

ROMAN VILLA AT LUFTON, YEovil

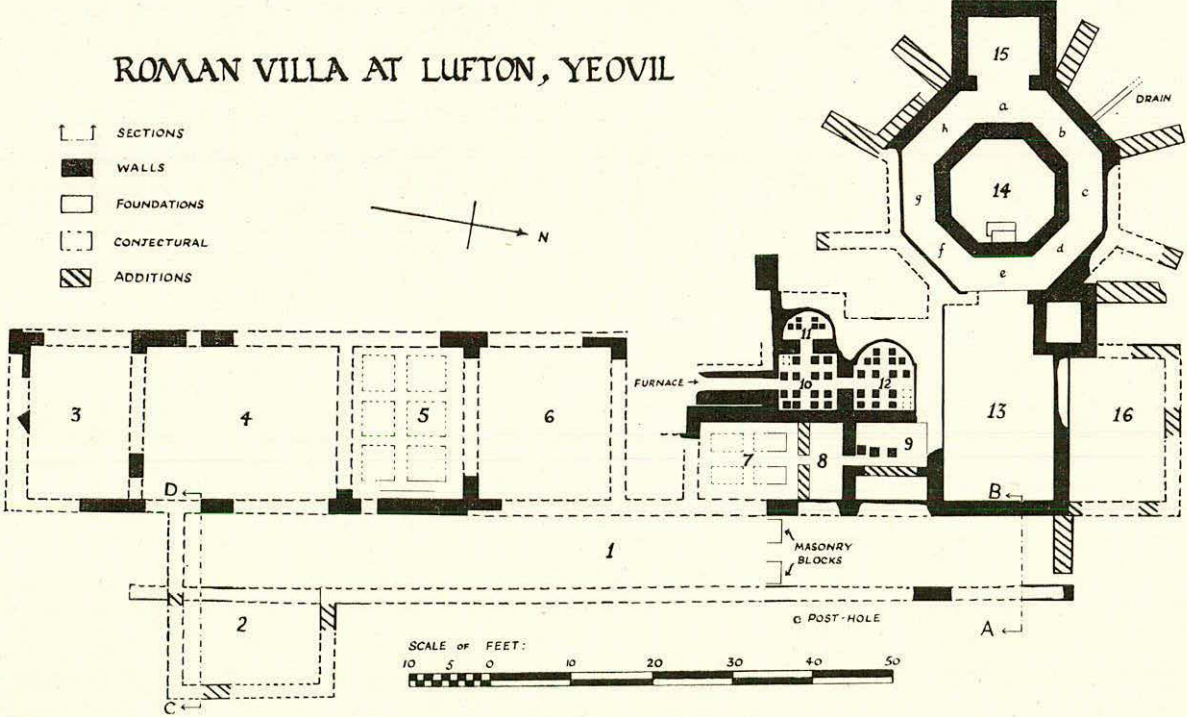


Fig. 1. Lufton Roman Villa: Plan.

THE ROMAN VILLA AT LUFTON, NEAR YEOVIL

BY L. C. HAYWARD, B.A., B.SC.

I.—PREFACE.

To the group of Romano-British houses in the Yeovil district, which includes the Westland buildings excavated in 1927-8,¹ can now be added a late Roman corridor house discovered at Lufton in 1945. Its most interesting feature was a large octagonal building with a plunge bath surrounded by an attractive mosaic pavement. The small finds (chiefly native pottery) were typical of the late Roman period; no evidence was discovered of any earlier occupation.

The vigilance of a young farm worker, Mr. K. C. J. Hill, while driving a tractor on Manor Farm, Lufton, in April 1945, and of his friend Mr. Walrond of Pitney, led Mr. H. S. L. Dewar to the site: examination confirmed the existence of a Roman house, and in the following year digging commenced with the sanction of the Somerset Archaeological Society. The work was done between 1946 and 1952 by the boys of Yeovil School Archaeological Society under the direction of the writer and Mrs. Hayward: help was also given by Miss D. M. Rogers and girls from the High School and by members of the staffs of both schools. We gladly acknowledge our heavy debt to Mr. C. A. Raleigh Radford, without whose expert advice and friendly encouragement, our problems would have overwhelmed us. Our best thanks are due to the Wyndham Trustees of Yeovil School for financial help, and to the owner of the site, Mr. S. Grant, who willingly co-operated in the work.

To the following who gave help and advice we also offer our grateful appreciation: Mr. and Mrs. St. George Gray, Miss M. V. Taylor, Professor J. M. C. Toynbee, Dr. E. Trewavas, Dr. F. S. Wallis, Lt.-Col. C. D. Drew, Dr. F. H. Pollard, Mr. W. A. Seaby (for assistance in the coin report), Mr. K. B. Swaine (who drew the section of the reconstructed bath block), Mrs. M. Swaine (who prepared the coloured scale drawing of the mosaics, and the line

¹ *Proc. Som. Arch. Soc.* Vol. lxxiv (1928), 122-143.

drawings for Figure 7), Mr. M. Jones for the pottery drawing and Mr. P. Fry for preparing the sections. Finally, the writer wishes to record his heavy debt to his wife, for her invaluable aid at every stage of the work.

II.—THE EXCAVATIONS: *The House*

The site,¹ about 175 ft. above sea-level, lies in a field known as Snow's Mead, on the south-east side of a small valley protected from the prevailing winds by Lufton Hill. The Roman road from Ilchester to Dorchester passes within a mile and a quarter on the east. The sub-soil is clay found uniformly about 2 ft. from the surface; it was recently examined for brick-making. A rather poor local limestone was easily available for building; Ham Hill quarries (3 miles away) provided freestone, and Charlton Mackrell blue lias for roof tiles. A small water-course begins in the field above and a spring is marked on the 25-inch Ordnance Survey Map in the field to the west.

The area examined occupied a raised platform 100 ft. wide extending from the south-east corner of the field for 200 ft. along its eastern side. The remains lay within a foot of the field surface on the west, the overburden increasing to 3 ft. towards the east and south. The walls had been extensively robbed for their stone but could be found at, or near floor level in places. They were normally 2 ft. wide with a slight offset at ground level, and were built of roughly dressed blocks of yellow limestone laid in flat courses, sometimes varied by herringbone work. More carefully dressed Ham Stone was used at the corners and at the ends of the buttresses. (Pl. X, 2). The foundations were frequently 2 ft. in depth. For the tessellated pavements, blue and white lias and red brick were chiefly used, cut into cubes of two sizes, but more varied in shape and colour in the finer mosaic work. The tesserae were bedded in mortar to which tiny fragments of red brick had been added; below this, a layer of sandy mortar lay over rough stones set in the clay subsoil. The design of the pavements, though much more elaborate than the Westland examples, was inferior to that at Low Ham. Many flat slabs of blue lias, lozenge shaped and 15 to 16 in. long by 10 in. wide, occurred all over the site; in the area outside the walls of room 15, a few large red brick imbrices and tegulae

¹ Nat. Grid. Ref. 31/516179.

