

THE ROMAN SITE AT CATSGORE, SOMERTON

BY C. A. RALEGH RADFORD

(with contributions by H. S. L. Dewar, Daphne Greenshields and W. A. Seaby)

I.—PREFACE

In 1950, on the initiative of the Somerset Archaeological Society, a training school for excavators was organised under the auspices of Group XIII of the Council for British Archaeology. The arrangements were made by Mr. W. A. Seaby and the school was financed by fees from the students, donations and a grant from the Society. Twelve students were enrolled. The greater number spent two weeks on the site chosen at Catsgore, near Somerton, where a small Roman farmhouse was examined under the direction of the writer. Subsequently a short course was arranged in Taunton Museum for the study of the pottery, which was attended by eight of the students.

A Roman site was chosen for the training school as it was felt that remains of this date offered the best opportunity for the study of stratification in relation to the remains of structures, and, while producing a reasonable quantity of objects, to indicate the dating of the layers. The best thanks of all concerned are due to Mr. H. S. L. Dewar, who placed at the disposal of the school the site recently discovered at Catsgore, and to the Trustees of the Somerton Erleigh Estate, the owners of the land, and their tenant, Mr. G. White of Catsgore Farm.

The present report has been prepared by the writer with the assistance of several of the students. The section dealing with the relation of the farmhouse to neighbouring Roman sites is the work of Mr. Dewar. Reports on the coins and small objects are by Mr. Seaby, that on the coarse pottery by Miss D. Greenshields. The plan was prepared by Mr. Parrott of the staff of the County Architect for Somerset. The photographs were taken by Mr. Cookson of the Institute of Archaeology of the University of London, who was present during the latter half of the training school to instruct the students in the preparation of the site and the taking of photographs. To all these our best thanks are due, as also to Mr. J. H. H. Wilkes,

the County Architect, who arranged for the preparation of the plan, to the Director of the Institute of Archaeology, for permission to use the services of Mr. Cookson, and to Mr. and Mrs. Dewar for much help in organizing the work at Catsgore.

THE SITE

The Roman farmhouse lies in the parish of Somerton, two miles SSE. of the town and half a mile NE. of the modern farmhouse of Catsgore. The building was set on the south-west slope of Kingsdon Hill, immediately below Limepits Lane, which here marks the boundary between the parishes of Somerton and Kingsdon. This road, which is now overgrown and impassable, has long been reputed Roman and is so marked on the Ordnance Survey and on the map of Roman Britain. The field in which the remains lie is now pasture; it has not been cultivated within living memory, though adjacent fields in a similar situation are still under plough. Near the bottom of the field are the remains of one of the lime-kilns from which the lane takes its name.

The Roman buildings were re-discovered in the dry summer of 1948, when normal supplies of water dried up. Two large holes were dug alongside the hedge in order to provide for the needs of the stock. Water was found and one of the holes was subsequently filled in. Traces of walling, much dressed stone, and fragments of Roman pottery were found in the course of the work and were reported to Mr. Dewar, who in 1949 tested the site and established the existence of a Roman building. This test was designed as the preliminary to a more extensive excavation, but in the following year, when the question of a site for the training school arose, Mr. Dewar generously waived his prior claim.

No earlier record of this Roman site is known to exist, but the excavations proved that the building had been extensively explored in the nineteenth century. In this connection one inevitably thinks of Samuel Hasell, that indefatigable explorer of Roman villas in the neighbourhood of Somerton, but the site cannot be convincingly equated with any of those of which he has left a record. It can only be said that the work took place in or about the time of his activities in this field and that the explorers appear to have removed much of the finer Samian from the site.

C.A.R.R.

II.—THE SITE IN RELATION TO NEIGHBOURING ROMAN VILLAS (Fig. 1).

This unpretentious building ought not be considered *in vacuo*. We have to regard it as one of a large group of Roman houses of varying importance, at different heights from about 40 ft. to a little over 200 ft. above sea level, and occupied at varying times in the Roman period. Many problems have to be solved regarding this important central Somerset group of villas. Two questions particularly arise: how was it possible for all the villas to be supported by the amount of land available for husbandry unless some of them were being abandoned at a time when others were commencing operations? Secondly, what was the predisposing cause that seems to have sited such a large group of farms in this particular vicinity? Many years' work will be needed to produce the answers, but it is self-apparent that the great work done by Haverfield for the *Victoria County History of Somerset* (1906) has been largely out-dated by recent discoveries, and that the six-inch O.S. maps need much revision before they can be used as a reliable base by field-workers in central Somerset. These notes attempt to make things easier for students by collating the latest evidence, giving the approximate National Grid References, and in many cases making use of a local feature to assist those unfamiliar with the National Grid.

Note :—The serial numbers used have no connection with those used by Haverfield in the *Victoria County History*, or by Sir Richard Colt Hoare in his reproduction of Samuel Hasell's map of the area in *Pitney Pavement*, but where necessary their numbers are also given.

1. Street. Roman villa discovered in 1825 and sometimes referred to as at 'Butleigh Wootton' or 'Butleigh Bottom'. Colt Hoare¹ describes this as '... an extensive Villa ... in which ... were found coins of Claudius Gothicus and other Roman Emperors'. The site is correctly marked on O.S. 63 N.E., just below the 200 ft. contour. Mr. C. W. Phillips and the writer, in July 1949, noted fragments of Roman tiles, Ham Hill stone and dressed blue lias. If mosaics remain near the surface, it appears that any future deep ploughing will disturb them. The N.G.R. is about 31/48853465.

2 Compton Dundon. The well-known Littleton Villa was explored by Hasell in 1827, and excavations in 1951 have shown

1 Colt Hoare, *Pitney Pavement*, (1832), 10; cf. Haverfield in *V.C.H. Som.*, i, 322.

that the courtyard house dates from the fourth century and lies above another building of early second-century date, also a prehistoric settlement. The modest dwelling of c. 200 was enlarged and a bath block with a fine mosaic added in the early fourth century. The subsoil of calcareous and sandy tufa underlying the villa, somewhat resembles that at Low Ham, and the small Roman house at Catsgore. Its position is marked correctly on O.S. 63 S.E. ; N.G.R. 31/49153105.

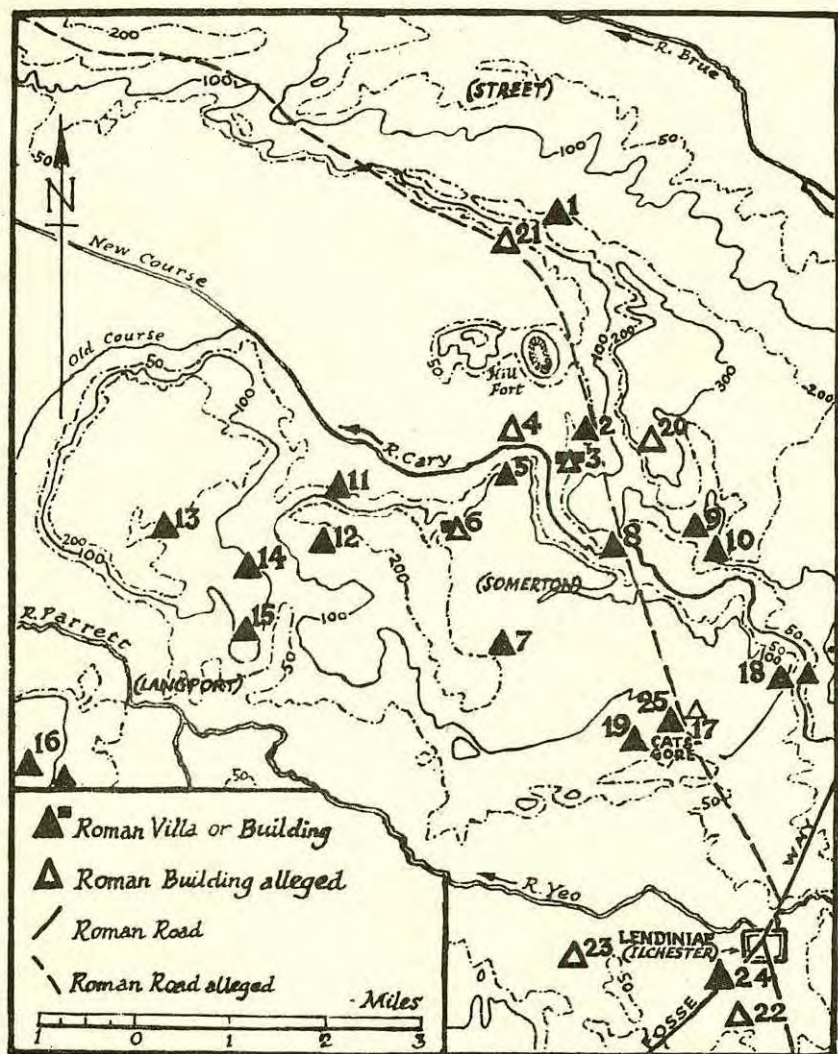
3. Compton Dundon. A group of villas is suggested on O.S. 63 S.E. in the orchard adjoining Littleton House, probably following Colt Hoare's account in the *Pitney Pavement*. He writes ' . . . in his (Hasell's) orchard, 8, 9 and 10 are situated, which are supposed to be three distinct villas, but from more recent discoveries he is inclined to think them part either of one large villa, or of a village, for he has found an area of about thirty acres adjoining 8, 9 and 10 entirely covered with buildings . . . producing foundations of walls of herring-bone structure, bricks, tiles, coins, fragments of mosaic pavements, etc.' Haverfield¹ remarks (as if it was his own idea) ' This would indicate a village rather than a villa.' He continues : ' But the " area of thirty acres " may be a serious exaggeration. It does not seem to be confirmed by any subsequent discoveries '. At present it is probably impracticable to discover in this particular instance how far Haverfield was right in pursuing his campaign against Hasell, owing to the modern range of buildings belonging to Bartlett's Farm, Lower Farm, Manor Farm and Littleton House, where Hasell lived. It may, however, be noted that Capt. and Mrs. Sanderson, present occupiers of Littleton House, have recovered a fairly extensive collection of pottery in their grounds, dating from the second to the fourth century, including a countersunk lug, and a coin of Gallienus (A.D. 253-268). The site lies just above the 50 ft. contour N.G.R. 31/49053045.

4. Somerton, Etsome Farm. This alleged villa site demands more attention than it has recently received. Haverfield calls it ' King's Sedgmoor ', probably with good reason. He states² ' Early in the nineteenth century Mr. S. Hasell found a building below the peat on King's Sedgmoor near Somerton, and in it an iron ring or fibula " cased in brass ", and a piece of bone (perhaps a handle) scored with the letters *Aprilis*, perhaps the name of the

1 *V.C.H.*, i, 323.

