



Colchester Archaeological Group

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Please apply in writing to the Honorary Secretary at the following address:

*Honorary Secretary
Colchester Archaeological Group
c/o 27 Alexandra Road
Colchester
Essex C03 3DF*

The Iron Age "A" Farm at Vinces Farm Ardleigh

by F.H. Erith F.S.A. and P.R. Holbert

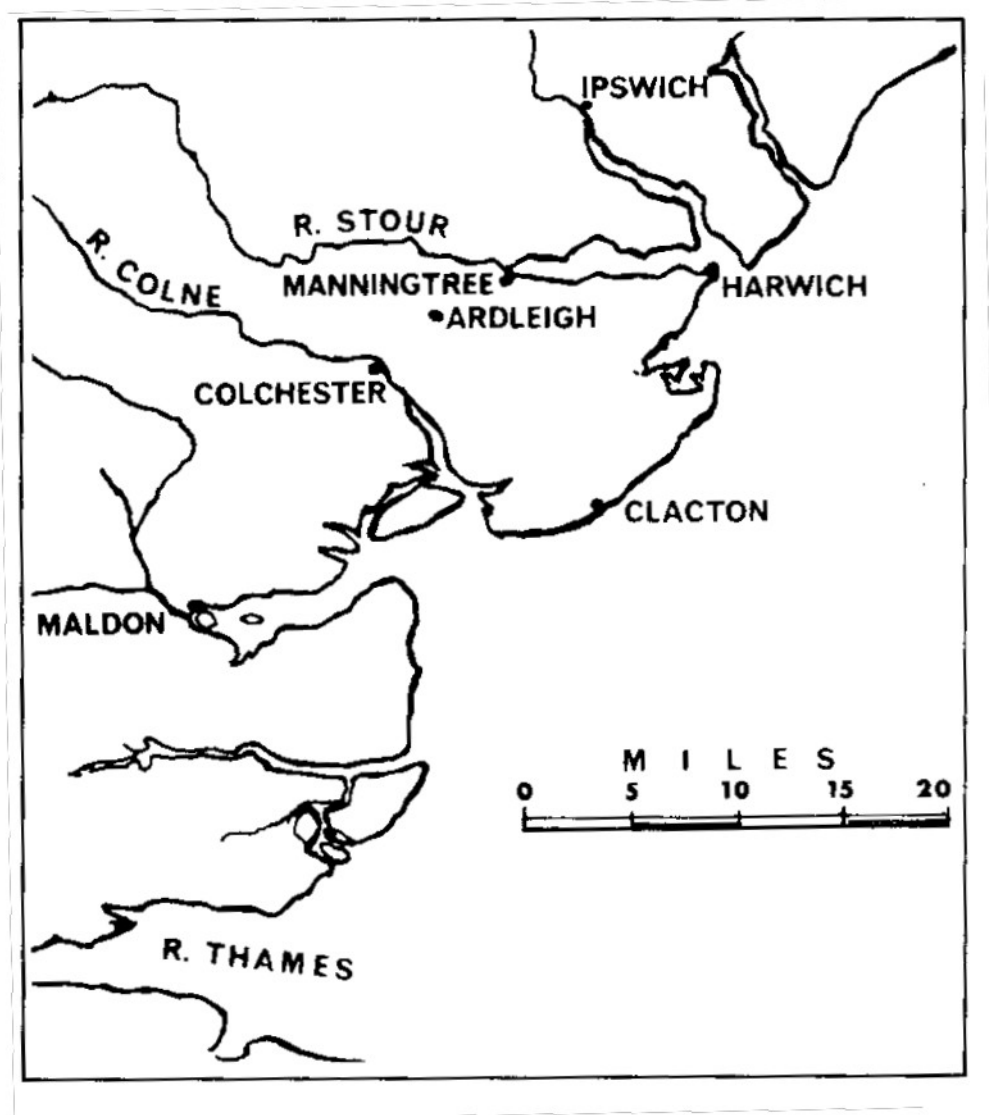
SUMMARY

A dwelling of the Pre-Belgic Iron Age consisted of a round hut fifty feet in diameter. This was contained within a rectangular enclosure roughly one hundred feet long and sixty feet wide. The hut was destroyed by fire in the first century B. C. and then abandoned.

LOCATION

Ardleigh is in north-east Essex, between Manningtree at the head of the estuary of the Suffolk Stour and Colchester on the River Colne; the distance from both places being about four miles. (fig. 1.)

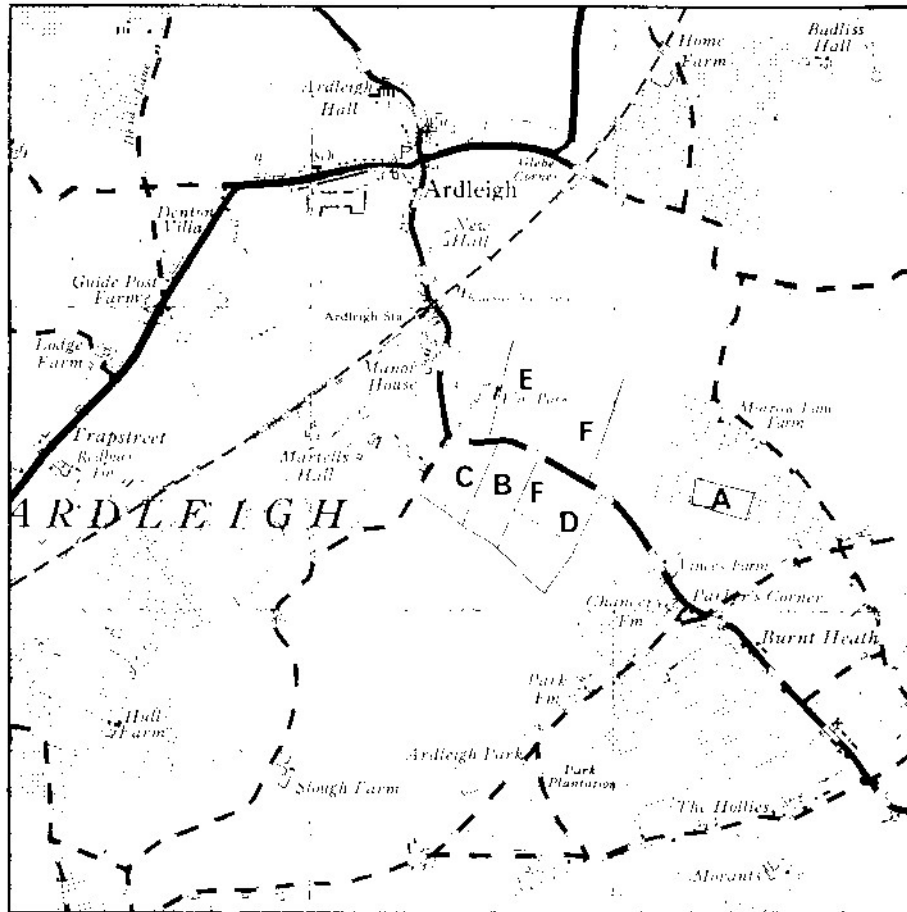
Fig. 1 MAP OF ESSEX COAST



The site is in a field called "The Shut-in four Acres" belonging to Vinces Farm, Grid ref. TM063284 It is part of the gravel plateau of the Tendring Hundred, one hundred and twenty feet above sea-level and flat for many miles around.

To the north and west are large well-drained arable fields, but to the south is Burnt Heath, and area so boggy that when it was enclosed in 1803 the ditches had to be exceptionally numerous, as can be seen on the map. (Fig. 2)

Fig. 2 MAP OF SOUTH ARDLEIGH



Scale: 2½ inches = 1 mile

- A Iron Age "A" Farmstead site
- B Late Bronze Age cemetery
- C L.B.A. ringditches
- D Iron Age "A" pottery with pestle
- E Belgic Settlement
- F Belgic Cemeteries

To the south-west, in the vicinity of Vines farmhouse, there is a seam of ironstone three or four inches thick and about two acres in extent, at a depth of two feet. This has been described as "Gravel cemented together with a substance containing silica and much ferric oxide (18.3%), the peroxide being as much as 6.5% of the whole". (Essex Naturalist X, p. 210.)

This is not a "defensive" site in the military sense, but it may well have been chosen for its remoteness, since it is about a mile from the nearest stream, besides being protected from the south by the swamp of Burnt Heath.

DISCOVERY

The history of this site began in 1955 when a deep-digging plough was introduced to the farm. This brought to the surface three or four inches of subsoil and with it considerable amounts of pottery of the Late Bronze Age, Belgic and Roman periods. This occurred mostly in fields to the west of Vines farmhouse, but a few nondescript prehistoric sherds and red clay loom-weights were also turned up in the Shut-in Four Acre Field.

Then in the dry summer of 1959 Captain R. H. Farrands R. N. R. made his eventful flight over Ardleigh and published an account of it in the Bulletin. (Colchester Archaeological Group Bulletin III, pp. 13-15.) One of his discoveries was of a cropmark in the Shut-in Four Acre Field, which at that time was in oats. He described it as "a sub-rectangular ditched enclosure with possibly two entrances". (fig. 3.) From the previous finds from this field coinciding with the

cropmark, it seemed likely that the site had been a settlement of the Pre-Belgic Iron Age.

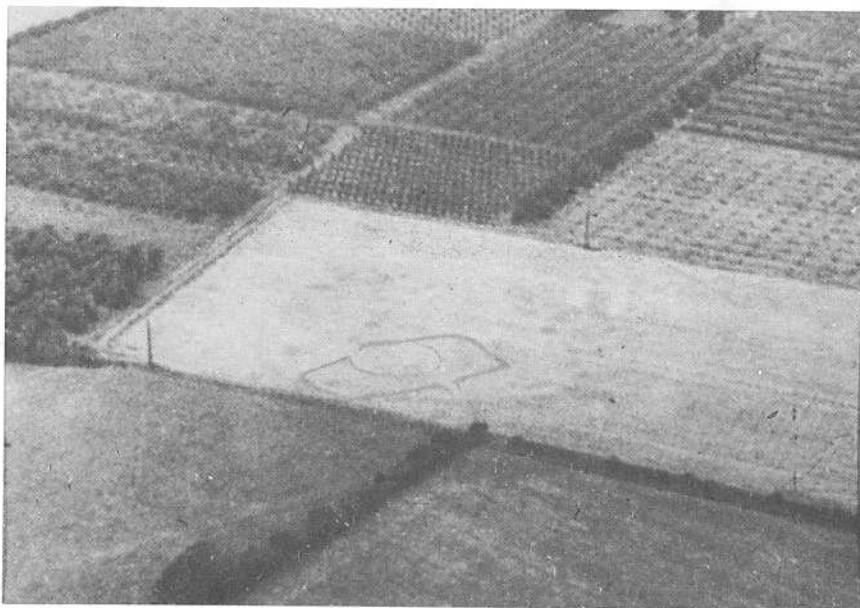


Photo by R. H. Farrands

Fig. 3 CROPMARK IN FIELD OF OATS. JUNE 1959

In 1963 Mr Bryan Blake, then of the Colchester Museum, had assembled a team to dig at Lawford, but was prevented from doing so for a fortnight owing to the late harvest. He used the time to cut some trial trenches on this Ardleigh site to see if the ditches which showed on the cropmark could be located. There was no slight mound or surface indication of their position, but by cutting long trenches he found the enclosure ditch in several places, as well as a smaller circular ditch in the interior. In the following year, the Colchester Archaeological Group, under Mr Peter Holbert, also dug trial Trenches, but soon had to desist owing to the hardness of the ground. Finds in both cases included pottery of the Early Iron Age. Mr Blake then published all these as a Note in the 1965 Transactions of the Essex Archaeological Society. (p.261.)

EXCAVATION

In 1966 it was decided by the Colchester Archaeological Group Committee to carry out a full-scale excavation of the site, to extend over two seasons 1967/68. Consequently an area covering the southern part of the settlement was marked out in the form of twelve by twelve foot 'boxes' (fig. 9). Previous knowledge gained from the 1963/4 trenches confirmed the depth of plough soil as twelve-fourteen inches. Excavation to this depth in the boxes exposed the sandy-clay mixture of which the upper subsoil consists. At this level the main features (the ditches) show up, indicated by rather indistinct greyish forms contrasting with the general cream-buff of the subsoil. Higher levels of the settlement had of course been lost, sliced off by modern deep-ploughing.

In consideration of certain disadvantages experienced by the use of 'boxes', it was decided that for the 1968 season the remaining part of the settlement should be uncovered in larger areas, to include the most interesting features. (fig. 10.)

In view of some of the features found in the northern sector of the Hut circle, the southern half was re-examined in 1969.

The Ditches (fig. 4)

The Settlement is defined by two main ditches – “A” being the outer enclosure ditch of roughly rectangular shape, enclosing an area of approximately a hundred by sixty- feet. Lengths of this ditch (marked “B”) were not excavated, but are conjectured by the cropmark photograph. The circular inner ditch “C” enclosed an area of about fifty feet in diameter (at plough depth). An odd length of ditch and disturbance “D” is interpreted as bounding a smaller enclosure.

The outer ditch "A" was of varying depths of three foot six inches to six feet, with widths varying from six to ten feet. The shallowest part of ditch "A" was where it converged with ditch "C", while the deepest was at the right-angled bend of the north-eastern corner, ditch "A" was interrupted on the straight, eastern side by a Causeway Entrance "E", flanked by shallow drainage channels.

