion, we opened a trench across the line between these two points. This is in the western corner of Holmwood House School playing fields and permission to dig there was kindly given by the Headmaster, Mr S. Duggan.

The trench was fourteen foot long and exposed a thin metalling stretching for approximately eleven feet and resting on greyish white loam. (See diagram below) The natural gravel was reached at a depth of just over three feet.

There were no signs of faggots in this section of the road and there were no small finds. On such slight evidence we could only conclude that this had been a road of minor importance.



1. Surface Humus
2. Loam turning lighter above 3.
3. Small stones stained rusty
4. Greyish white loam
5. Natural Gravel

CLAY PIPES FOUND AT COLCHESTER by Leonard H. Gant.

The clay tobacco pipe is one of the most common "small finds" in any excavation of either industrial or occupational site dating from the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

These are accounted of importance to archaeologists for they can now be divided into fairly closely datable groups, based on the bowl sizes and shapes, angle of bowl to stem and the size and design of the foot.

Tobacco and pipes were introduced into England in the last quarter of the 16th century and at that time, owing to the scarcity and high cost of the "new weed", the bowls were very small and the whole pipe seldom measured more than six inches. The early type was apparently based on the design of the Aztec pipe and this form, with variations of angle to stem and bowl size persisted for over a century in England.

Clay pipes were cheap but easily broken and this, no, doubt, accounts for the large number found.

The early types were made by hand and polished but moulds were introduced in the early 17th century and decorations in the form of plain or rouletted bands were added to the bowls. Later the maker's initials or rebus were stamped on the foot, but these are not common before 1650. I have one stamped "W P" dating from the first half of the 17th century.

Fragments of clay pipes swept up in ale houses were sold to oyster merchants who spread them on oyster layings for the spat to cling to. I must confess this was rejected by an oyster merchant who assured me that oyster spat prefers a flat base to cling to, and the Second local yarn accounting for the large amount of fragments dredged up off our coast and within the Corporation's jurisdiction was also denied. This asserted that a Dutch boat carrying a cargo of pipes foundered off Brightlingsea in the 18th century. No reference to this incident has been found but I have a barnacle covered pipe of that period which was dredged up in the Pyefleet Channel.

Bristol and London were the earliest centres of pipe making, the earliest reference being to imports of pipe clay from the Isle of Wight, Poole and other places in 1611. Other centres later grow up at Broseley (Shropshire), Hull and Chester, and innumerable small pipe making industries sprang up in other towns.

A contemporary writer described the early pipes as being formed "like a little ladell", which is a very good description.

By 1619 tobacco smoking was widely enjoyed and in that year the Worshipful Company of Pipemakers received a charter and production of great quantities of pipes took place.

The early pipes found in Colchester were probably of London make but local manufacture began in the 17th century when there was a considerable coastwise trade in both finished pipes and the raw clay.

Further study of borough and parish records might provide details of the early local craftsmen. The first published reference appears to be in the "Universal British Directory" (1801) which lists Stephen Chamberlain as the only pipe maker in Colchester. Pigot's Directory of 1839, however, gives three makers, Stephen Rand of George Lane, James Pettit of 38 East Street and Elizabeth Lowthroup (called Lowthorp by Miller Christy in the Victorian County History, Vol 2)

Pipes of both Stephen Chamberlain (below Fig. 7) and his nephew Stephen Rand (Fig. 8) are illustrated. Bonham's Directory (1886), shows J. Jennings at George Lane and he and his two sons carried on the 'business until about 1910, making all types except the long churchwarden from Devonshire clay.

The almost perfect unused specimens of Rand pipes in my possession were found in sawdust filling in a cavity wall of the conservatory at the Minories High St.

Elaborate moulds were introduced in the early 19th century and decorated pipes are still made. Rand used several different moulds with oak leaf and fluting, but London makers produced grotesque bowls bearing masks of literary characters. The invention of mass produced cigarettes and the fashion for smoking briar pipes greatly reduced the demand for clay pipes but these can still be bought for a few pence.

The following notes on types illustrated do not presume to give a chronology of English pipes, the best I know is appended to an article by A. Oswald in the Archaeological Newsletter, Vol. 5, No 12. (1955).

Fig. 1. 1580-1620. The earliest type recorded, hand made and polished bowl with rim ornament projects well forward and heart shaped base droops slightly from the stem. Material of grey colour.

Figs. 2- 4. 1620-1650. Note the development of the stepped foot, bowl pinched below the lip with plain groove or rouletted band. These also appear in larger types of the same bulbous design. A great number of the larger types have been recovered from the Dutch Quarter and elsewhere in the Borough.

Fig. 5. A typical Bristol design characterized by the inward curve of the bowl just forward of the large oval foot.

Fig. 6. 1680-1720. A slimmer and more elongated type in rough yellow clay, having a small spur; bowl inclined well forward. This was found in Long Wyre Street.

Figs. 7 & 8. 1780-1850. The familiar churchwarden evolved from earlier heavier types. Thin walls, and wider bowl with long, slender stem and small spur. The first is stamped S. C. (Stephen Chamberlain, circa 1800) and the second is similar in shape, apart from the spur, but decorated with a line of oak leaves on the forward edge of the bowl. It is stamped S.R. (Stephen Rand, circa 1840), and was found in St Helen's Lane.

Much further research and study needs to be done on this fascinating subject and it is regretted that space forbids illustration of many other types and variants in my collection, which covers over three centuries.

My thanks are due to many friends for the gift of specimens, but particularly to Air Commodore J. S. Chick, John Bensusan Butt and H. Calvar.



Fig 1



Fig 2



Fig 3

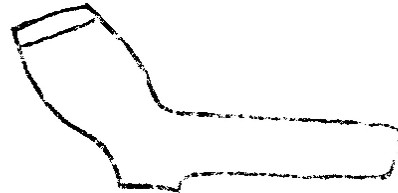


Fig 4



Fig 5



Fig 6

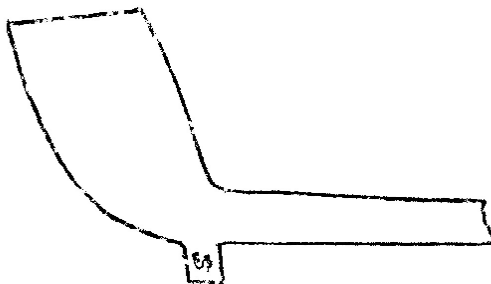


Fig 7



Fig 8

PART 4 DECEMBER 1958

We wish all our readers a Happy Christmas and good digging in the New Year.

This issue completes our first year of quarterly bulletins and the individual membership of the Group is now forty.

Our last Bulletin was particularly rewarding in that Mr L.H. Gant's article on clay pipes brought him some very interesting letters on the subject and also some pipes for identification. He asks us to say how grateful he is for these and that he will be glad to hear of any others. This proves how useful an interchange of bulletins can be, especially if it leads to an exchange of ideas and to the development of individual hobbies and sidelines.

This Bulletin includes an unofficial account of the excavations at Dedham and articles by A.F. Hall and R.H. Farrands.