2 *Ibid.*, 325.

owner'. This bone, often illustrated, is well-known to archaeologists and has monopolised attention that might have been centred on the villa. That the villa was found below the peat is confirmed by Stradling, a personal friend of Hasell, in *A Description of the Priory of Chilton-super-Polden* (1839). The bone, now in Taunton Museum,



(Based on the Ordnance Survey by permission of the Controller)

Fig. 1. Sketch-map showing Roman Villas and other buildings within six miles of Somerton.

was once in Stradling's collection. The whole question has unfortunately been complicated by Haverfield's concluding sentence : ' It may however be that which the Ordnance Survey marks, low down on the marsh level, about 250 yds. NW. of Etsome Farm in the parish of Somerton '. Now Haverfield may never have visited this site on foot, or he would have noted the site selected by the Ordnance Survey is well above the marsh level, situated on a terrace of sand and gravel. Trial excavations carried out here by Mr. J. W. Searle and the writer in 1950 failed to reveal any sign of a building. A third brass of Constantine I was, however, picked up about 100 yds. to the NW. of the O.S. position. The writer feels convinced that the villa should be looked for below the peat as stated by Stradling, and that the O.S. marking is incorrect. The importance of a villa, which may have been overtaken by Dr. H. Godwin's marine transgression¹ in the coastal belt raising the water level inland, can hardly be overstressed.

5. Somerton, Bradley Hill. This villa, No. 16 on Hasell's map reproduced in *Pitney Pavement*, but not noticed by Hoare in the text, is referred to by Haverfield.² His suggestion that this villa might be the one marked by the O.S. Surveyors near Etsome Farm is, as W. A. Seaby and the writer found in 1950, groundless.³ Much of the building has been despoiled by stone robbing, and the very limited nature of the investigation does not allow any dating. Such of the herring-bone and other foundations as have been observed are, however, well built. The position is an exposed one, above the 100 ft. contour in the field north of the position once occupied by the now grubbed Great Piece Plantation, O.S. 63 S.W. ; N.G.R.31/48003035.

6. Somerton, Bancombe Hill or Bradley Hill. This villa, No. 15 on Hasell's map, but not mentioned in *Pitney Pavement*, has been dismissed, both by the O.S. and by Haverfield.⁴ Seaby and the writer in May, 1950 looked for this site, and applying O.G.S. Crawford's ' nettle-bed ' technique, at once located a small dump of building debris and a quantity of pottery, mostly of the second century. But so far, the foundations of the villa remain elusive. The position of the remains discovered is at N.G.R. 31/47332967.

1 *Journal of Ecology*, xxxi, No. 2, 219.

2 *V.C.H.*, i, 325.

3 *Proc. Som. Arch. Soc.*, xcv, ii, 174-5.

4 *V.C.H.*, i, 325.

There are reasonable grounds for conjecture that the missing villa lies either on the top of the hill, immediately above the pottery find-spot, or in the opposite field to the east of Bradley Hill Lane. Close to this area, Mr. J. W. Searle informs us of the find of loom weights, a weaving comb, and an *antoninianus* of Gordian III, during quarrying and road work.

7. Somerton, Melbury. This Roman building, perhaps a villa, was located in 1949,¹ after a search provoked by the pre-1886 find of a 'Marnian' type fibula. This is important as it may indicate that the villa lies on a prehistoric site, as does Littleton. Fourth-century pottery was recovered by the writer, sealed by a fall of heavy lias masonry, on a rough floor of slabs and plaster. The site is in a field called 'Nutt Close', between two right-angled turns in the Somerton-Long Sutton road, lying close to the small orchard where there is a well, formerly known as 'Roman Well', O.S. 73 N.W. Flue tiles were found 100 yds. north. Location of the site was facilitated by air observation made by J. H. Penrose, O.B.E. The N.G.R. is 31/47952750. A contiguous bench mark shows 139.45 ft. O.D.

8. Somerton. Villa on line of Charlton Mackrell Road. This is Haverfield's No. 38 in the *V.C.H.*, appearing on the Hasell-Colt Hoare map as No. 6, and described in the text of *Pitney Pavement* as at Hurcot (a Tithing of Somerton). On O.S. 63 S.E. the site is shown in the roadway, following Colt Hoare's text. It was excavated by Hasell (according to Haverfield), and coins of Antoninus, Victorinus, Postumus and Constantine as well as pottery were found. The siting is about 200 ft. from the right bank of the Cary, just below the 50 ft. contour; N.G.R. 31/49702910.

9. Somerton, Hurcot tithing. The site of this villa was examined by Hasell in 1827 according to Colt Hoare, *Pitney Pavement*. Haverfield states that, according to other records, Hasell found a good mosaic in a room 12 x 14 ft., as well as another. Tesserae and pottery are in Taunton Museum. Haverfield is sceptical of the site as marked on the O.S. 63 S.E., placing it 'west of the modern house and near to Dominic's well', also reporting foundations there of unknown date. N.G.R. 31/51152975.²

¹ *Somerset & Dorset Notes & Queries*, xxv (Dec. 1949), pt. 243, p. 238, No. 173.

² As this paper goes to press the writer is able to record that, with the help of A. D. Hallam, he has located the foundations of this villa, having a floor of *opus signinum*, some 100 yds. SE. of the position shown on the O.S. map and on the opposite side of the 'Ancient Road'.

10. Charlton Mackrell. The site of a Roman building is recorded by Colt Hoare in *Pitney Pavement*, as producing herring-bone walls, angular tiles, and coins of Claudius Gothicus, with others of the Lower Empire. No traces of mosaics were found, and the ruins seemed to have been previously disturbed. Haverfield remarks that nothing is now visible at or near the site, and he concludes¹ that the site marked on the six-inch O.S. seems borrowed from Hoare. During 1951 search was made for traces of the ruins by the writer, and by Dr. Hafemann of Mainz University, without success. O.S. 63 S.E. shows the position below the 100 ft. contour of Windmill (or Snap) Hill. Stone coffins and forty coins (Constantius II to Theodosius) are recorded in *V.C.H.* as from somewhere near the building. The N.G.R. may or may not be correct at 31/51352915.

11. Pitney. Little more need be added to what has been recorded about the better-known of the two Pitney Villas, Haverfield's No. 44 in *V.C.H.*, and 13 on the Hasell-Colt Hoare plan. But it should be noted, as pointed out elsewhere,² the sepulchral inscriptions were not found in the courtyard but about 100 yds. east of the villa, and that Hasell records coins of Vespasian and the Antonines. The site, N.G.R. 31/45103015 just below the 50 ft. contour, is correctly marked on O.S. 63 S.W.

12. Pitney—the other villa. This is Haverfield's No. 45, and No. 14 on the Hasell-Colt Hoare plan and presents difficulty as on O.S. 63 S.W. it is shown on the 200 ft. contour to the east of the Pitney-Stowey Hill road, whereas the plan marks it to the west. Certainly the O.S. position is quite bare of building debris, and we are indebted to Mr. L. Walrond of Glebe Farm nearby for pointing out the existence of a possible Roman hearth in the vicinity of Hasell's marking.³ N.G.R. 31/44852935 is the reputed correct position for this villa.

13. High Ham. This villa was excavated in 1861, but no proper account was ever published. Two mosaics, said by Haverfield⁴ to have been too badly drawn for reproduction, are in Taunton Museum. Coins include Allectus, Constantius I Chlorus and Constantine, while the roof material is of the usual tile with some

1 *V.C.H.*, i, 323.

2 *Proc. Som. Arch. Soc.*, xciv (1948-9), ii, 158.

3 *Arch. News Letter*, iii, No. 2, 34.

4 *V.C.H.*, i, 328.

Devon slate, probably from the Quantocks.¹ The site is marked on O.S. 62 S.E., between Wood Road and Mill Brook, above the 200 ft. contour, on what is now War Department land. N.G.R. would be 31/42202955, if the O.S. is correct, but the writer has been unable to detect any surface indications after ploughing, so that the position may be nearer the Mill Brook.

14. Low Ham. Of this important building, provisional accounts have been published recently,² it is therefore only necessary to note here that occupation commenced c. A.D. 200 and continued effectively until A.D. 367. From the evidence of a sherd of decorated Samian in possession of Mr. H. Cook of the Manor Farm, it may be that an earlier (wooden ?) house existed near the present Manor Farm buildings. It should be added that an unexplored stone foundation exists in the NW. corner of the field named 'Ashwells' where the villa lies. N.G.R. 31/43602885.

15. Huish Episcopi, Wearne. Tesserae, wall plaster and flue tiles have been reported from an area about a mile south of Low Ham.³ N.G.R. 31/42902775 approx.

16. Drayton, Curry Rivel. Haverfield records two houses about 900 yds. apart, close to the boundary of the two parishes.⁴ The first with coins of Claudius Gothicus, Carausius and Magnentius; the second with those of Trajan, Ant. Pius and many later. This latter site appears in the Muchelney chartulary as 'Stankestlas', the then boundary passing through the building, where the modern parish boundary is situated some 500 ft. from the find-spot of 1865, as shown on O.S. 72 N.W. N.G.R. is 31/40002475, and 31/3980-2565 respectively.

17. Kingsdon. Two villas are recorded on the Hasell-Colt Hoare map. No 3, shown on Kingsdon Hill, seems doubtful, as Haverfield states. Colt Hoare records them in *Pitney Pavement* as 'Some small remains . . . which have not been examined'. If they were dug, it must have been between 1832 and 1849, the year of Hasell's death. If, as one may imagine, the site of the small Catsgore house was wrongly placed on Kingsdon Hill (near the

1 Taunton Museum; *Proc. Som. Arch. Soc.*, xlii, ii, 52.

2 *Proc. Som. Arch. Soc.*, xcii, 25-8; *Som. & Dor. N. & Q.*, xxv, (March 1947), pt. 232, p. 1, No. 1; (Dec. 1947), pt. 235, p. 61, No. 40; (Dec. 1948), pt. 239, p. 141, No. 113.

3 *Journ. Rom. Studies*, xxxvii (1947), 173.

4 *V.C.H.*, i, 328-9. In the dry summer of 1921 wall foundations showed up by scorching in Drayton vicarage garden (N.G.R. 31/40272474), *Proc. Som. Arch. Soc.*, lxvii (1921), i, 78.

Reservoir) on the Hasell-Colt Hoare plan, then Catsgore, if Hasell was the digger, must have been explored between the above dates.

