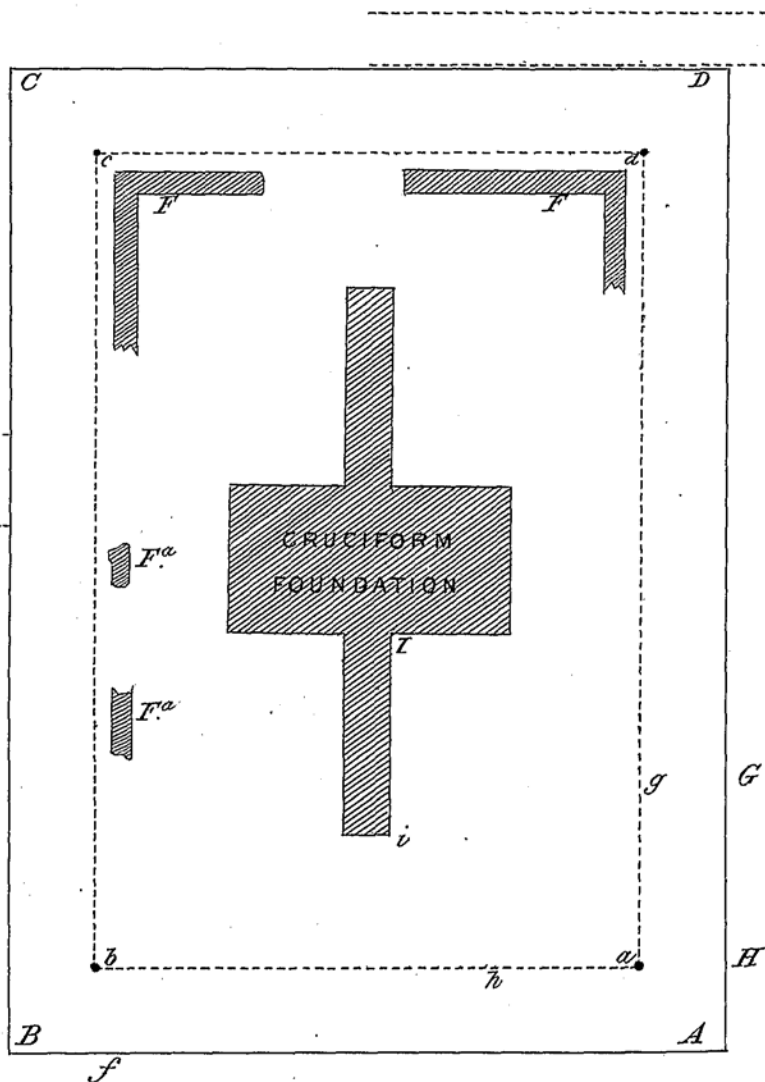




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Scale.



Plan of Platform

RICHBOROUGH CASTLE.

# Archæologia Cantiana.

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ACCOUNT OF THE SOCIETY'S RESEARCHES IN  
THE ROMAN CASTRUM AT RICHBOROUGH.

BY G. DOWKER, ESQ., F.G.S.

BEFORE describing the excavations undertaken by the Society, let me refer briefly to those made by previous explorers, especially of the remarkable subterranean building in the centre of the Castrum, to which our own efforts were principally directed.

It was known to our earlier topographers that within these walls existed a low cruciform structure, commonly called "St. Augustine's Cross;"<sup>1</sup> and most probably too that this cross rested on a subterraneous platform of masonry. But we have no intelligible description of either cross or platform till that of Mr. Boys, the historian of Sandwich, who made researches here in 1792. He laid bare part of the platform and measured it, finding its length to be  $144\frac{1}{2}$  feet, its breadth 104 feet, and its depth 5 feet; and that it was "a composition of boulders and coarse mortar, the whole upper surface to the very verge covered over with a coat of the same sort of mortar six inches thick." He also dug round the cross and discovered its dimensions; but was not, it

<sup>1</sup> [See Stukeley's *Itin. Curios.*, where is perhaps the earliest engraving of it, from a sketch made in 1722, tab. 97. But he apparently knew nothing of the platform below.]

would appear, aware of any structure existing still deeper, below the platform itself.<sup>1</sup>

In 1826 Mr. Gleig and others made excavations, resulting in the discovery of a certain cave, supposed to be that which Leland had seen in the reign of Henry VIII.<sup>2</sup> They too were the first to dig beneath the platform, which they did at its N.E. corner (D), finding the mass of masonry below it which has puzzled antiquaries ever since. Down the perpendicular side of this they sank a shaft, to the depth of twenty-two feet from the surface, without reaching the bottom, when the water came in and compelled them to discontinue the work.

