

## ROMAN REMAINS AND CELT FOUND NEAR QUARRY HOUSE, FRINDSBURY.

BY A. A. ARNOLD.

DURING many years past, considerable excavations have been made in a tongue of land, at Frindsbury, which stretches out into the River Medway, opposite Chatham, between Chatham Reach on the east and Limehouse Reach on the west. On the ridge of high ground the old Quarry House stands. The descent from that ridge to the low ground is rapid and steep; from the base there run out, to the south and east, marshes and saltings, terminating in a point opposite to Chatham. These marshes and saltings are covered by the river at high spring-tides.

In the higher ground, remains of the Roman occupation have from time to time been found. In 1838 a brief account was given, in Wright's *Topography of Rochester*, of the discovery some little time previously of a leaden coffin "at the distance of about 16 feet (from the surface?), in the chalky cliff opposite St. Mary's Church, Chatham; in it was contained a small vessel of Roman earth about seven inches in height." Some other like discoveries are believed to have been made at that time.

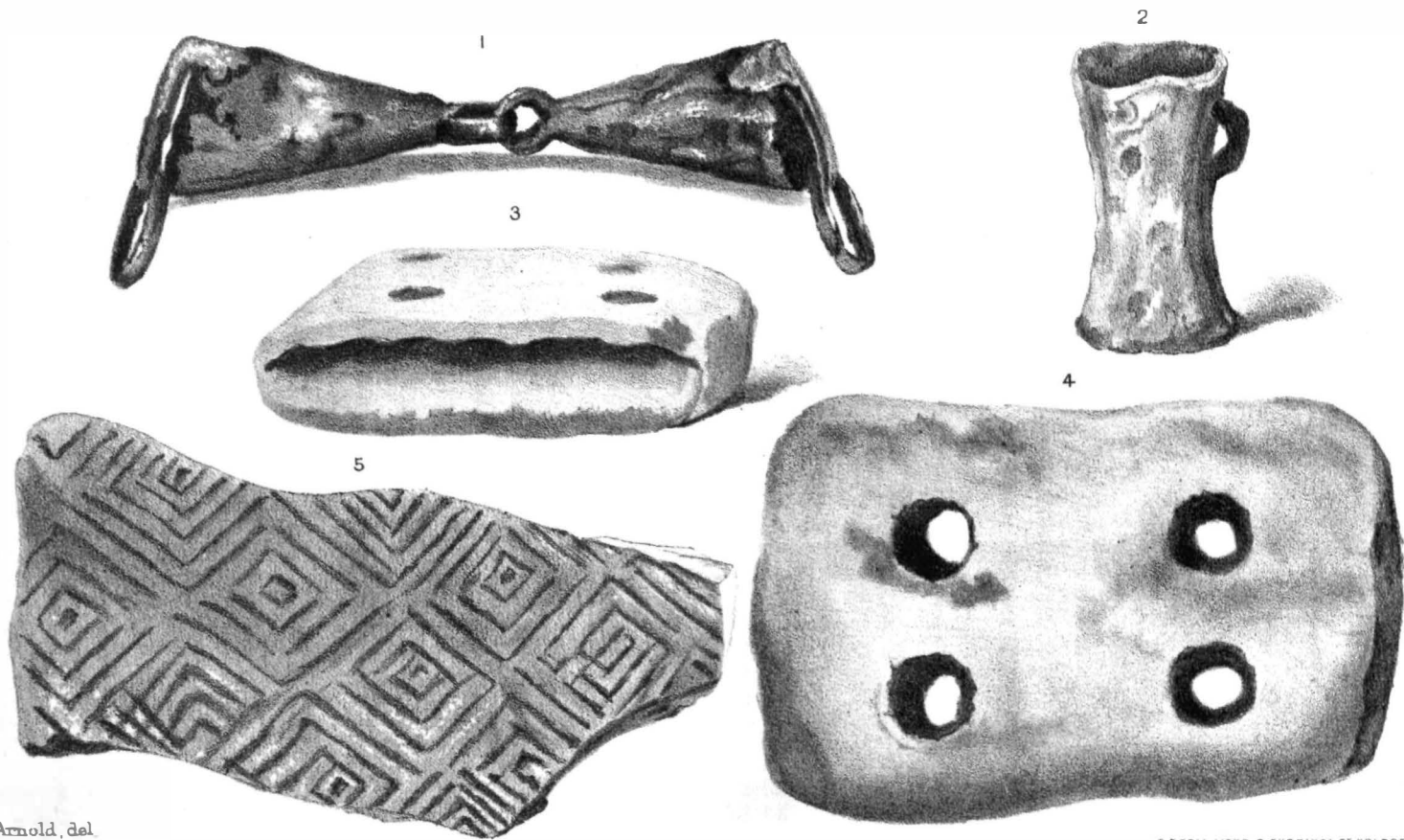
The land which forms the base of this tongue, or peninsula, was part of the possessions of the Church of Rochester, and had been so since the grant from King Offa in 764 until 1866 when it passed to the Eccle-