The inner, circular ditch "C", of U-shaped section, varied in depth and width - the northern run being four feet wide and three feet deep, and the southern three feet six inches wide and two feet six inches deep. On the western side ditch "C" coincides with ditch "A" and also has an entrance gap "E" on its eastern side, in line with the "Causeway".

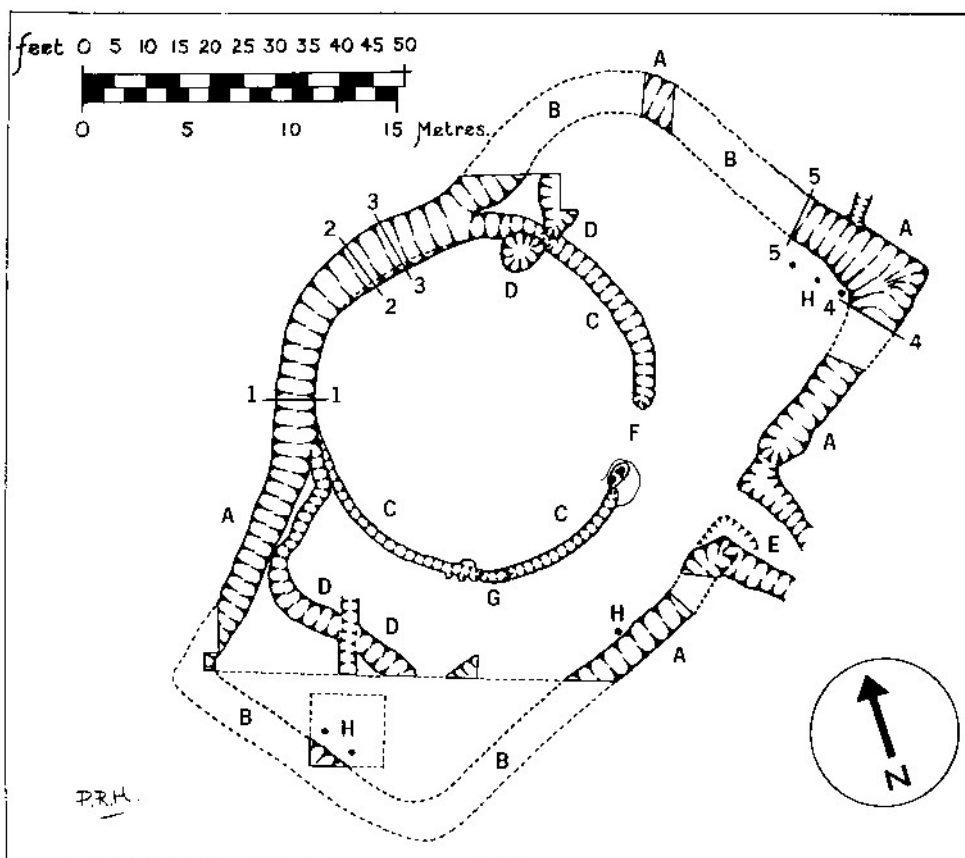


Fig 4. MAIN PLAN OF SITE

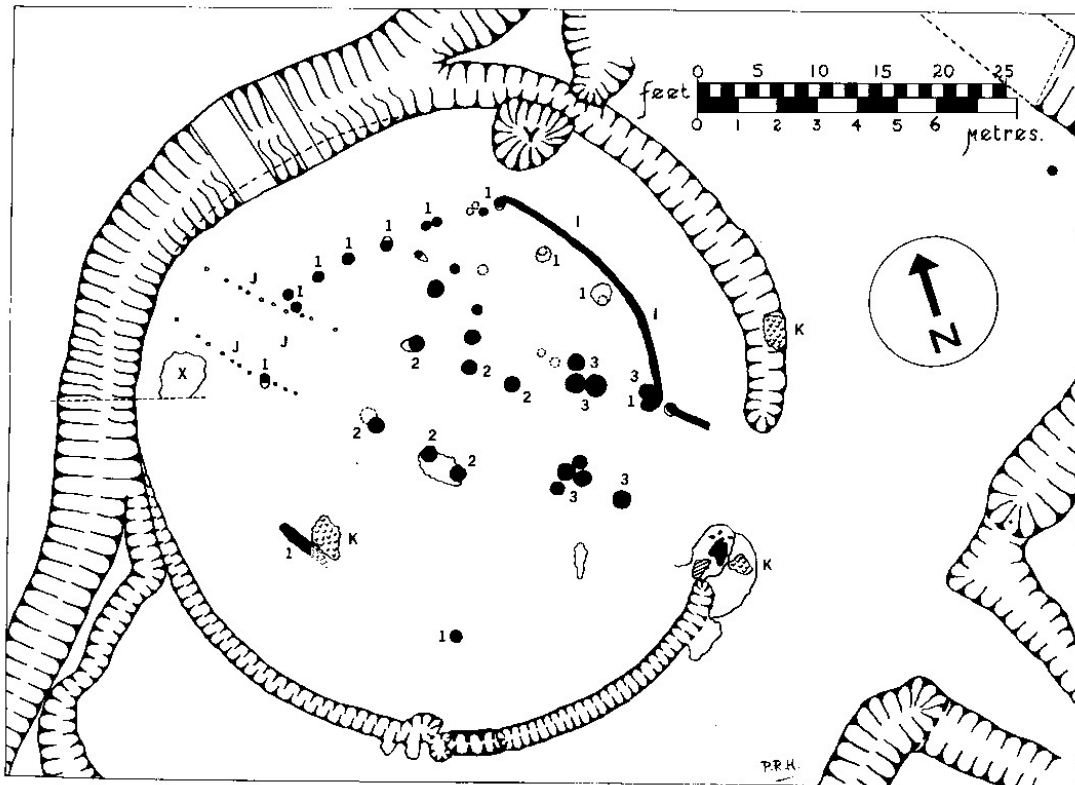


Fig. 5 PLAN OF CIRCLES WITH POST HOLES

The Postholes within the Hut Circle (fig. 5)

In this type of soil the locating of postholes can be very difficult and the material replacing the original posts can be almost identical with the natural undisturbed gravelly soil. Often the man-made disturbances can be seen only under certain conditions of wetness or dryness; e. g. after a shower of rain when the differences, drying out at different rates, suddenly show up quite clearly, usually as patches of whitish silt in the pale-buff subsoil.

The postholes found in the central area formed a definite pattern, indicative of a typical Iron Age round hut. For purposes of reference these postholes have been divided into three main groups.

Group 1. These appear to be concentric with the Ditch Circle and, although some in the southern half are missing, it can be assumed that the pattern was originally complete.

Group 2. These form a rough square in the Circle centre.

Group 3. These form a complex exactly opposite the entrance and indicate the presence of a Porch structure.

Various other holes which do not appear to fit into any of the above patterns may possibly suggest internal partitions or supports for a loom.

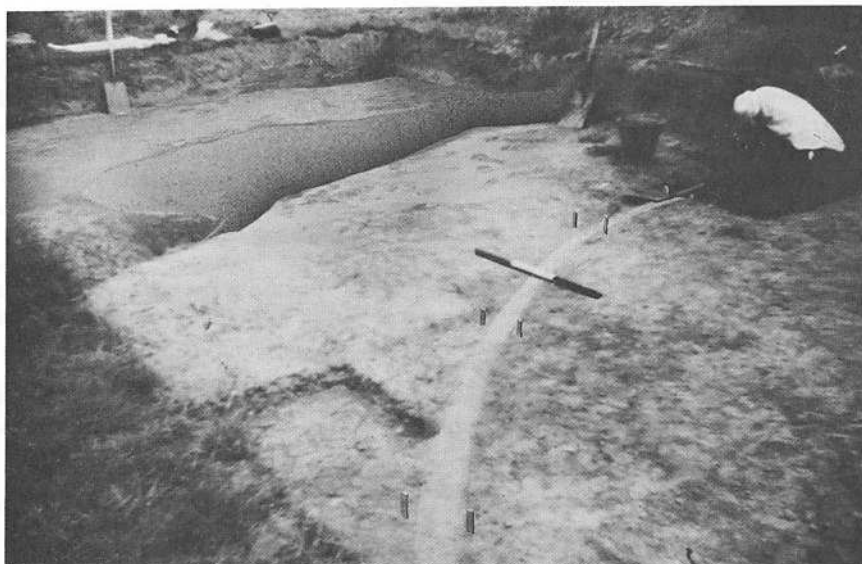
The Curved Slot

The most interesting feature found within the central area was the Slot "I" concentric with the Ditch circle and taking the same line as the Group 1 postholes. This Slot was eight inches wide and nine to twelve inches in depth (at plough depth), V-shaped in section and filled with light grey clayish material. It was not visible in very dry conditions, but after rain it appeared as an arc of darker soil and, on drying out, showed up as an arc of paler soil. (figs. 6, 7 and 8.)

The interpretation placed on this most unusual feature is that of a closely placed row of sharpened stakes driven into the ground. (A similar feature is recorded in the smaller hut at Little Woodbury.) (Proceedings Prehistoric Society VI (1940) page 93.)

There may also have been a similar curved slot on the opposite side at the south-east, but previous trial trenches had obliterated much of the subsoil where it might have been. Traces were found during the 1969 re-examination under a baulk which had not previously been dismantled.

The purpose of the curved Slot with the massive wall of stakes driven into it is not known, but such a wall would have given greater rigidity to a building, especially in the early stages of construction. The two parallel rows of stake-holes 'J' and significant gap in the Group 1 postholes diametrically opposite the main entrance may signify a back opening.



**Fig. 6 THE CURVED SLOT (THROUGH WHITE OF RANGE ROD)
SHOWING AS A PALER SOIL MARK**



**Fig. 7 THE CURVED SLOT (BETWEEN PEGS)
SHOWING AS A DARK SOIL MARK**

The Hearth

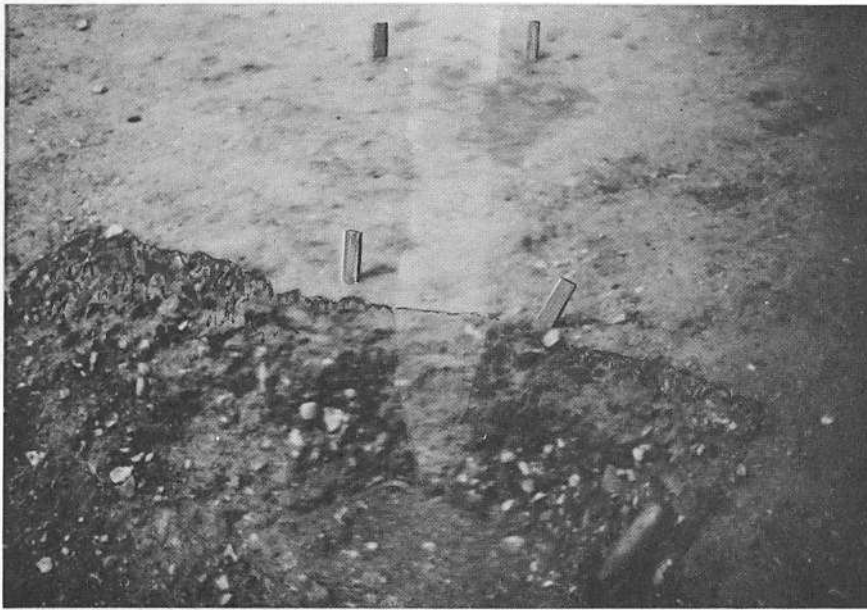
A mass of tumbled red-burned clay within the Hut circle denotes the position of the Hearth "K". As this extended some six inches below plough depth, the lower part of the Hearth must have been in a small pit.

In the ditch-terminals either side of the entrance were further masses of red-burned clay, mixed with ashes, pottery and broken loom-weights, obviously the nearest available rubbish-pits for anything discarded within the Hut.

Postholes in the Enclosure

There is some evidence for a fence or palisade on the inner lip of the enclosure ditch "A". Several scattered postholes "H" were found.

No packing stones were found in any of the postholes; indeed no stones were found anywhere on the site which could not have passed through a two inch mesh!



**Fig. 8 CURVED SLOT IN SECTION (LOOKING NORTH)
PEGS AT PLOUGH DEPTH**

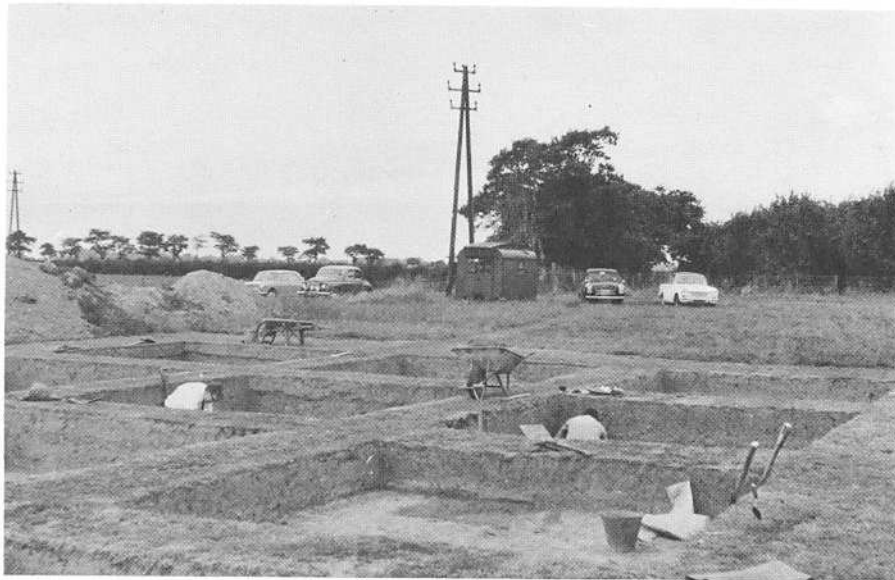


Fig. 9

The Sections (fig. 12)

The exact position where the Sections were drawn is indicated on the Plan in fig. 4.