These excavators raised much public curiosity as to the meaning of this extraordinary structure, till, towards determining the point, Mr. Rolfe of Sandwich, in September, 1843, made further researches. He commenced by sinking a shaft near the end of the eastern side (AD) of the platform, at G, and, excavating beneath it, found a low, narrow passage in the soil running under it, close to the perpendicular side of the lower masonry, which is overhung by the platform to the extent of several feet. In this passage, which was in some places eighteen inches and in others three feet in height, he found human and other bones, and scattered fragments of Roman pottery. With a view of discovering an entrance into the masonry, he deepened and enlarged this passage, which had extended to its N.E. corner (d), and continued a similar passage round its N. and part of its W. side, still, as before, beneath the overhanging platform, which he used as a ceiling. Finding nothing but

<sup>1</sup> Boys's Hist. of Sandwich, pp. 866 *et seq.*

<sup>2</sup> "Withyn the Castel is a lytle Paroche Chirch of S. Augustine, and an Heremitage. I had Antiquites of the Heremite, the which is an industrius Man. Not far fro the Heremitage is a Cave wher Men have sowt and digged for Treasure. I saw yt by Candel withyn, and there were Conys. Yt was so straitte that I had no mynd to crepe far yn." (Vol. vii. p. 138.) The cave found by Mr. Gleig was probably the smugglers' cave known to have existed at one time near the N.E. corner.

a uniform mass of solid masonry on his left, he abandoned this work, and attempted to force an entrance on its E. side, near where he had commenced, at *g*; but owing to the exceeding hardness of the material, after many weeks of great labour, he had penetrated horizontally to the distance of 16 feet only,<sup>1</sup> still encountering nothing but solid masonry.

His excavations had however determined the dimensions of the lower mass, viz. 124 feet from N. to S. and 80 feet from E. to W., the platform overhanging it by 12 feet on its E. and W. sides (as from *b* to *e*), and by 10 feet on its N. and S. sides (as from *b* to *f*). A hole, penetrating perpendicularly through the platform to its upper surface, was discovered at each corner (*c*, *d*) of the lower mass thus exposed, 5 or 6 inches square, and having fragments of wood still adhering to its sides, and the impression of wood in the mortar which formed them.

In July, 1865, the Kent Archæological Society having resolved on continuing these researches, the Rev. R. Drake and myself undertook the work. We began close to the place where Mr. Rolfe had made his entrance in 1843, and, after examining the passage dug by him, resolved to continue it along the S. and the remainder of the W. sides. For this purpose a new shaft was sunk near the S.E. corner of the platform, at *h*, and the passage carried first along the S. side (*a*, *b*) of the lower masonry, still, as before, under the overhanging platform. Towards the centre of this side it was observed that the sand had fallen away from the under-surface of the platform, and that numerous holes of foxes or rabbits communicated with the chamber so formed, which was so shallow, however, that the lower surface of the platform was rubbed and polished by their

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Roach Smith says 12 feet only, but the excavation extends to 16 feet.

backs. At a distance of 29 feet from the S.E. angle (*a*) of the masonry a large quantity of boulders was found mixed with dark vegetable earth; and here (*h*) was a hole extending horizontally into the wall to the extent of 6 feet, partially filled with yellow sand, and containing numerous bones of (as well as I can ascertain) the sheep or goat, the deer, the rabbit, ox, horse, and pig, mostly young. Immediately under this hole, and at the depth of 7 feet from the under side of the platform, another cavity was found in the masonry, extending 20 feet horizontally inwards, and pointing nearly to a spot under the S.E. corner (*i*) of the S. arm of the cross on the surface above. This excavation had been made by roughly breaking away the flints, leaving the sides very irregular. The hole was 5 feet high by 6 feet wide at the entrance; at 8 feet inwards, 5 feet 5 inches by 10 feet; at 11 feet, it contracted in width to 4 feet 6 inches, and so continued to the end. Our excavation was continued round the S.W. corner (*b*), where, as also at the S.E. corner (*a*), an opening ran upwards quite through the platform, like those found by Mr. Rolfe at the other two angles, bearing also the distinct impression of wood. All these four perforations are too small to have served any purpose of a superstructure, and were probably merely indications to the workmen. The passage was completed into Mr. Rolfe's on the W. side, nothing in the nature of an original entrance to the masonry being found in the entire circuit.

