

The 1949-50 season at Camerton Somerset had for its objective the continuation of the examination of the extensive Romano British Settlement on this prolific site, which has yielded evidence of occupation from Neolithic times to late 9th Century Saxon times. The site is situated on the Fosseway about 7 miles south of the City of Bath. It is about a quarter of a mile square in extent, and lies on the naturally defended plateau above the small mining town of Radstock. The Cam and Wellow Valleys lying on its North and South Sides. Work during the past season was concentrated on the north west sector of the settlement. This was necessary in order to comply with the requirements of a hospitable and co-operative owner farmer, (Mr. F. Wells of Camerton Farm) to whom the Camerton Club are very grateful.

Three buildings were located during the season, and examined. This makes a total of nine buildings located on this site. The first building discovered last season (VII) was a small rectangular building lying near and at right angles to the Fosseway. It is a late construction, and appears to have been built late in the fourth century or even perhaps in the early fifth century.

Carved Bath stone blocks with a chevron design had been incorporated in its roughly constructed walls. These, no doubt, came from earlier buildings on the site. A complete column of the same material was also found inside this building, and would seem to have been adapted for use as a pedestal or stand for the small statuette of a household god of native workmanship which had been fashioned from a block of the local oolitic stone of the district. It was found lying near the base of the pillar. It is $8\frac{3}{4}$ inches high and $4\frac{1}{2}$ inches broad at its widest point. The breast and sides are decorated with a criss cross pattern similar to that found on the native black ware. The figure is seated with hands placed on its knees, where two small holes have been made to receive an upright staff or something of that sort. This statuette awaits identification?

A fine bronze circular brooch inlaid with coloured enamels was also found inside this building. Constantinian coins were also found associated with minimi similar to the hoard discovered last year. This hoard has been dated as probably belonging to the early 5th century AD. The association of these coins, and the almost complete absence of Samian ware in this building suggests that we may have here a building erected towards the close of the Roman occupation and still in use in post Roman times.

A further interesting feature of this building was the flue in its south east corner. It consisted of a small sunken chamber 8 feet by 4 feet with a well constructed channel which led from this chamber to the wall. This was doubtless to take away the smoke. It also had a small stone platform on either side of this channel.

The north wall of this building was interrupted at 7 feet intervals for upright posts. The floor level was below the normal level outside the building and the natural oolite which is very shallow on the site had been well trodden or pounded, and this made a good solid floor.

Building VIII was of similar construction to the previous building, and its associated finds point to the same period of construction. It had the same type of floor and furnace. This building had been extensively robbed of its walls.

Building IX proved to be quite an extensive building, as compared with the two former buildings. It had a frontage of about 68 feet and was 40 feet in breadth. It also had a furnace against its west wall. The building had six rooms with an exterior passage at the rear on the ground floor. This narrow passage, no more than 2 ft. 6 ins. wide, rather suggests a stairway to an upper storey from the outside. This building has been identified with one of the buildings excavated by the Rev. John Skinner in 1817. The plan, now recovered, agrees largely with that given by Skinner (Victoria County History of Somerset, Vol. I, page 289, fig. 59) but an important omission is the absence of the semi circular courtyard, (a most unusual feature) at the rear of the building to the north.

Finds were very few as might be expected from a building that had previously been excavated. Skinner found three hoards of coins in this building which had apparently been buried just before the end of the third century AD. Hoard I comprised of coins of Gallienus, Valerian, Victorianus, Tetricus, Claudius Gothicus, Carausius and Allectus.

60 in number.

Hoard II was comprised of 114 third brass coins of the same period. Hoard III was also of the same period, and consisted of 334 coins.

This building together with Building I in the same field (excavated in 1932), is on a different alignment to the two previous buildings described above, and belong to an earlier period of building on the site early in the 2nd century AD. Two streets also discovered during the past season belong to this earlier plan of the settlement. They are on the same alignment as Buildings I and IX. The streets are set oblique to the Fosseyway giving the settlement a south eastern frontage.

Much work remains to be done on this most interesting site, and work will be resumed in the coming spring at Eastertide.

The Camerton Excavation Club was founded in 1948 to continue the systematic excavation of the Camerton site. It also provides a series of popular lectures on Archaeological subjects during the winter months, and a series of visits to sites of Archaeological interest in the western counties during the summer. It has also organised a very successful exhibition of its finds at Bath, and the same exhibition is also to be given at Norton, Radstock during the coming spring. The Club are most gratified by the appreciation shown by the man in the street to this method of presenting archaeological finds to the general public.

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