

RESEARCHES AND DISCOVERIES IN KENT, 1950

LONDON DISTRICT

ONE matter calls for comment in this district, i.e., the further examination of all that is left of the once extensive Charlton earthworks, being a continuation of an excavation carried out in 1914.

It was made with the assistance of local secondary school boys and was intended to ascertain whether any modification of earlier conclusions was necessary. In the main the summary given at the end of the report in *Jour. B.A.A.*, Vol. XXII, n.s. pp. 187-91, was confirmed, save that the occupation might now be put back perhaps half a century to approximately 50 B.C. Besides pottery, the chief discovery this time consisted of quern fragments, of puddingstone, Niedermendig lava and the more common millstone grit. The discovery of a few fragments of lead glazed pottery in undisputed association with other first-century sherds is of importance in view of the fact that pottery of this type is only recently ascribed to the first century A.D.

F. C. ELLISTON-ERWOOD.

SEVENOAKS DISTRICT

As the result of excavation for gravel at Marsh Field Pits, Sutton-at-Hone, Dartford, abundant finds of pottery and one fibula were reported. As a consequence, and by courtesy of Mr. S. Bowen, the site was visited on January 16th, 1950, and subsequently, with the following results.

The location of the site is 800 yards S.S.W. of the Darenth Roman Villa, the exact spotting being Long.  $0^{\circ} 14' 43''$  and Lat.  $51^{\circ} 24' 23''$ .

The abundant sherds together with the fibula are Romano-British, including a quantity of Belgic type, and do not extend beyond the end of the first century A.D. They are thickly spread over the area in a zone of black earth of an average depth of 6 inches, the top of which lies some 10 inches beneath the present surface.

This zone seals an Iron Age A occupation level which includes at least two shallow depressions dug through alluvial clay to the river gravel. From these depressions were recovered the remains of four pottery vessels roughly handmade with fingertip decoration, the sherds being accompanied by animal bones, charcoal and calcined flints.

It was possible in one instance to record a section, and it is hoped eventually to publish a short report on this interesting site, which is an example of a concentrated Iron Age A occupation covered by a thick Romano-British level of the first century A.D.

G. W. MEATES.

## ROCHESTER AND GRAVESEND DISTRICTS

*Wouldham Marshes, Rochester*

In June, 1950, our Member, Mr. E. Wilson Latham, directed my attention to the discovery of a wooden drain-pipe in Wouldham Marshes, Rochester. I investigated the site and found that the hollowed-out trunk of an elm tree had been unearthed by the Kent River Board while engaged in repairing the sea-wall. The trunk was nearly 3ft. below marsh level, which is here about 5.5 ft. above Newlyn Ordnance Datum (N.O.D.) and very near the present river wall. The National Grid Indication (N.G.I.) was 712661. The pipe-trunk was nearly 22 ft. long, having an external diameter which varied from 11 to 12 in. and an internal diameter which varied from 5 to 7 in. ; the landward end was stopped with a clay plug.

*Frindsbury Marshes*

In March of the same year the County Police had reported to Sir Edward Harrison an exactly similar find, and I am obliged to Mr. T. Moreton Knight for assistance in investigating this second natural pipe. The hollow trunk of an elm tree was seen protruding from the marsh bank of the river below Frindsbury Church (N.G.I. 755685) about 6 ft. below the present marsh surface, here about 9 ft. N.O.D. The length could not be determined but the external diameter was 12 in., the internal being 7 in.

Both these "drain-pipes" were found between 2.5 and 3 ft. N.O.D., that is, about 2 ft. above the Roman level, and they had obviously been inserted into the marsh from a somewhat higher level. They were clearly used in draining these marshes probably when they were first "inned" or enclosed in the late thirteenth or during the fourteenth century ; the clay stopper of the Wouldham example was used in the same manner as a modern sluice valve, i.e. it was removed to drain fresh water from the enclosed marsh at low tide and replaced to prevent the ingress of sea water at high tide.

*Isle of Grain*

Two sites came to my attention during the year very near each other in the Wallend Petroleum Tank Farm of the Medway Oil and Storage Co. The first was destroyed several years ago and I have only a description from workmen and a few objects. It is described as a seam of burnt clay and the relics found in the seam include brick and tile fragments, lumps of very burnt clay and brick and one small fragment of orange potsherd. Of this last our Member, Mr. E. Greenfield, writes :—"The orange sherd is Iron Age South-Eastern B, probably from an omphalos bowl with tooled semicircles with groups

of three impressed concentric rings placed where the tooled work meets." The fragment exactly agrees with those shown on bowls as illustrated by Ward Perkins, *Paper No. 6, Procs. Prehist. Soc.*, 164, Fig. 10 (1) Canewdon, and by Worsfold, *Arch. Cant.*, LXI, p. 151, Fig. 3 (5) Borden. In view of the circumstances little can be said of this site which produced Roman and Iron Age fragments. The N.G.I. was 878755, surface at 28 ft. N.O.D. horizon about 23·5 ft. N.O.D.

The second site was only a few yards to the east from the first, but quite distinct from it. On the eastern bank of the large "Borrow Pit" I observed a tightly packed bank of shells extending for some 6 ft. and 2·5 ft. from the surface, here 27 ft. N.O.D. On removing the overlying soil and loam it was seen that a slight hollow 6 ft. by 6 ft. had been filled with many hundreds of shells of oyster, whelk and cockle, together with bones of ox and sheep. Four sherds of dark grey pottery with wavy line decoration dated the site, for on showing these to our Curator, Mr. L. R. A. Grove, he immediately produced a large thirteenth-century jug, found in Maidstone, from a counterpart of which these fragments undoubtedly came. The jug is illustrated in *Arch. Cant.* LV., p. 63, Fig. 3 (2). A small medieval kitchen midden is indicated. More fragments of rough provincial Roman ware and pieces of tile have been found at the site described in *Arch. Cant.* LXII, xlv.

JOHN H. EVANS.

#### TUNBRIDGE WELLS DISTRICT

IN June last, a Mr. Francis, working at Bassett's Farm, Pembury (N.G.I. 642419) dug up three flint implements lying side by side, and 1 ft. from the surface. These three implements are Neolithic axe-heads; respective lengths, 9 in., 7 in. and 6·5 in. approximately, finely chipped but unground, and they are probably a trader's hoard.

This note is merely a preliminary notice of the discovery and it is hoped that our Member, Mr. P. J. Tester, will prepare a fuller report for our next volume.

The implements are now in Tunbridge Wells Museum.

V. F. DESBOROUGH.