

EXTRACTS FROM “CAMERTONIA” 1950

The Saxon Cemetery

A human skull was found in the quarry face at the Camerton/Clandown cross roads in 1926. “On hearing that bones were being thrown down by the quarrymen, the writer proceeded to the spot, where the quarrymen had recovered a number of human bones, several beads, and a small gilt bracteate. These I purchased for the County Museum at Taunton. On being acquainted of these finds, our President, Abbot Horne, FSA, with Dr A Bullied FSA, took immediate steps to investigate the site.....

The excavation of the Saxon Cemetery began in 1926, and was concluded in 1932. (See Proceedings of the Somerset Archaeological Soc, vols 74 & 79.)

During the summers of 1932 and 1933, excavations were made in the 18 Acre Field. Here, the plan of an interesting Roman building (Building 1) was recovered, of 2nd century date, also part of a further house in the same field (Building 3).

In 1934, excavations began in the Seven Acre Field, and continued to the Autumn of 1937. This revealed what may be the outer defensive ditches of a large Iron Age B hill fort. This is known to extend to the north in the field on the opposite side of the Fosseway. A small circular hut with surrounding ditch, and walls constructed of wattle was an interesting feature of this excavation.

While the Early Iron Age site was being investigated, two small ditches were discovered. These ran alongside the Fosseway, and are part of the original layout of this highway. These ditches had been cut through the filling of the earlier ditches, and from the finds discovered in their filling they were made not later than 50 AD. As will be seen from the accompanying plan, these ditches were traced westwards for about 165 yds (150m), where house 2 was located. A little further to the west, house 4 was found. Both houses were of mid 3rd century date and built over the silted up road ditches. House 4 was also built over the filling of the Bronze Age Tumulus II. In this barrow ditch fillingtwo silver coins of the British tribe Duboni of the 1st century BC were found.

Tumulus II has also been partially explored, but the primary interment has not been found. The original surface, before the barrow was constructed, showed much signs of burning.”

The outbreak of war in 1939 brought to an end the excavations.

Post war Excavations 1946 - 1950

In the Autumn of 1946 “ the examination of House 4 and Tumulus II continued.

Our attention for the 1947 season was centred on an examination of the so called

“Amphitheatre”. This is situated in Camerton Park to the south of Camerton Church. The site consists of a series of terraces forming three sides of a square.

During 1948 exploratory cuttings were made in the Rowberrow field. These revealed the foundations of three rectangular buildings (5,6 & 7), similar in plan to Building 4.

Work in the 1949 season was concentrated in the south west sector of the settlement in the 18 Acre Field. Three buildings were located and examined. This makes a total of nine buildings located and examined on the site. The first building discovered (8) 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 in the fourth or even perhaps the early fifth century.

An interesting feature of this building was the flue in its south-east corner. It consisted of a small sunken chamber 8ft by 4ft (2.5 x 1.25 m) with a well constructed channel which led from this chamber to the wall. This was doubtless to take away the smoke.....The north wall of this building was interrupted at 7 ft (2m) intervals for upright posts. The same feature was also found in building 6.....

Building 9 was of similar construction to the previous buildings and its associated finds point to the same period of construction.

Building 2,(?3) partly excavated in 1932, proved to be an extensive building, as compared with the two former buildings. It had a frontage of about 68 ft (21m) and was 40 ft (12.3m) in breadth. It had a furnace against its west wall. The building had 6 rooms with an exterior passage at the rear on the ground floor. This narrow passage no more than 2 ft 6 ins (75cms) wide rather suggests a stairway to an upper storey from the outside. This building has been identified with one of the buildings excavated by Skinner in 1817..... This building together with building 1 in the same field, (excavated in 1932), is on a different alignment to the 2 previous buildings described above, and belong to an earlier period of building 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 1 and 2 (please note there is some confusion in the building Nos and I think Wedlake is referring to buildings 1 and 3). The streets are set oblique to the Fosseway giving the settlement a south-eastern frontage.

During the present season (1950) cuttings were made at the foot of tumulus I on the site. The purpose of these cuttings was to ascertain whether a circular ditch existed around this barrow. It was found to have been constructed on a ridge and had no ditch like tumulus II.

An exploratory trench was also made across the area between tumulus I & II. A small furnace similar to others found on the site was found in this cutting in building 10. A street running east to west was also discovered.”

W J Wedlake 1950

