

MISCELLANEOUS NOTES.

A BURIAL ON THE SITE OF TONBRIDGE PRIORY.

IN connection with the reconstruction of Tonbridge Railway Station it was necessary in March 1935 to remove the old and to erect a new signal box on the East side of the main road. In excavating for concrete piers to support the signal cabin the workmen unearthed the skeleton of a man which was lying about four or five feet below the present surface of the ground.

The spot where the bones reposed formed part of the site of Tonbridge Priory before its dissolution in 1525. The buildings of the Priory—which was dedicated to St. Mary Magdalene—were of stone, and such of the ruins as remained were used as Farm Buildings until the construction of the South-Eastern Railway in 1838-41. (J. F. Wadmore, A.R.I.R.A., Tonbridge Priory, *Arch. Cant.*, XIV, 326-43.) It was necessary when constructing the Railway to level the ground, which was then slightly sloping from south to north. At the spot where the bones were found the original surface was not greatly interfered with and it may be taken that the burial of the body was effected “in the solid” at a depth of some four to six feet below the then surface of the ground. The site of the grave was within a few yards of the main buildings of the Priory and the grave must have been undisturbed certainly from 1841 until this spring.

The workmen in making their excavation had struck the skull with a pickaxe, and it was in small pieces when extricated from the excavated hole. The bones were very brittle and fell to pieces when touched. The backbone and ribs were very difficult to separate from the surrounding earth. The leg-bones were lying parallel to each other about nine inches apart. The thigh bones were in a fairly good state of preservation and measured about 16½ inches, indicating a total height of about 5 feet 5 inches or 5 feet 6 inches. The skeleton was lying on its back with the feet towards the east. There were no remains of a coffin or

of hair or clothing, nor were any buckles, buttons or similar remains discovered, although search was made. An almost complete set of teeth was counted. Near the feet of the skeleton were two pieces of glazed brick, one of which was sent to the British Museum. The report of the Authorities is that "the fragment submitted is a piece of brick (heavily fired) with glazing of the fourteenth or fifteenth century."

The discovery of the human remains caused further enquiry to be made and it appears that near the site of the new signal box some brickwork had been found which seemed at first to indicate the foundation of a portion of the Priory buildings. If these bricks (as was at first reported to be the case) had been of the same description as the fragments found near the body, many interesting questions would have arisen. Closer enquiry has, however, revealed that they were comparatively modern, of local manufacture, and laid in cement mortar. The portion exposed was, moreover, a segment of a circle, and as the Priory buildings before the coming of the Railway were occupied as a portion of the Priory Farm, and as a considerable area was in hops, it may safely be conjectured that an oast house stood on the spot in question (erected, say, between 1750 and 1820) and that it was pulled down, and all but the foundations were removed, when the Railway was constructed.

This leaves two questions to be solved : (1) About what period did the burial take place of the skeleton now exposed ? and (2) What significance (if any) attaches to the small fragments of glazed brick ?

As to (1), it seems safe to assume that the burial took place during the time the Priory buildings were occupied by the Canons Regular of the Order of St. Augustine, that is to say, prior to the middle of the sixteenth century. There must have been many burials in the precincts during the existence of the Priory. Three stone coffins were in fact dug up while the site was being cleared for the commencement of the Railway works ; and about twenty-five or thirty years ago another skeleton was found in circumstances very similar to those in the present case.

As to (2) the small brick fragments may, of course, have come to the spot by accident, but it may perhaps be inferred that they were shovelled into the grave with loose earth when the body was interred. They may have been a portion of the débris left on the site when the abbey was rebuilt about the middle of the fourteenth century. If so, the man was buried not earlier than 1300 and not later than 1525.

I must add that I have been greatly helped by Mr. Angus Baird, the Engineer in charge of the new Railway works at Tonbridge, who has kindly taken statements from his workmen and in other ways assisted in elucidation and verification of facts.

ARTHUR A. NEVE.

DISCOVERY AT COURSEHORN, NEAR CRANBROOK.

DURING recent alterations to the garden at Coursehorn the interesting discovery of a sixteenth century stone fire surround was made. This bore the initials M. and W. and the coat of arms of the Piggots. There had evidently been a second coat of arms for the Henleys but the piece was unfortunately missing. These arms related to Walter Henley and his wife, Margery Piggot, who lived at Coursehorn which belonged to the Henley family for some centuries, and which they left early in the seventeenth century. This family held important positions, and was related by marriage to the Culpeppers of Goudhurst, connected so tragically with Catherine Howard. The surround, although much broken, has been mended by an expert and re-erected in the house—an eighteenth century farmhouse which was built round the remains of the Manor—and contains relics of this in the fine Tudor ceilings and other features, and also parts of the moat and courtyard which have only recently disappeared in favour of a garden.

The present owners will be very pleased to show the fireplace to any archæologists who may be interested.

MRS. CLAUD LEMON.



STONE FIREPLACE AT COURSEHORN, CRANBROOK.



ROMAN GRAVE GROUP FROM GILLINGHAM, KENT.

A ROMAN BURIAL PIT AT GILLINGHAM, KENT.

DURING excavations for a sewer, on land which is now being developed for housing purposes by Messrs. Vinall & Chappell, opposite Woodlands Lane Cemetery, Gillingham, at a distance of about 100 yards from the main road, Council workmen found a human skull, a dish of Samian ware with barbotine rim (Form 36) and a small globular-shaped cinerary urn of black "Upchurch" ware, both of the first or early second century A.D., at a depth of four feet in the Chalk.

The dish is a fine glazed and undamaged specimen, 7" in diameter with a border $\frac{3}{4}$ " wide on which are six ovate pointed leaves attached to a stem and one leaf without a stem.