ROMAN VILLA AT LUFTON, YEOVIL : SECTIONS

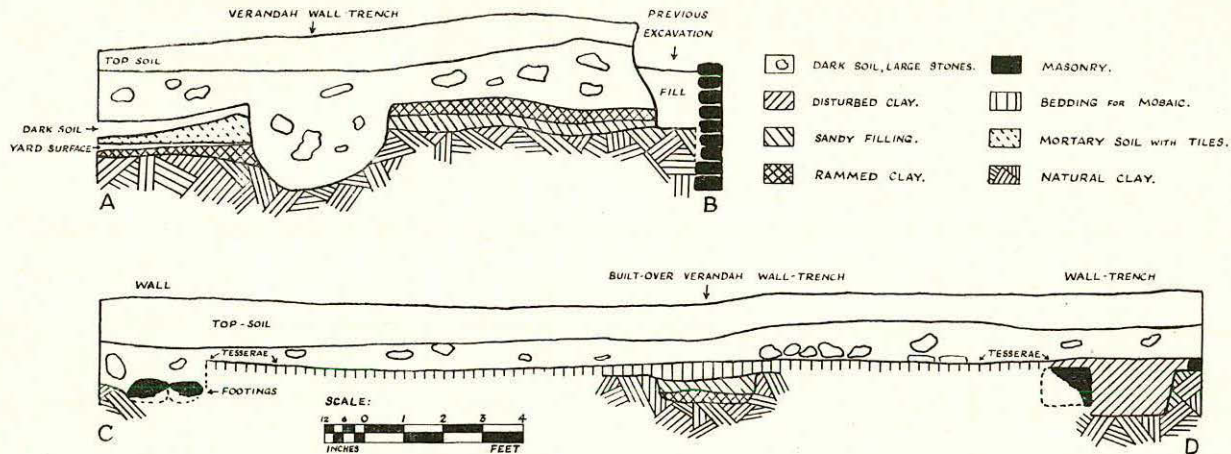


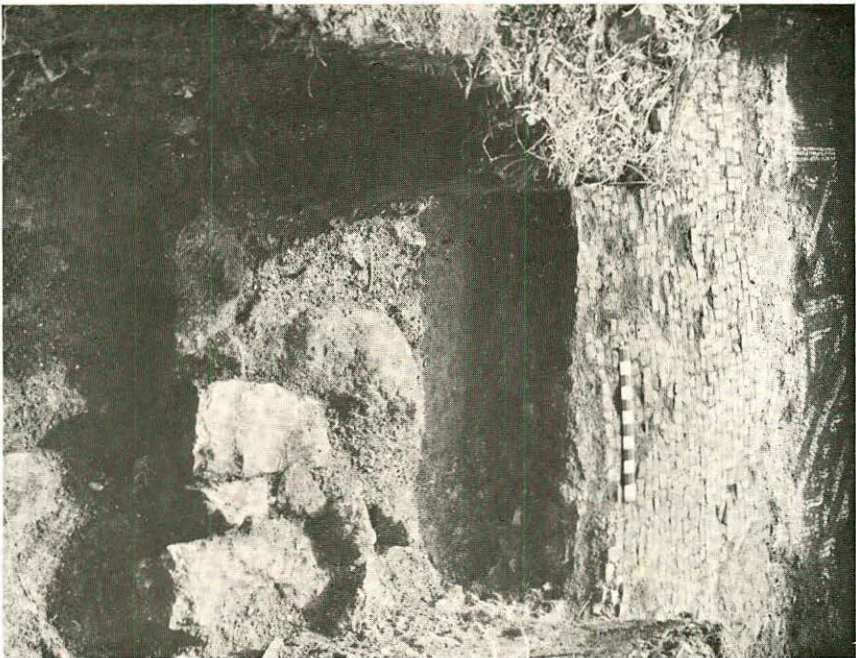
Fig. 2. Lufton Roman Villa: Sections (for plan see fig. 1).

were found, but from the evidence of the 'slate-fall' it would appear that stone tiles roofed the building. Coloured wall plaster was also found in several rooms; red, green and cream were the commonest colours, but little can be said about the patterns,—stripes, panels and stippling were noticed, and there was evidence of redecoration and replastering of the walls.

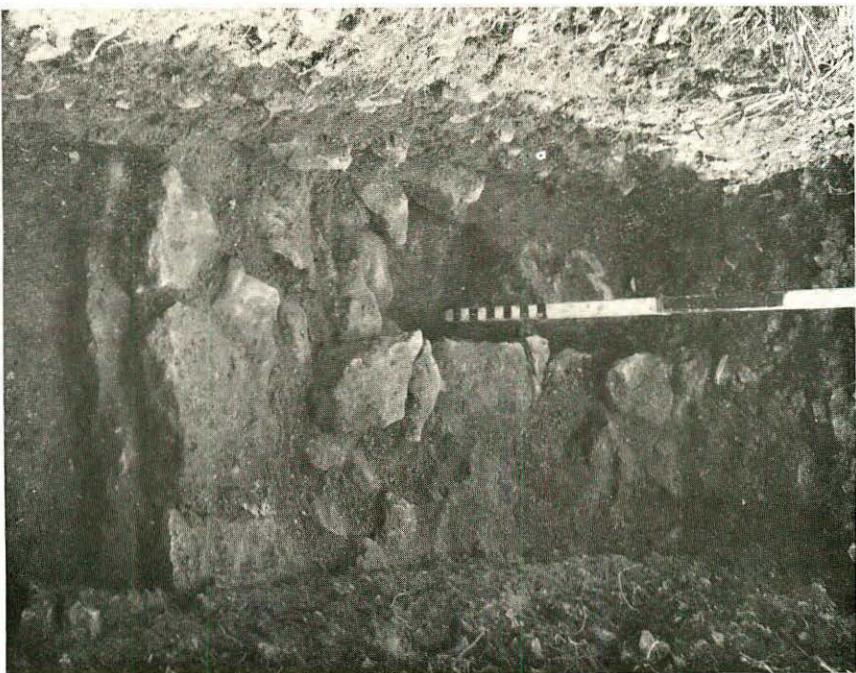
At four points along the eastern side of the building, the foundation trench of the outer corridor wall was found (Fig. 2); its relatively shallow depth suggests slighter masonry than in the rest of the building, but only roughly laid foundation courses survived in two places, and nowhere above, or even at floor level. Among the debris was found a fragment of worked Ham Hill stone from a column 1 ft. in diameter; it is therefore likely that the verandah was of the same type as Spoonley Wood¹ with small stone columns set on a dwarf wall and carrying a wooden architrave. In the area outside the corridor, a layer of granular weathered limestone overlay the natural clay from which the top soil had been removed, as the original turf line could not be seen. This 'yard' surface extended for only 7 to 8 ft. in front of the house. At one point on it a large number of white tesserae were found in a heap, including lengths of white lias from which the cubes had been struck. A post hole with stone 'packing' and a tile base was found 3 ft. out from the corridor, and may mark the position of a wooden porch.

The corridor (No. 1 on plan) had a mosaic floor preserved only at its southern end where alternate red and white stripes appeared within a grey border. A clearly marked fall of plaster, 3 in. deep against the outer face of the inner verandah wall, and fading to nothing at 2 ft. out, lay under a thinner spread of mixed clay and mortar: this strongly suggests a plaster-faced stone wall with an upper part of timber-framed wattle and daub. The corridor ended on the north at a point opposite the northern side of the frigidarium (Room 13). Here it had been closed by the insertion of a good masonry wall 2ft. 6 in. wide, whose foundations cut into the bedding of the corridor pavement. One concludes that the house as first planned was wingless, and that for some reason a wing was added

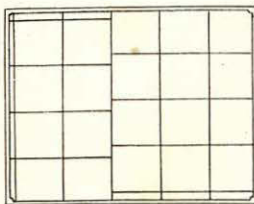
¹ *Archaeologia* Vol. lii, 656; cf. *Proc. Dorset Nat. Hist. and Arch. Soc.* lix, VII (b) and 10, excavations at Colliton Park, Dorchester, where the actual columns of the verandah (with bases exactly parallel with the Lufton fragment) were found thrown into a well.



1. Wall and pavement of Room 2, showing foundation trench and corridor beneath.



2. NW corner of Room 6 showing foundations.



ROMAN VILLA AT LUFTON, YEovil: MOSAIC PAVEMENT
ROOM 13

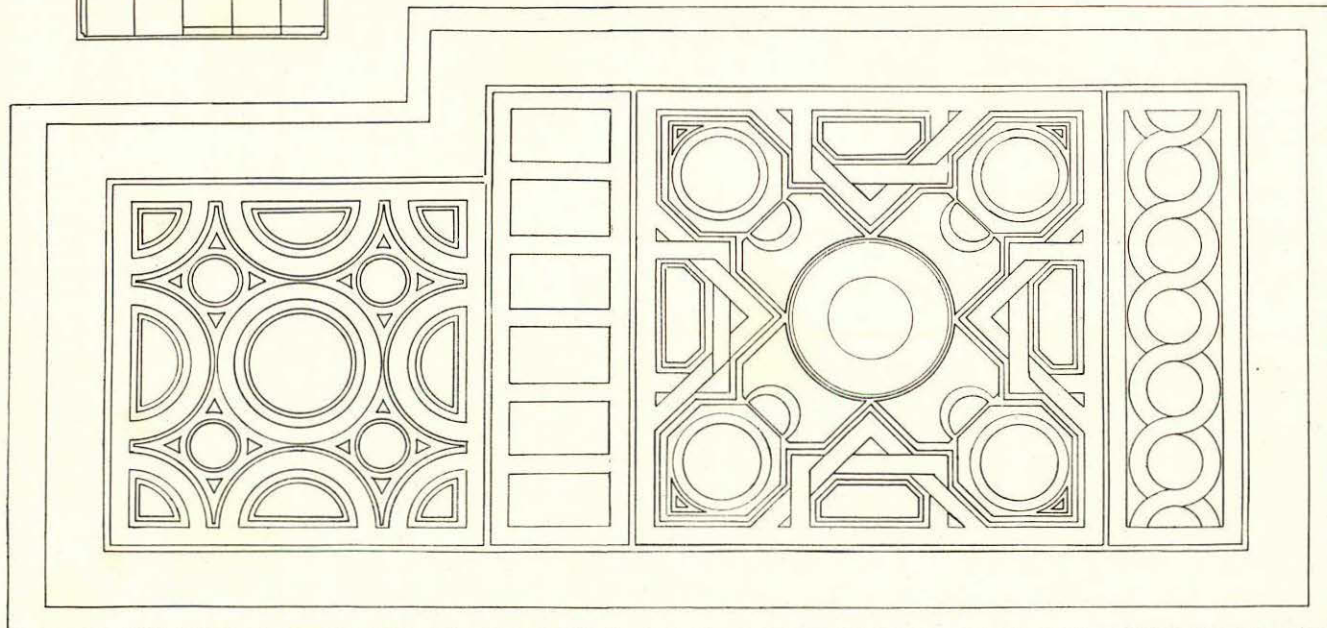
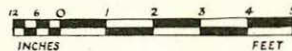


Fig. 3. Lufton Roman Villa: Reconstructed design of mosaic pavement, Room 13.

later at the south end only, the open northern end being then enclosed by this new wall.