18. Kingsdon. This villa lies about half a mile north-east of Kingsdon, just above the 100 ft. contour on Halley Hill. This is No. 1 on the Hasell-Colt Hoare plan, and is described in the text of *Pitney Pavement* as a large villa which has not been opened . . . but the plough has brought up to the surface Roman brick, tiles, etc.' Haverfield has nothing to add to that record. The site as marked on O.S. 73 NE. is correct. Mr. A. W. Vivian-Neal informs the writer that the position was well known in the 'eighties and that Herbert Neal carried out a small excavation about the year 1885, and that he is understood to have collected many tesserae, as well as pottery including Samian sherds.¹ C. A. Raleigh Radford and W. A. Seaby visited the site with the writer in 1950, when portions of a rotary quern, together with Romano-British pottery and Devon slate were noted. The villa here offers obvious attractions for future excavation. N.G.R. 31/52552710. Haverfield, quoting Colt Hoare in *Pitney Pavement*, records a villa (No. 43 in *V.C.H.*) below the hill to the east of the river Cary and between it and the road to Charlton Mackrell, in the manor of Lyte's Cary, examined by Hasell and said to have included 'a hypocaust and other Roman remains'.

19. Somerton, Highbrooks-Catsgore.¹ Substantial foundations of lias masonry were found here in the autumn of 1951 by Mr. J. W. Searle and the writer, after ploughing had brought Roman flue tiles and a lias paving slab to the surface. The position is about 400 ft. east of the south-east corner of Rough Plantation, O.S. 73 N E., on slightly rising ground, N.G.R. 31/49972595. About 800 yds. WNW. lies the small Roman Farm at Catsgore, excavated in 1950.

20. Kingweston, Copley Wood. Colt Hoare records the sites of several small habitations irregularly interspersed, under No. 7 in *Pitney Pavement*. Haverfield under No. 34 in *V.C.H.*, writes of a stone building at a spot called Magotty Pagotty, remarking they (the ruins) might well be of fairly recent date. The O.S. 63 S.E. marks the site of a villa at Magotty Pagotty. Hasell's map, however, (from which the plan in *Pitney Pavement* was probably prepared) clearly shows the site to be about 500 yds. due west. In any case, as the ground is described by Colt Hoare as high and barren, perhaps we should not expect a better-class house here.

¹ See present vol. of *Proceedings*, 234.

21. Street, Ivy Thorn. A Roman villa is shown at the foot of the scarp between Middle Ivy Thorn Farm and Ivy Thorn Manor House, on a sketch map (undated, but watermark 1825) sent by Hasell to Colt Hoare. This document is among the Laver Papers in the collection of the Society at Taunton Castle. It is not clear why this building was omitted from Hasell's larger, well-drawn, map and from the plan in *Pitney Pavement*. It must have been unknown to Haverfield, and is not marked on the O.S. 63 N.W. The N.G.R. is approximately 31/47403435.

22. Sock Dennis. Mr. J. Stevens Cox has recorded¹ evidence of a probable Roman villa site at Sock Dennis in the immediate vicinity of the present farmhouse; O.S. 82 N.E., situated below the 50 ft. contour. N.G.R. 31/51652135.

23. Tintinhull, Bearley Farm. Suggestion has been made by a competent observer of a probable Roman villa here.² Bearley (following the O.S. spelling) is about two miles west of Ilchester between the Yeo and the Fosse Way. Pieces of a lead coffin in the Walter Collection are said to be from here. The N.G.R. for Bearley Farm is 31/49202235.

24. Ilchester Mead. Mr. J. Stevens Cox has reported probable villa foundations here, found during pipe-laying in 1950. Pottery, dating from the first to the fourth century, and a coin of Valentinian I (364-375) were recovered.³ The N.G.R. is 31/51252215.

25. Somerton, Catsgore. The subject of the present paper. N.G.R. 31/50752635. In the autumn of 1950, some 200 yds to the NNW., near the east corner of the field adjoining Spyall Plantation, the writer discovered lias blocks (disturbed by the plough) suggesting wall foundations, coarse pottery and a 'radiate' coin.

The villa marked by the O.S. at Kingweston, half mile east of the village, has been left out, as neither Hoare nor Haverfield⁴ recorded anything about it, although the latter thought it might be connected with coins from Barton St. David. The writer is aware of several alleged finds of tesserae at various places within a six-mile radius but where these are neither published, nor recorded at the Society's Museum, they have been disregarded.

H.S.L.D.

1 *Som. & Dor. N. & Q.*, xxv (June 1948), pt. 237, p. 109, No. 81.

2 *V.C.H.*, i, 367; *Proc. Som. Arch. Soc.*, xlii, ii, 52.

3 *Som. & Dor. N. & Q.*, xxvi (Dec. 1951), pt. 249, p. 54, No. 33.

4 *V.C.H.*, i, 322.

III.—THE EXCAVATIONS

Two long trenches were dug approximately at right angles to disclose the different periods of occupation on the site. They showed that there were two periods of masonry, the later walls in one place cutting across an earlier foundation. No stratified deposit was found associated with the later walls and their irregular layout did not suggest that further exploration would prove profitable. Attention was therefore concentrated on the earlier building, which was traced by means of a series of trenches. Its extensive destruction by ploughing and the simple character of the remains suggested that a complete clearance would be unnecessary. Towards the end of the work traces of an even older wooden building appeared beneath the earlier stone house. This was explored in the last two days, but lack of time and the presence of dumps overlying the central area prevented the recovery of a complete plan. Material from the filled-in wall trench and post-holes of this timber building incidentally provided valuable evidence for the date of the earlier stone house, which had been built to replace it. Three sections (fig. 2) are published to illustrate the relation between the various structures.

Section A-B. The trench was dug 3 ft. wide down the slope, starting at the hedge. A retaining wall, with two courses of squared stones, set in the natural clay subsoil was found 10 ft. from the hedge. The upper side was formed of rough stones pitched on edge. The wall crossed the trench at a slight angle with an extensive gravelled area sloping down in front of it. Two feet above the wall a gully cut 2 ft. 6 in. wide and 4 in. into the natural clay, was found crossing the trench. The redeposited clay filling this gully yielded a few scraps of pottery, all apparently of the first century, while the disturbed soil above contained second-century sherds. The soil overlying the gravelled spread below the wall contained a small amount of pottery, mainly of the fourth century.

Seven feet below the wall everything was cut through by a modern disturbance, which continued for 19 ft. along the line of the section. The disturbance was loosely filled with soil, the stones lying near the bottom, as though thrown in first. This filling was sharply differentiated from the fine plough soil underlying the turf, showing that the field had subsequently been cultivated. The disturbance contained much Roman coarse ware, but the finer pottery consisted of small chips of terra sigillata, suggesting that the larger pieces had

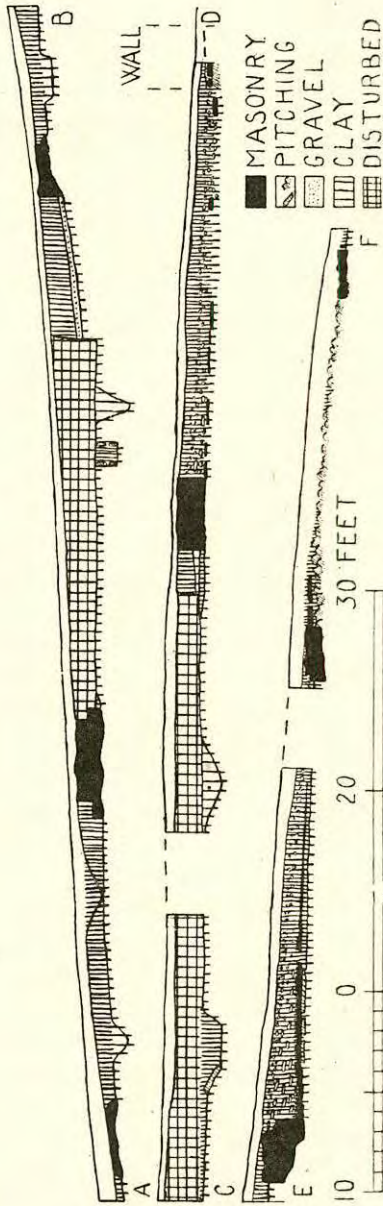


Fig. 2. Roman Site at Catgore : Sections (for Plans see figs. 3 and 4).

been removed by the excavators. A wall running along the other side of the trench showed that the disturbance was caused by nineteenth-century workers following its face. The disturbance had a flat bottom so that the upper end was cut 8 in. below the surface of the subsoil. When this bottom was cleaned a post-hole was discovered, 1 ft. 3 in. across and of the same depth, the sides being packed with small slabs of stone. The wall trench of the circular house which crosses the line of the section, was not discovered at this stage, as the filling of re-deposited clay was indistinguishable from the undisturbed subsoil on the floor of the trench.

The disturbance ended against the face of a wall which cut obliquely across the trench. It had a pitched foundation of lias slabs, with a slight offset at ground level, one or two roughly squared stones remained in position to mark the upper face, but that on the lower side had been destroyed. The late wall running down the further side of the trench, cut across this foundation, with an offset marking the ground level about 6 in. higher. Fifteen feet further down the trench a foundation was uncovered running parallel to the older wall above; the later wall had been entirely robbed at this point, but its foundation trench was located in a cross cut, 10 ft. further down the slope. The entire disappearance of this wall, while the earlier foundations survived, established the relative date of the two structures. The disturbed soil between the walls crossing the trench contained some Roman pottery, mostly of late first or second-century date. Four feet below the upper wall a shallow V-shaped ditch appears in the section. Its base reaches to the surface of the natural soil and the sides fade out on the underside of the fine humus. The line between the ditch-filling and the sides was marked by a slightly harder surface, on which small fragments of stone were lying, but there is little difference between the filling and the soil into which the ditch was cut. It is to be interpreted as the furrow between the ridges of a medieval strip field. It had been filled and the modern plough soil was continuous above the filling. Seven feet further down the trench a V-shaped ditch, later identified as the wall trench of the circular house, and filled with re-deposited clay, cuts into the subsoil. It contained a few scraps of early Roman pottery and its position within the two walls showed that it was earlier than the building to which they belong.

