

THE ROMAN SETTLEMENT AT STANTON CHAIR (CHARE)
NEAR IXWORTH, SUFFOLK.

By G. MAYNARD and BASIL BROWN.

The following are a few brief notes on the Stanton Roman Settlement and results obtained by excavations carried out under the auspices of the Suffolk Institute of Archæology and the Ipswich Museum, towards which the Suffolk Institute of Archæology made a financial grant in 1936, which was entirely expended on labour.

The area occupied by Roman remains at Stanton Chair is extensive, and it appears probable that the settlement which flourished here in the Middle and Late Roman periods was one of the largest (if not the largest) in a considerable district which has many evidences of Romano-British habitation and potteries.

At Stanton, we appear to have had an important Roman Villa with surroundings made up of cottages and outbuildings situated on gently rising ground with good supply of water, a rivulet flows at the foot of the hill and a spring issues from this hill to the east of the villa.

There are indications that the settlement was near a road junction and may have been a large posting establishment.

In character this Roman settlement seems to have been civil and not military, although there is reason to suspect that measures were taken for its defence at some period of its history.

Fragments of Roman tiles and pottery were noticed by Mr. Basil Brown during the Autumn of 1933 in a field adjoining the Stanton Chare farm during explorations, for locating ancient sites in the district by surface finds, after which as much evidence as possible was obtained regarding building foundations encountered during agricultural operations from Mr. Peck, the tenant of the farm.

In the summer of 1935 trials were made by Mr. Brown, Mr. G. Kilner and Mr. J. B. Watson and painted wall plaster, etc., found.

In October, 1935, excavations were started under the supervision of Mr. G. Maynard, of the Ipswich Museum, and continued until wintry conditions caused their suspension.

During the short period available, two buildings, designated as Nos. 1 and 2, were located by trenching. These were subsequently covered down and work suspended until July, 1936.

In this month the excavations were re-opened and work proceeded at Building No. 2, which was successfully cleared, and found to be a bath-house occupying the northern extremity of one wing of a Villa.

This bath-house consists of remains of a Stokery, with stoke hole leading to the hypocaust beneath an apse-ended Caldarium and the Tepidarium, the rest of the bath-house being taken up by the Frigidarium, where a lead outfall pipe from the floor of the cold shower bath is still in situ.

Great care had to be exercised in clearing the pillars of the hypocaust, which had been subjected to repeated heating during use, while the final collapse of the building itself had broken through the floor supported by the pilæ and had filled the hypocaust vault with a chaotic mass of debris. The clearing was however very successfully accomplished.

The Latrine, a semi-detached square building adjoining the Frigidarium, was afterwards excavated, together with small adjacent buildings, possibly dressing rooms and subsidiary structures of the bath house system.

There is evidence that a connecting and probably roofed path or corridor linked these buildings and the bath house with Building No. 1, approximately 380 feet distant. Here quantities of beautifully coloured wall plaster were found and other indications of the residential character of this part of the building, together with indications of fire and of collapsed roof tiles lying in the position in which they fell.

A large part of this building and the connecting path have been cleared.

Building No. 1 at the southern end of the corridor appears to connect with a line of buildings, to the east, which has been determined by trial holes. It is hoped to excavate this east wing during the coming season. The various finds include complete specimens of roof tiles, both tegulæ and imbrices, much window glass, of thick, medium and thin varieties, with which the settlement seems to have been well supplied, and which may even have been manufactured there, for near the site occur ancient names like Glass Field and Glass Field Road.

Various pieces of bronze have been dug up, including portions of bracelets or torcs, tweezers, etc., while iron objects comprise nails in many varieties, knives, lynch pins, keys, etc.

Thirty-six coins have been found and suggest a long occupation. Among them are Trajan (found on site before excavation), Marcus Aurelius, Faustina Senior and Junior, Gallienus, Victorinus, Claudius Gothicus Constantine, Constantius Chlorus and Eugenius (393 A.D.).

The pottery found includes Samian, Castor and Painted wares and many products of the Roman pottery works at Wattisfield. Mr. Ivan Moore will report in detail on the ceramics of the site at a later date, when a detailed report with plans and illustrations will be drawn up on the completion of the excavations. Meanwhile thanks are due to the owner, Mrs. Mayes, and especially to Mr. W. Peck, the occupier of the site, for permission to carry on the work; also to the Suffolk Institute for financial assistance, to the Committee of the Ipswich Museum for their support and to the general public who visited the site in large numbers and contributed generously to the excavation fund. Valuable advice was received from Mr. R. A. Smith, of the British Museum, Mr. Hull, of the Colchester Museum, Mr. Reid Moir, President of the Ipswich Museum, and other visiting archaeologists. Personal assistance of great value was given by the Rev. Tyrrell Green, Mr. Kilner, of Ixworth, Wing Commander G. E. Livock, Captain C. L. Paul and parties of Rover Scouts from Ipswich and West Suffolk, and many other friends. Mr. S. G. Duthoit kindly lent a hut which was of great service and Mr. C. Pigot and Mr. J. B. Watson provided valuable motor transport facilities. Mr. G. Maynard acted as director and the work of excavation was in the charge of Mr. Basil Brown throughout. The field museum established on the site proved very attractive and it is proposed to extend this feature during the 1937 season's work.

OBITUARY.

MR. H. C. CASLEY.

In the death of Mr. H. C. Casley the Suffolk Institute of Archæology has lost a long and faithful supporter of its interests and welfare. His connection with the Institute extended for a period of half a century, for his name first appears as one of the elected members of the Council in the Institute's Report, 1886-1887 ; he held this position continuously until his death.

His sound legal knowledge of Municipal Government was of great value to the Institute in its connection with the ancient boroughs of Suffolk. He readily gave his services when members met to listen to the story of the old coast towns, Aldeburgh, Dunwich, Orford and Southwold.

Mr. Casley was, further, especially interested in the recorded History of Suffolk : anyone would be rightly proud to possess the volumes on his library shelves, which marked his devotion to the subject they represented.

To the Proceedings of our Institute, Mr. Casley added a most useful Article on Lowestoft China, of which he had a valuable collection. In this Article he gives a reliable account of the process of manufacturing the ware. His Article in our Proceedings (Vol. XIII, 183-185), "An Ipswich Worker on Elizabethan Plate," will be found to be most suggestive and informative by all who are interested in the History of Church Plate.

V.B.R.