In order to determine the depth of the masonry (for our passage only reached to a depth of about 6 feet below the platform), I caused a perpendicular shaft to be sunk immediately under the hole in the S. side described above (*h*.) At first, and for some distance, the soil appeared to have been previously moved, but at a depth of 15 feet from the platform it was undisturbed. The masonry downwards from this depth was not quite

so regular, some courses of stone receding from the perpendicular, and the base thus appearing to incline inwards. At a depth of 18 feet, the soil showed symptoms of water, and at 21 feet the water gained rapidly. I then had an iron bar thrust in, to ascertain if the bottom of the masonry had been nearly reached, but it still continued. The water increasing upon us, we were now obliged to discontinue the shaft,—the total depth reached being 22 feet from the under surface of the platform, and upwards of 30 feet from the surface of the ground.

The stonework of this lower mass of masonry, which we were thus exploring, consists entirely of boulders of flint, selected with great care,—not a fragment of other stone being found. In this it contrasts greatly with the outside walls of the Castrum, which are composed of many different materials. The mortar or concrete in which the flints are imbedded appears to be composed of lime, mixed with coarse sand, small pebble, a very slight proportion of ground brick, and fragments of shell, as if from sea-sand. From its great excellence, improved, no doubt, by time,<sup>1</sup> it is extremely difficult to penetrate the masonry. Sledge hammers and iron chisels were employed by Mr. Rolfe, and it yielded only to repeated strokes, the flint breaking sooner than the concrete. Where any portion has been exposed for a long time to the atmosphere, as in the passage beneath the platform found by Mr. Rolfe, the surface downwards is covered with stalactites of carbonate of lime. This concrete has evidently been applied in a fluid state over successive layers of boulders about 6 inches deep, and has in some cases flowed over the masonry into the sand outside, in such a way as to lead to the supposition that the sand had been first excavated to the required depth,

<sup>1</sup> Silica is partly soluble in water, and appears to form a chemical compound with lime, forming silicate of lime; in this way mortar may become hardened by time.

and that the boulders and mortars were then filled in, in regular succession. This overflow is observable only towards the upper part of the masonry, and mostly towards the centre of each side of the parallelogram; as if the excavation for the intended building had not everywhere preserved its perpendicular face, but the soil, having during the work fallen in towards the side, had been thrown out by the workmen and again filled up as the building proceeded; each overflow of mortar being thus constantly covered with a fresh layer of sand. I can only in this way account for these appearances.

The nature of the sand bears out this view of the mode in which this structure was built. The hill of Richborough is composed of the Woolwich and Thanet sands,—formations beneath the London clay. The upper sand is here about 10 feet deep, the lower division is sandy for about 7 feet further downwards, and if we take a depth of 16 or 17 feet from the surface, we come into the more clayey Thanet beds, which become firmer as we go deeper into them, and are the repositories of the freshwater springs. Where the sand of the hill remains in its natural state, and is undisturbed, it is firm and retains nearly a perpendicular face when cut into; where the lower sand has been mixed with the upper, it may be distinguished by its colour and little coherence. Hence, in some parts of the Roman excavation, the disturbed sand would have easily fallen in, as it afterwards settled away from under the platform. This was particularly the nature of the sand along the E. side, where the passage found by Mr. Rolfe under the platform was, without much doubt, the result of settlement; but other places along the S. and W. sides showed the same effect in a less degree. It thus seems evident that this subterranean structure was built in a rectangular pit dug to receive it.

On the E. side, however, there may have been some



further excavation eastwards, shown by the settlement there found in the sand, and this possibly may have been connected with the bank of the river Stour opposite to it. Gleig excavated on this side, but the settlement in the sand here must have taken place at a much earlier date. The stalactites in it must be the result of a vast length of time, for nothing approaching to an incrustation of carbonate of lime was found in the hole in the masonry cut by Mr. Rolfe more than twenty years ago, though the water had found its way through the top of this excavation; nor in the hole found at the S. side, of which no record exists.

