

NOTES

Anglo-Saxon Thetford. Excavations, started in February, 1948 by the Ministry of Works, have opened up part of what are evidently the Western industrial outskirts of the Late Saxon town of Thetford.

The earliest feature disclosed was a shallow double ditch system filled in at an early date and built over.

Subsequently a line of three super-imposed well-metalled roads was laid down; the earliest of these roads, which overlap the ditch system, was in use in the late 9th century, as shown by a coin of St. Edmund. The remains of a number of huts or sheds have been found on both sides of the road but the outlines of the majority have been destroyed by later occupation and by the many pits which have been encountered. In some places as many as six occupation levels could be counted.

Considerable industrial activity was indicated by great quantities of ash, in some places four feet thick, by signs of iron and bronze working, by a vast amount of pottery and by the discovery of a large pottery kiln estimated to date from about A.D. 1000. This kiln which was dug through earlier occupation levels, is horse-shoe shaped with interior dimensions of 10 ft. long by 5 ft. wide, at its widest, by 4 ft. high. There were four large flue holes in the domed roof. The method of operation is not yet fully understood but it is evident that a number of repairs and enlargements were made during its life. Close to it the remains of two smaller kilns or perhaps drying-ovens, much damaged, have been found.

A large number of beautifully made potters' tools of bone have been found in various places.

The pottery falls into three main groups, all wheel turned, *viz.*: Group I: hard iron-grey gritty ware, Groups II/III: soft or semi-soft shelly ware, including a number of St. Neot's pattern bowls, Group IV: glazed ware, on close off-white or pink paste.

Group I pottery includes cooking pots, bowls and storage jars in an infinite variety of rim forms, all Rhenish in conception. Many bear rouletted decoration which, however is much more common at early levels and appears to have gone out of fashion later. The storage jars, some of which are very large, are ornamented with broad applied strips of 'pie-crust' decoration. Many are handled, some with eight handles having been found.

Groups II/III pottery is commoner at later levels. It is made in many fewer variations than Group I and is scarcely ever rouletted. This Group is not thought to be native to Thetford but to have its origin in Mid-Anglia around Bedford and St. Neots.

Group IV ware is glazed yellow, orange or brown. Some of the glaze is to the highest quality. Sherds have been found in close association with a coin of St. Edmund so that it appears to have been introduced in the late 9th or early 10th centuries. Brown glaze with 'bovril coloured' streaks has been found in early 11th century associations.

Small finds include a number of disc brooches or pin heads, some with early 9th century decoration, spurs, horse-shoes, and bridle fittings, a great many iron knives, some of the Viking 'Trelleborg' pattern, a Viking sword pommel with a tiny insertion of gold, a wide variety of pottery cresset lamps, a number of single sided, hog-backed combs and an interesting set of carpenters' tools. These last include hammer, adze, drift, rectangular file and a double sided saw blade with coarse and fine teeth, perhaps used for making combs.

The discovery of a coin of Cnut, bearing the mark of the Thetford mint, on the highest occupational level indicates that the period of occupation seems to have run from the early 8th century to the early 11th century. No evidence of occupation either in Pagan Saxon or Norman times has been found.

GROUP-CAPTAIN G. M. KNOCKER.

? *Roman Mill-stone at Frostenden.* On 4 July, 1949, when visiting the shōp at Frostenden, I happened to notice that the step to the road was a half mill-stone. It struck me that it bore a remarkable resemblance to those two Roman mill-stones that yet remain in the County at Herringfleet Priory and the wall of the erstwhile *parochial* church (not the present one) of Letheringham. Interest is added by the fact that this shop is just a quarter of a mile from the Domesday *portus maris*, discovered by me some years ago. (*Proc. Suff. Inst. Arch.*, vol. xviii (1924), p. 167).

CLAUDE MORLEY.

A Dunwich Relic. Until the present harbour was made by men of Southwold and Walberswick in 1596, Dunwich and Southwold were joined and a strip of the former still separates Walberswick from the sea. In this strip some few years ago, during a very low tide, some brickwork was exposed which several people said was part of a kiln. It was near where a vein of clay comes on to the beach. From it Mr. Ernest Cross rescued the mouth and handle of a flagon of which the illustration is a photograph. It is made of light brown pottery coated on the outside with a glazed green enamel. The mouth is $\frac{1}{4}$ in. thick at the top and is $3\frac{1}{2}$ ins. in diameter and $2\frac{1}{2}$ ins. in depth. There was an animal face on either side, but of one only parts of the eyes and two ears remain. It has been examined by experts at the British Museum who say it was made