Two blocks of 'herring-bone' masonry 3 ft. wide and 8 in. deep were revealed 40 ft. along the corridor, lying on natural clay. As there is a total drop of 4 ft. in floor level from end to end of the villa, it is assumed that the masonry provided the foundation for one of the necessary steps.

In examining the junction of the corridor and the southern wing, it was noticed that the foundation of the front verandah trench continued underneath the existing mosaic pavement of room 2. (Pl. IV, 1). It appears on the section E-W (Fig. 2, CD) across the southern end of the building and proves that the wing was a later addition. No evidence for dating this alteration was forthcoming in the filling of the foundation trench, and as nearly all the stone had been removed, it was not possible to compare the masonry of the two building periods.

The room comprising the wing (No. 2) had a tessellated floor, one portion of which was in good condition: this showed a geometrical design based on triangles in blue and white cubes framed in the usual border of larger grey tesserae. A black occupation layer immediately above this floor contained typical late pottery: this was 'sealed' by a distinct layer of plaster from the walls.

Room 3 at the extreme southern end of the main range was heated by a shallow channelled hypocaust¹: heavily burnt Ham stone blocks formed a channel only 6 in. deep; a large capping stone 20 in. wide, though wrenched from its original position, still lay across the channel in the face of the trench. Loose red and blue tesserae and a mortar bedding proved the existence of a tessellated floor.

Room 4 too had a plain geometrical design in its pavement, which, however, existed only in isolated fragments. At the SW. corner of this room the masonry survived above floor level, where local limestone blocks, roughly dressed on the external face, were laid in flat and herringbone courses, with a 2 to 3 in. offset; the character of the masonry was exactly similar to that in the bath-block.

Room 5 was separated from Room 4 by a stone wall 2 ft. 6 in. wide in its foundations, not bonded in at its junction with the eastern wall of the building (like the wall bounding the room on the other side). It was heated by a channelled hypocaust and floored by a

¹ cf. the Spoonley Wood Villa, *Archaeologia* lii, 666.

Plate V



Lufton Roman Villa: Detail of mosaic pavement in Room 13. Scale.

tessellated pavement, the loose tesserae from which were found in the channels, together with building debris, including red and cream coloured wall plaster. This pavement was of three colours, red, blue and white, with the usual border of larger grey cubes.

The adjoining room (No. 6) was examined only at three corners. No trace of its floor was found. At this part of the site the surviving masonry (all below floor level) lay 2 ft. to 2 ft. 6in. from the surface (Pl. IV, 2): a core of rough yellow limestone blocks was faced by poorly dressed stone laid in flat courses with a very sandy mortar.

The last of the living rooms (No. 16) appears to be a later addition because of a marked difference in the masonry where it abuts with a straight joint on to the cold room. It had a channelled hypocaust, into which had fallen fragments of its tessellated pavement and coloured wall-plaster (red stippling on buff). Two portions of the floor showing the cable pattern and a border of large blue tesserae lay in situ on the south side. A coin of Valens was found in the wall debris. In the area immediately to the north of this room, lying above the mortar droppings and tiny fragments of lias roof-tiles, a heap of clinker mixed with shale was 'sealed' by a fall of masonry from the nearby wall. This points to the use of coal as a fuel.

THE BATH BLOCK

The bath block was completely excavated: it proved to be unusually elaborate for a villa of modest size. The cold room (No. 13) was spacious: in one corner a small sunken bath had been built, partly projecting beyond the line of the north wall of the room. As the pattern of the mosaic pavement allows for this irregularity, it may be concluded that it was part of the original plan. The bath was enclosed partly by the walls of its alcove, partly by masonry 1 ft. 3 in. thick built out into the room; its floor, 1 ft. 6 in. below the mosaic pavement, was of 1 ft. square red brick tiles, and its sides, faced with concrete and finished off with finer plaster, coloured red, had a round moulding at the corners and bevelled edges at the junction with the tiles; a 3 in. lead pipe formed the outlet. When excavated, the sides were preserved to a maximum height of only 1 ft. and no steps to give access were found.

The pavement of this room was badly broken, and had sunk as much as 4 in. at the east end, where the surface was covered by a layer of coarse sandy mortar over which large irregular slabs of

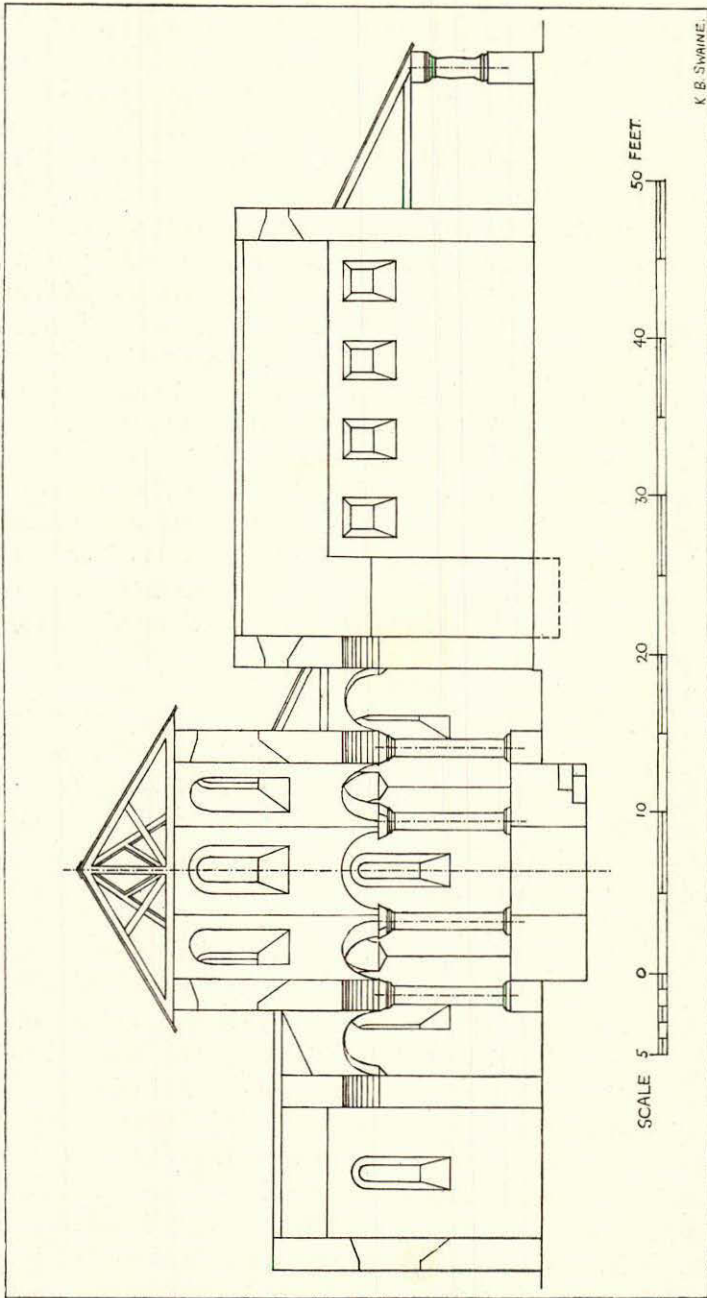
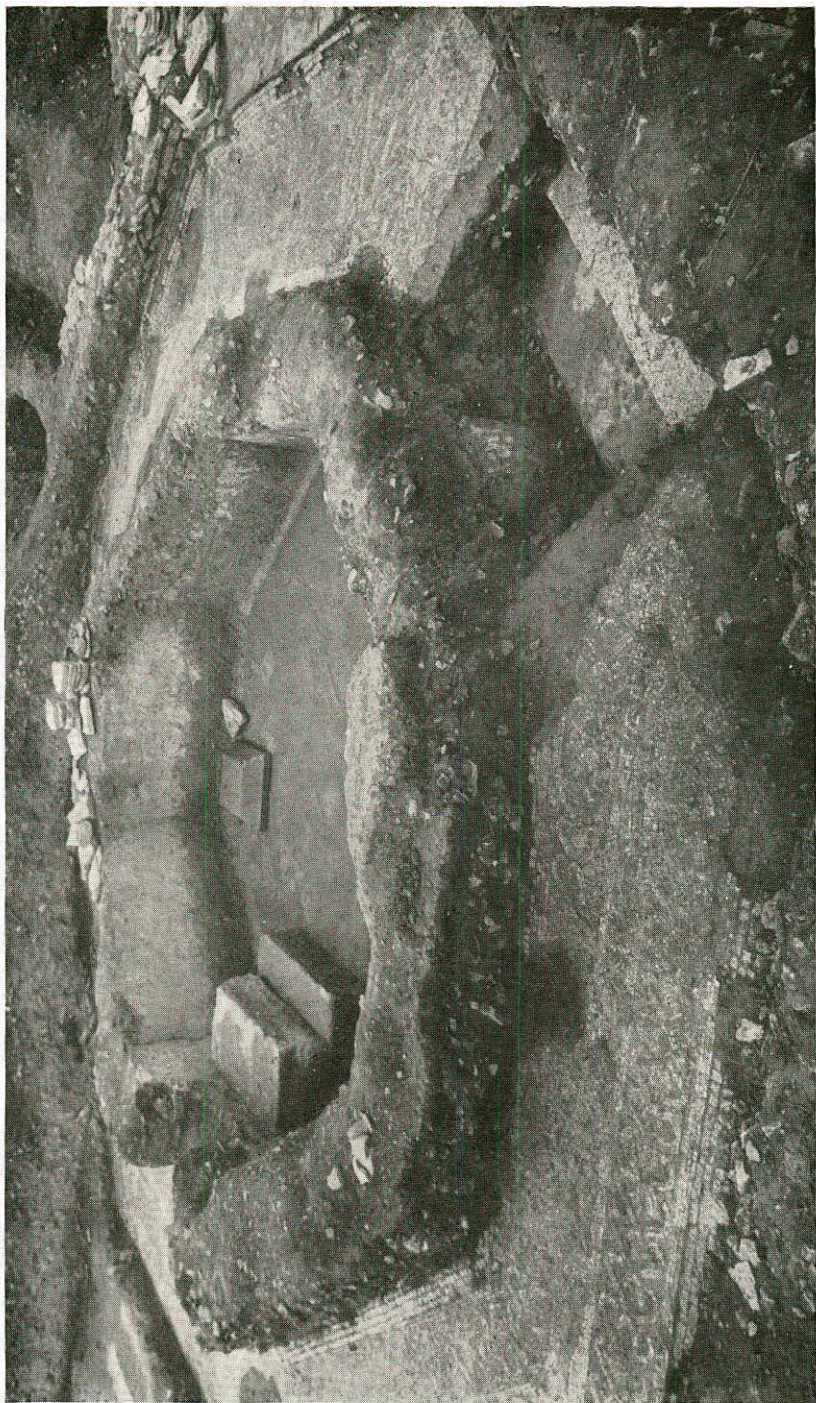