It is worthy of remark that little or no organic matter or manufactured material is found in the sand,—one piece only of Samian ware was found, with some iron, buried in sand at a considerable depth on the S. side, and beneath the platform. The platform rests on pure sand, and was, I think, built at an early period of the Roman occupation.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> I think we have evidence that this structure was of earlier date than the enclosing walls; for the excavations showed that the earth all round it was virgin soil, with little admixture of Roman pottery or refuse. The foundations of other buildings, or, as I think, roads, between the eastern side of the platform and the edge of the cliff, appear nearly on a level with the face of the platform; and the broken rag-stone strewn over its surface appears to have continued to the edge of the cliff. A very large quantity of broken pottery, bones, oyster-shells, and coins have been found above the level of the platform; very few below. Had the excavation for the masonry been carried through any thickness of this made earth, it is probable that much more of such *débris* would have been found in the soil at a greater depth. At one place, near the N.E. centre of the platform, a subsequent excavation had been made, and was traceable from the made earth with which it had been filled. The subterranean structure is composed entirely of flint boulders, imbedded in mortar, without a trace of tile or other material than lime and sea-sand. It is to be noted that the walls of Richborough are built of various material, some of which, as oolite, must have been brought from a distance. Had this platform and substructure been built at the same time as the outer walls, it is reasonable to suppose that it would have been composed of like material; and had it been of later date, when the Romans were more acquainted with the neighbouring country, that larger material would have been used.

As the soil below the platform on the east side has settled away from

Having ascertained thus much about the masonry below the platform, we subsequently trenched the surface of the platform with trenches about 4 feet wide, commencing at 12 feet from its edge on the E. and W. sides, and 10 feet on the N. and S. We extended them first all round the platform, from the apertures rising from each corner of the under-masonry as before mentioned (at *a, b, c, d*). These first trenches we next connected by cross trenches from E. to W., touching in their course the ends of the longer arms of the cross, and these again we connected so as to expose all the perpendicular faces of the cross. At the point *i* in the plan an attempt had before been made to penetrate the platform, and the cross at this place was undermined from the starting point of the S. arm to near the end of the E. arm. This had been noticed by Mr. Boys.

The cross is situated in the centre of the platform, above which it rises 4 ft. 6 in. at its S.E. corner. It is 87 feet long from N. to S., with a width of 7 ft. 6 in.; the transverse being 22 feet wide and 47 feet long. The longer arms run 35° E. of N. Its masonry is composed of Kentish rag, oolite, tufa, and flint boulders, cemented with a concrete made of lime, broken tile, coarse sand, and grit, very similar to that in the outer wall of the castrum. The corners and ends are faced with squared blocks of tufa,—a material not found elsewhere in the masonry at Richborough, but to be seen the under surface more than on any other side, it is not improbable that some other structure or excavation has been made on this side, perhaps connecting it with the river.

It would appear that the cross on the platform was a subsequent erection, having, as it were, a foundation of its own on the platform, and being composed of different material.

If we adopt the hypothesis that the platform was of earlier date than the outer walls, it is evident that the latter were made to accommodate themselves to the former, for, though the platform is not now in the centre of the Castrum, yet the Decuman gate is placed exactly opposite the centre of the cross, and the south gate (if there was a south gate) would have been as exactly opposite its longest transverse.

in Roman work at Dover. Though resting on the platform, the cross does not form part of it, but is laid on a foundation consisting of blocks of chalk on a layer of Kentish rag, broken fine, without mortar; this again resting on the layer of ferruginous sand which covers the entire face of the platform. The upper surface of the cross is much broken, and has clearly been higher than its present remains.

Starting from corners about 5 feet inwards from the N.W. and N.E. holes (at *c*, *d*) through the platform, and thence running parallel with its sides, we found resting upon it the remains of a wall (F), which may perhaps have been carried round its entire circuit. It is 3 ft. 6 in. wide, and now averaging 1 ft. 6 in. in height. It extends 26 feet southwards down the W. side, with two more detached portions nearer the S. end of this side. Along the N. side it extends 12 feet eastwards from the north-western corners, and 30 feet westwards from the north-eastern, having apparently been demolished at the interval: and again down the E. side southwards 14 feet. It is built of boulders (those on the outside squared), imbedded in mortar composed of lime-grit and broken tile, but containing more sand than other mortar at Richborough, and easily crumbling in the fingers. It stands, like the cross, not immediately on the platform, but on a layer of intervening sand.

The best preserved portion of this wall is the more southern of the two detached fragments on the W. side (F<sup>a</sup>), a mass about 8 feet long, and distant from the perforation near the S.W. corner (*b*) 33 feet. This was 3 feet in height, and at 1 ft. 5 in. from the surface of the platform had a course of bonding tiles, apparently Roman, but showing signs of having been broken before their present use, as if taken from an older building. I found fragments of this tile lying also under the wall, in the sand on the surface of the platform. The face

of this portion of wall above the course of tiles contracted one inch. All other parts of the wall appeared to have been broken away down to this bonding-course.

