



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

Kent Archaeological Society is a registered charity number 223382

© 2017 Kent Archaeological Society



"INK-PRINT" SPRAGUE & CO. LONDON.

PLATE I. ROMAN STATUETTE OF BRONZE (5½ INCHES HIGH) FOUND AT FRINDSBURY.

ON ROMAN REMAINS FOUND AT FRINDSBURY.

BY A. A. ARNOLD.

IN the last volume of *Archæologia Cantiana* (Vol. XVII., pp. 189-192) a short account was given of Roman remains found near Quarry House, in the parish of Frindsbury, near Rochester. Although nothing very important has since been found, it may be well to place on record an account of the various objects which have come to light since the previous report. It was explained, in the former paper, that the excavations of chalk which are going on at the Frindsbury Quarry are made in sections. A strip of land, about twelve yards in width, is marked out along the whole length of the hill side, and when this has been excavated, the operation is repeated, and another similar strip is commenced. In excavating each strip the site of the Roman house, which lies about 140 feet from the old Quarry House, is cut through and exposed. Up to June 1889, about twenty-four yards in width, or two such strips, have been excavated since attention was first called to the spot, by Messrs. Tingey, the proprietors of the works.

One of the first and probably the most interesting of these discoveries was made in March 1888, at the bottom of a hole or pit about twelve feet deep. There, a bronze statuette of a "genius" or wingless Cupid was met with (Plate I.). It is $5\frac{1}{4}$ inches high, and was found almost entire, the left foot only being broken off. The right hand is elevated and extended. Inside the palm a ferruginous stain, or trace of iron, suggests that originally the hand clasped some object of that metal. The left hand is rather out of proportion to the rest of the limbs, but in other respects the figure is graceful and artistic. A statuette, almost in the same attitude, and of nearly the same size, was found at Colchester, about the year 1848, and was figured in the *Journal of the British Archæological Association*, vol. iv.

p. 60. That Cupid or Bacchus holds a bunch of grapes in his right hand, and probably our figure did likewise. Mr. Wm. Tingey has caused the statuette to be mounted on a suitable pedestal, and retains it in his possession.

In the same hole with this statuette there were found two coins of third brass; one of Probus, the other of Tetricus the younger. A few months later, a coin of Allectus was also discovered near the same spot. As these coins are all of the latter part of the third century, it may be inferred that this figure became buried about that period.

Among other Roman articles a considerable number of bone and ivory pins were met with. Some are rather elaborately carved; others are plain, and of the usual type; about thirty were perfect, the others being in pieces.

Underlying all the above remains, at the base of the pit before mentioned, was found a plough-share, or coulter, weighing about 9 lb. 10 oz. (Plate II., fig. 1). It was much oxydized, but differs little from the shape of those at present used.

A quantity of fragments of earthen ware, principally of the sort known as Upchurch ware, some smaller pieces of Samian, and many tiles were found; but on none that passed through my hands could I find any maker's stamp or name.

There was also the handle of an *amphora* of large size, of the common pale stone-colour. A year later, a piece or segment of the side of a large vessel of the same colour and texture was turned up, to which that handle had possibly belonged.

Besides these fragments, there were quantities of pieces of mortar, which was undoubtedly Roman, with tile in some cases still adhering to them. There were also found some much-worn horse-shoes, of a cumbrous form, and considerable weight. On looking at these shoes one is irresistibly reminded of the line in Virgil:

"Quadrupedemque citum ferrato calce fatigat."

The horn of a deer, cut so as to be used as a tool, and neatly perforated at the base for a string or cord for its suspension, was also found.

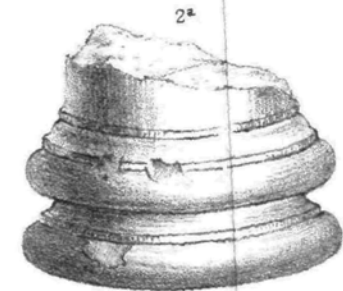
In April 1889, the excavators were again approaching the