A significant feature in Nos. 2 and 3 is the relatively thick layer of "dark grey silt with burning", in which some sherds of early Belgic pottery were embedded. No pottery was found above this level. A very impressive conflagration must have occurred to cause a "burnt" layer of such thickness and it is reasonable to conclude that the wood and thatch from a substantial hut must have caught fire in an east wind and collapsed into the ditch.

Sections 2 and 3 also show a buried Ledge on their eastern sides; the western edges of this ledge formed the original circumference of the true circle round the Hut on its western arc. The lip of the Hut circle ground above this ledge had been eroded away, as can be seen on the Plan.

In Section No. 1 the depression on the eastern side, marked "X", is a small pit within the Hut circle.

Sections 4 and 5, from the north-eastern corner of the enclosure ditch also show evidence of a substantial fire in the upper levels.



Fig. 10 NORTHERN HALF OF HUT CIRCLE

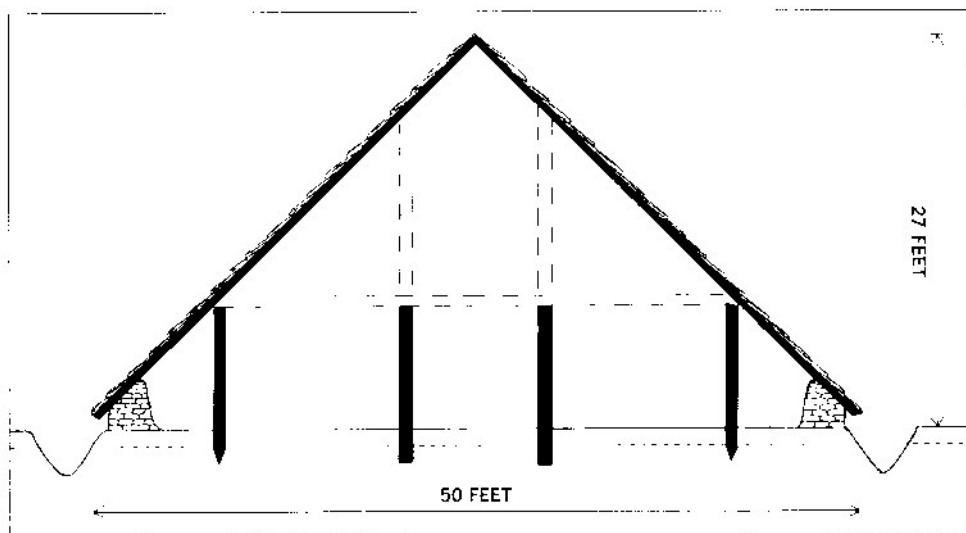


Fig. 11 ELEVATION OF CIRCULAR HUT

ELEVATION. Conjectured reconstruction (fig. 11)

The type of building within the circular ditch is revealed by the setting of the postholes, etc., in the ground plan in fig. 5.

The outer ring of postholes with the curved Slot "T" represented the effective wall of the hut. This was some seven feet within the circumference of the ditch, so the roof would have had to extend down that additional width to convey rainwater into the ditch. Assuming that the soil from the ditch was thrown inwards (as at West Harling, Proceedings Prehistoric Society XIX (1953) p. 5), then a low earthen bank would be formed on which the roof rafters would rest. The most likely form of roof-covering in this part of England is thatch, either of straw or reeds and this requires a roof pitch of at least forty-five degrees. At this pitch the height of the apex of a conical roof would be half the diameter plus the height of the earthen wall. So with a diameter of fifty feet and a low earthen bank of two feet, the height at the apex would be twenty-seven feet.

No postholes were found at the centre, but the Group 2 holes were in a square each about six feet from the centre. These could have held posts to support the roof rafters at an intermediate height, or supported beams on which further cross-timbers could have been erected.

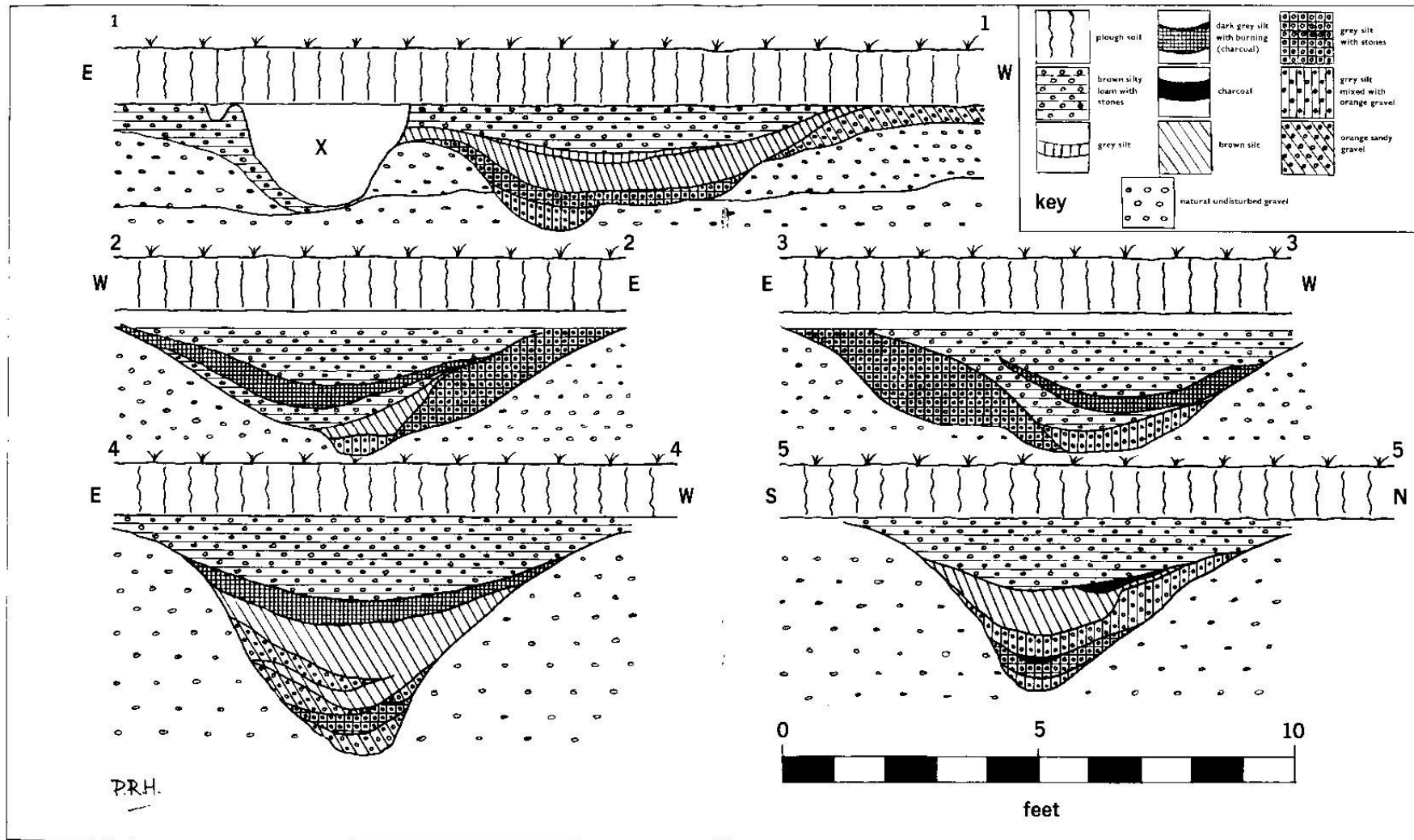


Fig 12. POSITION OF SECTIONS IS SHOWN ON Fig. 4

The length of the rafters, from the apex to the eaves over the circular ditch would be thirty-four feet; but presumably not all of them would be in single unbroken lengths of timber. The main constructional problem would be to get the first three hoisted as a tripod and Pits "X" and "Y" might have been where the bases of two of them were embedded.

ALTERNATIVE FORM OF DWELLING

The position of the portholes found here is not right for a peripheral building running round the inner side of the circular ditch, as the main posts, etc. would be under the crown of the roof. Neither was any provision found to carry away rainwater from the inner circle of eaves..

SEQUENCE OF CONSTRUCTION OF DITCHES

The shape of the Plan (fig. 4) shows that the rectangular ditch "A" of the Enclosure could not have been dug before the circular ditch "C", since it is inconceivable that a rectangular enclosure would have been made with a kink on one side forming the arc of a perfect circle. If one was dug before the other, then it was the circular ditch that was made first.

But the pottery does not confirm this. If anything the pottery from the rectangular ditch is earlier than that from the circular ditch. Nos. 35 and 36 (fig. 15) were in the enclosure ditch.

Stratification is no help here either as the reading of silt lines in the ditch sections only shows the sequence of filling in, which may be in a different order from that of digging out. In the place where three ditches converge, the middle one (Ditch "D") was filled in first, probably very soon after being dug out, as the infill was almost identical with the surrounding 'natural' and only a few nondescript sherds in the bottom confirmed that it really was a ditch. It would seem, therefore, that the whole site was planned as an entity and constructed in one season.

DATING

If the time of the destruction of the site is accepted as early in the first century B.C., then the earliest date for its original construction will depend on how long such a building could have lasted. Much would depend on how dry the posts had been kept at or below ground level. Posts protected from wet by the thatched roof would last very much longer than the post of a field-gate exposed to all weathers. The latter would be rotten in fifty years, while the former might last for two hundred years. (There are signs that some of the posts had been replaced.)

This would give a possible date for the construction of the site as early in the third century B.C., which is not incompatible with the pottery evidence, except that two pots, Nos. 35 and 36 in fig. 15 seem earlier. The commencing date of the site might be considered contemporary with the smaller hut at Little Woodbury, since in both cases the Curved Slot technique was used in the construction. Unfortunately the dating of the Little Woodbury Hut is conflicting (Proceedings Prehistoric Society XIV, p.5), but it could hardly have been earlier than mid third century B.C.

THE ECONOMY of the settlement

The site represents a self-supporting farmstead where sheep and cattle were kept and corn grown.

The evidence for Sheep is from the loom-weights which signify wool. The evidence for cattle is from the bronze awl (fig. 15), a tool which would have been used on leather. Leather had long been worked here, as a Bronze Age predecessor had imitated a leather bucket in pottery form. (Proceedings Prehistoric Society XXVI (1960) p. 187.) The swampy area to the south would have provided rough grazing for sheep and cattle, while the self-draining and light land to the north and west would have been, and indeed still is, ideal for corn growing. Although there is no direct evidence for the production of iron, the presence nearby of easily obtainable supplies of its raw material could hardly have been overlooked.

CONTINUITY OF OCCUPATION

It is hardly sufficient to study this site in isolation and without reference to the other prehistoric sites marked on the Map in fig. 2. Half a mile to the west is the very large Urnfield of the Late Bronze Age, with at least one intrusive Iron Age "A" urn (fig. 16). Adjoining the Urnfield is a Belgic cemetery of eight grave-groups and one cremation in a Roman urn. This argues the case very strongly for a continuity of occupation; or if there were invasions, then the invaders merged with the local population sufficiently to use the same burial rite and the same burial ground.

At Wendens Ambo, near Saffron Walden, where Bronze Age and Aylesford type urns were found in the same spot, Sir Cyril Fox commented that continuity was more probable than coincidence. (Archaeology of the Cambridge Region, p. 98.) At Ardleigh, where the Iron Age "A" settlement provides a time link between the Bronze Age and the Belgic periods, the evidence is much greater.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS: We wish to thank all those members of the Colchester Archaeological Group who assisted in the excavations. Also Mr Reg Palmer who made the caravan seen in fig. 9 and donated it to the Group. We offer our grateful thanks To Professor C. F. C. Hawkes F. S. A. and Mrs Hawkes F. S. A. for their encouragement and interest; and to Mr Dennis Harding, of the University of Durham, for suggestions and advice by correspondence.

THE POTTERY

Two sherds of wheel-made Belgic pottery were found in the upper part of the conjoined ditch, in a layer of black ashes, and so give the date of the probable destruction by fire of the farmstead, about 100 B.C. Another Belgic sherd was found in the upper layer of the outer ditch.

The remaining pottery was of the pre-Belgic Iron Age, hand-made, coarse and rough in texture, black or dark brown in colour for the most part and with practically no flint grits. It consisted mostly of cooking pots and bowls. A characteristic feature is the carination at the shoulder, with an upward curve to an everted rim. As often as not the rim was decorated with rather irregular finger-tipping.