Fig. 4. Lufton Roman Villa: Restored sections across bath block.



Lufton Roman Villa: Octagonal bath from NW. showing steps and pulvin.

lias had been laid, giving the impression of a poorly executed attempt at repair and levelling up.¹ The design of the pavement (fig. 3) was in two parts: nearer the bath a series of circles, semicircles and quadrants, enriched with Solomon knots, rosettes and other *motifs*, and edged with the cable pattern, enclosed a circular centrepiece; in the other part four corner medallions were linked with rectangular and semicircle panels by an intricate interlacing of 'cable' borders. Only one medallion was complete (Plate V): it had a striking mosaic portrait in six colours, probably representing one of the seasons.² A narrow border of large red tesserae and a wider one of blue enclosed the whole pavement.

An octagonal building (No. 14) adjoined this cold room, and the floor level was 8 in. lower: examination proved that the two rooms were built at the same time; the stone foundations of the wall 2 ft. wide enclosing the small bath on the west side of Room 13 ceased at a point 3 ft. beyond the adjacent corner of the octagonal room: no foundation trench was disclosed running into the opposite corner of the cold room and virgin clay occurred about 1 ft. from the mosaic floor where the trench would have been expected (cp. foundation courses 2 ft. deep at the other end of this room). It is therefore assumed that the two parts of the bath block were erected at the same time, despite the fact that the axis of the cold room is not in line with that of the octagonal room. Thus the plan shows an opening 6 ft. wide which may have been spanned by a semicircular arch, a feature which would correspond well with the entry into the small room (No. 15) on the opposite side of the bath.

Except on one side, where three courses of herringbone masonry remained, much of the stone above floor level had been robbed. The outer walls had been strengthened by the addition of buttresses at the corners,³ seven of which were found in all, averaging 8 ft. in length, 2 ft. 6 in. in width, with foundations 1 ft. deep; they were not bonded into the walls nor were they set symmetrically to the building: the SW. side had also been re-inforced by masonry that doubled the thickness of the wall. (Pl. X, 2). It seems clear that these buttresses were a later addition to support a structure showing

¹ cf. R. E. M. Wheeler, *Lydney Report*, 62.

² cf. Bignor in T. Morgan, *British Mosaic Pavements*, 204, where the 'Seasons' mosaic also has the panels showing a vase with trailing leaves used in the Lufton frigidarium.

³ cf. the Mount, Maidstone, *Journal of Brit. Arch. Soc.* ii, 87. (I owe this reference to Miss M. V. Taylor).

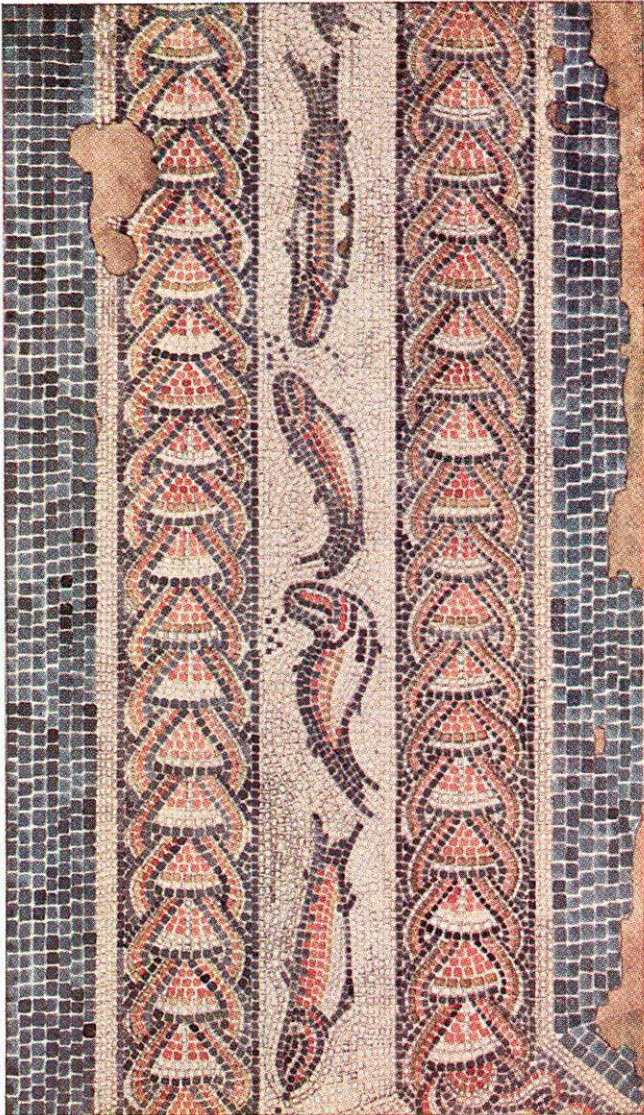
signs of collapse. The building contained an octagonal plunge bath¹ sunk $2\frac{1}{2}$ ft. below the floor, measuring 13 ft. across, and faced with fine grey plaster. Two large blocks of Ham stone formed steps into the basin, which was enclosed by a stone wall standing at one point 1 ft. above the surrounding pavement. Mr. Raleigh Radford has suggested that this building (fig. 4) was entirely of stone, and that eight stone columns at the corners of the low inner wall carried arches supporting a clerestory to admit extra light above the pent roof over this ambulatory: an eight sided pyramidal roof completed the building.² He points out that the six stone buttresses would be useless to prop up a half-timber building: moreover the basin of the plunge bath was filled with blocks of roughly dressed limestone, some still faced with coloured plaster. Among them were several fragments of carefully dressed stone forming part of the base of a column, as well as a stone pulvin 2 ft. square (Plate VI), still bearing a circle of white marks on its lower side where it rested on a column. The pulvin would have been unnecessary if the upper part of the wall were half timber, which is normally less than 1 ft. thick. The spaces between the columns must have been spanned by arches, for a stone architrave of 6 ft. is impossible, and as a stone wall is likely to have arched windows, a clerestory at least 5 ft. high probably gave extra light to what seems to have been an imposing and attractive building.