Section C-D. The trench was dug 4 ft. wide along the slope, approximately at right angles to the first. At the north end a wall,

of the same character as that mentioned at the top of section A-B, was found running at a slight angle to the line of the trench and parallel to that wall. It was joined by two cross walls, probably contemporary. No floor level was left and the whole area was disturbed. The pottery was mostly of the fourth century and two late coins came from the foundation trench. South of this wall a well 7 ft. 6 in. deep was found in the centre of the trench. It could not be stratigraphically related to the walls, and a second-century olla was found resting on the stone base. This well had been discovered by the excavators of the nineteenth century and their disturbance continued for many feet along the line of the section. Their digging extended little, if at all, below the line of the natural subsoil and they did not discover the V-shaped wall trench of the circular house which curved across our trench in two places. In both cases it was clay-filled and on the north side the outer slope was lined with stone slabs. These slabs had partly collapsed and the filling in this section was much looser and possibly contaminated during the later occupation of the site. To the south of the disturbance a stone wall was found crossing the section, with the trench of a robbed foundation wall running parallel to it 20 ft. further on. The wall was 3 ft. 6 in. wide, built of squared slabs of lias roughly coursed. It was set into the old subsoil. Outside the wall, and lying on the old surface soil, a layer of sticky yellowish clay was banked to a height of 6 in. against the wall, gradually tailing off for a distance of 2 ft. 6 in. where the strata were cut through by the modern disturbance. This layer, which contained much organic matter, is to be explained as the rotted thatch fallen from the roof when the building fell into decay. The soil under the thatch contained much pottery; in the lower level the wares were of the first and early second century with Antonine fragments near the surface. The soil above the thatch contained pottery of the second century with some admixture of later wares. The space between the wall and the robbed wall at the far end of the trench had been paved with flat slabs, set on the natural clay, the surface of which had probably been pared down. No pottery came from beneath these slabs. Above was a thin layer of dark occupation soil, covered by a layer of lighter soil with much broken stone. The spread of this stone, banked up against the wall and with larger fragments below and smaller pieces above, is clearly the result of the gradual destruction and breakup of the wall by ploughing.

Some second-century pottery was found in the occupation layer and a few pieces in the soil above.

Section E-F. This represents the further face of the strip cleared along the north-west side of the building in section C-D ; it is staggered and irregular to avoid modern disturbances. The upper wall can be seen standing to a height of nearly 2 ft. In the centre is a cross wall of which a part only of the lowest course and the foundation is preserved. Of the lower wall, the foundation alone survives. The paving of most of the upper room was found in position, with a few slabs missing ; some slabs remained in position at the upper end of the room below the cross wall. The section shows that the builders kept their floor level by cutting into the slope at the upper end and raising the lower part with slabs of undressed lias pitched into the soil and brought to a level surface for the bedding of the pavement. The strata above this pavement correspond in every way with those in section C-D and do not require further description.

The evidence of these and other sections, that need not be recorded in detail, showed a succession of three occupations. The first represented by the deep V-shaped trench and the post-hole in section A-B, belonged to a circular wooden house. The second was represented by the earlier walls. The building was found to consist of two rectangular blocks, forming an L-shaped farmhouse. The character of the latest occupation could not be determined, but its late Roman date is certain.

THE CIRCULAR WOODEN HOUSE

The stone-lined post-hole at the bottom of the first trench (section A-B) and a second of similar form, six feet to the south-east, were found at an early stage. Both lay below the area disturbed in the nineteenth century and though they yielded fragments of early pottery, there was not sufficient to establish their date. The wall trench could not be recognised on the surface of the subsoil, so nearly did the re-deposited clay filling it resemble the undisturbed stratum on either side. It was first recognised by the occurrence of pieces of pottery at a depth of up to 1 ft. below the surface of the subsoil, and then defined in the sections. Once the existence of this wall trench and its circular plan were established, it was not difficult to trace the rest of the circuit. It was picked up passing under the wall at the corner of north-west block (Pl. I, 1) and at

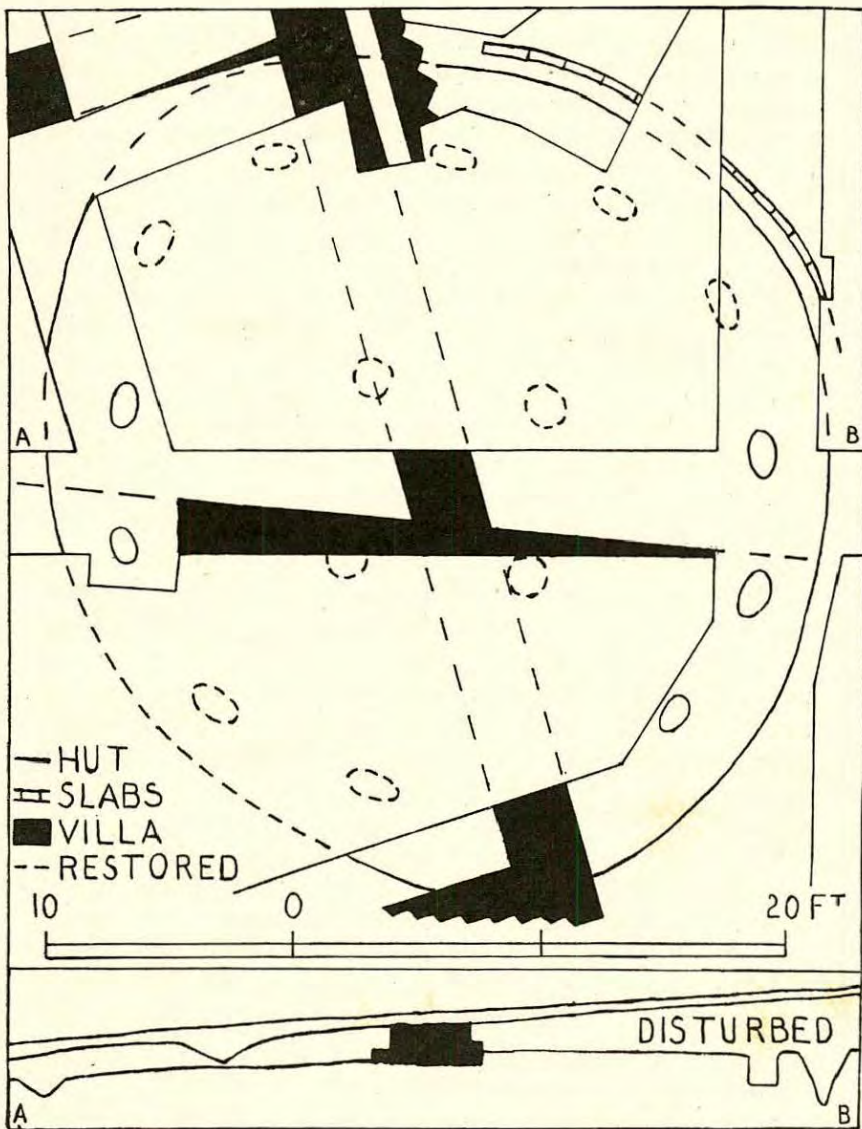


Fig. 3. Catsgore. Plan of Wooden House (for Section see fig. 2).

other points within this building, always with a rammed filling of the natural clay. Only in the area to the north between the two blocks of the farm house was the filling less compact, the clay mixed with some soil. Three further post-holes, none of them stone-lined, were picked up forming part, with the other two, of a ring concentric with and 3 ft. within the wall trench. The central area, already covered with dumps and largely lying under later walls, could not be uncovered for lack of time.

The plan as recovered (fig. 3) showed a circular building with an overall diameter of 33 ft., delimited by a wall trench 1 ft. 9 in. wide. On the upper side it had been cut 2 ft. 3 in. into the subsoil, the depth gradually decreasing as the bottom of the trench was level. The five holes located were three on the east, two stone-packed, and two on the west side (Pl. I, 2). In each case the space between the holes was 6 ft., and there would have been thirteen in all if the same distance had been maintained. These holes were oval, about 2 ft. by 1 ft., and probably held coupled posts, each about 9 in. in diameter, the two being spaced along the line of the ring. No trace of the floor level was found, but it may be assumed that it lay as high as the old ground level in the centre of the house and had been destroyed by later disturbance of the soil. It was presumably level, involving cutting down of the surface on the upper side and terracing up the lower part. This is confirmed by the substantial stone slabs found lining the outer slope of the wall trench on the upper side of the house. These must have been designed to relieve the pressure of earth on the base of the wall, which was probably of a light material.¹

This circular house is the earliest structure found on the site and must date from the beginning of the occupation. Pottery found in the wall trench and the post-holes indicates the period during which it was occupied. No trace of wood was found in the post-holes or the wall trench, so we may assume that the timbers were withdrawn when the later north-west block was built on the site, and that material sealed beneath the floors of this house also dates the destruction of the timber building.

1 It was at first thought that these slabs formed the lining of the base of the wall below ground level, a practice for which ethnographical parallels could be quoted (e.g. Shabik'esche Village, New Mexico; Smithsonian Institution, *Bureau of American Ethnology, Bulletin* 92), but the sloping position of the undisturbed stones and their occurrence on the other side of the trench, beyond the line of the wall, preclude this explanation.



1. Roman Site at Catsgore, Somerton : NE. corner of NW. Block: (A) Passage between buildings. (B) Wall footing showing 'pilaster'. (C) V-trench of Circular House passing beneath building. (D) Subsoil.



2. V-trench of Circular House and easternmost of two large oval post-holes showing part of packing and lining of lias blocks.

The more important pieces of pottery found in the wall trench are illustrated. In addition to the two pieces of decorated sigillata of Flavian and Trajanic date (fig. 6, Nos. 1 and 2), there is another fragment of form 37 with panelled decoration, possibly from the same bowl. The plain ware consists of one fragment each of forms 18, 18/31, 27 and 33, none necessarily of the second century. The coarse ware, besides the pieces illustrated, includes fine red bowls (cf. fig. 7, Nos. 14 and 15), a fragment of a grey bowl imitating form 29 (cf. fig. 7, No. 12), a jar with a countersunk handle and a number of cooking pots and other vessels, all of which might be of the first century. There were also pieces of corn-drying ovens of the type found on native sites of the Iron Age.¹ The finds as a whole indicate an occupation of some forty years from *c.* 70 to *c.* 110, a dating confirmed by the other early objects found unstratified on the site.

Although the important central area could not be explored, the type of the house is certain. The position of the ring of posts, only 3ft. from the wall trench, shows that this cannot have formed the main bearing for the rods forming the conical roof; there must have been a further support in the centre. This central structure would almost certainly have been square, probably about 6 ft. square as suggested in the plan (fig. 3). This type of house is known in the S.W. Iron Age. Apart from the more elaborate, classic example at Little Woodbury,² there is an almost exact parallel at Castle Dore, which is attributed to the end of the first century B.C.³ The central structure would be covered with a gabled roof, the ends of the gable open to admit light and air. The main roof was circular, probably of thatch or turf, and the stronger, stone-packed pair of posts on the east side indicate the bearers for a gabled roof covering the porch. The wall was a light structure probably of wattle plastered with clay and had no structural function.

THE FARM HOUSE

The site was next used for an L-shaped farmhouse. This consisted of two blocks. The first lay to the south-east and measured 46 by 24 ft., the second was 40 by 22 ft., separated from the first by a passage 4 ft. wide.

1 *Proc. Prehistoric Soc.*, vi, 53 and xv, 156.

2 *Ibid.*, vi, 78; *Antiquity*, xxv, 29.

3 *Journ. Royal Institution Cornwall*, N.S., i, appendix, 55.