A few bowls were, in addition, decorated with vertical scored lines done with a pointed instrument and penetrating the sides at least two millimetres. No. 15 was found in over a hundred fragments in the primary silt at a depth of six feet, in the angle of the north-east corner of the compound. (This pot is about two-thirds complete.) Nos. 9 and 12 were in the bottom of the circular ditch at a depth of three feet. The great depth at which these three pieces were discovered suggests that vertical scoring is an early feature. (Pottery from Ancaster, Lincolnshire, with a similar feature, is tentatively put at late third to late second century B.C. Information kindly supplied by Mr Jeffrey May.)

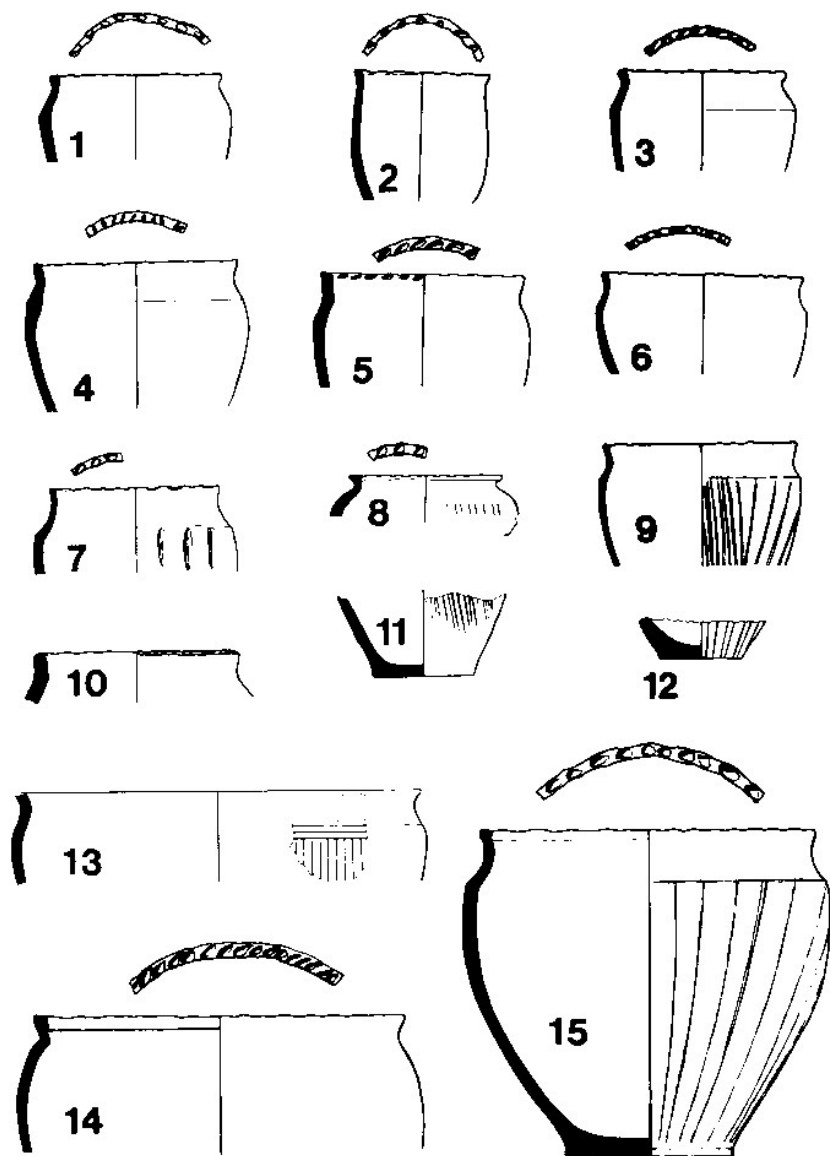
Most of the larger pieces of pottery were found either in the circular ditch terminals close to the hut door, or in the enclosure ditch at either side of the causeway. The wry little beaker, No. 36, was under the primary silt and so close to the causeway that it may have been some sort of foundation burial. The bowl with a shape reminiscent of Iron Age "B", No. 29, was in the shallow ditch flanking the main causeway.

No. 35 was in the primary silt at a depth of four feet in the outer ditch near the southern joint with the circular ditch. The stabbing decoration seems too thin and also too regular to have been done with a finger tip.

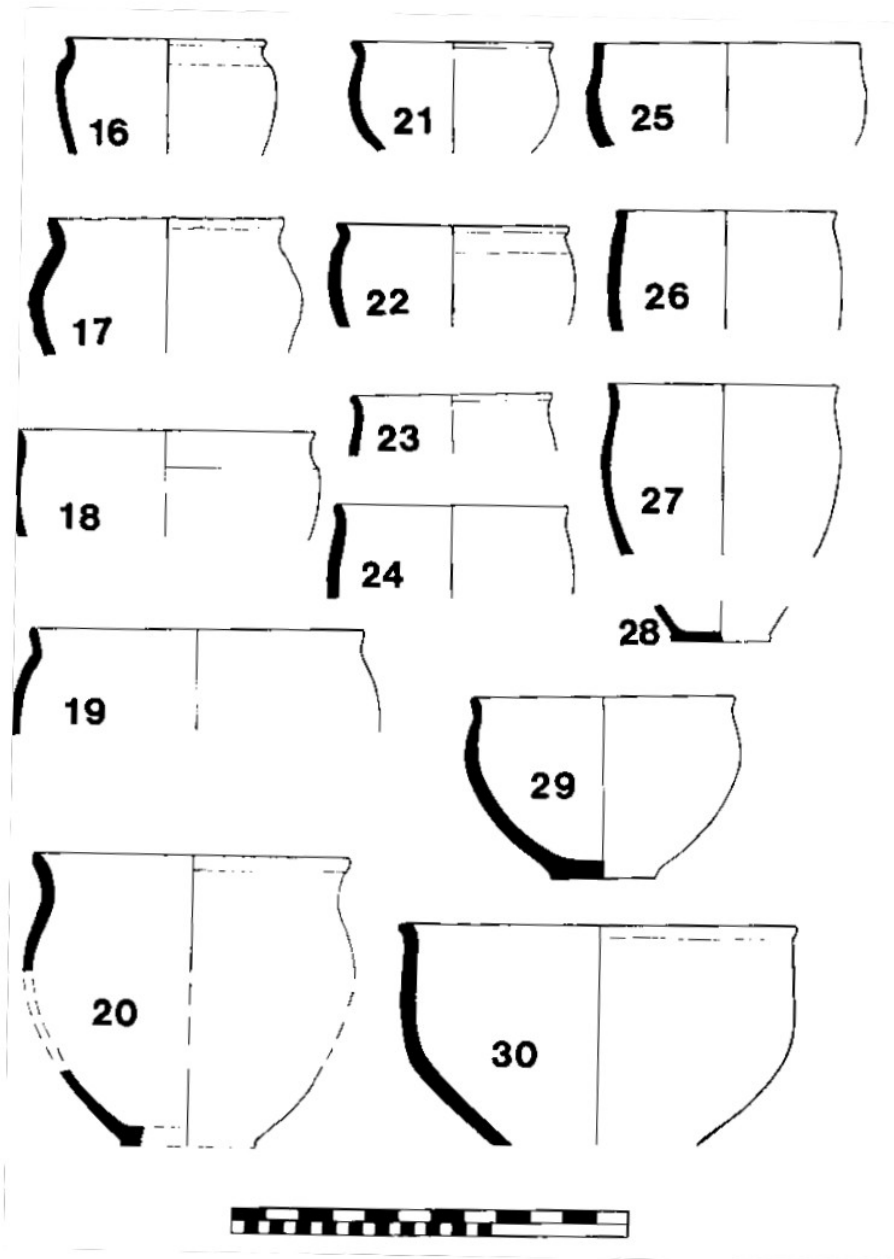
THE POTTERY (continued)

Fig. 13

Bowls or Cooking Pots with finger-tipped decoration on rim



1. Brown-black coat, grey-black core. Rough.
2. Brownish coat, grey-black core.
3. Grey-black coat, grey core. Corky ware.
4. Brown-black coat, grey-black core.
5. Brown-black coat, dark grey core.
6. Black coat, grey core.
7. Black coat, grey-brown core.
8. Grey-black coat, red-brown core. Vertical scorings on body.
9. Grey-black coat and core. Sharp incised scorings on body.
10. Dark-brown coat, grey core.
11. Grey-black coat, red-brown core. Vertical scorings on body.
12. Red-pink coat and core. Sharp and deep vertical scorings.
13. Pale-brown coat, grey-black core. Faint scorings on body.
14. Brown coat, grey core. Rough.
15. Pale red-brown coat, mid-brown core.

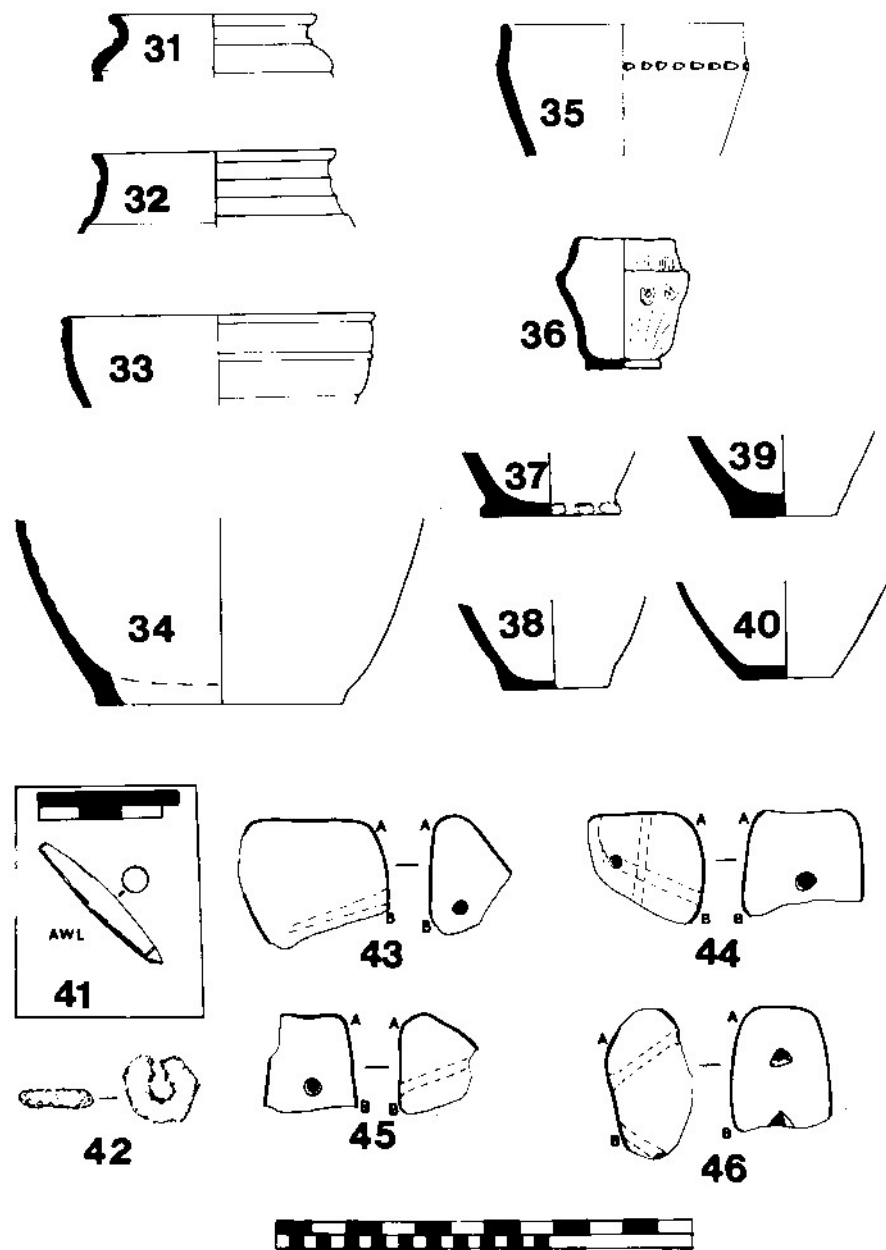


THE POTTERY (continued)

Fig. 14

Undecorated Cooking-Pots and Bowls, plain rims

- 16. Black, with slight burnish.
- 17. Black-mauve, uneven, ware pitted.
- 18. Grey coat, black core.
- 19. Grey-brown coat and core. Corky.
- 20. Buff-pink coat and core.
- 21. Black-brown coat, black core.
- 22. Red-buff coat and core.
- 23. Red-brown coat and core.
- 24. Black coat with some burnish, red-brown core.
- 25. Grey-black coat and core. Some burnish.
- 26. Grey-brown coat, deep grey core. Some burnish.
- 27. Black coat and core, smooth burnish. Found near No. 15.
- 28. Black coat and core, smooth burnish.
- 29. Black-brown coat, black core.
- 30. Red-brown coat, black core.



THE POTTERY (continued) AND OTHER FINDS

Fig. 15

Sub-Belgic cordoned Sherds

- 31. Flask like Cam, 232. Pale red-brown, wheel-turned.
- 32. Brown-mauve, wheel-turned. Some grits in ware.
- 33. Pale red-brown coat, dark grey core, wheel-turned. Found on upper edge of enclosure ditch.

Other types

- 35. Red-brown coat, black core. Incisions round the shoulder are carefully made and regular.
- 36. Brown-black coat, black core. Extremely rough and awry. Found in one piece about three-quarters complete.

Bases

- 34. Red-brown coat, black core. A few grits.
- 37. Pale brown. Everted, knobby foot-rim.
- 38. Pale red-brown coat, black core.
- 39. Red-brown coat, black core.
- 40. Black. Impression of rye-grass.

