

Archaeological Notes

Recent Building at Balkesbury Camp, Andover

THE building of seven new houses facing Rooksbury Road (N.G. 41/353447, 6 in. O.S. sheet Hants XXIII N.E.) has shed a little more light on the rampart of the south-east corner of Balkesbury Camp at a point where it is barely visible. To the north the rampart runs through the front gardens of the houses built in the last few years along Rooksbury Road, and the building of the new houses now means that for its full length as far south as the disused chalk pit it is in front gardens. The author made brief visits for the Ministry of Works while this work was being carried out.

The plots have a frontage of 480 feet on the road. A trench for a drain on the front of the houses ran longitudinally along the rampart and revealed it as a low bank with a core of broken chalk reaching about two feet in thickness above the old turf line. It stands about 35 feet back from the hedge measured to its outer edge, and is about 40 feet broad. Excavation for a garage revealed the ditch in front, a depth of about six feet showing. The outer lip of this is just inside the hedge.

Animal bones and a few sherds came to light. The sherds which were all found together are reported by the workman who found them to have been beneath the rampart on the old ground surface. The ware is fairly hard hand-made pottery with flint grits, baked dark brown-red but sometimes with a black core or black on the inside. No rims are preserved, but pots were evidently flat bottomed with a slightly thickened edge and rough bottom, and had straightish sides with an angular shoulder.

Clearly the pottery is Iron Age A in form and one need do no more than remind the reader of the conclusions reached by Professor and Mrs Hawkes in the journal of this Society after their excavations just before the war (*Papers and Proc. Hants F.C.*, 14, 1940, 338-345), where A2 pottery was found as here stratified below the material of the bank.

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Southampton Excavations

SPRING 1957

INTERIM REPORT

EXCAVATIONS were carried out for a month during April on a section of the defences near the north-east corner of the walls. A grant was received from H.M. Ministry of Works, and a force of from two to four paid labourers was employed during the whole time. Many volunteers also took part.

One section was cut through the bank behind the wall on the east side of the town and just north of East Street. The early, pre-wall, bank was discovered, and from pottery

HAMPSHIRE FIELD CLUB PROCEEDINGS

obtained from beneath it a date approximating to some time during the first half of the 13th century would seem appropriate. At a later date this bank had the front cut back to a vertical face and the town wall built against it, followed by heaping more earth behind it to form a higher and larger bank. The wall itself was of exceedingly poor workmanship and was only 2ft. 6ins. wide. The footings went no deeper than the original ground level. It was faced only on the outside, while the core was composed entirely of large, uncut, stone blocks, placed almost at random against the bank, with little effort to retain regular courses. At present, it seems unlikely that this work was completed before 1350. The evidence is as yet slight, and must be treated with caution, until further work can be attempted and confirmation obtained.

Further work was carried out on the wall during the 16th century, when it appears to have been widened.

Outside the wall, several trenches were cut, in order to obtain knowledge of the inner ditch, and its line has been successfully traced at this point. It appears to have been about 13 ft. deep and 30 ft. across.

On the original ground surface between the wall and the edge of the ditch was a scatter of pottery sherds, seemingly of Iron Age 'AB' type, dating probably to the 1st or 2nd centuries B.C.

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