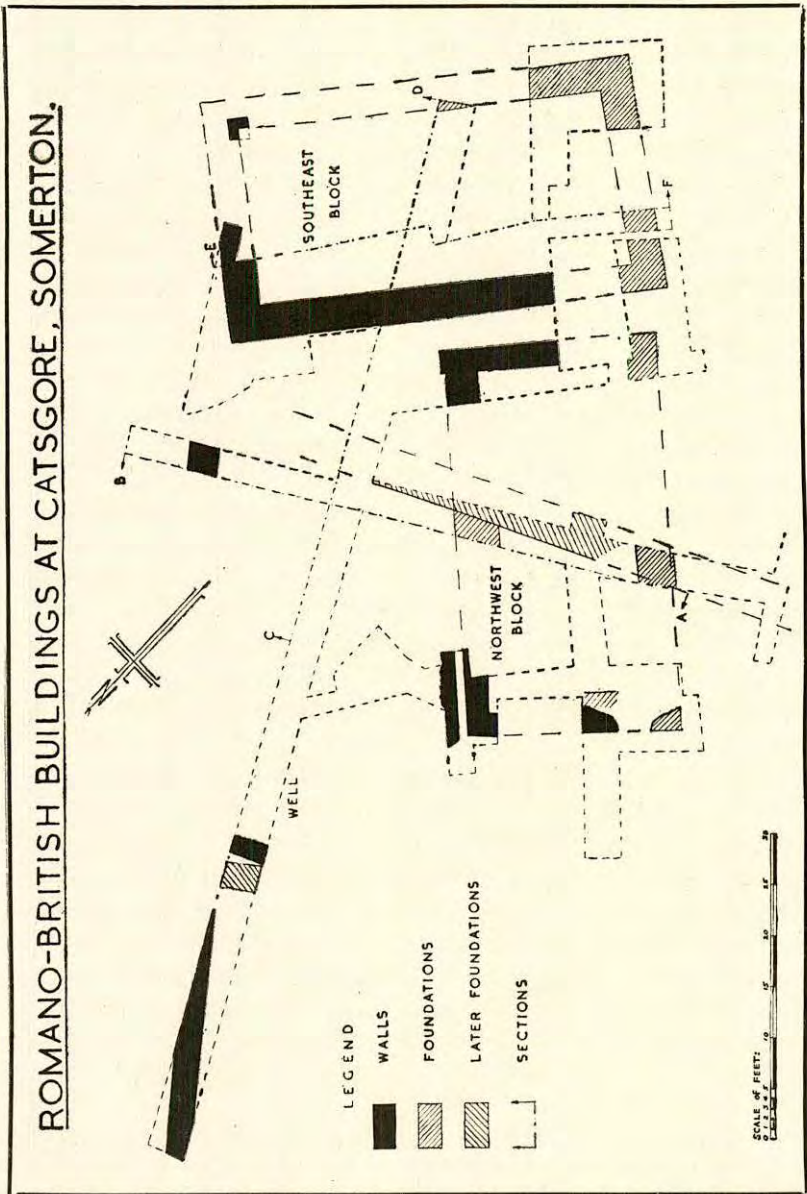


Fig. 4. General Plan, showing limit of excavation (for Sections see fig. 2).

The walls of the south-east block were 3 ft. 6 in. wide ; at the upper end they stood to a height of nearly 2 ft. above the floor level, but this gradually diminished, so that in the lower part only

the foundations remained. About one-third of the building was cleared to floor level, including the whole of the north-west side. The sections show that there can never have been a large quantity of stone. The medieval ridge and furrow (p. 54) ran approximately along the line of section C-D and the spread of stone in that section came largely from the side walls. There was no sign of stone-robbing and the upper wall was probably standing to its original height. The masonry was therefore only a sill, on which the beams of a half-timbered structure were bedded. The fallen remains piled against the wall-face in section C-D show that the roof was thatched. The floor was paved with irregular flat slabs of local lias. In the upper part these were bedded directly on the clay subsoil ; lower down the slope the level was made up with a layer of roughly pitched stones, which remained even where the slabs had been destroyed. Traces of a partition were found 22 ft. from the upper end. This appears in the section (section E-F), but was barely distinguishable on the ground and is not marked on the general plan.

The north-west block was even more ruined, the plough having everywhere penetrated below the floor level. A few stones of the upper wall remained ; elsewhere only the roughly pitched foundation of the walls and the pitching beneath the pavement could be recovered.

The masonry of the walls is of local lias, laid in courses of varying width (Pl. II, 2). The exposed face of each stone is squared, the other side being left irregular and tailed back into the core of the wall, which is made up with smaller undressed fragments. The stones are laid in a good cream-coloured mortar that has lost little of its tensile properties.

There is a slight projection on the face of the inner corner of the north-west block, adjoining the passage. This should probably be explained as a pilaster flanking the doorway from the house into the partly-enclosed area forming a small courtyard. The courtyard slopes gradually upwards. In the centre, a few feet in front of the house, were scraps of mortar lying on the old ground level and marking the mixing floor used at the time of its construction. On the north-east side adjoining the north corner of the south-east block, a rise in the ground formed a slight shelf, on which were the bases of three cooking pots, of the second century (Pl. II, 1). The ground here shows traces of fire and there is no doubt that the

raised shelf was deliberately formed by cutting away the subsoil in front in order to form an open-air cooking place. This may have been covered by a lean-to roof, but the area where the post-hole would have occurred had been disturbed in the nineteenth century. There were traces of a stone-built drain outside the north corner of the north-west block but this was not picked up in the main section (A-B) as the ground had there been disturbed.

Beyond the courtyard, 50 ft. to the north, a stone-lined well was discovered in the long north and south trench. The shaft was 3 ft. in diameter with the lining carefully constructed of lias slabs in 3-in. courses. The well was sunk through one of the layers of clay which occur in this formation. At 7 ft. 3 in. from the modern surface it reached the top of one of the beds of stone on which the masonry was based. Water still trickled along the sloping surface of the stone and rose to a depth of some 5 ft. in the shaft of the well, when the soft, almost liquid, mud had been removed. There was a large stone built into one side, 2 ft. 6 in. from the surface, forming a chord across the shaft and serving as a rest for a bucket (Pl. III,2). The well contained an almost complete pot of the second century on the bottom (fig. 7, No. 19) and other sherds of this date in the lowest filling. Late Roman pottery occurred at a rather higher level, and 4 ft. from the surface were two large medieval sherds. Pressed down into the mud, reaching below the level of the medieval sherds was a stick nearly four feet long and of no great age. The well must have been dug by the dwellers in the Roman farm, probably during the occupation of the second-century house. It was open during the late Roman occupation and must have been discovered and partly cleared during the Middle Ages and again by the nineteenth-century excavators. Their efforts to establish its depth by probing resulted in the loss of a stick cut from the hedgerow.

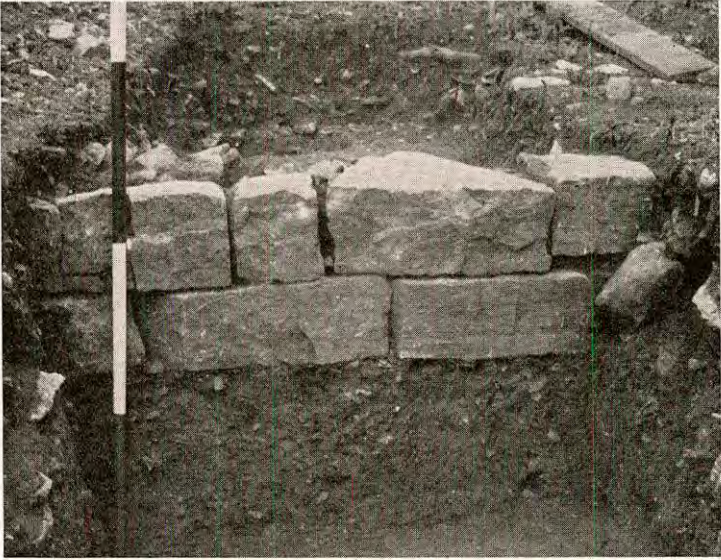
The deposit of pottery lying in the old surface soil beside the wall of the south-east block was very similar to that associated with the circular house. The sealed part under the paving stones of the passage produced a piece of decorated sigillata, probably Trajanic (fig. 6, No. 3), parts of the grey ware bowls imitating forms 29 and 30 (fig. 7, Nos. 11 and 12), and the bowl (fig. 7, No. 13). The deposit under this paving of the north-west block produced a late first-century glass beaker (p. 67, No. 5). The unsealed part yielded two pieces of decorated sigillata, one probably Trajanic, the other a scrap, possibly as late as *c.* 130-50 (fig. 6, Nos. 4 and 5),



1. Roman Site at Catsgore, Somerton: cooking place outside N. corner of South-east Block with pot *in situ*.



2. Interior of South-east Block, showing remains of rough lias pavement.



1. Roman Site at Catsgore, Somerton : Late wall across NE. end of Section A-B.



2. Well, with ' bucket-rest ', discovered in long N-S. trench.

a piece of 18/31, a Flavian jug, parts of several bowls of fine red ware, including fig. 7, Nos. 14 and 15, parts of several bowls imitating form 29 and other early types. The pottery lying on the floor of the entrance passage and of the south-east block under the fallen stones and that scattered about the court-yard was predominantly of the second century with a few later fragments. An iron brooch (fig. 5D) was found on the floor of the passage. The pieces from the area of the kitchen (fig. 7, Nos. 16-8) formed part of a deposit lying over and beside the bases of the cooking pots and clearly accumulated after the disuse of the cooking place. It was mainly of the second century with two or three later pieces.

THE LATE OCCUPATION

A number of walls and foundations were discovered at a high level, principally on the north of the site. One of these ran along the line of the main east and west trench, crossing the foundation of the north-west block ; its position showed that the earlier wall was then in ruins. Two courses of masonry, each of regularly cut squared stones ran across the top of the same trench (section A-B) (Pl. III, 1). They formed a revetment with a rough upper side and there was a gravel spread on the sloping surface below. The other walls lying further to the north-west were badly ruined and the associated levels had been destroyed.

These walls were uncovered in the exploratory trenches. The high level, the lack of associated floors and the ruined condition of the walls did not suggest that a prolonged investigation would be fruitful, nor did the parts found suggest a coherent plan. Three late Roman coins, a slightly worn antoninianus of Quintillus, an 'Urbs Roma' and a commemorative issue struck after the death of Constantine the Great were discovered in the foundation trenches and a quantity of late pottery including one piece of rosette-stamped ware lay alongside the walls. It is possible that this occupation is connected with the Roman site, which Mr. Dewar has located in a field some 200 yds. to the north (p. 51, No. 25).

C.A.R.R.