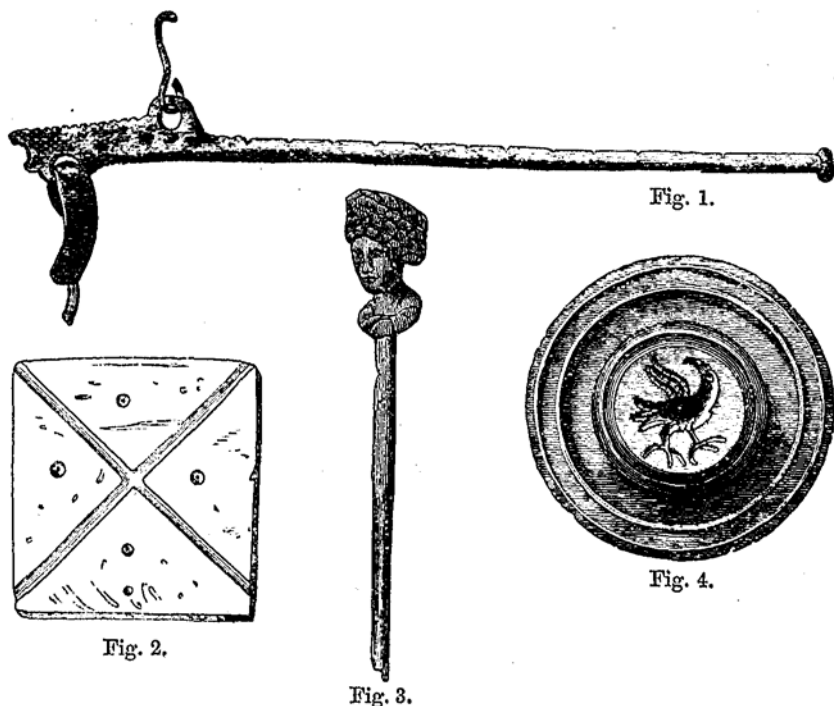
The other of these two detached masses ( $F^b$ ) was found completely overthrown outwards. It was exactly in the middle of the W. side. A large piece of Kentish ragstone was imbedded in its masonry.

No remains of worked stone, as for doorways or window-frames, or other architectural features, were found in or near any part of this wall, if we except certain fragments of white marble, carved in mouldings as if for a cornice, discovered in excavating the platform, and now in our Society's Museum at Maidstone. Similar examples are engraved in Mr. Roach Smith's account of Richborough.

Excavations over all the surface of the platform were next undertaken, with a view of determining a point often questioned, whether any opening existed from the top into the subterraneous structure. This operation, which was performed by means of successive trenches, completing the whole surface, was a work of long time and great labour, owing to the large accumulation of soil. No such entrance was discovered, nor anything to warrant a belief that any such had ever existed. The earth had evidently been previously much disturbed; and as this became less evident always towards the edges of the platform, it would seem that former explorers had examined the central part the most diligently (attracted probably by the cross), where were also fewer coins and other relics found in the soil. Mr. Boys appears to have contented himself with exploring around the cross, besides digging such trenches as enabled him to estimate the extent of the platform.

A great number of Roman coins was found, as usual, during these excavations; none however of remarkable type, or adding anything to our knowledge of Rutupian

history. At various times we also found a small bronze steelyard (Fig. 1); a flat square piece of ivory, engraved as for a counter (Fig. 2); a bronze pin, with delicate



female bust for its head (Fig. 3); and a circular bronze fibula, ornamented with two raised circles and a flat raised centre, in which is struck in *intaglio* a well-executed figure of an eagle (Fig. 4). All these are engraved here at their actual size. Also an iron axehead (Fig. 5) engraved at reduced size.

It is well known that human remains have been constantly found on the eastern side of the area of the Castrum, near the platform. Mr. Drake caused a hole to be dug here at a spot where the corn grew less luxuriantly, and found some large squared ragstones, and beneath them some human bones. In tracing the remains of foundations between the platform and the

edge of the cliff I found, at a depth of 4 feet, numerous remains of human skeletons, apparently buried without order, with bones of several bodies lying in the space