The pavement of this ambulatory showed two parallel bands, consisting on three sides of the overlapping lyre pattern (Pl. VII and IX, 2 and 3), and, on the other four sides, a repeating flower *motif* with a central member flanked by two inward curving tendrils (Pl. VIII, 1 and 2; IX, 1); between these ornamental bands, on a white background, was a series of 29 fishes in tesserae of six colours, many blowing bubbles (Pl. VII, VIII, and IX). The series was interrupted by a band of diamond pattern between panels f and g.

The eighth side of the ambulatory was decorated with a geometrical pattern in which the setting out had gone wrong, for the triangular panels at the ends vary considerably in size (Pl. VIII, 3). The central rectangle enclosed three panels, two lozenges with the Solomon knot, and a circle with a small bowl of flowers. The mosaic

¹ cf. Roman Villa at Holcombe, Uplyme, Dorset, *Archaeologia*, xlv, 462. (I owe this reference to Lady Fox).

² cf. the Roman Temple, Pagans Hill, Somerset, *Proc. Som. Arch. Soc.* xcvi, 112-142.



Coloured Drawing of 'Fish' Mosaic

workmanship, though pleasing and effective, is not of first class quality, as is that of the Virgil mosaic at Low Ham: the latter is by a foreign master about A.D. 330, whereas the Lufton mosaics, like that of the small earlier one at Low Ham¹ (also showing the same faulty setting out of geometrical designs) are probably local work of the late third century.

At a break extending across the pavement on the southern side of the plunge bath a concrete duct was revealed 5 in. below the floor level: it probably held the inlet pipe. On the NW. side, the pavement had a break in the mosaic work extending for 6 ft.: here examination showed that the mortar bedding for the tesserae rested on large slabs of stone; where one of these had been taken out, presumably by stone robbers, a large fragment of red coloured wall plaster had slipped down into the hole (Plate VI). The end of a lead pipe, 2 in. in diameter, was found midway in the bevelled edge of the bottom of the basin on the NW. side: it emptied into a stone faced channel 10 in. wide which was traced for 6 ft. beyond the outer wall. This was the outlet for the water of the bath.

The small room (No. 15) opened from the octagonal room over a broad sill of Ham stone (Pl. X, 2); its tessellated floor had a geometrical design (a circle within an octagon) with the usual 'cable' border; again the setting out showed blemishes. The walls of this room, 2 ft. thick, had herringbone masonry in roughly dressed limestone blocks, strengthened at the corners with Ham stone. The slate fall indicated a gabled roof running E-W.

The heated rooms of the bath block lay to the south of the cold room. That nearest the furnace (No. 10) was 7 ft. square (Pl. X, 1), but its walls had disappeared from well below floor level except at one point, where the mortar bedding for the pavement remained above an adjacent pila. The hypocaust contained a mass of mortar, fragments of brick, flue tiles, roof tiles and stones. There were many large blue and red tesserae, a few still firmly fixed together, though not in position. Communicating with this room were two others. No. 11 was the sweat bath, semi-circular in shape, the debris from which contained many fragments of very hard plaster with a smooth surface, coloured maroon red. A mass of rubble extended for over 2 ft. beyond the apsidal end, and a heavy buttress had been built in line with the southern wall on Room 10. No. 12 with a semi-

¹⁰ *S.D.N.Q.* xxv, 62.

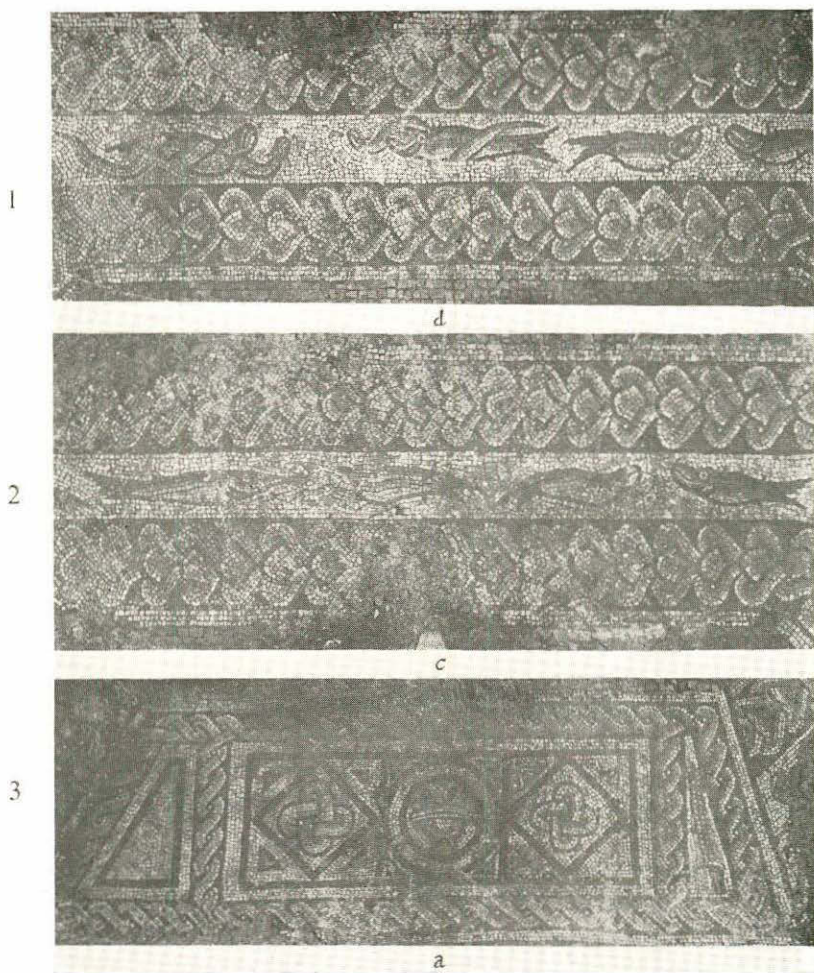
circular projection, was filled with building rubbish, including blue tesserae. Part of the wall in the apsidal end and the whole of the wall next to Room 3 had disappeared.

All these heated rooms had floors of *opus signinum*, on which was found a layer of soot 2 in. thick. The sides of the hypocaust were faced with hard pinkish plaster $\frac{1}{2}$ in. thick. Pillars for supporting the floors were found in position; the base of each pillar was a red brick 1 ft. square, carrying smaller bricks 8 in. square mortared together—in some cases four still standing on their base. The channels connecting these hypocausts with each other and with the furnace had sides formed of large red bricks laid one above the other. To the south of Room 10 lay the furnace with cheeks of Ham stone masonry (much reddened by fire) forming a channel 1 ft. 5 in. wide, tapering outwards vertically. On the bottom a deposit of ash was found.

Between these last rooms and the corridor were rooms 8 and 9. The floor of the latter had been completely wrecked, red, blue and white tesserae alone indicating its nature. When cleared of building debris, it showed three blocks of Ham stone in line with one side of the channel into Room 9, each showing traces of mortar bedding for bricks, two of which lay among the rubbish. Presumably this area had been warmed by a pillared hypocaust, the floor being 1 ft. 10 in. below pavement level in Room 13: no other pillars were found, nearly all the stones and the wall dividing it from Room 14 had vanished, though its line was given by fragments of its plaster facing *in situ*. The half of this room adjacent to the verandah had been divided off by a wall inserted parallel to it, thus forming a narrow passage, perhaps giving entrance to the heated rooms. The evidence suggested that the hypocaust had been filled up here and a layer of concrete laid down to level it.

A brick-faced channel led into Room 8, having been formed by inserting a wall of inferior masonry between the main front wall and Room 10, with a channel through it in line with that into Room 9. This room (No. 8) revealed no trace of a hypocaust; in it a very large number of big blue tesserae lay in a mass of mortar, clay and lime. The channel into the room on the south had been partly blocked up. The purpose of these alterations is not clear. Room 7 was a small one, heated by a channelled hypocaust, the sides of which were plaster faced; two spaces for wall flues were noted in the northern wall, which was of much poorer workmanship, strongly

Plate VIII



1. Lufton Roman Villa: Panel *d* of mosaic surrounding octagonal bath.
2. Panel *c* of mosaic surrounding octagonal bath.
3. Panel *a* of mosaic surrounding octagonal bath.

suggesting later alterations. The floor had been of large (1 in.) blue and red tesserae, and many fragments of wall plaster in red, cream and purple were recovered from the channels. A flanged bowl of late Roman date (fig. 5, No. 12) was found on the floor of the hypocaust.