Loom-weights

- 43-46. In the drawings the thick edges represent the original, though eroded surface. The thinner lines represent breakages. Brick-red, surprisingly heavy; sometimes pebbles in the clay. Some thirty or forty fragments, of which these are the largest, were all found in the terminals of the circular ditch.

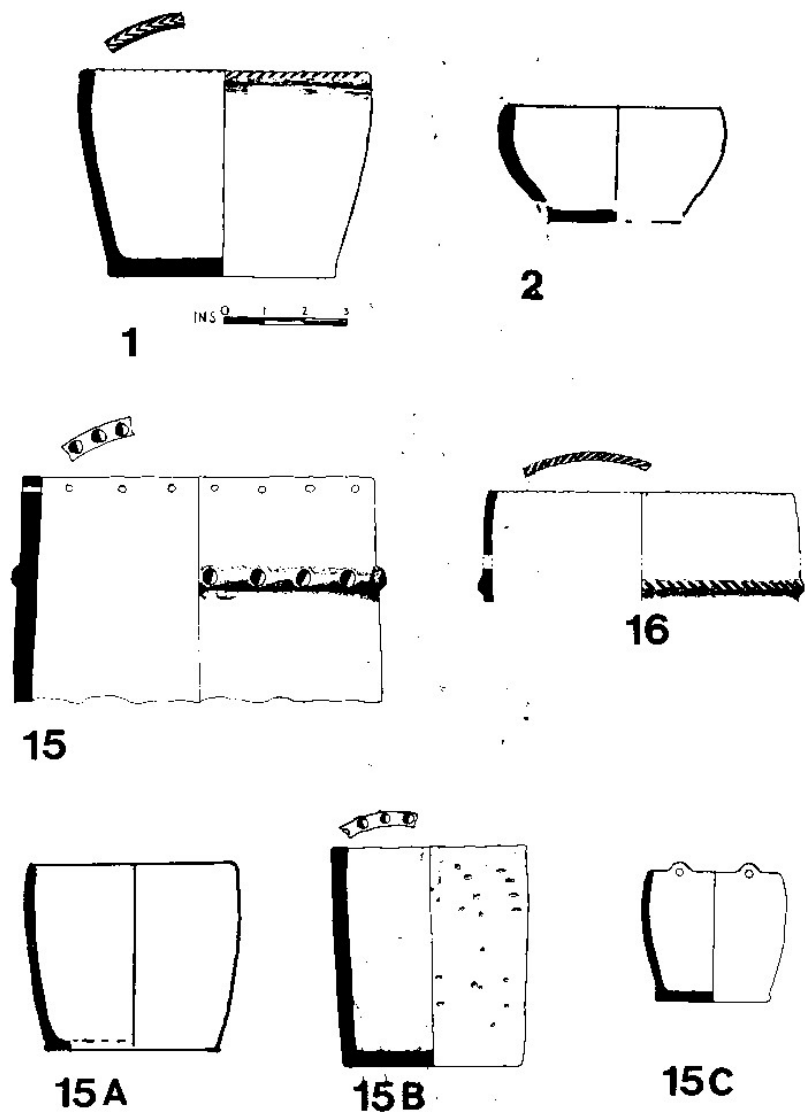
Object of Bronze

- 41. Awl, with both ends eroded. Found in Enclosure ditch near Causeway.

Object of Iron

- 42. Ringle, very much corroded. Found in Enclosure ditch.

EARLIER PHASE OF IRON AGE "A"



SCALE: Nos. 1 & 2 = 1/4
OTHERS = 1/6

Earlier phase of Iron Age "A" at Vinces Farm

In 1960 some Iron Age "A" pottery was ploughed up in a field south of the Farmstead. With it was a sandstone pestle.

The vessels had a flower-pot profile, but with a slight curve inwards towards the rim. The rim of one pot was decorated with an incised chevron pattern, giving the impression of plaiting. Its shape is similar to two of the three accessory vessels found inside a Late Bronze Age urn, No. 15 from "Ardleigh Ring Three". Urn 16 from the same barrow had a cabled rim and cordon; this was the only Iron Age vessel among twenty-seven Late Bronze Age ones.

There are thus two distinct types of Iron Age "A" pottery on the same farm. The earlier one with bucket or flower-pot profile, curling slightly inwards towards the rim, the texture permeated with white grits, and with cable or similar decoration on the rim, has definite Late Bronze Age connexions.

The later phase, as found at the Farmstead site, is expressed by the bowl with carination at the shoulder and everted rim, finger-tipped along the top and with no grits in its texture. This type lasts for a century or two prior to the Belgic invasion.

Fig. 16

1. Pot with chevron-incised pattern on rim. Red-brown coat, slightly burnished, grey core. The whole permeated with white grits.
2. Similar colouring and texture. Found with No. 1 together with a pestle.
15. Bronze Age urn containing cremated bones and three domestic pots. One of the secondaries or satellites from "Ardleigh Ring Three".
- 15A, B & C. Accessory vessels within Urn 15 above. (15C has two projections on the rim pierced with holes for a handle.)
16. Iron Age "A" Urn with cabled rim and cordon. A secondary or intrusive burial in "Ardleigh Ring Three".

WINTER MEETINGS 1970

The second half of the winter season of lectures got off to a rousing start on 12th January with a stimulating talk by Mr David Clarke, M. A., F. S. A., F. M. A., on the history of the Museum and his hopes for the future. He recalled the great antiquarians of the past: Charles Gray, William Wyre and the Round family. Originally the building had been the town jail and an engraving records the open courtyard with a little house in one corner where Miss Smith, the custodian and jailer, lived in 1742. William Wyre started a private Museum which was housed in a small building. Later this was amalgamated with Essex Archaeological Society and this worthy body actually owned half the collection up to 1926. The building was roofed over and eventually opened as a museum in 1860. In 1885 the town walls were officially placed in the custody of the Museum. From the beginning of the century the lack of money had been a constant problem; the Council's quota for 1907 was £324 and the Curator's salary was £50 per annum. This state of affairs has gone on progressively over the years and, relatively speaking, there is little improvement today. Mr Clarke compared our policy with that of the United States, where a large Museum could boast six thousand cars in its car park and entrance fees of 25,000 dollars in one day. Shortage of funds and storage space made it impossible to acquire many objects of historical interest which might seem of little importance today but would be of inestimable value to posterity.

The Chateaux of the Loire was the subject of the Rev. Ian Dunlop's talk on 19th January and members were shown many beautiful slides. Mr Dunlop pointed out the characteristic hallmark of all chateaux - the tower; for which, originally, the nobleman was compelled to apply to his overlord for permission to build. As this, subsequently, was always the muniments keep, it was, of course, the first place to which rioting peasants went. The towers were also the status symbol of the aristocrat; chateaux were not castles as such, but more the nobleman's country mansion and, as the French do not have our taste for country living, their chateaux mostly remained empty whilst they followed the Court. From the attractive Chateau de Moulin which was, unusually by comparison, built of brick, to the famous Chinon chateau which Richelieu set about dismantling, to Louis XII's creation of Blois, we roamed, looking at the lovely dual reflections of these buildings skillfully caught by the photographer on the surfaces of river and lake. The quaint colombier or dovecote attached to some of the chateaux was a feature similar to those of our own country mansions, now so scarce, alas; but those which do remain serve to show us the early idea of broiler-production food and, indeed, are far more picturesque than our own modern methods.

On January 26th it was the turn of the 'home team' to lecture their fellow members and it proved to be a very interesting evening. First, Mrs Ida McMaster outlined the history of Mount Bures and compared the village to its namesake in Normandy and, indeed, her slide showing the latter could well have been taken on her own doorstep. She then went on to describe the excavation which took place last summer illustrated by excellent slides which included some amusing action shots and concluded her talk with some outstanding shots of the Mount taken by her husband. Mr James Fawn followed with a succinct and informative talk on the methods of firing various types of kilns admirably illustrated by diagrams. Finally Mr Peter Holbert told us about the Roman kiln found during ploughing towards the end of last summer. Situated between the by-pass and the railway, the kiln comes within the area bounded by the ancient defences of Camulodunum and shows signs of use over a long period. The excavation is to be continued in the Spring.

Dr Lawrence Barfield, M. A., Ph. D., Department of Ancient History & Archaeology, University of Birmingham, lectured to the Group on 2nd February. His subject was the recent Neolithic excavations at Fimon and Rivoli in Northern Italy. The Fimon site, in picturesque country, was once a prehistoric settlement on the shores of a large lake, now a drained peat basin. Beneath one foot of peat and on the white lake marl lay the criss-cross planking with some limestone blocks which denoted the living area of these flint-using people, who were unquestionably the descendants of earlier mesolithic cultures. From the bones discovered it was clear that the "square-mouthed pottery" people were of a pastoral nature although the number of red deer remains showed they were still largely hunters. Carbon 14 dating revealed the fact that this Neolithic site was some thousand years earlier than those found previously and fell between 4500-4100 B.C. On top of baulks of wood was a strongly built stone hearth which had been several times renewed with more stone blocks. Each side of this hearth post-holes were noted in parallel lines but the lack of space beside the hearth precluded these from being the remains of hut walls. Possibly they were drying frames for skins, etc. Much shell debris was seen, mostly mussels and some snails which, together with nuts and water chestnuts, appeared to have formed their staple diet. At Rivoli, a stupendous rock site overhanging a river gorge, the shoulder of this massive defensive site contained another Neolithic settlement c. 3200 B.C. which had been superseded in turn by Bronze Age, Dark Age Lombard 700 A.D., and medieval castle fortifications above them on the summit. Similar square mouthed pottery with the spiral scratch motifs were found, with a piece of German pottery of the same period which gave proof of trade through the Alps at that distant period. Grinding stones and various shaped storage pits, some in unexplained lines, were excavated. Burnt daub with finger fluted lines and white lime wash decorations similar to Yugoslavian and Romanian examples were seen. Stone cult objects, clay stamps for skin decoration, loom-weights and a later Bronze Age skeleton were uncovered, together with other human remains from nearby which proved to be c. 480 A.D., and either Lombard or Roman burials. A mattock head and other worked antler tools proved a strong affinity with the technique of their mesolithic ancestors.

On 9th February Mr Don Benson, Field Officer to the Oxford City and County Museum, lectured on another Neolithic site, this time in England, at Ascott under Wychwood. From 1965 to 1969 the Neolithic long barrow was stripped, literally and figuratively, of its secrets. The position of the barrow was, contrary to the normal, not on the sky-line but lay more in a dip on sloping land and end-on to a stream. It dated from 3000-2000 B.C. was some five feet high and two large standing stones (moved in 1902) originally gave clues to its probable use and period. In the first season, stone foundations of three distinct abutting revetment walls outlining the barrow were found together with a line of stones, possibly with a fenced partition, defining the central long axis of the mound. Later the horn-shaped dummy front entrance facade was found and, towards the rear of the barrow and about one-third length from the end, were seven stone burial cysts, each roughly one yard square. These contained an assortment of bones; in one, for instance, various parts amounting to eight individuals and in another to four; but only one Neolithic bowl amongst them. However in the old ground surface beneath the barrow much evidence of earlier phases dating perhaps from Mesolithic periods was found. In all no less than fourteen land changes could be traced through forest use, clearance for cultivation, abandonment to open grassland, quarrying, ploughing and final enclosure etc. Perhaps the most interesting evidence was a vertebra in which was imbedded an arrow head. One of the cysts was empty and was obviously awaiting allocation, for other bones were found buried carefully beside its walls.

On 16th February Miss Dorothy Charlesworth, M. A., F. S. A., Ministry of Public Building and Works lectured on Housesteads Fort, one of the great sites lying against Hadrian's Wall and in use for almost three hundred years. Originally the Wall was constructed solely with mile-castles and turrets but the effort required to move up to a thousand troops quickly from the rear to the wall defence, must have necessitated the building of additions such as Housesteads. Strangely enough excavations revealed no burnt destruction layers or discarded weapon evidence which might depict sudden disaster from Pict or Scots invasions, therefore it may be concluded that the Wall prevailed for as long as required, at least at that point. The area dominated by the Brigantian tribes to the south, was formidably desolate up to the eighteenth century and there was talk of rebuilding the Wall in Victorian times to keep out the Scots! Amongst the foundations discovered in the fort were granaries, barracks, excellent latrines complete with running water and drains, a corn-drying kiln and the Commandant's house in which was found a beautiful gold intaglio ring. Walls in the barrack block showed clear differences of military thinking through the occupation periods. In a corridor floor was found a blank stone slab obviously intended for inscription but discarded due to breakage. It was perhaps funerary and had a well incised sculpture of Cupid in each corner. It seemed that the fort eventually suffered a slow economic run-down in its civilian departments. The headquarters building became a smithy with bundles of beaten arrowheads remaining as evidence. In one outer civilian house was a skeleton with a knife in its ribs and next door was evidence of a probable coin forger. Deterioration from the proud Roman discipline indeed.

