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SOCIETY NEWS



THE BULLETIN OF THE ENFIELD ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY

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'Society News' is published quarterly in March, June, September and December. The Editor is Mr. G. R. Gillam, 23, Merton Road, Enfield, Middx., to whom articles and notes for inclusion and correspondence regarding the Bulletin should be addressed. The Bulletin is free to members. Extra copies may be obtained from the Editor (9d post free).

EDITORIAL

All the colour and pageantry of the period was present at the recent Medieval Frolick. The costumes were magnificent - the ladies in their wimples and flowing dresses, the men in tunics, hose and robes. We are sure that members have acquired a great deal of knowledge about medieval fashions during the making of their garments.

Four hours of closely packed entertainment provided a truly spectacular event. Salisbury House was an ideal setting for the occasion - the present Tudor building is believed to be on the site of the manor house of Edmonton.

There was dancing by Morris Men in the grounds of the house. Several realistic fights were staged between two contestants using swords, axe and mace and ball, and poleaxes. The surfaces of the shields they were carrying proved that the weapons were not toys!

The lower rooms of Salisbury House, suitably decorated, became the Great Hall for the meal that followed. The tables were loaded with food and drink. There were joints of meat, salads, cheese, bread, dressings of various kinds, tarts, cream, fruit, beer, cider and a very medieval beverage, mead - all the items which would have been found on the medieval board. A repast that no lord would have been ashamed to provide for his guests. Grace (in latin) was said and we quickly caught the atmosphere of the period and were soon eating with our fingers in the medieval manner.

After the meal we adjourned to the upper chambers to listen to a medieval band. Their programme included little known 13th century tunes as well as one or two familiar ones.

The Great Hall having been cleared and a bar set-up we spent the rest of the evening with more dancing by the Morris Men in which members were invited to join and in finishing off the food and drink.

It took weeks of work to prepare and the organisers deserve an unqualified vote of thanks for their efforts in providing this truly memorable event which will long be a talking point for those who attended and who derived so much enjoyment from the evenings entertainment.

In December 1968 we published an interim report on the excavations of the pottery kilns near Much Hadham in Hertfordshire. A further seasons work has since been carried out and we welcome the opportunity to include an account of the 1969 excavations.

The Romano-British Kiln Sites, Bromleyhall Farm,

Much Hadham, Herts.

BARLEY HILL 1969

The extensive R. B. pottery and tile manufactory on Bromleyhall Farm, Much Hadham, Herts. lies 1.5 miles northwest of the modern village of Much Hadham and covers two fields of the farm, Wickham Spring Field and Barley Hill.

Four pottery kilns and one tile kiln have been excavated on W. S. F. since 1963 but little work has been attempted on Barley Hill kiln sites. A survey in the winter of 1963-64 plotted several probable kiln sites and subsequent annual inspections after ploughing confirmed their locations. There is little doubt that most of the kilns have suffered damage from mole draining in the recent past and that deep ploughing is causing further damage each year.

In 1967 and again in 1968 one Barley Hill kiln site was found to be severely disturbed by ploughing. With the owner's consent, the site was excavated in the summer and autumn of 1969 by the Braughing Hundred Archaeological Group with the aid of a grant from the Ministry of Public Buildings and Works. The excavation was under the supervision of the writer.

A pottery kiln of probable fourth century date was located and excavated, together with a potters waste dump and a tile kiln of similar date.

SUMMARY pottery The kiln conformed to the now familiar pattern
BARLEY HILL/KILN 1 of the W. S. F. pottery kilns. It was of
TL/41852165 the single stokeholed 'updraught' type but
lacked any internal structure, the pottery
charge being laid directly on the oven floor for firing.

The oven was pear-shaped and lay with the oven south and stokehole to the south east. The oven was constructed in the natural clay of the site. It was built by lining a pit roughly eight feet long by six feet wide with clay to a thickness of approximately ten inches. This clay was rendered internally with a facing of clay 'slurry' two-three inches thick. The floor of the oven was only clay lined to a thickness of two inches with a facing of 'slurry'.

The oven was later relined and a new floor provided but these structural elements were obscured by mole drain damage and ploughing.

The oven opened into the stokehole through a narrow mouth, a typical feature of the B. H. F. kilns. The stokehole filling of black soil and charcoal contained a quantity of fourth century pottery which included several sherds of the bossed and dimpled (so-called) 'Romano-Saxon' type.

BARLEY HILL TILE KILN 1 The remains of a tile kiln were found lying approximately in line with the pottery kiln but with the stokehole to the northwest. The kiln consisted of a tile lined flue opening upwards into a clay lined firing chamber transversed by tile built cross walls. The remains of only one wall were in situ

The cross walls and flue arch appear to have been broken down and used to partly fill the flue when the kiln went out of use. The remaining filling of the flue and firing chamber was friable tile debris and black soil which extended into and filled the stokehole. Only a few fragments of tiles were recovered from the filling, these were mainly bonding tiles, with small pilae, some tegulae and two fragments of imbrices.

THE POTTER'S WASTE DUMP Six feet to the north of the kilns and lying roughly parallel with them was a shallow ditch, three feet wide and eighteen inches deep, filled with waste pottery, probably from the pottery kilns. The collection was typical of B. H. F. wares, flagons, jars, straight-sided flanged bowls and some folded beakers were all noted during excavation. An estimated ten hundredweight of pottery was recovered from the site, most of this came from the dump. In general terms the pottery dates to the very late third or fourth century.

CONCLUSIONS Tile making may have formed the greater part of the industrial activity on the site with pottery making only ancillary to this. The pottery kiln was poorly constructed and was little used when compared with the flamboyant examples of W. S. F. kiln I and Mrs Hartley's kiln A. However, the contents of the waste dump suggest a fairly long life, or a high degree of wastage, for the kiln. Alternatively, the dump may be from another pottery kiln(s) although a geo-physical survey did not indicate any further kilns in the vicinity,

It may prove difficult to determine the sequence of kiln use and construction on the general B. H. F. complex and before attempting to place the first Barley Hill kiln in that sequence the pottery must be washed, sorted and evaluated, a process possibly lasting several years. In the meantime the kilns continue to receive further punishment at the point of the modern deep plough.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS Deep gratitude is expressed to the owner of B.H.F. Mr. Patrick Dolan and his farm manager Mr. Peter Glogner for permission to excavate and their patient understanding of our needs. Mr. and Mrs. N. Cooke kindly allowed access across their land for volunteers and heavy equipment. To Mr. J. Allan and the six boys of the Herts Training School who bore the brunt of the heavy work go our particular thanks, especially for moving a large spoil heap over the pottery kiln in a very short time

B. BARR.