IV.—THE COINS

The ten coins from the site call for a short comment only. For the most part they were found in disturbed soil or beside the later walls at depths where intrusion was possible. They fall into three groups :—

- (a) No. 1. Late second century *sestertius*.
- (b) Nos. 2-4. *Antoniniani*, post mid-third century.
- (c) Nos. 5-10. Six small bronze coins of the house of Constantine, probably all struck between 330 and 345.

The *sestertius* of Lucius Verus is worn to the extent of saying that it must have been dropped on the site some years after the date of issue. The *antoniniani* are all close in date and Nos. 3 and 4 in a condition to suggest deposition within a year or so of minting, *c.*270.

Coins of group (c) are most likely to have circulated in the last years of Constantine the Great and during the early years of the division of the Empire, after 337. None of the later (and larger) *folles* class of Constantius was found, nor coins of the house of Valentinian, all of which are so common in the mid and late fourth century that the presence of some would surely have been detected if the site had remained occupied up to that period.

The pitted and worn *antoninianus* of Gallienus (No. 2), found lying on the pavement, was the only coin associated with the farmhouse, but the overlying strata were shallow and disturbed at this point and it may well be intrusive. Two of the late coins (Nos. 5 and 7) and the *antoninianus* of Quintillus (No. 4) were found in the foundation trenches of walls belonging to the late occupation. Although these levels were not immune from disturbance, the evidence suggests that the late walls were built *c.*340, a date which is borne out by the pottery and should probably be accepted. The occurrence of the coin of Constantius II of about the same date in debris fallen from one of these walls suggests a short occupation; this is borne out both by the sudden cessation of the series and the character of the remains.

1. *Lucius Verus* (161-9). *Sestertius* (A.D.166). *Obv.* [L VERVS] AVG ARM PARTH MAX ; laureate head r. *Rev.* [TR POT VI IMP] IIII CO[S II] S C ; Victory half-draped to front, holding palm and fixing to palm tree a shield inscribed [VIC PAR]. Cohen, 206 ; M. & S., 1456. Surface.

2. *Gallienus* (252-70). *Antoninianus*. *Obv.* . . .]IENV[S[. . . (?); radiate bust r. *Rev.* Figure standing 1, holding spear, also kneeling figure. On pavement of farmhouse, in passage between the two blocks.

3. *Victorinus* (265-70). *Antoninianus*. *Obv.* IMP C VICTOR-
INVS P F AVG ; radiate and draped bust r. *Rev.* SALVS AVG ;
Salus l., feeding serpent rising from altar. Southern mint. Cohen,
118 ; M. & S., 71. Disturbed soil. This patinated coin is almost
in mint condition, showing an untrimmed minting tag on edge.

4. *Quintillus* (270). *Antoninianus*. *Obv.* IMP C M AVR CL
QVINTILLVS AVG ; radiate and draped bust r. *Rev.* LAETITIA
AVG ; Joy standing l, holding wreath and anchor on globe.
Mint : | XII Rome. Cohen, 39. M. & S., 22. In foundation
trench of late wall at north end of site. Slightly worn.

5. *Constantine I* (306-37). *Æ*, 15 mm. Commemorative issue.
struck c.330-7. *Obv.* [VRBS ROMA] ; helmeted and cuirassed
bust of Roma l. *Rev.* No legend ; she-wolf suckling Romulus
and Remus. Mint : S CONST (Arles). Cohen, 17. In founda-
tion trench of late wall, 1 ft. 8 in. down.

6. *Æ*, 12.5 mm., on very thin module. Commemorative issue
as No. 5. Mint : illegible. Disturbed soil.

7. *Æ*, 14 mm. Commemorative issue, struck after death of
Constantine in 337. *Obv.* [DV CO] Nstant[INVS PT AVGG] ;
veiled bust r. *Rev.* No legend ; emperor in quadriga r. Cohen,
760. In disturbed soil by lower end of late wall in Section A-B.

8. *Constantius II* (as *Caesar*, 323-37.) *Æ*, 16 mm. *Obv.* FL
IVL CONSTANTIVS NOB C ; laureate bust r. *Rev.* GLORIA
EXERCITVS ; two standards between two soldiers, each with
spear and shield. Mint : illegible. Cohen, 122. Surface.

9. (as *Augustus*, c. 337-40). *Æ*, 14.5 mm. *Obv.* CONSTANT
[IVS AVG] ; laureate bust r. *Rev.* GLORIA EXERCITVS ;
standard between two soldiers. Mint : TR P (Trier). Cohen, 114.
Debris from late wall.

10. *Constantius II* (?) *Æ*, 18 mm. *Obv.* . . .]IVS[. . . (?) ;
laureate bust r. *Rev.* Inscription illegible ; figure-standing. Mint :
illegible. Surface.

W.A.S.

V.—SMALL FINDS (Fig. 5).

As mentioned elsewhere, the finds from the site were meagre,
and it is probable that a number of objects had already been removed
by previous investigators in the last century. It is noticeable, too,
that amongst the objects recovered is nothing displaying cultural

worth, the emphasis being rather on utility and a restricted pocket. This amply testifies to the humble nature of the farmstead, with its simply paved lias floors thatched roofs and several domestic pots showing repairs by riveting.

Clay and Slag

1. A few fragments of burnt clay or daub, in some cases showing marks of wattle, were picked up during the excavations but were mostly unstratified. Some belong to corn-drying ovens of native type (see p. 59, footnote 1).

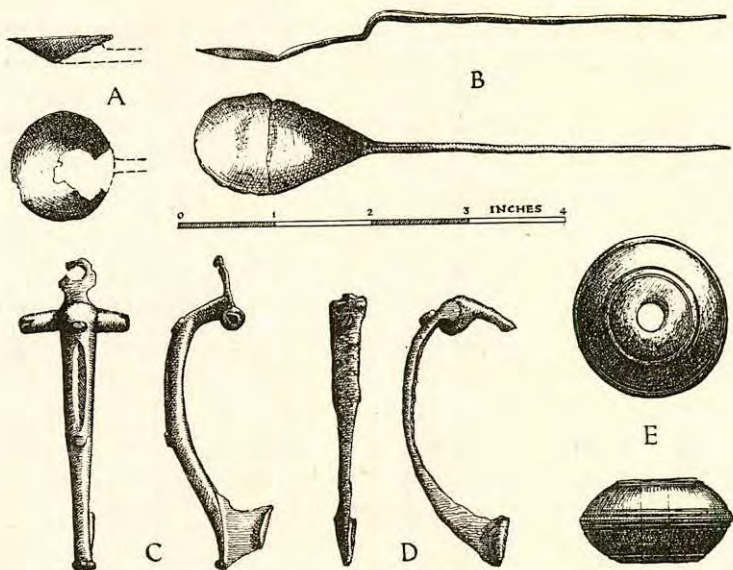


Fig. 5. Small Objects from Catsgore, Somerton ($\frac{1}{2}$).

2. Two pieces of slag, with baked red clay adhering, came from the north-western side of the site at depths of 10 in. and 22 in. The clay may have formed part of the original crucibles. An analysis, kindly made by the County Analyst at Taunton, shows this slag to contain a high percentage of silica, some iron oxide and aluminium oxide, with lesser amounts of magnesium oxide, carbon, alkali metals and phosphates, but no copper, tin, lead, manganese or borates, and only a trace of zinc in one sample.

3. One quarter of what appears to be a fusiform sling-bullet but flattened at end; dark grey clay burnt light red on outer surface.

Original length : $1\frac{1}{2}$ in. by diam. : $\frac{7}{8}$ in. ; present length : $\frac{7}{8}$ in.
 Found in west sector of wall trench of circular house. Type as
Glastonbury Lake Village, ii, 562, Pl. XC, Nos. 1-23.

4. Sling bullet, roughly ovoid but irregular in shape. L : $1\frac{1}{4}$ in. ;
 diam. : $\frac{5}{8}$ in. Found in disturbed soil within area of circular house.
 Fusiform baked clay sling bullets have been frequently found at
 Ham Hill, and at both Glastonbury and Meare Lake Villages.

Glass

5. Three fragments which unite to form a portion from the side
 of a small clear glass beaker, out-curving near rim and incurving
 towards foot. It has wheel-cut horizontal grooves, three on upper
 part of wall and two near the incurving of the base. External
 diameter of vessel between bands of grooves : $2\frac{3}{4}$ in. approx. ;
 th. of wall : $\frac{1}{32}$ in. Found below pavement on east side of north-west
 block. Late first century. Cf. *Wroxeter III*, Pl. XXIII, fig. 1, p. 34,
 assigned to late first and early second centuries ; also *Richborough IV*
 Pl. LXIX, Nos. 376, 378, dated late first century.

6. Chip of glass, bluish tinge, surfaces and edges slightly etched.
 Th. : $\frac{1}{16}$ in. Found in upper disturbed soil. Probably Roman.

Bronze

7. Spoon, bowl pear-shaped ; handle circular in section tapering
 to point, the junction with bowl being a simple downward curve
 (fig. 5B). Bowl damaged by crack across centre ; bright green
 patina. Length : $5\frac{1}{2}$ in. Found in disturbed soil. Probably third
 or early fourth century. A spoon of this form, but smaller, was
 found at Congresbury, N. Somerset, and is in Taunton Castle
 Museum.

8. Bowl of spoon, circular, much damaged and broken at its
 junction with handle which is missing (fig. 5A). Found in top soil.
 This is a relatively common form in the first and second centuries.

9. Brooch (fig. 5C). Long curved bow apparently cast in one
 piece with head-loop and hollow cross-arms. Hinged pin missing ;
 catch plate short and wide. The bow is decorated with two circular
 studs, having a broad groove between them ; dark green patina.
 L : $3\frac{1}{8}$ in. Found unstratified. Probably early to mid second
 century. It is difficult to find a close parallel but it may be placed
 in Collingwood's Group N (*Archaeology of Roman Britain*, p.249,
 fig. 61, Nos. 28-31). The head-loop for chain or cord shows that
 it was joined by chains to a fellow for fastening on the shoulders.

Brooches as large and crudely designed as this one are well represented at Rotherley, Dorset (Pitt-Rivers, *Cranborne Chase*, ii, Pl. XCVII).

Iron

10. Brooch (fig. 5D). Plain flat tapering bow, expanding gradually in the vertical plane towards the catch-plate; three-quarters of hinged pin missing. A 'knob' asymmetrically placed at upper end of bow is probably due to oxidation and not decoration. L : $2\frac{11}{16}$ in. Found on floor of passage between north-west and south-east blocks. Late first or second century. Two similar brooches are amongst ten of this material dating to the late first century, from Ham Hill, at Taunton Castle Museum. Others of the same type from Rotherley (*op. cit.*, Pl. CI, Nos. 3, 4, 5 and 7).