The following week Miss Hilda Grieve, B. E. M., B. A., F. R. Hist. S., F. S. A. (Scot.), who is currently working on the Victoria County History of Essex, outlined the basic difference between the strictly disciplined efforts required for professional history on the one hand and, on the other, those self indulgent enjoyable meanderings needed to write personal history for one's own pleasure. Not all the sources were always to be found at the Record Office and some of these had to be tracked down in the most unexpected places. Key factors were topography of the town or village, the manor, church, institutions, etc., and plain unadorned truth. At Chelmsford, for instance, the complete division could still be felt which had been formed at the Conquest when differently owned ecclesiastic manors lay on each side of the river. Even in such boroughs as West Ham, Leyton and Walthamstow this ancient manorial system was obvious in refusal to amalgamate services, etc. It is necessary to trace what has happened and why; what events - commerce, religious, agricultural or geographical have affected the life, work, play, worship and education of the people. Even after all that, the main problem still remains - how to set out the resulting history.

The lecture on Monday 2nd March was by Dr Peter Warren, M. A., F. S. A., Department of Classics, University of Durham, on Myrtos, an early Bronze Age settlement in Crete. The stone-walled settlement, dating from 2600-2200 B.C. lay on sloping ground above a sea cliff and had been substantially destroyed by fire in its final period, 2200-2170 B.C. Evidence of stored pottery, fulling and dyeing processes, also clay and stone figurines, together with the really beautiful pots, jugs, dishes and seal stamps showed the busy activity of these people of an early Minoan culture. Unexpectedly, none of their tombs, which are known to contain great treasure, has been found on the site or nearby. The buildings were constructed of stones which clearly came from a ridge behind the site and the roofs consisted of clay spread over reeds. Some of the pottery was unique to Myrtos and a lovely hand-lamp with a raised handle to protect the hand took the first use of these artifacts back into the third millennium. A bowl with an inner handle was thought to be a spinning utensil, enabling the ball of wool to run freely. Herbal "teapots" were numerous together with incised goblets and much hatched painted ware; these were of mottled ware, red burnished ware, and black wash with white chevrons. Quite the most outstanding find was the unique goddess or lady-jug which had a long, blind neck, rounded body with arms forming an open spout - the only inlet to the vessel which was beautiful in every detail and thought to be from a shrine, perhaps dedicated to weaving and spinning.

Mr A. A. Round, B. Sc., of the South Staffordshire Archaeological & Historical Society, was the lecturer on 9th March. His subject was the excavation at Roman Letocetum at Wall in Staffordshire. Unmistakable evidence was found of earlier fort constructions thought to number three of varying sizes, the smallest enclosing an area of some two acres; this appeared to date from 60-120 A.D. and was thought to be associated with the advance of the Legions into Wales, lying as it does near the junction of Watling Street and Ryknild Street. The village was obviously named because of the presence in several fields of the remains of Roman walling. In numerous places excavated large outer fortification were seen, whilst two in particular surrounded the smallest fort, the outlines of which were positively defined. Within this fort the beam slots for several six foot square rooms were uncovered and with which were clear signs of burnt debris. A later stone floor overlaid these features, fortunately keeping them intact. Finds appeared rather sparse considering that excavations had covered a ten year period but some coins were found, also an unusual glass eyed face jug and a very attractive intaglio ring stone. Nearby is an excellent Roman bath site excavated in the 1920's and now open to the public. Perhaps this was associated with the larger fort which has been only partially identified by the discovery of its outer ditches.

On March 16th Mr Simpson, M. A., F. S. A., of the Queen's University of Belfast, described his excavations in the Welland Valley, not far from Stamford. With the famous Dr St Joseph's aerial photographs of sites such as Maxey and Harholm, he had a high standard to keep up. At Maxey a great cursus ditch cutting across a rectangular enclosure, was itself cut by a small religious-rite circle of postholes. Here a decorated incised antler, infilled with red paint, was found and could be paralleled with spiral decorations found on antler remains from Bury St Edmunds. Periods at Maxey ranged from Neolithic, c. 2500 B.C, through to two Iron Age enclosures, plus a Roman outer enclosure surrounding those. At Tallington was an extremely large Early Bronze Age barrow which had been successively enclosed by no less than four stake circles, holding more banked-up earth each time, and finally the whole surrounded by a ditch twenty-five feet wide and five feet deep. The primary interment was an inhumation enclosed in some type of coffin, perhaps a hollowed-out tree trunk. Over this had been placed another body whose skeleton had partially collapsed on top of the first when the coffin rotted, An extremely large posthole, probably a marker for the monument, was a feature, together with the food vessel found. Adjoining was another small beaker barrow containing two adults and two or three children. The whole complex was obviously a family sepulchre and most of the pottery found was of the Rinyo-Clacton type. Pollen analysis showed that the area was largely open grassland at that time. At Barnack Roman aisled buildings, with stores, were found dating from the third and fourth centuries. From comparative maps 1714 & 1900 the village of Maxey shows little change and, as Stukeley made no comment in his survey of the whole area, it seems fairly certain that none of the great monuments was there in his time either and had already been ploughed out by the beginning of the eighteenth century.

GROUP NOTICES

- Monday, 4th May - Evening Outing to Hill Farm, Gestingthorpe, by kind invitation of Mr & Mrs Cooper, to see the collection of finds from his extensive excavations. Meet at the Firs Car Park, Maldon Road, at 6.30 p. m. Lifts will be arranged for members who have no car.
- Saturday, 23rd May - Essex Congress Symposium at Colchester Castle Museum. A selection of Essex exhibits from members of the Congress accompanied by a short talk. The Group will be represented by Mr F. H. Erith, F. S. A., on the Iron Age Farmstead at Vinces Farm, Ardleigh.
- Saturday, 13th June - Day excursion to Suffolk and Norfolk; details are on the enclosed leaflet. Members are welcome to bring friends and it is hoped you will give this venture your support; it should be an interesting and enjoyable day.
- Monday, 6th July - Evening outing to Sudbury. Details in June Bulletin.
- Monday, 13th July - Cheese and Wine Party at Aquila, Great Bentley, by kind invitation of Miss Enid Crowther. Details in the June Bulletin.
- Monday, 12th October - Annual General Meeting and the beginning of our Winter meetings

EXCAVATION PLANS: The excavation of the Roman kiln site at Moat Farm will continue. We hope to start, weather permitting, on the Sunday after Easter. Thereafter every Sunday. For information telephone Mrs K. de Brisay, Layer de la Have 274 (evenings) or Mr. Reg Palmer, Colchester 79797, and the message will be passed on to Mr Peter Holbert.

The Colchester Excavation Committee is running a rescue excavation from May to September on the site of Camulodunum. **VOLUNTEERS URGENTLY REQUIRED** during the week and at weekends. Apply to Miss Rosalind Dunnett, Colchester Castle Museum, telephone 77175.

INDUSTRIAL ARCHAEOLOGY: The C. A. G. wish to assist the County Records Office in a brief survey of industrial archaeological sites. The period of this survey is prior to 1930 and our area is north-east Essex excluding the Clacton and Manningtree area, otherwise north of the Blackwater and east of Witham. Machinery, or its remains, should be recorded also maker's name and address exactly as written where possible. A sketch or ground plan can be made on the reverse of the site card if this will clarify description. Include any object not mentioned below if it is of the slightest relevance.

Headings

- | | |
|-------------------|---|
| (a) Power | - Mills, etc. |
| (b) Transport | - Rail, road, water and air. |
| (c) Raw Materials | - Quarries, pits, salt pans, etc. |
| (d) Manufactures | - Factories, workshops, etc. |
| (e) Services | - Water, Gas and Electricity. |
| (f) Housing | - Industrial dwellings & housing units. |

Information required

- | |
|------------------------------|
| Location. |
| National Grid Ref. No. |
| Name & nature of monument |
| Present use and condition. |
| Description. |
| Name of person reporting it. |

Forms for this project can be obtained from, and when complete should be returned to Tony Bonner, Threshelfords, Kelvedon, Colchester, Essex

All enquiries and articles for the Bulletin to the Hon. Secretary, Mrs K. de Brisay, Corner Cottage, Layer de la Haye, Colchester. Telephone: Layer 274

PART TWO JUNE 1970

GROUP NOTICES

MONDAY 6th JULY

An evening outing to Clare, Suffolk. (This replaces the trip to Sudbury as announced in our March issue which had to be cancelled due to unforeseen complications.) However, Clare is a beautiful little town with an eventful history. There is much unspoilt Medieval architecture and also remains from Norman and Roman times. The church dates from 1460 - 1520 and has many interesting features.

Meet at the Firs Car Park in Maldon Road at 6.20 pm for departure at 6.30 pm sharp.

The usual lifts will be arranged for those without cars.

MONDAY 13th JULY

The annual Cheese and Wine party will be held this year at "Aquila", Great Bentley, by kind invitation of Miss Enid Crowther.

This interesting modern house is sited practically at the centre of the southern perimeter of the Green. It is about twenty houses to the east of the Cricket Pavilion with its Martyrs Commemorative Stone.

Miss Crowther, who is a well-known Essex artist, has a spacious studio where guests may see many examples of her work.

Tickets, price 10/- each, entitle the holder to one glass of wine and food.

Additional glasses of wine may be obtained at 2/6 each. Please apply to Mrs K. de Brisay, Corner Cottage, Layer de la Haye, before 6th July, stating how many tickets are required and enclosing payment.

MONDAY 12th OCTOBER

The Annual General Meeting as usual marks the beginning of our Winter Session of weekly meetings.

The programme is not yet complete, but among those who have agreed to lecture are Brian Davison on "Castles of the Conquest and their Background"; J. N. Coldstream on "The Minoan Eruption of Thera"; Dr J. P. Wild on "Roman Industries in the Nene Valley"; Dr Colin Renfrew on "The Origins of European Metallurgy"; Dr Oliver Rackham on the "Ancient Woodlands of East Anglia"; Dr Anne Ross on "Well Shafts"; Dr Michael J. Walker on "Rock Art, Excavations and Field-Work in South-East Spain, 1968/70" and many others.

EXCAVATIONS

The rescue dig on the Hilly Fields sponsored by the Colchester Excavation Committee is now in progress and anyone wishing to volunteer should apply to Miss Rosalind Dunnett B.A. at Colchester Castle Museum.

INDUSTRIAL ARCHAEOLOGY

Full details of the survey and recording of Industrial Archaeological sites was given in the March issue of the Bulletin. We have been allotted our own area and anyone wishing to take part should apply to Tony Bonner, Threshelfords, Feering, Kelvedon. Telephone Kelvedon 222. Helpers are urgently needed.

THE BULLETIN

Our special March issue on the Iron Age A Farmstead site at Ardleigh has caused wide interest and it is being advertised by the Council for British Archaeology in their Abstracts as well as in their list of Offprints. Unfortunately success must be paid for and to balance this we have had to restrict the content of this issue.

NEOLITHIC PICK FROM HALL FARM, MOUNT BURES

The fine Neolithic pick illustrated below was found on the surface after ploughing by Mr W. W. McMaster, who owns and farms the land.

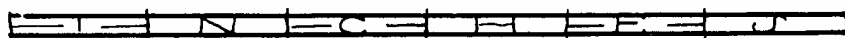


The field (O. S. TL. 9095/3260) lies close to the railway embankment and beside Herds Pasture, in the garden of which was found part of a flint knife or dagger.

About two hundred yards separates the find spots of the two artifacts and it is hoped to be able to ascertain whether the knife was also of the Neolithic period.

This field is adjoining those on which have been found Roman debris, kiln waste and the great Belgic fire-dog vault; thus proving that occupation has been fairly constant since a pastoral way of life began in about 3000 B.C.

Only two fields distant, to the north-west, is the Early Bronze Age site consisting of two conjoined barrows at Bures Hamlet. Unfortunately both are now ploughed out though one was excavated in 1967 (Colchester Archaeological Group Bulletin Vol. 10, No. 4). This site is at Baker's Hall.



H.M.C.

Between the river Stour and Hall Farm, a distance of about

half a mile, there are several other Bronze Age ring ditches which have been recorded at Colchester Museum.

The land is river sand and gravel with clay patches overlying.

RECENT ACTIVITIES

The May outing to Gestingthorpe was an unqualified success and, before the early Spring dusk fell, members were transported by tractor and wagon up the hill to the site which is thought to be an intensive Roman industrial area covering several acres.

Sitting comfortably on straw bales, a mobile grandstand view was obtained of the surrounding countryside. At the top the party dismounted and were shown various trenches by Mr Cooper who pointed out interesting features in section. The great depth of top soil (about 14 inches) was commented on. Asked about communications, Mr Cooper explained that the site was between two rivers and that a Roman road ran nearby.

Back at the Farmhouse, Mr Cooper's unique and varied collection of finds from the site was much admired, as was also his reconstruction model of the large building found in the centre of the site. We look forward to his book on which he is now working.

The evening closed with a very welcome cup of tea and warm thanks to Mr and Mrs Cooper for their hospitality.

THE ESSEX CONGRESS SYMPOSIUM

On Saturday 23rd May several members attended the Essex Congress Symposium at Colchester Castle. The series of several short talks covered the Neolithic site at Clacton, our Iron Age A site at Ardleigh, the Roman site at Wickford, a survey of recent work in Colchester, the cropmarks and Saxon cemeteries at Mucking and Medieval site at Waltham Abbey. The use of a larger and brighter projector for some of the afternoon's talks was much appreciated.

An exhibition of finds from the various sites together with plans, sections and photographs was on view in the crypt.

For some there was a further session afterwards when the Roman kiln site at Moat Farm was visited. This resulted in much useful discussion about the kiln and, incidentally, about Red Hills which arose from some exhibits from Mucking and it is hoped to extend this and to make a comparative survey of Red Hills north of the Blackwater with those to the south of this river.