A large quantity of pottery, chiefly coarse native ware, was found in the occupational debris: it was particularly plentiful in the northern rooms, though none occurred in the octagonal plunge bath itself and little in Rooms 14 and 15. The virtual absence of Samian ware sherds, and the late date of the finer native pottery, together with the meagre evidence of the coins (chiefly mid or late fourth century) point to an occupation beginning not earlier than A.D. 250. The well preserved state of the plaster facing in the great bath indicates that it had been filled up with building debris before decay overtook the villa as a whole. The poor repairs to the pavement in Room 13, and the erection of rough partition walls directly over the tessellated pavement in Room 4, suggest 'squatter' occupation after the owners had abandoned the house, possibly as a result of the troubles in A.D. 367. These conclusions may be compared with those of Mr. Raleigh Radford as to the history of the Westland house at Yeovil, and with what is known about the East and West Coker villas in the same neighbourhood: 'all these settlements were inhabited in the fourth century, and the three more important seem to have begun at the end of the second and continued until the third quarter of the fourth century, with a more intensive occupation in the latter part of that period'.¹

III.—THE POTTERY (Figs. 5-6).

Sherds were recovered from all parts of the site except the octagonal plunge bath, almost wholly in the occupational layers on the building debris: no sealed deposits occurred, except one rim of a flanged bowl in the foundations of the furnace. About 10% represented the finer native pottery, the remainder being coarse wares in these proportions: jars 34%, bowls 36% and dishes 20%. There were only two scraps of terra sigillata.

A late third or fourth century date may be assigned to nearly all this pottery: much of it resembles that found at the Westland house² Yeovil, in 1927-8, to which references are given below,

¹ *Proc. Som. Arch. Soc.* lxxiv (1928), 136.

² *Proc. Som. Arch. Soc.* lxxiv (1928) 138-142.

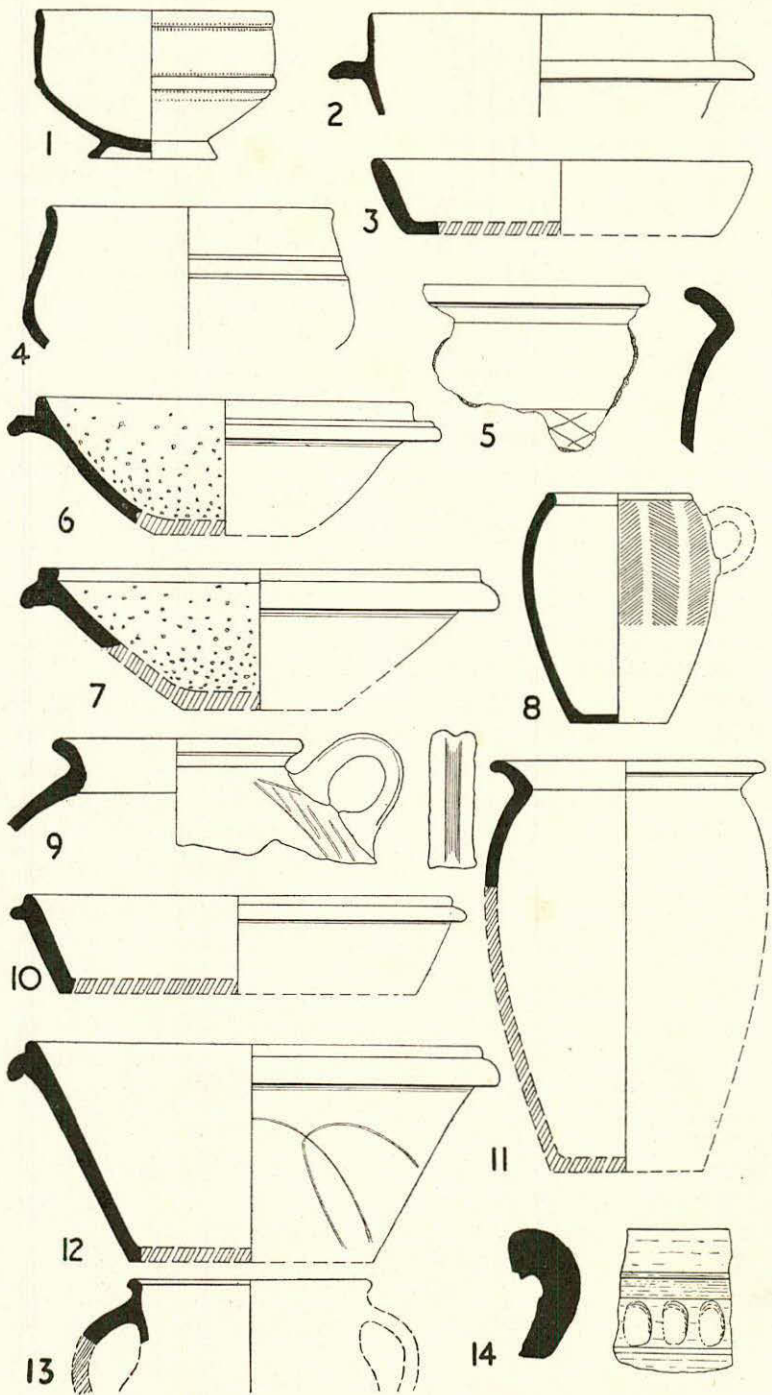
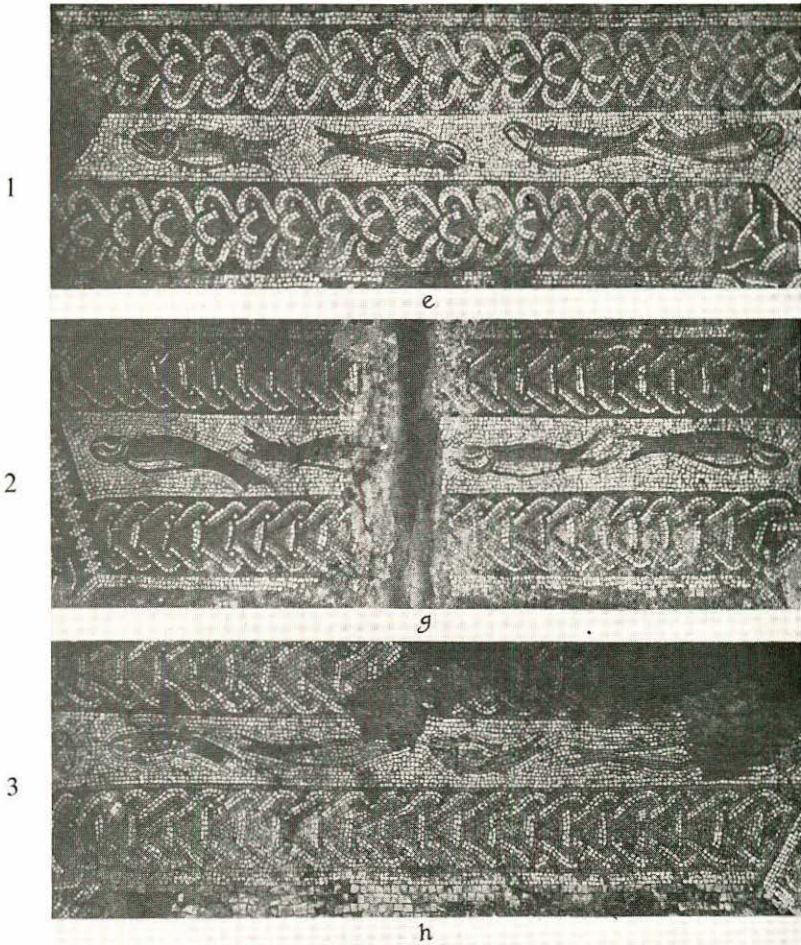


Fig. 5. Coarse Pottery, Lufton. (4)

Plate IX



1. Lufton Roman Villa: Panel e of mosaic surrounding octagonal bath.
2. Panel g.
3. Panel h.

as well as to New Forest Pottery Sites at Ashley Rails, Black Heath Meadow¹, Linwood, to a late well filled in A.D. c.375 at Mildenhall², and to the Richborough reports³.