The depth of the dish is $1\frac{3}{4}$ " from top to base. The cavity in the dish is 1" deep in the centre. The urn is $4\frac{1}{2}$ " in height, 5" in greatest diameter and 2" at the base. The mouth is $2\frac{1}{4}$ " in internal diameter. Except for a small chip on the rim which was apparently missing when found, the urn is in good condition and otherwise undamaged.

ARTHUR JONES,
Curator, Gillingham Museum.

ROMAN CREMATION BURIAL AT
GREAT MONGEHAM.

EARLY in October 1935 the laying of gas mains, preliminary to completely developing a new estate for 200 houses in a field with a chalk sub-soil exposed this burial.

The excavation of a narrow trench about 15 ins. deep for the main seems to have first exposed a high walled coarse ware conical bowl. This had been crushed by the weight of the soil, and was further broken by the workmen. Unfortunately as none of the rim has been found it seems likely that the main damage had been done by the plough. On the exposure of these fragments greater care was taken, and this has resulted in the complete recovery, except for a section of the rim, of a large vase of fine grey ware,

11 $\frac{3}{8}$ ins. high by 8 $\frac{7}{8}$ ins. in greatest diameter with a turned out rim 5 ins. in diameter and with an opening of 2 $\frac{1}{2}$ ins. This contained a number of fragments of bone small enough to pass through the mouth of the vase.

The funerary group also included a smaller vase of a similar type, 7 $\frac{1}{2}$ ins. high without the rim, which was missing through an ancient break, by 5 $\frac{3}{4}$ ins. in diameter. The mouth opening was something like an inch across. The fourth object was a poorly made grey ware stump-footed bulbous beaker 6 $\frac{1}{4}$ ins. high, of Richborough type 96, and the fifth a Samian dish, Form 31, with potter's mark JVCVNDVS F. This is a late second century production from Rheinzabern.

The group was deposited in a small roughly circular excavation in the chalk at a maximum depth of 2 ft. 3 ins. The coarse pottery is of late third or early fourth century date. As the Samian dish is one hundred years or so earlier it has been suggested that it was possibly an heirloom. It was in a broken condition when found.

W.P.D.S.

THE OLD HOUSES BEHIND THE FISHMARKET, FOLKESTONE.

THE old houses with narrow dividing passages and steep flights of steps, which rose in tiers, against the side of the cliff and formed such a picturesque background to the Fishmarket at Folkestone, are now being pulled down and replaced by modern dwellings on the level ground.

Artists will regret the destruction of these late eighteenth century red-roofed buildings which, for several generations, have delighted their eyes and formed the subject of many pictures, but the demolition was inevitable. These houses, always of a poor type, together with others bordering on the Stade, were unfit for habitation and were too delapidated to allow of reconditioning. On enquiry at the Borough Engineer's Office, I was informed that nothing of archaeological interest had been found in them except a few old Dutch figured tiles, which are being preserved. The old

red tiles will be used again for the new buildings whose roofs, therefore, will still lend colour to the Fishmarket.

N. E. TOKE.

202 BEACH STREET, DEAL.

THIS house, the last seventeenth century one to remain on the seaward side of Beach Street, and it seems at the furthest point at which houses were built at the N. end of the town up to that date, with its neighbour 201, has just been demolished by the Corporation. The scheme has been to clear the whole of the sea front of houses so as to have an unencumbered esplanade, and as this house suddenly showed signs of weakness the opportunity was taken to remove this isolated block.

No. 201 was of no architectural merit with the exception of two old pine beams with stop chamfered angles. These had been cut down from their original length and may have been old ship timbers. Another beam had certainly been spar wreckage from some vessel.

There are no early records of No. 202. Architecturally it seems to have been built about 1675 to 1685 as it had a Flemish style gable, two small oak-framed windows with leaded glazing (which had been blocked up in the eighteenth century) and large hollow-backed fireplaces reduced in size late in the same century to take cast iron grates. The documentary evidence shows that a former name for the dwelling was Conduit House, and that it had been a watch house in the occupation of the Commissioners of Customs. In an entry in a diary for 1829 it is spoken of as "The Watch House." Before that time and later it was the house of the Chief Officer of the Coastguard. This tenancy by Custom House officers is also proved by one of the grates having side panels displaying the royal coat of arms with supporters, motto and crest, while the front had III in a circle between the script letters G and R.

The house, a double fronted one of red brick with a basement, an upper and an attic story had undergone many

alterations. All the windows had been remodelled in the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, and a large projection had been built out presumably when the Customs were in occupation. No original panelling remained but, in an upper room, a plain oak framework beneath a stretched canvas for paper seemed evidence of it. Other rooms had eighteenth century oak or pine panelling, and there was a good example of an eighteenth century cupboard with coved back of stained wood and shaped shelves in the large ground floor room which looked seawards. The basement retained no signs of great antiquity but a solid brick-vaulted cellar seemed to be a legacy of the eighteenth century Custom House period, and was perhaps built as a store for seized smuggled goods. The deeds speak of it as "The Archway." The staircase which was reached through the southern front room was a poor affair down to the basement and up to the first floor, but the flight to the attic was a fine fragment with its massive newels (from which unfortunately the finials had been cut) and turned spiral balusters.

During the demolition coins of William III and George III, a small green glass physic bottle and an early eighteenth century rat-tailed tea spoon have been found behind panelling or fireplaces.

W.P.D.S.

BIGBERRY CAMP.

OWING to the illness of Mr. R. F. Jessup the report on the excavations at Bigberry has had to stand over to Vol. XLVIII.