There is no doubt that a symposium such as this serves a very useful purpose. There are many local groups in the County doing excellent work and an opportunity to get together and discuss different aspects of a mutual interest is invaluable.

HOLY TRINITY CHURCH, COLCHESTER

Many of our members will share the anxiety widely felt over the present condition and future of this interesting building in the centre of the town.

Recently, as announced in the press, a committee representing the Civic Society, the Essex Archaeological Society, the Friends of the Museums and the Colchester Archaeological Group has been formed by Mr Kenneth Mabbitt, lately President of the County Society, and a letter expressing concern at the present disgraceful state of this church and with hopes for its future has been sent to the Chairman of the diocesan committee for Redundant Churches, which will sit in the near future.

H. M. C.

OBITUARY

It is with great regret we record the death in a motor accident on 8th May of Claude Chipperfield at the age of 80. Before his removal to Bontddu, North Wales, in 1965, "young Chipperfield", as he was nicknamed, was a very active and enthusiastic digger and he took part in many excavations of the Ardleigh ring-ditches. We missed his cheerful company when he left and those who worked with him will remember him with affection.

All enquiries to the Hon. Secretary, Mrs K. de Brisay, Corner Cottage, Layer de la Haye, Colchester. Telephone 274.

GROUP NOTICES

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING.

The Annual General Meeting will be held in the Lecture Room at Colchester Castle on MONDAY OCTOBER 12th 1970 at 7.30 p.m.

Coffee and biscuits will be served at the end of the business meeting.

Please make every effort to attend; we want to hear your comments, criticisms and suggestions so that we can arrange our future programme to your liking. We shall also welcome gifts of books for the library so if you have any to spare please bring them with you.

Nominations for Officers and Committee.

The present officers and committee are willing to stand for re-election.

Please send your nominations for officers and committee to the Hon. Secretary to reach her before October 5th 1970.

The Address is:- Mrs. K. de Brisay,
Corner Cottage,
Layr de la Haye,
Colchester, Essex.

SUBSCRIPTIONS

The annual subscription falls due on 1st October 1970. The rates are as follows:

| | |
|---|----------------------|
| Single subscription | £1. 0. 0. per annum. |
| Second member of a family | 10. 0. " " |
| Junior members 16 years and under | 10. 0. " " |
| Half - Year rates from 1 st April. | |

Please send to the Hon. Treasurer:- Miss Dorothy Jones,
Farthing Garden,
Layr Breton Heath,
COLCHESTER, Essex.

It will be greatly appreciated if these are paid promptly.

If a subscription is not renewed by December 1970, the membership will be taken to have lapsed.

PLEASE NOTE: In the interest of economy NO REMINDERS WILL BE SENT.

WINTER MEETINGS 1970/71

In the Lecture Room, Colchester Castle, at 7.30pm.

**GUESTS ARE WELCOME BUT NON-MEMBERS ARE
ASKED TO CONTRIBUTE 2/ 6 A VISIT TOWARDS EXPENSES.**

1970

- October 12th - Annual General Meeting after which coffee & biscuits will be served.
- October 19th - B. K. Davison, Inspector of Ancient Monuments : CASTLES OF THE CONQUEST & THEIR BACKGROUND.
- October 26th - D. F. Petch, B. A., F. S. A., F. M. A., Curator of the Grosvenor Museum, Chester : RECENT EXCAVATIONS IN CHESTER
- November 2nd - Dr. John Coles, Department of Archaeology & Anthropology, University of Cambridge and Hon. Editor of the Proceedings Prehistoric Society : EXPERIMENTAL ARCHAEOLOGY.
- November 9th - Norman Scarfe, well known for his Shell Guides and other books, : THE LOCAL TRADITIONS IN BUILDING.
- November 16th - Dr. Oliver Rackham, Corpus Christi College, Cambridge, Plant Physiology Research Officer : EAST ANGLIA'S ANCIENT WOODLANDS.
- November 23rd - Nicholas Coldstream, University of London : THE MINOAN ERUPTION OF THERA.
- November 30th - Dr. J. M. Walker, The Queen's College, Oxford : ROCK ART, EXCAVATIONS & FIELDWORK IN SOUTH EAST SPAIN 1968/70.
- December 7th - Dr. J. P. Wild, Department of History, University of Manchester : ROMAN INDUSTRIES IN THE NENE VALLEY
- December 14th - ANNUAL CHRISTMAS PARTY - FILM SHOW - BRING & BUY STALL.

1971

- January 11th - Stanley West, M. A., A. M. A., Ministry of Public Building & Works : RECENT EXCAVATIONS AT WEST STOW AND DUNWICH. (Provisional)
If Mr. West cannot come there will be a return of the ever popular MEMBERS FINDS AND TREASURES.
- January 18th - F. H. Erith, F. S. A. : LOCAL PREHISTORIC SITES NEWLY DISCOVERED FROM THE AIR.
- January 25th - Richard Bradley B. A., University of Southampton : THE EXCAVATION OF A BEAKER SETTLEMENT AT BELLE TOUT
- February 1st - Miss Enid Crowther : HAND MADE POTTERY : A PRACTICAL DEMONSTRATION.
- February 8th - Miss Rosalind Dunnett, B.A., Colchester Excavation Committee : RECENT EXCAVATIONS.
- February 15th - Dr. Anne Ross, University of Southampton : WELL PITS & SHAFTS & THEIR SACRIFICIAL SIGNIFICANCE IN THE CELTIC ERA.
- February 22nd - Ronald Blythe, the well-known author : THE WOODLANDERS.
- March 1st - Dr. Colin Renfrew, Department of Art & History, University of Sheffield : THE ORIGINS OF EUROPEAN METALLURGY.
- March 8th - J. J., Wymer, M.A., F.S.A., Research Associate of the Department of Anatomy & Anthropology, University of Chicago : THE CLACTONIAN INDUSTRY & ITS ORIGINS.
- TUESDAY March 16th - Alec Down : THE CHILGROVE ROMAN VILLAS.

1970 - THE YEAR OF THE CROP-MARKS

by F.H.Erith F.S.A.

The drought in the summer of 1970 will long be remembered by farmers as a disastrous year for crops and by archaeologists as a marvellous year for crop-marks.

Crop-marks are caused by the silt of ancient ditches having more moisture than the surrounding gravel; consequently, during a drought, crops growing over the silted ditches are more flourishing and taller than the rest of the field.

Such crop-marks are usually best spotted from the air; the first account to appear in this Bulletin was that by R. H. Farrands in 1959, when he discovered several marks at Ardleigh.

In subsequent years other flights were made in our region and the discoveries from them reported in our Bulletin. It became clear that the Tendring Hundred and the Stour Valley areas were rich in crop-marks caused by occupation in prehistoric times.

When it became clear that this was likely to be a good year for crop-marks plans were made to have the area photographed from the air during July.

The first flight was made by George Curtis of Dedham, who flew from Southend to Colchester and then north to Lawford, west over the Stour Valley and up its tributary, the River Brett.

A week later, Mrs. McMaster, flying from Polstead, flew over the Stour Valley and found several new sites in the Bures area. Later she and Tony Bonner with Mr. A. G. Ingram shared a plane and made a trip over Kelvedon, Mersea and the Dedham Vale with very successful results.

A list of all new sites is appended at the end of this article, but in addition, several previously discovered sites were again spotted:- the Roman Villa at Messing, the four barrows near Manwood Grove at East Mersea and the Henge Monument at Stratford Hills, again with the cross showing in the middle!

RING DITCHES.

The majority of the new discoveries are ring-ditches, that is cropmarks in the shape of an unbroken ring, which represent the circular ditches originally dug around barrows. Groups of these ring-ditches appear in almost every village where there is gravel and this implies a fairly settled population in the Bronze Age and Neolithic periods. The immense labour required to dig out these ditches and to raise the barrows must have been performed by retainers of a dominant family in each village.

The evidence from one excavation at Ardleigh suggested that the ring ditch was dug sometime before the death occurred, as the pit prepared for the central urn cremation had silted up a foot before the urn was actually placed. If the climate in prehistoric times was at all similar to the present, there would have been three months in the summer and two in the winter when the ground was too hard to dig a ring-ditch.

The excavation of a ring-ditch is often fruitless, which is probably why so few have been done. In our district eleven have been excavated and two had Middle Bronze Age cremations with collared or overhanging-rim urns, four had Late Bronze Age bucket urns as primaries, one at Bures Hamlet had two clay coffins and a flint arrowhead, and the remainder had either nondescript Bronze Age pottery or nothing at all in the centre.

LEVELLING OF THE BARROWS

Originally some sort of mound must have been placed over the central interments, with soil other than from the circular ditches, but there is little evidence now that this was so since most of them are absolutely flat.

They must, therefore, have been deliberately levelled in order to make the land suitable for arable cultivations. Barrow-levelling, whether in Roman, Medieval or Victorian times would have been no very difficult task and a gang of men with shovels and horses and carts would have been able to tackle a seventy foot diameter barrow in a couple of days, since it was all "soft digging" Mr. Quinton Clarke remembers the men on his father's farm at Tendring levelling one in the early years of this century (about 1908).

The evidence from Ardleigh Ring Three seemed to point to it being levelled in Roman times, since Bronze Age pottery from Secondary urns originally placed in the mounded part of the barrow had been pushed into the circular ditch on top of Roman pottery.

However, it seems that most barrows were still evident at the time of Enclosure, which here was in the 17th century or earlier. The enclosures must have respected the barrows since they never extend over two fields and many of them are found neatly in one corner of a field. Examples are the Henge at Stratford Hills, Ardleigh Ring Seven (cemetery field), Mistley Ford Farm and Mistley Dickley Hall, Stoke and elsewhere.

OTHER CROP-MARKS.

At Bures, Little Bromley, Lawford and Stoke by Nayland there appeared crop-marks in the form of parallel lines. They could possibly be cursuses in the strict definition of the word, although stopped-up ends were not observed. Three of them were associated with sites which may be Henges. At Stratford Hall two parallel lines 115 paces long and 25 paces apart were joined by rounded ends. This could have been a cursus in the true sense, but it also might be a levelled long barrow. What appears to be a levelled long barrow is in a field at Lawford House Farm, alongside a cursus which leads to the Henge at Lawford Grange.

A rectangular complex appears in a field at Higham Hall on the Stratford boundary; possibly the Roman site of AD ANSAM.

FIELDWORK.

There is not much time left between the time when the photographs taken during aerial flights have been developed and made available for study, and the cutting of the corn, but certain routine jobs should, if possible, be done in that interval.

First the site on a photograph should be identified and a visit paid to the field to see if it is also visible from the ground. The farmer or owner should be informed and the position explained to him. If the farmer is agreeable the site should be marked in some way so that it can be found again after the corn is cut. This may mean walking into the standing corn, which, if done carefully, will do no harm, but should never be done without the farmer's permission! If possible measurements, such as the diameter, should also be taken.

CONCLUSION.

It is now evident that, in the Neolithic and Bronze Ages, the gravel soil bordering the Suffolk Stour was as thickly populated as anywhere in England. It was only the intensiveness of agriculture down the ages which has almost obliterated all signs of it.

CLASSIFIED LIST BY PARISHES.

| Parish. | Farm. | Grid. Ref. | Crop-mark. |
|--------------------------------|--------------------|------------|------------------------------------|
| <u>COLNE AREA.</u> | | | |
| Colchester | Gosbecks | 976223 | One double & one single ring ditch |
| Ardleigh | Slough Farm | 046277 | Ring ditch |
| <u>STOUR AREA. ESSEX SIDE.</u> | | | |
| Mistley | Ford Farm | 111306 | Ring ditch |
| Mistley | Dovehouse Farm | 123307 | Ring ditch |
| Mistley | Dickley Hall | 117303 | Ring ditch |
| Little Bromley | Dickley Hall | 296106 | Parallel lines 10 yards apart |
| Lawford | Lawford House Farm | 096303 | Long barrow or enclosure |
| Lawford | Land Settlement | 071306 | Ring ditch |
| Boxted | Boxted Mill | 011344 | Ring ditch |
| Great Horkesley | Thriffts Farm | 970337 | Ring ditch |
| Wormingford | Gernons | 936334 | 4 Ring ditches |
| Wormingford | Staunch Farm | 921328 | Double ring ditch |
| Wormingford | Staunch Farm | 923325 | Large ring ditch |
| Mount Bures | Staunch Farm | 918328 | 3 Small ring ditches |
| Bures Hamlet | Brook House Farm | 911333 | Ring ditch |
| Bures Hamlet | Near Bombose Farm | 894344 | Penannular ring ditch |

STOUR AREA, SUFFOLK SIDE.

| | | | |
|--------------------|---------------------------------|--------|---|
| Bures St. Mary | Smallbridge | 923333 | Ring between parallel lines |
| Wissington | Smallbridge | 934333 | 4 Ring ditches |
| Stoke by Nayland | Tendring Hall Farm | 986350 | Ring ditch |
| Stoke by Nayland | Tendring Hall Farm | 986348 | Ring ditch |
| Stoke by Nayland | Tendring Hall Farm | 987347 | Ring and rectangle |
| Stoke by Nayland | Wasses Farm | 031354 | Ring ditch |
| Stoke by Nayland | Wasses Farm | 032353 | Double ring ditch (huge) between parallel lines 40yds apart |
| Higham | Hall Farm | 041351 | Rectangular marks covering several acres |
| Stratford St. Mary | Hall Farm | 054343 | Cursus on long barrow |
| Stratford St. Mary | Hall Farm | 054342 | Ring ditch |
| Stratford St. Mary | Hall Farm | 049343 | Ring ditch (huge) |
| Stratford St. Mary | Hall Farm | 030343 | Ring ditch |
| Stratford St. Mary | Between old main road and A. 12 | 049345 | Ring ditch |

RIVER BRETT

| | | | |
|--------|--------------|--------|------------|
| Raydon | Fox Farm(?) | 035379 | Ring ditch |
| Raydon | Ponds Farm | 039391 | Ring ditch |

PREVIOUS LISTS.

| | |
|---------------------------------------|--|
| Prehistoric Sites in the Stour Valley | - C.A.G. Bulletin-VOL. 10, No.4. 1967. pp.50,52 |
| Dedham Barrow Complex | - C.A.G. Bulletin-VOL. 10, No. 2. 1967. pp. 28, 31 |
| Ardleigh & Great Bromley | - C.A.G. Bulletin-VOL, 6, No. 4. 1963. pp. 43,44 |

A SCHOOL LOG-BOOK - 1863-1884
by Harry Palmer

A century ago Forster's Education Act (1870) was passed. This Act is generally regarded as the foundation of a universal education in this country as it provided for rate financed schools to be established where - at that time - schools did not exist. Six years later education became compulsory and in 1891 fee paying in elementary schools was abolished.

