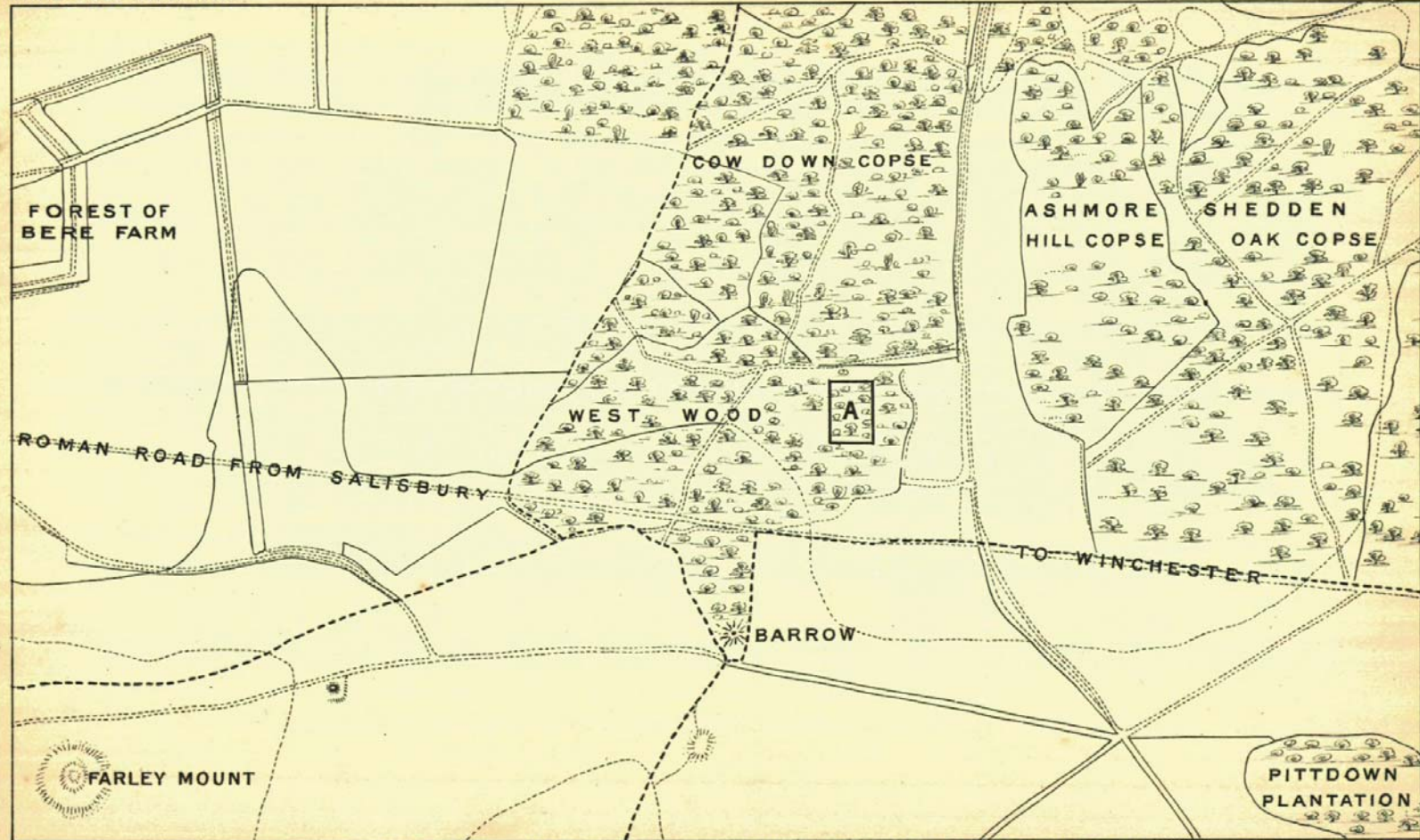


HANTS FIELD CLUB, 1895.