11. Builder's or carpenter's nails. Several square-sectioned nails with flat circular heads were found, mostly in the upper levels. The largest measure up to 4 in. in length with a section through the stem of $\frac{5}{16}$ in. at head end. Two are bent and another shows clenching over at the end. Half of one nail shows splitting of the stem due to faulty manufacture (cf. Woodcuts and Bokerley, *Cranborne Chase*, i, pp. 93-5, Pl. XXX; and iii, pp. 126-30, Pl. CIX).

12. T-shaped object resembling iron wall-tie. Head, flat, $4\frac{1}{2}$ in. long, tapering to rounded ends and just over $\frac{1}{2}$ in. wide at centre. Stem, square-sectioned, tapering; present length : $5\frac{3}{8}$ in. Found on floor of house, south-east block. Small T-shaped nails were found at Woodcuts (*op. cit.*, Pl. XXX, Nos. 2 and 6).

13. Hob-nails. Three hob-nails were recognised, of which two were found on the south side of the pavement in the south-east block.

14. Cleats. Portion of a broken cleat; also an almost complete double-pinned cleat, with diamond shaped body. The latter found beneath wall debris of south-east block. Exactly similar hob-nails and cleats, for use on Roman sandals and boots, were found at Ham Hill (Taunton Castle Museum); cf. also Rotherley, *op. cit.*, p. 190, fig. A.

Bone

15. Very little worked bone was discovered amongst the bones of animals in the debris on the site. Part of a rough bone pin and another bone fragment showing utilization were discovered close against the outer wall face of the south-west foundation near the south corner of the north-west block.

Stone (Shale, Lias and Flint)

16. Spindle whorl of Kimmeridge Shale, lathe-turned and perforated (fig. 5E). Short truncated convex bicone, decorated either side with two pairs of grooves. Almost perfect. Diam. : $1\frac{5}{8}$ in. ; th. : $\frac{3}{4}$ in. Found in disturbed soil. Whorls of this kind are very common in Somerset. Two of similar type were found at Ham Hill, one on the site of the Roman villa. Two more were found in the Pitney Villa excavations (formerly Stradling Collection) and another came from Manor Farm, Ilchester. Others were discovered during digging at Burnham Claypits. All these are now in Taunton Museum.

17. A number of disks of lias slate, roughly trimmed to circular or oval shape, were found about the site. These range from $\frac{3}{4}$ in. to $1\frac{1}{2}$ in. in diameter and $\frac{3}{16}$ to $\frac{3}{8}$ in. in thickness. They may have been used as gaming or reckoning counters. Similar disks have been found on other Roman sites in the immediate vicinity.

18. A few flint flakes, none showing secondary work, were recovered ; four of them came from the area of the ditch of the circular house. In one case a flake was accompanied by a few fragments of gritted Iron Age ware from a small pocket or post-hole in the sub-soil, cut through by the circular wall trench, and probably indicating the earliest occupation of the site.

W.A.S.

VI.—THE POTTERY

Terra Sigillata

Most of the small amount of terra sigillata consisted of small scraps found in the area between the two blocks of the house. Many of these occurred in the filling of the nineteenth-century trenches, suggesting that the finer pieces had been retained by the excavators, who threw away the scraps and the coarse wares. The pieces not illustrated were all of the second century, the latest being a scrap with 'cut-glass' ornament, a type which was in use as early as the Antonine period.

(a) *Potters' Stamps*

1. ELVILLI on a coarse base, probably form 80. Unstratified. Elvillus of Lezoux, Antonine (Oswald, *Index of Potters' Stamps on Terra Sigillata*. p. 114).

2. SATVR[NINVS] on form 33 ; in debris on floor of south-east block of house. The AT ligature on this stamp may be compared with the ATV ligature of the same potter found twice at Silchester

(May, *Pottery found at Silchester*, p.256). Saturninus of Lezoux was working from Hadrianic to late Antonine times (Oswald, *op. cit.*, p.283 ; *Richborough IV*, p.216, No. 286).

3. . . .]RN[. . . on scrap.

(b) *Decorated Sigillata* (fig. 6).

1. Form 29. Much worn scrap with base of rouletted rim and panel in upper frieze containing chevrons. Wall trench of circular house. Panels of chevrons occur at Pompeii on two bowls of this form by the potter Mommo (*Journ. Roman Studies*, iv, Pls. II, 2 and IV, 15). The same motif is used as a wreath by Rufinus in a bowl associated with the other two (*Ibid.*, Pl. VII, 36). It is also used on Flavian bowls of form 37 (cf. *Richborough I*, Pl. XVIII, 16). Flavian.

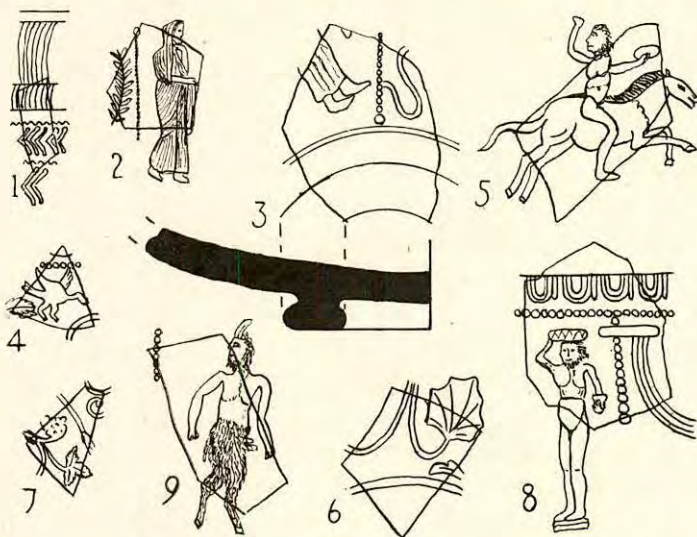


Fig. 6. Decorated Sigillata, Catsgore, Somerton.

2. Form 37. Fine brick-red ware. Pudicitia (Oswald, *Index of Figure Types on Terra Sigillata*, 926 : hereinafter cited as O.); beyond beaded border of panel to left, a wreath as on Oswald and Pryce, Pl. XVI, 1 (Bregenz Cellar Find). Wall trench of circular house. Trajanic.

3. Form 37. Burnt fragment of heavy base. Legs of draped seated figure on left ; large beaded border to panel ; on right stalk

of tendril. Below pavement between two blocks of house. The motif on the left cannot be identified, but the fragment is probably not later than the reign of Trajan.

4. Form 37. Flying bird (O.2315), with tendril below. The piece appears to be part of a bowl like that from Wroxeter attributed to Cinnamus and dated c.130-50 (Atkinson, *Wroxeter 1923-7*, Pl. LXVI, S.45). Deposit below contemporary ground level outside south-east block of house. Date possibly as Wroxeter bowl, but the bird occurs on Lezoux ware of Trajanic date and this fragment may be as early.

5. Form 37. Man on horseback with shield in left hand (cf. O.251). Ground level outside south-east block, Trajanic.

6. Form 29. Fragment of lower frieze with rinceau; the stalk ends in a large polygonal, many-pointed leaf. Unstratified. The leaf of this type is illustrated on bowls by Vitalis and Manduillus found at Pompeii (*Journ. Roman Studies*, iv, Pls. V, 27 and VI, 34). Flavian.

7. Form 37. Fragment of vine scroll as *Richborough IV*, No. 54. Thin ware, well-modelled design. Outside south-east block of house, on old ground level. Probably Hadrianic.

8. Form 37. Small blurred ovolo; on left, satyr holding basket on head with right hand and cup in left (cf. O.599); heavy beaded border to panel and on right demi-medallion. Outside south-east block, unstratified. The larger figure of a satyr, recorded by Oswald, is used by potters of the Hadrian-Antonine period. Antonine.

9. Form 37. Satyr (cf. Oswald, Nos. 717 and 717-A). Unstratified. Antonine.

C.A.R.R.

Coarse Wares (figs. 7 and 8).

1. Bowl of hard grey clay with darker surface. Wall trench of circular house. This is a rather better fired, harder example of the pre-Roman bowls common in this area (e.g. *Maiden Castle*, fig. 72; War Cemetery, c. A.D.44). Examples of Roman date occur in the earliest levels at Ilchester (pre-Flavian), with a pre-Flavian olla at Hembury (*Proc. Devon Arch. Explor. Soc.*, i, Pl. XXVIII, P.11) and at Milber Down (*Ibid.*, iv, pt. 2, fig. B19; small camp, c. A.D. 50-80). Cf. *Camulodunum*, fig. 80, form 47 (c. A.D.10-61).

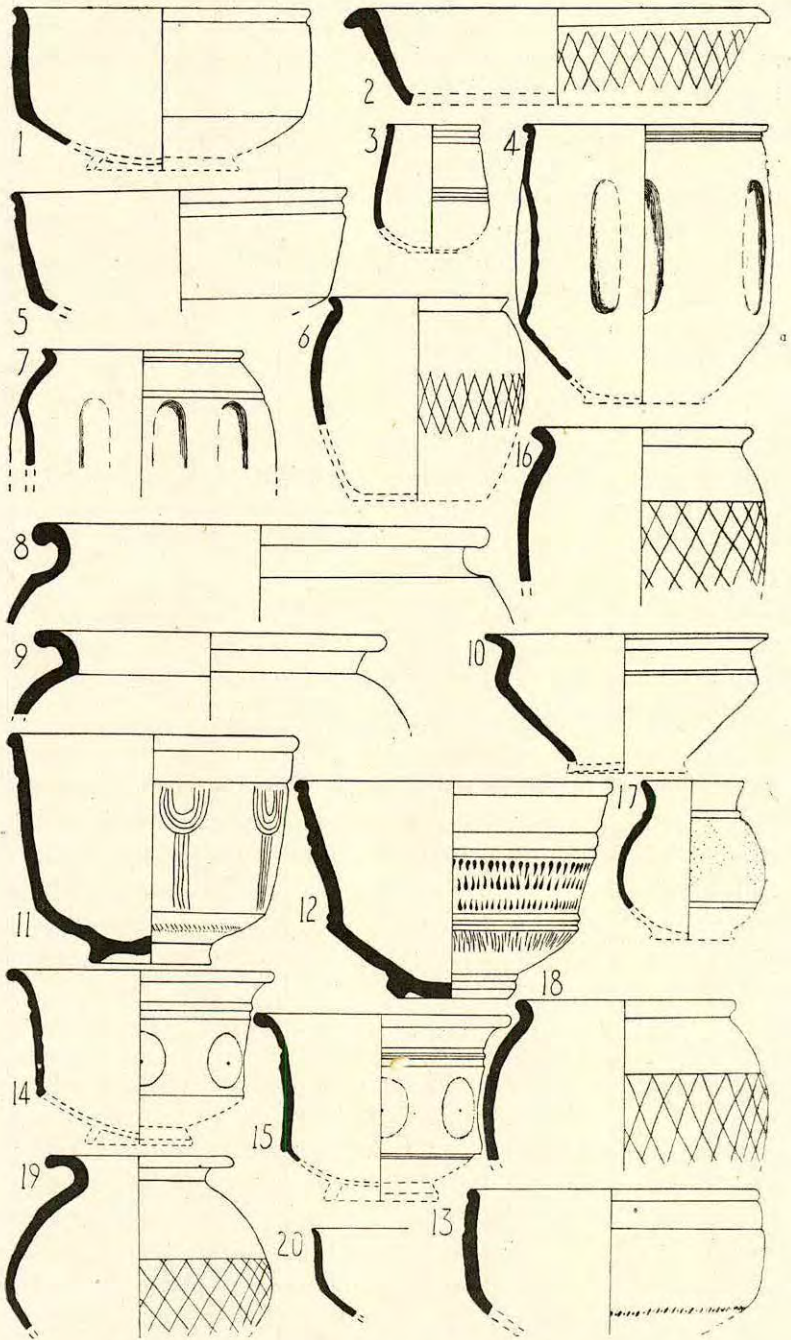


Fig. 7. Coarse Pottery, Catsgore, Somerton ($\frac{1}{4}$).