siastical Commissioners, who have largely developed its commercial uses; there are now several cement factories upon it, in full work, for which enormous quantities of chalk are being dug from the Commissioners' estate.

Mr. Wm. Ball, J.P., of Strood, a member of our Society, as the Commissioners' tenant, holds the chalk land, and the works on it are under his control. He informs us that he has already found several relics of graves near the surface, which he believes to be Roman; but no articles which would absolutely determine the origin, nationality, or date of these graves have yet been discovered. In dredging the river at Limehouse Reach, opposite the chalk works, two bronze swords, apparently Roman, were found a year or two since; these are in Mr. Ball's possession.

The remainder of this peninsula, from a line a little below and to the north of Quarry House, and stretching thence to the south-east, south and west, belongs to the Rochester Bridge Trust, and is leased to Messrs. Tingey and Son; it is on this land that those articles were found which are represented in the accompanying Plates.

Messrs. Tingey, some few years ago, in digging the adjoining land, which they hold under the Ecclesiastical Commissioners, found a Roman glass bottle or flask, and some other antiquities; and when in 1884 they took the Rochester Bridge Estate into their hands, and were about to excavate, Mr. Tingey, Jun., J.P., who is also a member of our Society, and much interested in its objects and researches, took care that anything of interest which might be found should be brought to his notice. They began their digging in the field to the east of what was once the Cherry



M. B. Arnold, del.

S. P. KELL, LITHO. & FURNIVAL ST. HOLBORN, E.C.

1, A HORSE'S BIT; 2, A BRONZE CELT; 3 & 4, A PERFORATED TILE, DUG OUT OF THE ORCHARD AT QUARRY HOUSE; 5, RED TILE WITH INCISED PATTERN, DUG OUT OF AN ADJOINING FIELD.

Orchard, belonging to Quarry House. There were indications in this field of a brick manufactory having once been tried. They did not, however, find the brick-earth they expected, and nothing but a little surface digging was therefore done; yet in this work they came upon fragments of Roman tiles of all sorts and sizes, a specimen of which is given as No. 5 in Plate I. There is so much of this tile on the ground as to lead to the inference that it formed a floor, or part of a yard, in a Roman villa.

The other articles shewn on the two Plates were found in April 1887, in several holes dug in the orchard close by, where Messrs. Tingey were excavating chalk. They mark off a strip of the land running from north to south, whence the surface earth, or "calow," is removed by digging and breaking it away, so as to get to the underlying chalk. In removing this earth at about 100 feet north of the Quarry House, the workmen came upon a hole or shallow pit of about 5 feet in depth, filled up with what was evidently foreign or made earth, refuse, stones, and other substances. The sides were irregular, and the hole had not the appearance or shape of a grave. The men found in succession two other similar pits or holes, at distances from each other of about 40 feet, in all of which were Roman remains in considerable quantities. Those which were entire and the best portion of the fragments were preserved by Messrs. Tingey, and some of these are shewn in our Plates :

#### PLATE I.

No. 1 is apparently a horse's bit, or snaffle, of iron, much oxydized.

No. 2 is a small celt of bronze, with an ear for the better fastening of an handle.

Nos. 3 and 4 represent the side view and surface, respectively, of a perforated tile or brick. The four holes have the appearance of being made by the finger in the unbaked clay.

#### PLATE II.

No. 1 is a vase of Upchurch clay, height  $4\frac{3}{8}$  inches.

