



<http://kentarchaeology.org.uk/research/archaeologia-cantiana/>

Kent Archaeological Society is a registered charity number 223382

© 2017 Kent Archaeological Society

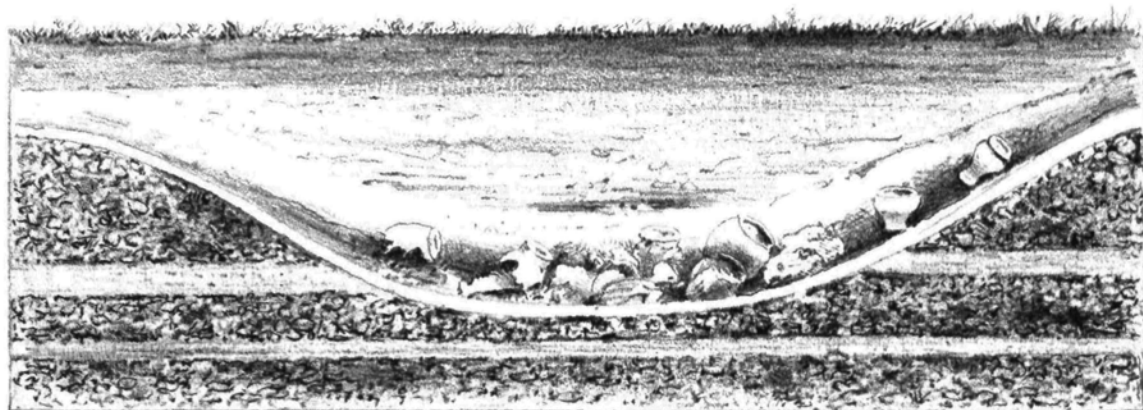


Fig. 1.



Horizontal section of the Pit.



G. Dowker, del.

3 in. x 6 in. x 1 in. x 1 in.
40, King St. Covent Garden.

ROMAN REMAINS FOUND AT PRESTON NEXT WINGHAM.

ROMAN REMAINS AT PRESTON NEXT WINGHAM.

DEAR MR. ROACH SMITH,

AT Preston near Wingham, in 1872, in digging for gravel, an elegant urn with ornamented border was found, together with several Samian *Pateræ*, and large black urns with burnt bones. In the same field, on the Dearson Farm, on the top of a hill overlooking the little Stour valley, a few years after, a large assemblage of Pottery was found, which I was fortunate in being allowed to disinter. There were portions of, I should say, fifteen or twenty vessels, buried about two feet from the surface in peaty charcoal, in a space of about 6 feet by 4. See plan, fig. 1. They had evidently been subjected to fire heat in the hole in which they were found, the gravel soil around and beneath being calcined by the heat. The sides of the excavation had been plastered with a similar clay to that composing the pots, and into it straw or grass had been introduced. The pottery was all of one character, being coarse blue ware, like that composing the urns in which burnt bones are generally found; but no bones or other remains indicating a burial could be detected. The pots were all buried bottom uppermost, and appeared as if one had been placed within the other. They were reduced to fragments, evidently from the pressure of the superincumbent earth. The peculiar colour of the pots found appears due to the presence of charcoal or carbonized material, and their having been partially burnt; where the fire appeared to have raged fiercest they were of a red colour. Two apertures led down to the cavity facing east and west, which was somewhat in the shape of a soda-water bottle with a neck at each end. In one of these narrower portions a perfect vessel was found. I could only account for the

appearances I have just detailed on the supposition that this had been a sort of kiln, used for the purpose of preparing sepulchral vessels. The number packed together, apparently one in the other; the entire absence of bones, or any other sort of pottery; the fact that the vessels were all bottom upwards; and the two draft holes near the summit of the hill, all seemed to me to point to the same conclusion. I exclaimed, "Here is the undertaker's Kiln."—But you, Sir, will doubtless offer a better explanation.

Yours truly,

GEORGE DOWKER.

Considering this deposit as the remains of a Kiln, it does not appear how its construction could have answered its purpose, and it does not in any way correspond with any one of the examples of Roman Kilns, which, fortunately, have been drawn and engraved.* Even if it were one of the very humblest kind, constructed for some special purpose, it is not to be understood why the vessels should have been left in it.

Looked at under the probability of the interment being of a funereal character, we find an almost infinite variety in the modes of Romano-British burial, both as regards the entire body, and also the ashes of the burnt corpse. In the last volume (XI) of the *Archæologia Cantiana*, pp. 115–117, I gave some examples of what may be called baked clay tombs, and to such, I think, Mr. Dowker's interesting discovery may be referred. Mr. Dowker states that in the same field have been found evidences of burial, and it is not at all unlikely that the deposit under consideration may have belonged to a funereal interment, as an accessory to the main deposit, whether of the body entire, or of the *ossuarium* after cremation.

February 28th, 1878.

C. ROACH SMITH.

* *Collectanea Antiqua* (vols. vi. and vii).