2. Pie dish with heavy rim and trellis pattern on exterior. Similar ware, interior burnished. Site as last. For shape cf. Milber (*loc. cit.*, B.30 ; c. A.D.50-80, and *Richborough III*, Pl.XLI, 339 ; A.D.80-120).

3. Small beaker with moulded rim and girth grooves on swell. Fine soft red ware with red slip ; probably same ware as painted bowls, Nos. 14 and 15. As last.

4. Indented beaker with finely moulded rim. Fine soft red clay, surface gone ; probably same ware. As last.

5. Bowl ; a more sophisticated example of No. 1, with moulded rim. As last.

6. Olla with short, sharply profiled neck and trellis on swell. Sandy grey clay, reddish in patches, darker surface. As last.

7. Indented beaker as No. 4, but coarser rim and fuller profile. As last.

8. Rim of store jar. Coarse grey sandy clay, with black washed surface, now largely gone. As last.

9. Similar rim and ware. As last. For shape cf. *Richborough III*, Pl. XXXVII, 264 (A.D.80-120).

10. Small thick bowl in fine soft red clay, surface gone. Ware resembles No. 3. As last.

11. Bowl imitating sigillata form 30. Fine soft grey clay with darker wash. Incised decoration on side. One fragment sealed below pavement between two blocks ; others in disturbed soil.

12. Bowl imitating sigillata form 29. Similar ware. Two zones of stabbed decoration. One fragment found in sealed deposit as last. Bowls of this fine grey ware, imitating sigillata forms, are common in Somerset and Dorset. The earliest, imitating form 29, have been found in a Flavian deposit at Ilchester. This dating is confirmed by the appearance of similar bowls in other parts of Roman Britain (*e.g. Richborough IV*, Pl. XCI, 450 ; A.D.70-85, and *Wroxeter I*, fig. 17, 6 ; A.D.80-110). The imitations of form 30 are probably little, if at all, later ; but imitations of form 37 (*e.g. Jordan Hill, Weymouth, British Museum Guide to Roman Britain*, fig. 128) are presumably not earlier than the end of the century. A regular pattern with swags and pendent lines (as No. 11) later became normal in this area, but in the earlier period there are many varieties of incised and stabbed decoration (cf. No. 28).

13. Bowl. Similar ware and form to No. 1, but more sophisticated. As last. Cf. Colliton Park, Dorchester (*Proc. Dorset N. H. and A. Soc.*, lx, Pl. VIa, No. 1 ; first century).

14. Carinated bowl. Fine red ware with red slip and circles in white paint ; the slip preserved only under the paint. Part found in old surface soil outside wall of south-east block ; part from debris near cooking place.

15. Similar bowl found with last. We can quote no parallel to these fine red bowls. Fragments of others were associated with the circular house, though not in well-sealed deposits. The clay is very similar to that of the small beaker and coarser bowl found sealed in the wall trench of that house (Nos. 3 and 10).

16. Olla with band of trellis on swell. Coarse hard grey clay, with burnished surface, repaired with lead rivet. Deposit alongside cooking place (unsealed).

17. Small 'poppy-head' beaker. Soft grey clay with lustrous black surface, reddish in patches ; diamond-shaped panels of applied dots. As last. Cf. Colliton Park, Dorchester, *Proc. Dorset N.H. and A. Soc.*, lx, Pl. VIa, No. 2, p. 59 ; *Richborough I*, Pl. XXV, 54 (Antonine) and *III*, Pl. XXXIX, 306-8, (A.D.80-120 ; first and second century ; A.D. 90-140).

18. Olla as No. 16. As last.

19. Olla with full profile. Clay and decoration as last and probably also of the second century. Resting on bottom of well.

20. Gallo-Belgic plate. Fine buff clay with dull red wash, mostly worn off, and narrow black rim on exterior. The form is a variant ; the ware resembles *Camulodunum* form 17 C and D (p. 221). Range on that site from A.D.49 on, but becomes more prominent later ; at Hofheim the type is Flavian.

21. Fragment of small cup or bowl with foliate scrolls *en barbotine*. Grey sandy ware, buff on much worn surface ; now no trace of slip. Unstratified. This is a coarser variety of the small slipped cups of continental origin (*e.g. Richborough IV*, Pl. XC, 409-12 ; all pre-Flavian).

22. Small handled jar. Coarse grey clay, burnished surface. Unstratified. Cf. *Richborough III*, Pl. XL, 322. Antonine.

23. Small beaker. Same ware and period as No. 17. Unstratified.

24. High-sided flanged bowl. Hard grey clay, black surface. Unstratified. A common late type on the site, never found associated with the farmhouse. Cf. *Maiden Castle*, p. 250, fig. 80, Nos. 54-5.

25. Bowl. Same ware and period as Nos. 5 and 13. Unstratified.

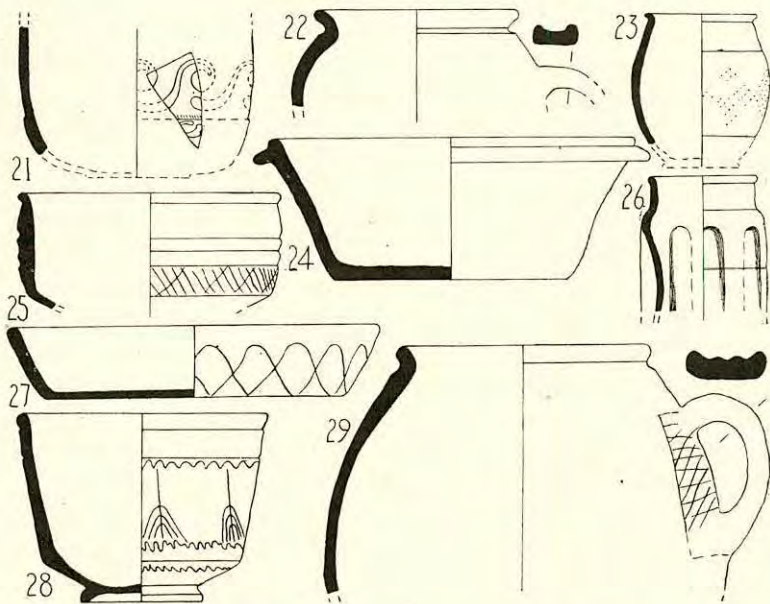


Fig. 8. Coarse Pottery, Catsgore, Somerton (4).

26. Indented beaker of New Forest ware. Hard grey clay with orange black surface ; interior, puce. Unstratified.

27. Flat dish. Coarse grey clay, black surface. A common type in second-century deposits on the site.

28. Grey bowl. Ware as No. 11, more elaborate decoration. Unstratified.

29. Handled jar. Clay and form as No. 22. The patch of trellis surrounding the handle may imitate the stitching of a leather original. Unstratified.

D.G.

VII.—SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The Roman building at Catsgore, a small and poor farmhouse, is of some historical interest. The great villas excavated since the second world war—Low Ham and Lufton—belong to the prosperous period of rural Britain, the late Roman age. Yeovil, explored some twenty years ago, fits into the same picture. The greater number of the objects recorded from the numerous Roman villas of the district is also of the late period (see part II), though a few sites have yielded earlier material. But the exploitation of the wealthy corn-growing hinterland of Ilchester, which these villas reflect, cannot have sprung fully-developed from the waste, and at Catsgore we see something of the origins of this rich countryside.

The first occupation, starting about A.D.70, is of a purely native character. The circular timber house is a type known in the south-west before the Roman conquest and the pottery is predominantly native in its types and affinities.¹ Even so small an item as the baked clay sling bullet (p. 66) reflects the pre-Roman usage, for the type is one of the commonest at the Lake Villages. We can scarcely doubt that the builder was a Briton, probably one of the lesser local aristocracy.

The rebuilding, about 110, marks no sudden break. The dwelling-house was reformed in a manner more consonant with Roman architectural use, but the plan conforms to none of the normal Roman villa types.² The materials were of the simplest; there is neither heating system nor painted wall plaster. The farm is as remote from the princely villas, as Longleat or Montacute from the dwelling of the Tudor yeoman. Only the pottery shows the full impact of Romanization, the standardized imports and products of the provincial workshops ousting the variety of the earlier period. We can only suppose that the second generation, having prospered, adopted a slightly higher standard of living and that he and his successors were gradually drawn more and more into the orbit of provincial life.

The farm remained occupied throughout the second century, but third-century types were not recognized. The later pottery was of the fourth century rather than earlier, and the older house appears to have been deserted soon after 200. Even the unworn coins of

1 Pp. 71-5, Nos. 1-15, 20, 21, 25 and 28.

2 Collingwood, *Archaeology of Roman Britain*, 114.

Victorinus and Quintillus (Nos. 3 and 4) do not disprove this hypothesis, for the second came from a foundation trench that can hardly be earlier than *c.* 330, while both could have been dropped by stray travellers.

The meaning of the late occupation and its relation to the remains discovered by Mr. Dewar in the nearby field to the north cannot yet be solved. It is clear that the third century saw a great change in the rural hinterland of Ilchester, a change marked by the rise of great villas like Low Ham and Lufton, neither of which have yielded remains earlier than *c.* 200. These villas probably arose from the consolidation of smaller holdings like Catsgore, and that site may have been one of the casualties. But much more work will have to be done before we can begin to trace in rural Britain the social and economic changes of which written evidence has survived in some parts of the Empire.

C.A.R.R.