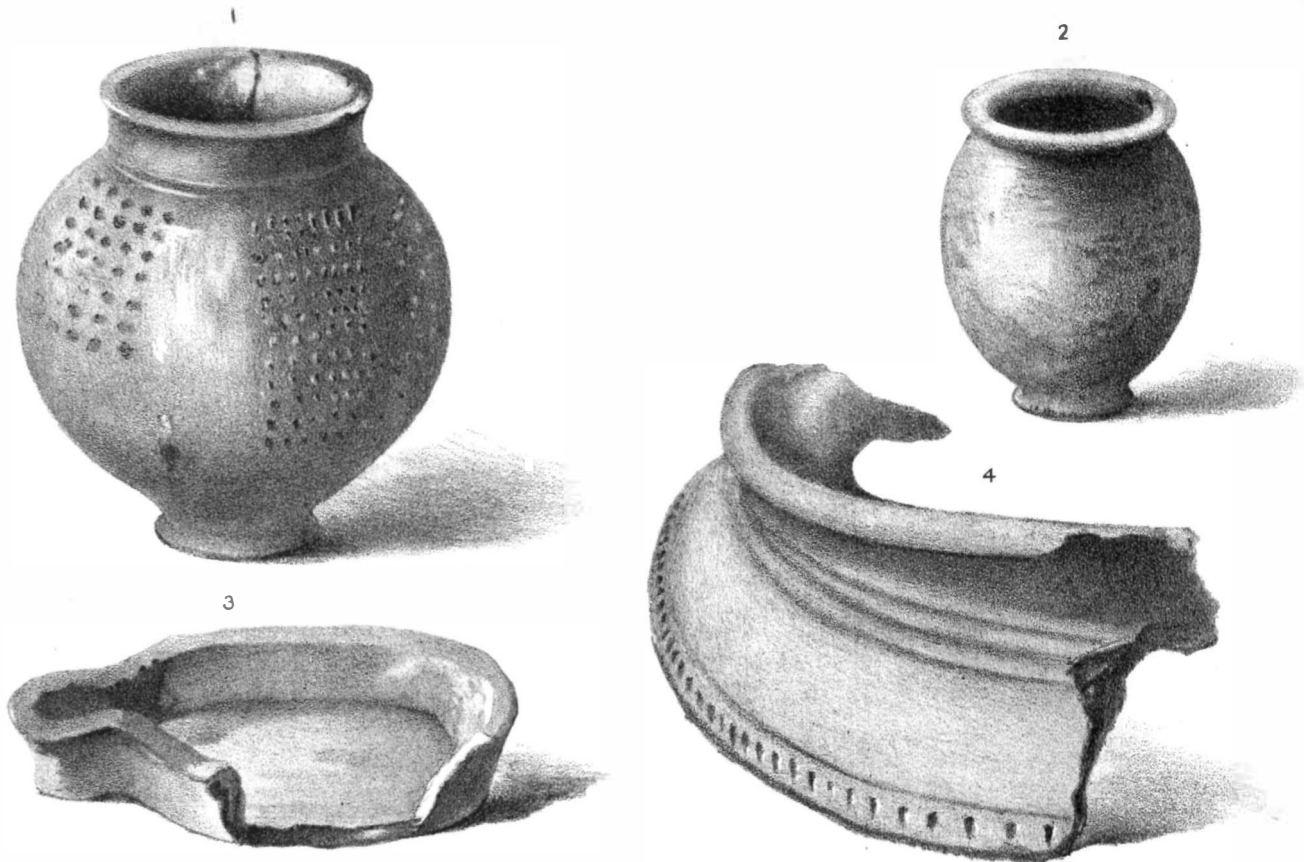
No. 2, a Roman vase of pale brown ware, height  $3\frac{1}{8}$  inches.

No. 3, the greater part of a lamp of pottery, or perhaps a vessel used for some culinary purpose, length from edge to exterior of lip 5 inches, width 4 inches, of pale brown ware, but the surface much calcined and burnt.

No. 4, fragment of a large vessel of red ware, with some slight ornamentation.

There were numerous other fragments and detached pieces of tile and ware, from some of which a nearly perfect and larger vase of Upchurch ware has been preserved; it is of ordinary shape, about 6 inches in width and 4 inches high. A curious small hollow ball of iron was also found, in the same hole as the bit, with which possibly it may have had some connection.

There is nothing particularly remarkable about these objects. Their chief interest lies in suggesting that this place has been the site of a Roman villa, for which these holes were refuse-pits; but something still more interesting may yet be discovered.



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1, VASE OF UPCHURCH WARE, 2, ROMAN VASE OF PALE BROWN WARE, 3, ROMAN LAMP OF POTTERY,  
4, FRAGMENT OF RED WARE, ALL DUG UP IN THE ORCHARD OF QUARRY HOUSE.

G.F. KELL, LITHO. & FURNIVAL ST. HOLBORN, E.C.