1. Carinated bowl imitating terra sigillata form 44, with bands of roulette stamped decoration. Medium hard grey clay with traces of red slip. Unstratified. Cf. *Ashley Rails*, Pl. IV, 2; *Westland* Pl. F, 3; *Richborough I*, Pl. XXVIII, 113 (mid fourth century).
2. Flanged bowl imitating terra sigillata form 38. Hard grey clay with glossy red slip. Unstratified. Cf. *Ashley Rails*, Pl. VII, 10; *Mildenhall*, Pl. I, 1 (late fourth century); *Richborough I*, Pl. XXVIII, 109.
3. Flat dish. Hard dark grey gritty paste with black slip. Unstratified. A common third and fourth century type. Cf. *Richborough I*, Pl. XXVIII, 106.
4. Carinated bowl with two parallel raised bands. Hard red body and grey core, with much worn red slip. Unstratified. For shape, cf. *Mildenhall*, Pl. II, 2.
5. Olla with wide lattice decoration. Hard black clay, burnished rim and outer surface. Unstratified. An early cavetto type common from the late second century onwards.
6. Flanged mortarium. Medium hard buff clay with biscuit coloured slip; inside studded with grit. Unstratified. *Ashley Rails*, Pl. Xa, 8; a third and fourth century type.
7. Flanged mortarium. Hard red clay with buff slip, inside studded with grit. Unstratified. Cf. *Sloden*, Pl. XVII, 17.
8. Handled beaker with bead rim and panels of alternating oblique lines on upper part. Black clay, slightly rough interior surface, burnished exterior. Occupation layer of Room 13. A widely distributed type, common in the military fortresses. Cf. Seaby, *Roman Building at Alcester, Warwickshire*, 40, No. 33, and 41, note 4, quoting May, *Roman Pottery in the Colchester and Essex Museum*, 1930, 'This form occurs frequently on Roman sites and many examples could be cited dating from the Hallstatt period 500-200 B.C. (British Museum Mores Collection) down to A.D. 180-270 in the Poltross Burn Milecastle. Those of early date have a beaded lip, and an example

¹ Heywood Sumner, *Excavations in New Forest Pottery Sites*.

² *Wilts. Arch. Magazine*, xli, 159-66.

³ J. P. Bushe-Fox, *Reports on the Excavations at Richborough I-IV*.

- from Wookey Hole, Somerset, is ornamented with fir-tree pattern (*Archaeologia*, LXII, 587, fig. 12, No. 6, late Celtic)'. Possibly a local product continuing an early tradition.
9. Jar with stuck-on handle and burnished oblique lines on each side of handle. Dark gritty paste, rough scoriated inner surface, traces of slip on outer surface. Unstratified.
 10. Shallow flanged dish. Hard gritty black paste, slightly burnished. Unstratified.
 11. Olla with cavetto rim. Hard rather coarse black clay, slightly burnished rim and outer surface. Unstratified. A common fourth century type.
 12. Flanged bowl with looped decoration. Ware as No. 10. Found between pilae of hypocaust in Room 7. Many vessels, varying in size, of this common third and fourth century type were found. Cf. *Westland*, Pl. G, 18.
 13. Handled jar. Fine cream body, biscuit coloured slip. Unstratified. The closest parallel to this vessel is a handled jar at *Old Sloden Wood*, Pl. XIV, 2, and the two-handled jar, Pl. XXIV, 6.
 14. Storage jar with row of depressions on top of rim made by a pointed implement, and a row of thumb impressions below rim. Hard coarse grey body with high proportion of grit. Unstratified. Cf. *Black Heath Meadow, Linwood*, Pl. XXII, 5 and 6.

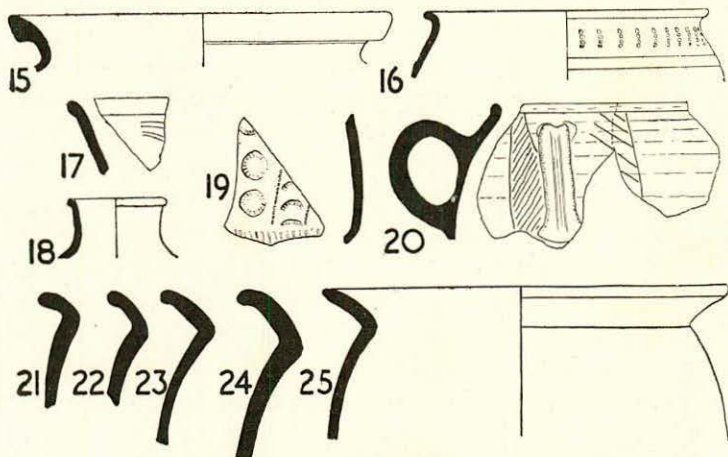


Fig. 6. Coarse Pottery, Lufton. (4)

Plate X



1. Lufton Roman Villa: Octagonal plunge bath from SW., showing buttressing and part of Room 15.



2. Hypocaust of Rooms 10 and 11 from N.W.

15. Bowl with very hard grey body and smooth glossy surface. Unstratified.
16. Bowl with stamped demi-rosettes and raised band. Medium hard red clay with traces of red slip. Unstratified. Cf. *Mildenhall*, Pl. II, 3. Rosette stamped ware was common at Ashley Rails.
17. Bowl with pattern in white slip and faint roulette notching below rim. Hard red body with red slip. Occupation layer in Room 13. Cf. *Mildenhall*, Pl. III, 3.
13. Beaker. Same ware as 13. Unstratified. Cf. *Richborough I*, Pl. XXVII, 96 (mid fourth century).
19. Carinated bowl with stamped rosette, demi-rosette and notched decoration; slight impression of the stamping showing on the inside. Hard red clay with grey core, reddish-brown slip, much worn. Unstratified. Cf. *Ashley Rails*. Pl. IV, 1; Pl. V, 6 and 9. (Fourth century). *Mildenhall*, Pl. II, 6.
20. Bead rim jar with stuck-on handle, and panels of burnished oblique lines. Dark grey clay, with slightly rough inside surface. Occupation layer of Room 13. A common type at Ilchester, in a series of sizes, probably a local product c. A.D. 180-380. Cf. No. 8.
- 21-24. Ollae. Hard black paste, slightly burnished rim and outer surface; lattice decoration. Cf. No. 11.
25. Olla. Hard coarse dark grey clay, much worn surface with traces of black slip.

SMALL OBJECTS. (Fig. 7).

Bronze.

1. Part of bracelet with hook terminal, $\frac{1}{8}$ in. wide, $\frac{1}{16}$ in. thick (fig. 7, B). Unstratified. Cf. *Lydney*, fig. 17, D and E (later half of fourth century); *Westland*, Pl. H, 1; *Richborough II*, Pl. XX, 40; Pl. XXI, 51.
2. Part of bracelet of twisted bronze, $\frac{1}{12}$ in. thick (fig. 7, D). Unstratified. Cf. *Lydney*, fig. 17, N (later half of fourth century).
3. Two spoons (bowls only) of tinned bronze: (i) oval, nearly complete, with beginning of handle (fig. 7, C). Unstratified; (ii) badly broken, oval, $2\frac{1}{2}$ in. long; occupation layer of Room 13. A tinned bronze spoon was found at Littleton Villa in 1951.
4. Brooch (fig. 7, A), flat strip bow, pin missing, catch-plate

flattened. Ribbed decoration on bow, much worn near the spring where secondary circular piercing occurs off centre, possibly for setting of precious stone. Found in old surface soil outside Room 16. Cf. Collingwood, *Archaeology of Roman Britain*, fig. 60, No. 18, type J, 'a rare pattern' occurring 'only on earliest sites' (p.247). A similar brooch (found on Ham Hill) is in Taunton Castle Museum.

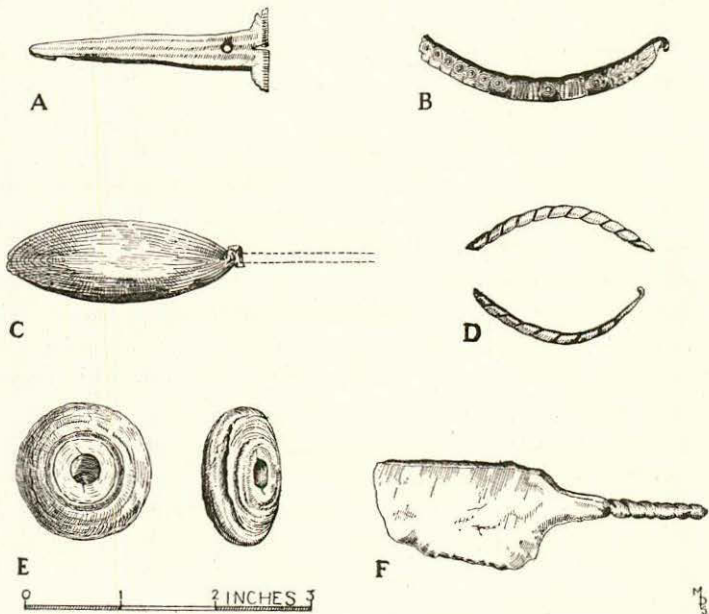


Fig. 7. Small objects, Lufton.

Iron.