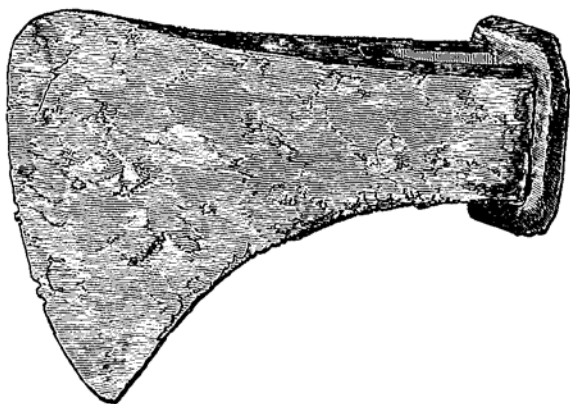


Fig. 5.

which might be occupied by one grave. All appeared as if they had been disinterred and buried again. A fact of some significance was that all these bones rested on a surface strewn with a similar material to that covering the platform, apparently composed of broken ragstone. These foundations, which are most likely those alluded to by Mr. R. Smith in his work on Richborough, and supposed by him to be medieval, may be traced along the cliff at the N.E. corner of the Castrum, and are composed of boulders loosely bedded in a friable mortar, and resting on blocks of chalk. I traced this wall (κκ) to the N.E. edge of the platform, and again on the N. side towards the centre: it is rather higher than the face of the platform, part of which it overlaps. I took it to be the foundation of a Roman road, but in this I may be mistaken. Similar foundations exist in other parts within the walls (as at L), and may be traced in dry seasons in the growing corn.

Large masses of Roman masonry, apparently overthrown, are to be found under the cliff. Some were

recently discovered by workmen constructing a bridge over the stream here, and others were destroyed during the formation of the South-Eastern Railway past the spot. A quantity of broken wall has also fallen into the river near the railway. These remains were supposed by Mr. Boys to be those of a return-wall on the eastern side of the Castrum, completing the square; but all evidences of the kind terminate about opposite the N. side of the platform, and none are found further southwards. These remains under the hill may then have had some connection with the water, as, for instance, with a passage from it to the Castrum,—possibly even to the subterranean building, which may have in this direction an entrance yet to be discovered. The falling in of the sand beneath the ledge of platform, which I have described as having taken place on this side, might point to the same thing.

The summer of 1865, being exceedingly dry, enabled me to trace in the growing corn spots where foundations will probably be found. It seems clear that Richborough was, during the Roman occupation of Britain, an island, at least at high water. The high ground on which the Castrum stands is entirely surrounded by marsh land, still but little above high-water mark. It would appear that much more water flowed into this estuary in earlier times than at present; even now, from better drainage and the removal of timber, the country round it becomes dryer every century. A number of small streams, bearing evidence of their once larger size, converge as they approach Richborough. The Gosshall, Poulders, and Marshborough streams contributed their quota at the north of the island, the Delf and the North Stream running through Sandwich flowed into the sea on the south side, where Stonar Beach then, I think, formed the seashore. But when the sea ceased to flow through from Reculver, the

