

## IRON AGE HEARTH AT FINGLESHAM NEAR EASTRY, KENT.

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ON May 30th, 1929, workmen excavating a cesspool for the new inn which Messrs. Jude Hanbury and Co. are building at the junction of the roads to Betteshanger and Finglesham, and a few feet above marsh level, came upon a coarse black-ware hand-made pot. The section at this spot on the N.W. side of the pit showed 9 inches of soil succeeded by 14 inches of a light brown loam. This was followed by 27 inches of a stiffer and rather darker loam which merged into 28 inches of dark clayey loam becoming darker at the base, and with burnt flints scattered through the lower half. This level of 6 feet 6 inches from the surface seems to have been the level of the old land surface at the first period of occupation, and the date of occupation of the site, from the style of the coarse pottery, may be second or first century B.C., although similar pottery was being made well into the first century A.D. No metal objects have been found and the pottery fragments belong to only two or three vessels, one of which in the firing had baked reddish brown. One of the pots is of a thick heavy gritty clay—average thickness  $\frac{3}{8}$  inch—flat-bottomed, a flat-topped beaded rim, and with a reddish interior. A second is of a blackish gritty clay, lighter in substance— $\frac{1}{6}$  inch thick—with a small beaded rim.

The pot first discovered seems to have been standing on its hearth. Unfortunately the first pieces of pottery dug up were thrown away on the spoil heap and have not been recovered, but when Mr. P. W. Steed, who farms the land, had his attention drawn to the spot, he rang up the writer. That evening the section of the pit from which the pottery came was carefully excavated. The occurrence of bones in the lower part of Bed 4 had been noted, and the possibility

of a burial discussed, but fuller excavation and the character of the bones soon showed that part of an old hearth site had been exposed.

The bones seen were too decayed to stand removal and were in a fragmentary state ; but teeth of horse, ox and sheep or deer were recovered.

Before the actual surface of the hearth was exposed the earth was almost black, and many burnt flints were scattered round the site ; and at this level on one side a layer of large flints, many not burnt, had been set in the soil. The soil of the actual hearth was baked into a friable red brick, and on it at one place stood the remains of the large flat-bottomed pot, the upper part of which had been destroyed by the workmen.

Below the level of the hearth the soil was chalky loam with much flint, and this continued down to water level at a depth of 9 feet 3 inches from the surface.