WESTWOOD, NEAR WINCHESTER, SHEWING SITE OF ROMAN STRUCTURES—(A).

THE ROMAN STRUCTURES AT WESTWOOD, SPARSHOLT.

BY W. H. JACOB.

Roman remains have been found in so many places round Winchester, that no surprise is felt at the discovery of them on other sites hitherto unknown as localities in which Roman buildings of some sort existed.

One of the most interesting of the Roman roads from Winchester is that which connected it with Old Sarum. This road can still be followed for the greater part of its course.

About four miles from Winchester on the north of this road and close to it, is a wood known as Westwood, and here an extensive Roman structure of some kind, a large villa and other buildings existed, the elevation being about 400 feet above the sea.

A mile from this site is the very conspicuous landmark and ancient round barrow or tumulus known as Farley Mount, and within half a mile is another round barrow, formerly known as Robin Hood's barrow. These point to the probability that this locality was inhabited even before Roman time.

The existence of remains of buildings in this position has attracted the attention of antiquarians for some years, and in June, 1890, the then chief magistrate of Winchester, accompanied by several members of the Hampshire Field Club visited the spot. They were struck with the extent of the buildings, as evidenced by the almost buried walls and sundry sure indications of the Roman builders and occupiers. The matter, in due course, was laid before the Club,

and a grant of three guineas was voted for an experimental excavation in the form of trial holes. For many reasons it was difficult to fix a day for the test, but time was not wasted, for leave was obtained from the Ecclesiastical Commissioners to excavate, and Mr. F. J. Collier, who has the sporting rights, readily concurred in the permit, and on September 2nd, 1895, Messrs. W. H. Jacob, T. W. Shore and Norman C. Nisbett proceeded to the spot and commenced operations. It is essential here to state a few facts as to the remains of the Roman Villa or Farm. The site and all around was once open country, but close to it, on the south, doubtless not far from the wood, runs the Roman Road from Porchester and Winchester to Old Sarum. This great *via*, as between the first and second stations, is practically destroyed by centuries of agriculture, excavations for the materials which it afforded, and other causes; but from Winchester to Old Sarum (Sorbiodunum) it is traceable and intact almost the whole distance. A Christian writer, Sidonius Apollinaris, who flourished in the 5th Century and indulged in prose and heroic verse, pays a pretty tribute to the roads of Rome, their miliary stones, and Cæsar's names thereon,¹ in words which have thus been handed down to us by the translator.

"Break not the ancient caudies strong,
"Whereon the columns stand along,
"Nor names of Cæsar's do not wrong."

Alas, the "columns" which marked the distances between the great stations in Britain have yielded to the stone breaker and in all this island there are certainly less than a score of such monuments of that ancient civilisation. The road on which our Westwood Villa abutted remains hard and fit for travel now after the lapse of so many centuries, but

¹The Emperors' names were always placed on the *milliaria* or mile stones. They are important as showing us the interest which the people in this distant province took in all the changes and movements of the Roman Empire. At Bitterne (Clausentum), no less than six stones have been found with inscriptions to various emperors. Three of these are dedicated to Gordian the younger, to Gallus and Volusianus, and to Aurelian. The other three are all dedicated to Tetricus and are particularly interesting as being the only inscriptions yet found in Britain to any of the local usurpers with the exception of one to Victorinus, found near Neath in South Wales.