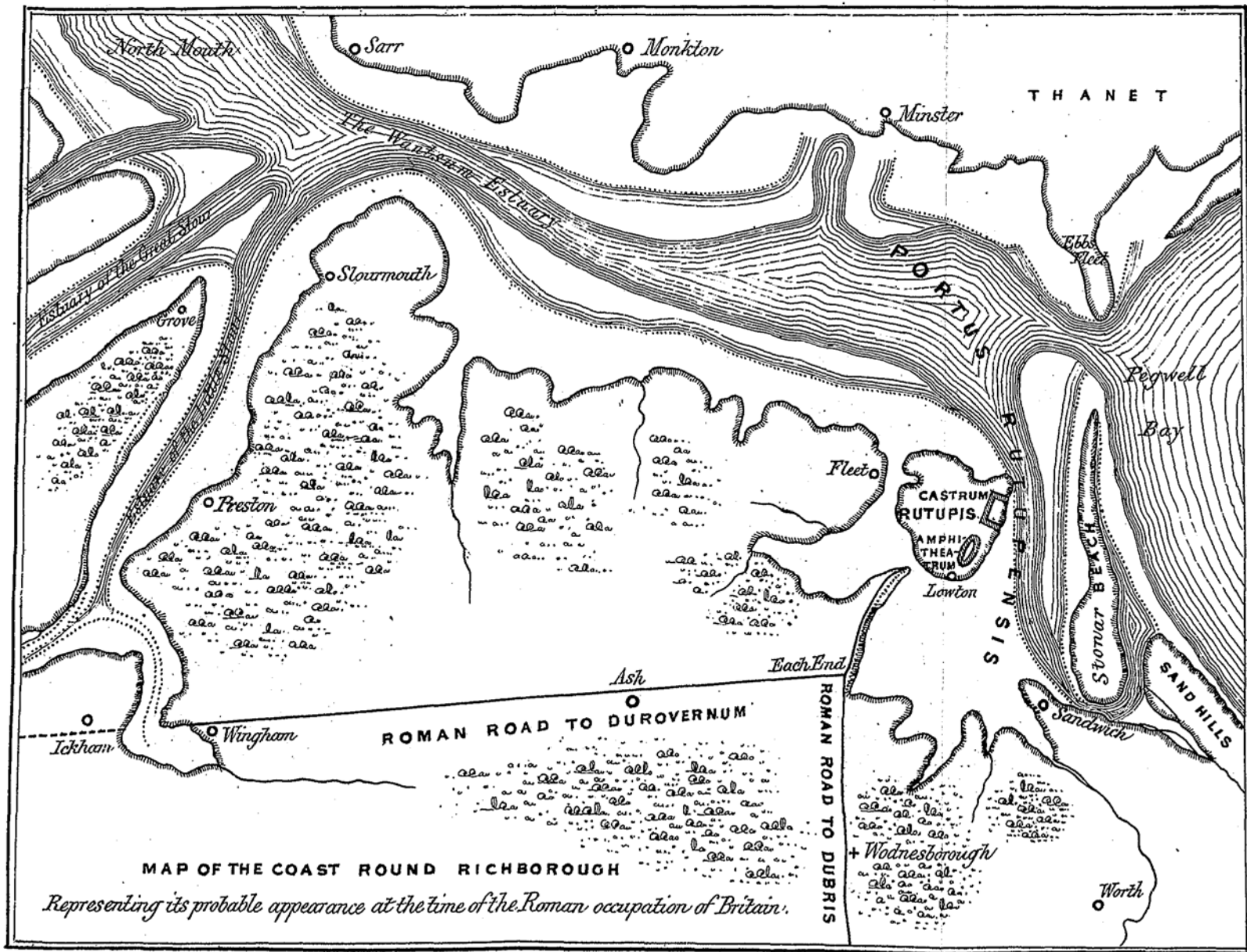
estuary would speedily silt up; and thus, without actual rise in the land since that period, these natural causes would leave it dry as at present. The Roman foundations discovered, as mentioned above, during the formation of the railway, were not much above the present level of the marsh. The map accompanying this paper I have drawn to represent the probable division of land and water during the Roman period, the levels being taken from the actual configuration of the land above high-water at the present time.

Historians have supposed the famous Rutupine oysters to have been bred where are the present marshes. I have sought in vain for any evidence of oysters in the immediate neighbourhood of Richborough, but have found their shells in the Stour at several places in its valley, lying in such a manner that the oysters had evidently lived where they were found.

On the N.W. side of this island a remarkable excavation exists in the side of the hill, totally unlike any naturally formed inlet, and having no spring or water-supply to account for such a formation of the land. It embraces an area of about three acres, cut back, as it were, into the land at a uniform depth, and having a contracted entrance; in fact, has all the appearance of a harbour—an appearance confirmed by the existence on the mainland, immediately opposite, of a place called "Fleet," the Saxon word for a harbour. This sheltered spot may well have been chosen by the Romans for the better security of their small craft.

On the S. slope of the hill a few cottages remain, called Lowton. From the number of Roman remains found here, I should conjecture this to have been the site of the Roman town. No excavations, so far as I am aware, have ever been made here, but in the dry summer of 1865, traces of foundations were visible in the corn; and it must be remembered that on this





side of the hill the soil is much deeper, and has been brought down from the parts above by rain and plough, so that we must not expect the corn here to give us many indications.

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\*.\* From the foregoing description, drawn up with great pains by the zealous and obliging conductor of the Society's researches, it will be seen that their result, if in no other way very interesting, has at least determined that neither on the surface of this extraordinary mass of masonry, nor down its sides to a depth of 11 feet (*i. e.* of 14 feet from the present level of the ground), does any entrance to its interior exist: also that if any chamber should be concealed within the substructure, it must at least be more than 16 feet horizontally inwards from its eastern side, and more than 20 feet from its southern. With great deference to his authority, and also to that of Mr. Roach Smith, who has deemed it probable that an entrance and a chamber may yet exist, I cannot bring myself to see any reason for supposing so. A subterranean chamber with wall more than 20 feet thick, and entrance (supposing it not less than 6 feet in height) more than 17 feet below its top, seems a thing impossible to have been designed by man, and is certainly one which we are unable to connect with any known Roman necessities or customs, either of peace or war. If the mass were built for a chamber, it may be further remarked, the overhanging platform, still subterranean, which crowns it, remains entirely unintelligible.