It had already been laid down (in 1862) that a Log-Book should be kept in all grant aided schools and in 1863 James Martin of 8 Lisson Grove, Marylebone, was printing a supply of Log-Books. The book referred to in my title is his 7th edition so presumably he was selling Log-Books before 1862.

This particular book was kept at the National (i.e. Church of England) School at Kelvedon and its first entry is for May 11th 1863. This entry is the first of many with a similar purport:

“School inspected by the Rev. M. Mitchell.”

and was made by the first Head of the school, Charles Noble. He carried on a long struggle against absenteeism:

July 21st 1863 “A wet day - field work suspended - the consequence was a good attendance mor. and aft.”

Sept. 9th 1863 “Very poor attendance today, most of the girls absent, gleaning barley.”

Pea-dropping, stone-picking and pea-picking are also mentioned as causes of abnormally low attendance.

Charles Noble retired after many years service in December 1875. His successor, Edward Atkins, retired eight months later. At this point, on the insistence of the Government Inspector, the school was divided into two departments - one for girls and one for boys and in September 1876 Arthur Fell took charge of the boys' department and continues the Log-Book. He records (June 26th. 1877):

“Attendance during the week very low, owing to number being employed pea-picking, some even

only just five and six years of age”.

In spite of this, half-holidays were frequently given - for the Master's birthday, church bazaars, the Vicar's birthday, numerous Saints' days etc. Shrove Tuesday had traditionally been a village holiday and so the afternoon was generally granted as a half-holiday.

Fell was not happy at the school. His relations with the Girls' Department mistress were strained as he had to share the only good set of reading books with her. Money was scarce for the school needs; about £40 annually was received for a Government Grant the children paid "School Pence", it seems of 2d per week (a list is attached of those who paid quarterly and a record given of those paid for by Strutt's Charity) and Fell had a dispute with the managers over money for the needs of the school.

Feb. 5th 1878 "In the evening a meeting of subscribers was held in the schoolroom. A voluntary rate of 3½d in the £1 was voted and a committee of Managers elected."

Feb. 20th 1878 "The Reverend G. P. Bennett visited the schools. He communicated to me the result of the Managers' meeting, viz. that the school was to be carried on as last year, and that they withdrew the notice they had given me. I replied that I had no wish to leave, but that unless a little different arrangement took place, I could not, in justice to the school or myself consent to remain. He requested me to state my wishes in writing, which he would lay before the Managers, but they could not go to any more expense".

Feb. 21st 1878 "Accordingly on the 21st I complied, naming the two great points which needed redress for the successful working of the school.
1) That I be allowed two Monitors or one Pupil Teacher, as during more than half of the past year and up till now in the present, I had been obliged to work the whole school without any help whatever.
2) That the necessary apparatus be allowed me, viz. An Alphabet Card and Graduated Reading sheets for the infants section, and a new set of Reading books for at least five standards". (and he rehearses the difficulties of sharing one set with the Girls Department.)

March 5th 1878 Has a copy of the Government Report on the School. It concludes: "another set of reading books should be procured".

March 28th 1878 Victory for Fell! He records the arrival of the desired books, takes them home and puts brown paper covers on them.

In July 1878, during the pea-picking season he comments on the compulsory education provisions in the 1876 act. -"In fact, as far as this parish is concerned, the Act is a dead letter so far".

The Government regulations printed in the beginning of the Log state: "No entry once made in the Log-Book may be removed nor altered otherwise than by a subsequent entry." But in January 1879 Fell pasted a paper to obliterate one page:

January 28th. "Hasty remarks on the examination, which I, on reference to the Code, thought had better be covered, explain the reason of having pasted in this leaf."

Then follows a copy of the Inspector's Report. Fell writes:- "The results of the Spelling Examination in the 2nd. and 3rd. Standards were not more disappointing to H. M. Inspector, than astonishing to the teacher."

By 17th March 1879 W, W, Thorne had been appointed to succeed Fell, who retired on 20th of March. W. W. Thorne remained in charge of the school for many years and is remembered by the older villagers.

FACT AND FANCY IN PUBLIC MEMORY

by Leonard H. Gant.

Personal and public memory play a great part in local history, and often proof of the fact comes with surprising accuracy, either from a printed or written record which turns up, or from archaeological investigation. Some events handed down from generation to generation by word of mouth have become established and are now either part of folk lore or tradition.

One of most remarkable examples of public memory was recounted to me by the late Rev. T. D. S. Bayley, concerning the parish of Great Saling, near Braintree. It had been decided to remove a rather undistinguished reredos to the altar in the parish church and this was mentioned by the school mistress to her class. The following morning a little scholar said to the teacher, "Miss, my old granny says there is a picture of the Lady behind the table in the church".

This information was passed to the incumbent and a careful examination was made of the wall behind the 18th century reredos when it was removed, and there was a wall painting, as the child had said, of The Virgin Mary, which had been covered for two hundred years!

During many years' study of the history of the parish of Berechurch I interviewed many old residents, and none was more helpful than a charming old lady named Mrs. Miller, whose family had been connected with the parish, and with that of Peldon for many centuries, her maiden name being Mallett. In the course of a conversation she said "I know the church is very old, because it has been there as long as I can remember". In fact the church was built about 1270! Mrs. Miller's memory was clear at the age of 85 years and she went on to tell me that the copper grille fixed to protect the new stained glass window over the altar in the parish church, was stolen soon after erection, and later it was replaced by an iron one, which remains to this day.

Catch phrases often persist long after the original meaning is forgotten; one such was Mrs. Miller's recollection that the stable clock face at Berechurch Hall was said to have been "made from old Mother Smith's copper lid". In fact it is still made of wood, and is round, like a copper lid.

A public memory, as yet uninvestigated, is that a battle was fought on Friday Wood Green and the pond there contains armour and weapons! It is true that the Parliament troops laid siege to nearby Berechurch Hall, and in fact the intervening fields between the Green and the Hall were styled "Nether Cannons" and "Hubbard's Cannons". Morant declares that the Hall was "much decayed" and had been rebuilt and used as a farmhouse, which was called the "Old House Farm".

Monkwick Farm, the home of Bestney Barker, a royalist and Roman Catholic, also suffered during the Civil War and the tale was told of a row of ring bolts fixed to a rafter in the eastern end of the old house, now demolished, where, according to my old informant "they chained up the prisoners". This would hardly refer to the Civil War, although Bestney Barker was taken away in 1642 and his estate sequestered, but more probably is connected with the housing of French prisoners during the Napoleonic War. I was told by Miss Silvia Sage, the daughter of the last gentleman to farm the complete Monkwick Farm, which extended from the Mersea Road to the Layer Road, that the employment of prisoners on the farm was known from memory, and she gave me a silver franc piece, dated 1795, which was found near the farm house.

Comments by newspaper reporters are sometimes useful sources of information, and I found this so when reading the contemporary report, published in the "Essex Standard", 26th December 1872, in which Mr. George F. Clarke (later sub-editor) compared the new church with the old, and said that the new church then lacked a south porch, but that it was understood a new one, on the style of the old, would be later erected.

This work was duly carried out, and a photograph in my possession, taken before the restoration in 1871-2 clearly shows that the new porch did, indeed, closely follow the design of the old one.

Finally, it is significant, I think, that the Berechurch earthworks are styled a "rampart" rather than a "road", although the "Rampart Way" or, to use its modern appellation, "Roman Way", was claimed as a possible road from Colchester to Mersea, and the raised earthwork now serves as a road. Careful excavation of sections of this bank were made by the late Mr. A.V. Hall, who found no trace of metalling on that part of the bank which passed through Charlotte's Grove, and had not been used as a road. The "Berechurch Dyke", with the ditch on the eastern or outward side, is shown by Hawkes and Hull in "Camulodunum" and its relation to Grimes Dyke and the Lexden, Moat Farm and Sheepen Dykes is clearly seen.

THE JUNE EXCURSION

Once again unbroken sunshine and a cloudless sky blessed our annual excursion on Saturday, 13th June, into Suffolk and Norfolk.

Our first stop was at the Abbot's Hall Folk Museum in Stowmarket where the founder, Mr. Norman Smedley met us. He explained the idea behind the venture and his plans for the future. This unique collection was a revelation to most of us and it is certain many return visits will be made.

The journey continued northwards into Norfolk; the countryside was green and beautiful with a profusion of blossom in the cottage gardens and on the trees, particularly the acacias.

Arriving at Castle Rising we went first to the Castle which was built in about 1150 and in 1544 was granted by Henry VIII to the Duke of Norfolk whose family held it until 1958. The immense outer ditch is crossed by a bridge leading to the remains of the gatehouse set in the huge circular bank; this in turn, encloses a stretch of greensward from the centre of which rise the smooth grey walls of the keep. The great door opens on to a flight of stone steps leading to the upper floors and a magnificent view from Sandringham on the south to the misty blue of the Wash to the north.

After lunch we visited the Hospital of the Holy & Undivided Trinity. These almshouses are little changed since they were built about 1614 and the Matron showed us round with great pride. Much of the original furnishings remain and a gallery of photographs on the walls told the story of the passing years. Two old ladies allowed us to see their rooms and one of them posed patiently in her red cloak with the Howard badge and pointed black beaver hat which used to be their uniform. A memorable oasis of peace and contentment.

We then made our way to North Elmham where Mr. Peter Wade-Martins met us and conducted us round the ruins of the Saxon Cathedral. He outlined with great clarity the various stages of development and use of this unique site from the late tenth to the late fourteenth centuries and made the place come alive before our eyes.

Our last stop was the ancient borough of Eye where a real Suffolk tea was laid out for us at the White Lion Hotel. Much refreshed we made our way to the church where the magnificent flushwork of the tower is set off by the early brick-infilled panels of the porch. Inside were many things of interest not the least being the excellent restoration work carried out by Sir Ninian Comper on the medieval rood screen and front cover.

There was not time to see more and the sun still shone to see us home after a very happy and successful day.

THE JULY OUTING

On July the sixth an unusually large number of members met for an evening outing to Clare. The appropriate weather was, as usual, laid on, and members wandered dreamily round this interesting and beautiful little town keeping themselves awake in the evening heat by incessant conversation, in the intervals of which they were entertained by Mr. Osborne, a learned and witty guide who evidently knows the town and its quite complicated history like the back of his hand.

One of the Conqueror's chief barons, Richard FitzGilbert, held nearly a hundred lordships in Suffolk, and made Clare, from which presently the family took its name, their headquarters. The town backs on to their motte and bailey castle, rather like Pleshey and Ongar. A formidable fragment of shell keep remains, but when the de Clares acquired the earldom of Gloucester, so much handier for annoying the Welsh and Irish, their interest in Clare waned and gradually the importance of the middle class increased. The splendid wool Church and interesting houses of Tudor date and later remind us of this. We visited the remains of the Austin Friars Foundation, once more inhabited by monks, and round the town. The railways station, now disused, was carved out of the castle bailey, and its builders would have been surprised to know how soon the one was to become as obsolete as the other, ousted by the motor transport which presently took us through the dusk back to Colchester.

CHEESE AND WINE

This year the Cheese and Wine Party was held on July 13th at "Aquila", Great Bentley. This interesting modern house is the home of Miss Enid Crowther, the well-known local artist, and members were able to study her paintings at their leisure as the party assembled in her spacious studio. Coffee was served later in her sitting-room upstairs with its long windows giving a wide vista on to the famous village green. Good food and wine in pleasant surroundings and an opportunity for chat made this, as always, a very popular annual event and our warmest thanks are due to Miss Crowther for her hospitality.

GROUP EXCAVATIONS

Unfortunately it has not been possible to carry out any new excavation this summer as the Roman kiln site at Moat Farm has proved to be more complex than was at first thought. A full report of this interesting site will be published in the Bulletin at a later date.

All enquiries to Mrs. K. de Brisay, Corner Cottage, Layer de la Haye, Colchester Telephone:- Layer de la Haye 274 (evenings).