military stones have never been discovered or dug up, possibly the pickaxe and shovel may some day exhume one and divulge not only distances, but the Emperor's name who caused them to be erected. It is a matter of certainty that the buildings in Westwood were never a halting place or small station, for a square entrenchment exists about a couple of miles off, near Ashley with its ruined cistern to catch the water and in this rest-camp coins, one of gold, were found many years ago, and before Field Clubs and interest in the past were general. Endeavours have been made by the writer to ascertain the possessor and the age of that *aureus*. It may be some guide as to the date of the occupancy of the buildings to state that a couple of years ago a *denarius*, not of the purest silver, was found by Mr. Butler, the keeper, a most worthy man, and a careful observer not only of the animals dear and otherwise to sportsmen, but of those things which the earth yields as evidence of the past. It is one of the coins of L. Marcus Julius Philippus, Emperor, A.D., 244-249. There are traditions that the neighbouring church of Sparsholt, an ancient structure, had the advantage of the immense supply of flints lying about the site of the buildings. Other more recent structures have profited thereby, but enormous quantities of flints of all sizes are yet remaining. The ground on which the buildings were erected has a gentle slope to the south east, and it is almost certain that the portion occupied by the proprietor stood on the highest point and the inferior buildings were at the base. A survey of the spot disclosed inequalities of surface and the existence of foundations in every direction, and scattered about are large stone tiles, if the expression may be used, which have the nail holes in them and were evidently laid on the roof in the way that slates are now. Here and there were flanged tiles used for heating purposes.

The experimental excavations made under the auspices of the H.F.C. resulted in the uncovering of very massive walls formed with flints, bedded in mortar and also pieces of worked chalk. One of the walls was uncovered down to a smooth surface formed on the footing of flints, but time did not permit an examination of the faces of the wall so as to determine which side was exterior or interior. The tine of a stag's antler was

turned up in the rubbish, also an ox bone, and apparently a sheep or goats bone broken in three pieces. There was also a fragment of dark bluish black pottery too small to permit any conjecture as to the shape of the vessel it formed part of. It is interesting to note that in the fir copse there are indications of barrows and there is a very fine one covered with large trees about half a mile off towards Farley Mount, itself an old burial place utilised for the interment of the famous horse "Ware Chalk Pit," and the country people assert he was buried with silver shoes on.

On the site, about a mile north of the church of Farley Chamberlayne, stands a pyramidal monument, erected about 1795 by Henry Paulet St. John, Esq. (afterwards, 1786, Mildmay, Bart.), to commemorate a favourite hunter which, in a fox chase, Sept. 1733, leaped into a chalk pit 25 feet deep, without injury to himself or rider. The next year the horse, under the allusive name of "Ware Chalk Pit," ran and won a plate at Winchester races. On the death of the good steed he was buried on the mount and a monument with an inscription erected, which becoming dilapidated were restored, and an iron tablet substituted by the late Sir William Heathcote, Bart., in 1870.

The use of the pick and shovel is the best revealer of the evidence of the past and it is hoped that the Hants Field Club will by future excavations determine the extent of the structures at Westwood, and endeavour to unearth something in pottery or pavement to indicate the character of the remains. There may still be under the earth rich pavements, &c., for it must be that the occupier of the large place was a man of wealth and honour, doubtless some Romano-Briton, who, on the line of road to and from the West of England with several vicinal ways, must have seen considerable traffic of troops, chiefly auxiliaries; for herein and about Winchester not the slightest trace has ever been found of centurial or legionary tablets, neither does the *Notitia* or other records of military Rome and her dependencies place any legion in this part of the empire. There is a small inscribed stone in the British Museum, found at Winchester many years ago and rescued from a stonemason's yard. Professor Hubner calls it a consecration offered to the Italian, German, and

British mothers the sacred protectresses of the nationalities which furnished recruits to the four Legions¹ and auxiliary cohorts of the army of occupation. Although Winchester and the vicinity has yielded coins, a few gold and immense number of copper and silver of every Emperor from Julius Cæsar down to Honorius not the slightest indication has ever been given of the troops garrisoned in the city or the rank of the chief officer.

¹ The viith, viiiith, and xxiiind Legions came over with the vith. The first three landed at Tynemouth and Newcastle. *Pons Ælia*. The altar inscription above referred to is as follows:—MATHI(BUS) ITA (li)s GERMANIS GAL(lis), BRIT(annis), AN(toninus) LU(cretianus) BENEFICIARIUS Co(n)s(ularis) RËST(ituit). — *Hubner's Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum*.