I cannot but regard the result of our researches as quite conclusive against the existence of any such internal chamber.

On the other hand, the whole construction of the mass, its shape, its evident method of building, and its enormous strength even for a Roman work, are suggestive of a foundation; and this alternative seems also the only intelligible solution. We may suppose the Comes Littoris Saxonici, designing to erect here within the camp some huge building—in all likelihood a Pharos or a watchtower of unusual height, such as the rather low situation would require—and mistrusting the sand of Richborough Hill for his foundation, to take the elaborate and thoroughly Roman step of digging it out for the required area, and to a depth of perhaps 30 feet; proceeding to make his own stratum to build upon. Labour was abundant to his hand, for the garrison's sole occupation was to keep a look-out for the Saxon pirate "*dubiis venturum ventis*;" and neighbouring Britons for the work were as plentiful and of as little account as the flint boulders

which he would order them to bring. As the slaves poured the flints into the squared pit, the Roman soldiers "flushed" them with their wonderful concrete, and in a very short time there lay in the bed of Thanet sand a rock which might have supported Babel.

Whether the great superstructure was ever raised upon it may be doubted, for no existing remains on the platform point to a building of size requiring a specially solid foundation, and the existing remains are undoubtedly Roman. Many circumstances may be imagined such as would prevent the full accomplishment of the magnificent plan,—a change of Comes for a less enterprising successor,—a mutiny of the troops,—a series of Saxon attacks in stronger force than usual,—the final withdrawal of the Roman garrison in the fifth century. There is no difficulty in explaining the absence of any evidences of a building adequate to the foundation; any difficulty lies in understanding the remains actually existing on its surface.

The smaller remains,—viz. of the wall F, which probably formed a complete rectangular enclosure upon the platform,—are built so exactly and regularly at a short distance within that part of it which is not mere platform, 5 feet deep, but huge solid foundation, perhaps 30 feet deep, that we may conclude them to have been certainly built with knowledge of, and with reference to, the position and intention of the great substructure. Their masonry is, as has been said, clearly Roman, with its red mortar and its course of bonding tiles; and so is that of the broader wall of cruciform shape, in the centre. May we not suppose these to have formed part of some temporary or substitutional building raised in lieu of the original colossal design? The cruciform remains have always puzzled investigators: their broadest part is too narrow to have formed the foundation of any building containing chambers, but so wide that we may well believe the solid stone wall which must have formed its upward continuation to have been of very considerable height. As a clue perhaps not unworthy of consideration, I would suggest that this building may have formed a sort of internal buttress or support to a timber Pharos built around it, as wooden houses are at this day built around and supported by their stack of chimneys in the centre. A cruciform shape would be the very form best calculated for stability in itself when raised to a great height, and for support to the timbers surrounding it. No one who has seen a Canadian town after a fire, can have failed to be struck with the curious effect of these central chimneys standing tall and alone above the ashes of the wooden buildings; and in this state let us imagine the watch-tower of Richborough to have been left by the first Saxon attack after Roman departure. The tall masonry also would not be very long in reaching its present level.

Notice should not be omitted here of a well-known statement as to the final departure of the Romans, contained in the short chronicle known as 'Historia Gildæ,'—a work which, as we learn from the author's own date for his birth, was written about a century only from their departure; and which, from its many incidental confirmations of its own genuineness, as well as from the respect paid to it by Bede and Alcuin, must be considered the strongest evidence of the few facts which it records of that period of

our history. In enumerating the various means of self-defence left to the Britons in mercy by their departing masters, this author tells us:—

“In littore quoque oceani ad meridianam plagam, quâ naves eorum habebantur, quia et inde barbariæ feræ bestiæ timebantur, *turres* per intervalla *ad prospectum maris* collocant; et valedicunt tanquam ultra non reversuri.” (Hist. Gildæ, § 18.)

Richborough and its harbour would certainly be principal spots indicated by the opening words here quoted; and it is clear that the description refers to watch-towers, not to fortresses,—with which indeed Richborough, and the other harbours most exposed to the Saxons (the “feræ bestiæ” described,) had long been provided. May we not, then, possibly discover in these words at once the origin of our mass of masonry, and the cause of the hurry and change of design apparent in its incompleteness?

T. G. G. F.