

Discovery of Roman Remains at "Stanchester," in the Parish of Stoke-sub-Hamdon.

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AS mentioned by Prof. Haverfield in his Presidential address in his note on *The Place-Name 'Chester' in Somersetshire*,¹ "Stanchester" hitherto appeared to have yielded no Roman remains.

The name "Stanchester" has been applied from time immemorial to a field lying about half-a-mile due north of Hamdon Hill, adjacent to the Fosse Way, from which it might be approached by a road known as "Trutts Lane," bordering a field in which are two parallel earthworks² termed "The Trutts." At the present day this lane is a mere trackway, at parts washed away by Trutts Brook which runs beside a portion of it.

For many years the existence of Roman buildings on the above site has been surmised, but no definite evidence has been forthcoming. The writer's grandfather, Mr. Richard Walter, foreshadowed the probability of such in his paper³ on Hamdon Hill nearly seventy years ago, as did the writer in a later paper⁴ on the same subject.

At the end of April, 1919, the writer visited the site, which was again under the plough for the first time for a generation, and he was able to find undoubted evidence of Roman habitation—fragments of tile (*tegulae* and *imbrices*), scattered over the greater part of the field, but more plentiful at the

1. *Proc. Som. Arch. Soc.*, LXIV, xl.

2. *Ibid.*, LVIII, ii, 48.

3. *Ibid.*, IV, ii, 88.

4. *Ibid.*, LVIII, ii, 48.

N.W. corner; numerous tesserae of various colours and fragments of Romano-British pottery, including a few pieces of Samian and New Forest ware, and a small portion of a mortarium.¹ These form ample proof of the nature of such buildings as may have existed there, the foundations of which the writer hopes at a future date to have the opportunity of discovering.

SUPPLEMENTARY NOTE ON "STANCHESTER."

In September, after the harvest, the writer obtained permission to explore this site.

By means of a probing-rod, used at various parts of the field, a level area of resistance was found about 50 feet from the northern boundary hedge and 30 feet from that on the west.

On making a trial trench here, a concrete flooring was discovered at an average depth of about 18ins. No pavement was found *in situ*, but numerous tesserae of various colours were scattered about. This flooring was uncovered to the extent of 18ft. by 10ft., and a considerable number of fragments of roofing-tile of baked clay, stone, and slate were turned up, together with a large portion of a Samian bowl in pieces, a rudely fashioned bone spoon (broken), a spherical flint pounder, and several pieces of decorated wall-plaster, pottery, flue-tile and brick.² On the west side of this flooring was a two-course Ham stone wall, 1ft. 3ins. wide, built on a well laid set-off course of dressed stone, 36ins. wide, running approximately north and south. To the west of this was another concrete floor which was not uncovered.

From this limited investigation sufficient evidence was gathered to prove the existence of Roman buildings of some pretension on the site, probably extending into the adjoining fields, as current tradition relates that foundations were unearthed when the boundary ditches were being deepened.

The extent of "Stanchester" is suggested by the position of the name on the 6in. Ordnance map.

1. *Proc. Som. Arch. Soc.*, LXV, lxii.

2. *Ibid.*, LXV, lxii.