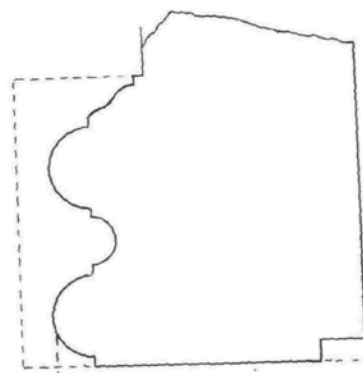
Fig. 1



6



2a



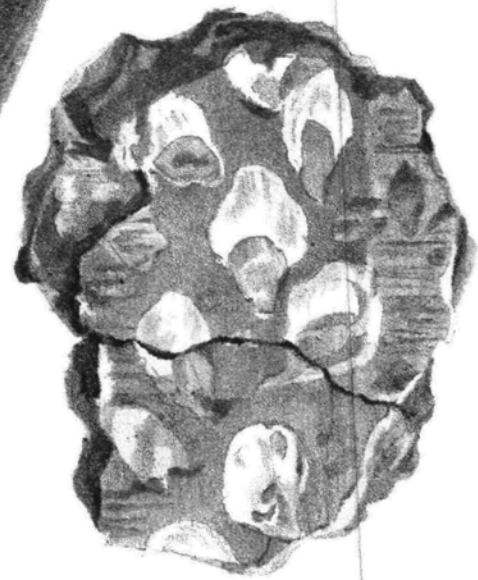
2b



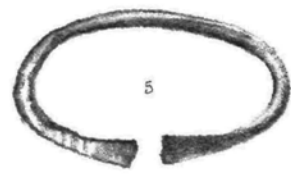
4



6



3



5



7

Roman relics found near Quarry House, Frindsbury

spot which had yielded these discoveries, and Messrs. Tingey kindly allowed every facility for watching the operations.

On the 29th of April, after several previous visits, I went to the spot, accompanied by the Rev. G. M. Livett and Mr. George Payne, F.S.A. In the course of their excavations the workmen disclosed what had evidently been the floor of a room; it was bedded with a two-inch layer of beaten chalk, covered with innumerable pieces of flue and other tiles, and also with pieces of plaster, some bearing traces of fresco, as well as with mortar and rubbish. Along the outer edge of the floor we found the remains of a wall, with its inner face quite perfect for a length of about five feet. The angle rested apparently upon a large block of chalk; and close to this block, built up with the rubble and rough stone of which the wall was composed, we found a section or fragment of a stone capital (Plate II., fig. 2a, 2b). We hoped to find more of the remains of the house, but the wall ended at this point, and it was pretty evident that we had reached, or rather passed, the extreme corner of the building.

We found no trace of anything like a tessellated pavement, not a single tessera. The only suggestion of anything like luxury or refinement were some small remains of coloured fresco. The tints on some of the pieces remained perfectly bright and fresh. The pattern on one fragment represented, upon a red background, detached white blossoms, of an acacia-tree probably (Plate II., fig. 3); other fragments were painted with broad bands of various colours.

The nature of the earth seems to shew that there was a shallow ditch, outside the Roman building, through which the refuse and sewage of the house passed. Numbers of pieces of pottery have been found; a considerable quantity of bone and ivory pins, one of which contrary to the general rule has no head, but is pointed at both ends; a bronze needle in excellent preservation; a bronze pin with squared head; the fragments of a pin, or ornament, of jet; pieces of Samian ware; fragments of bronze fibulae; and other pieces of metal; a bronze ring (Plate II., fig. 6) and a metal disc

192 ROMAN REMAINS FOUND AT FRINDSBURY.

or badge (fig. 7), pieces of handles; and other fragments, the purpose of which is not very clear.

On the 24th of May 1889, Mr. Tingey kindly brought to me two armillæ of bronze (Plate II., figs. 4, 5), one twisted, the other plain, and a coin which had been found on the previous day. The coin is a large brass of the Empress Faustina the younger. The armillæ are very similar to examples figured in the *Journal of the British Archaeological Association*, vol. ii., p. 101. A smaller one was found with other fragments in July following.

In the early part of 1889 a British coin was also found here. It was presented by Mr. Tingey to Dr. Evans, the learned President of the Society of Antiquaries, and of the Numismatic Society. He pronounced it to be a new type of coin, previously unknown to him. The inscription on it was "DVBNO"; on the obverse was a boar with ring ornaments; on the reverse a man on horseback. Dr. Evans believes it to be a coin struck under Dubnovellaunus, a British prince who was contemporary with the Roman Emperor Augustus.

Among other coins which were found here, during the year 1888-9, was one of Trajan and another of Domitian, both of large brass (the latter was in excellent preservation), and a third brass of Æmilianus, with the reverse "Apol(lini) Conservatori." A Quern, of conglomerate stone, was also dug up; it was perfect, but has since separated into fragments.

A vase of Upchurch ware, of rather elegant shape and curiously marked, was found, at a little distance from these Quarry House works at Frindsbury, in the autumn of 1888, at another part of the chalk pit, on, I believe, the property of the Rochester Bridge Wardens. Mr. Meadows, the Manager of the Beaver Cement Company, favoured me with a drawing of it (Plate II., fig. 6).

The digging at the quarry is still going on, and under Messrs. Tingey's obliging care for the preservation of every object of interest, we are quite sure to learn if any such should be found.