1. Blade of knife, with twisted stem for insertion into handle (fig. 7, F). Occupation layer of Room 13. Cf. *Richborough IV*, 326.
2. Nails¹ were very common, especially in association with roof tiles, some still remaining in the tile-hole. They varied in length from 3½ in. to 2 in., with a square shank and round heads, varying from ½ in. to ⅝ in. in diameter. One large-headed nail (1¾ in. diameter) was also found.

¹ Dr. F. H. Pollard, Dept. of Chemistry, University of Bristol, reports that chemical analysis of a typical iron nail showed 98% pure iron.

Shale, flint.

1. Spindle-whorl of Kimmeridge shale (fig. 7, E); found in building debris of hypocaust, Room 7. Cf. *Westland*, Pl. H, No. 12.
2. Small scraper of flint, $1\frac{1}{8}$ in. by $\frac{7}{8}$ in.; in foundation trench of corridor wall.

Glass.

1. Base of small vessel, 1 mm. thick, diameter $1\frac{1}{4}$ in. Floor of Room 13.
2. A few fragments of window glass were recovered, $\frac{1}{10}$ in. thick.

THE COINS¹

The coins are too few in number to permit precise dating either of the construction or occupation of the villa. All, with one exception, fall within the fourth century, and the latest, as at Yeovil and the Cokers, belongs to the reign of Valens. The exception is the base silver coin of the middle third century, in good condition, found on the field surface after ploughing in 1945. It would be rash to assume from this find that occupation must have begun soon after A.D. 250, since some stray losses of the extremely prolific series of 'radiates' would surely have come to light if this were the case. The coin evidence substantially bears out the evidence of pottery and the nature of the building for fourth century occupation, apparently lasting down to the troubled times following the disasters of A.D. 367.

1. *Philip II (the Younger)* (244-6). *Antoninianus*. *Obv.* M IVL PHILIPPVS CAES; rad. and draped bust r. *Rev.* IOVI CONSERVAT; Jupiter standing l. Coh. 13. Modern surface find.

2. *Constantine II* (as *Caesar*, 317-37). *Æ*, 14-16 mm. *Obv.* CONSTANTINVS IVN NOB C; laur. and cuir. bust r. *Rev.* GLORIA EXERCITVS; two standards between two soldiers. Mintmark off flan. Coh. 22. Destruction level.

3. *Constans* (as *Augustus*, 337-50). *Æ*, 20 mm. *Cententionalis* (348-50). *Obv.* DN CONSTANS P F AVG; laur. and draped bust l., holding globe. *Rev.* FEL [TEMP REPARATIO]; soldier r. leading

¹ Thanks are due to Mr. W. A. Seaby for help in the writing of the coin report and to Mr. Anthony Thompson, of the Ashmolean Museum, for help in identifying the coins.

boy out of hut. Coh. 18. Mintmark illegible. In old surface soil outside building.

4. Æ Barbarous imitation of coin of Constantius II, c.350-5 or later. *Rev.* FEL TEMP REPARATIO; warrior spearing fallen horseman. Destruction level.

5. *Valentinian I.* (364-375). Æ, 17.5 mm. *Obv.* DN V [ALENTINIANVS P F AVG]; diad. bust r. *Rev.* GL]ORIA [RO]MAN [ORVM]; emperor standing, r. hand on head of kneeling captive, l. hand holding labrum. Coh. 12. Mint mark illegible. Modern surface find.

6. Æ. 19.5 (fragment broken away). *Obv.* As last. *Rev.* [SECVRITAS REIPVBLICAE]; Victory to l.; in field OF III. Mint: CONST (Arles). Coh. 37. Occupation layer of Room 13.

7. *Valens* (364-378) Æ, 18-19 mm. *Obv.* DN VALENS P F AVG; diad. and draped bust r. *Rev.* As last, in field, A. Mint: SMAQ ?P (Aquileia). Coh. 47. Destruction level.

CONCLUSIONS

The excavation of this site has not produced direct evidence about the agricultural economy on which Romano-British villas were based, but it has proved the existence of yet another country house within the orbit of what is now known to be a fair sized town—Lendiniae (modern Ilchester). As at Low Ham¹ no trace of any occupation earlier than c.A.D.200 was found, in contrast with the early Roman and pre-Roman habitations revealed at Catsgore² and Littleton³ respectively. Lufton's occupation began later than that of Low Ham (probably towards the close of the third century), and at both, abandonment and subsequent decay came towards the end of the fourth century. Structurally, two points of some interest stand out: first, sufficient evidence was forthcoming to offer a reconstruction of the octagonal plunge-bath with its adjacent rooms; the fish mosaic of the ambulatory has its place, too, in the history of Romano-British culture. Secondly, R. G.

¹ *S.D.N.Q.* xxv, 1-6; xxv, 61-4.

² *Proc. Som. Arch. Soc.* xc, 59-63.

³ *J.R.S.* xlii (1952), 98.

Collingwood noted¹ that in Britain the wingless corridor house was almost entirely absent, and asked whether this meant that the British villas were once wingless, and were brought into line with the new fashions by adding wings. Lufton proves not only that a wing was added to an existing corridor house, but also that this wingless house belongs to the late period of the Roman occupation. This supports Dr. C. A. F. Berry's conclusion² "any correlation between type and date (of Romano-British houses) in the country regions must be abandoned". No parallel has yet been found for this unusual feature. Finally, attention may be drawn to the disproportion between the large and elaborate bath suite and the rest of the house: the luxury of the former contrasts oddly with the solid yet unpretentious comfort of the latter.

APPENDIX

THE FISH MOSAIC AT LUFTON

After making the coloured scale drawing, Mrs. M. Swaine suggested that freshwater fish were represented in the ambulatory mosaic of the plunge bath: panel f, fish 1—salmon, a fish of the Atlantic, not the Mediterranean; fishes 2 and 3—trout snapping at flies; fish 4—pike chasing trout; panel c, fish 2—sturgeon; panel d—pikes attacked by eels.

Dr. E. Trewavas, Assistant Keeper, British Museum (Natural History), to whom this problem was referred, very kindly reported:

"I think Mrs. Swaine's interpretations are very ingenious and I should not be prepared to quarrel with them.

"I agree with her suggestion of Sturgeon for panel c, fish 2. Trout is a possible interpretation of fishes 1, 2 and 3 of panel F. Fish 4 of panel f makes a better pike if it is interpreted in the position the reverse of her drawing, because there is no fin just behind the head on the back (this still leaves a small 'fin' to be explained) and the bubbles would then be going upwards as they are from the

¹ Collingwood, *Archaeology of Roman Britain*, 116, and 136, where he cites 'strip houses' at North Ash, Kent (Haverfield, *Roman Britain in 1914*, *Brit. Acad. Supp. Papers* iii), and at Ashdon, Essex (*Arch. J.* x, 14). I am indebted to Miss M. V. Taylor for references to similar houses at Nash Lee Farm, Terrick, Ellesborough, Bucks (*Records of Bucks* ii, 53 ff), at Lockleys, Welwyn (*Antiq. J.* xviii, 339 ff.), at Saunderton Church Farm (*Bucks Records* xiii, 398), and at Little Milton, Dorchester, Oxon. (*J.R.S.* xl, 102 and Pl. vi. 2).

² *J.R.S.* xli. (1951), 26.

other fishes. The eel is possible, although the conger or moray would be an alternative if a marine interpretation were preferred.

“The shell (panel h) looks to me more the shape of the ormer, *Haliotis*, known from the Channel Islands southwards (marine), a very decorative shell.

“For the fishes as a whole I think freshwater interpretation is better than marine, but the correspondence with real fishes is so very inexact that evidence from any other quarter would probably be more valuable.”

Miss M. V. Taylor has kindly drawn my attention to a recent discussion of fish mosaics by Doro Levi in *Antioch Mosaics* (Princeton 1947) I, 596 ff; pointing out that fishes were a favourite theme throughout the Roman world for decorating baths, he shows that the sea fauna of Italian shores served as models for the representation of fish in pattern books¹; there is no evidence of any kind for the introduction of different fish peculiar to other shores of the Mediterranean Sea. Moreover, he traces the development in the third and later centuries of schematic forms with a more purely ornamental effect and less varacity in the representation of species. Hard outlines, bands of gradated colours, conventional rings surrounding the eye, flattening of the tail and protruding stiff dorsal fins—all these characteristics appear on the Lufton fishes. It would seem therefore that a marine interpretation is the more likely one, and that identification of individual fishes is very difficult for stylistic reasons: no exact parallels have so far been found, the nearest being a mullet on the Hemsworth (Dorset) mosaic in the British Museum.

¹ For an illuminating discussion of mosaic artists, see J. M. C. Toynbee, *Some Notes on Artists in the Roman World* (Collection Latomus, Bruxelles 1951), 43-50.