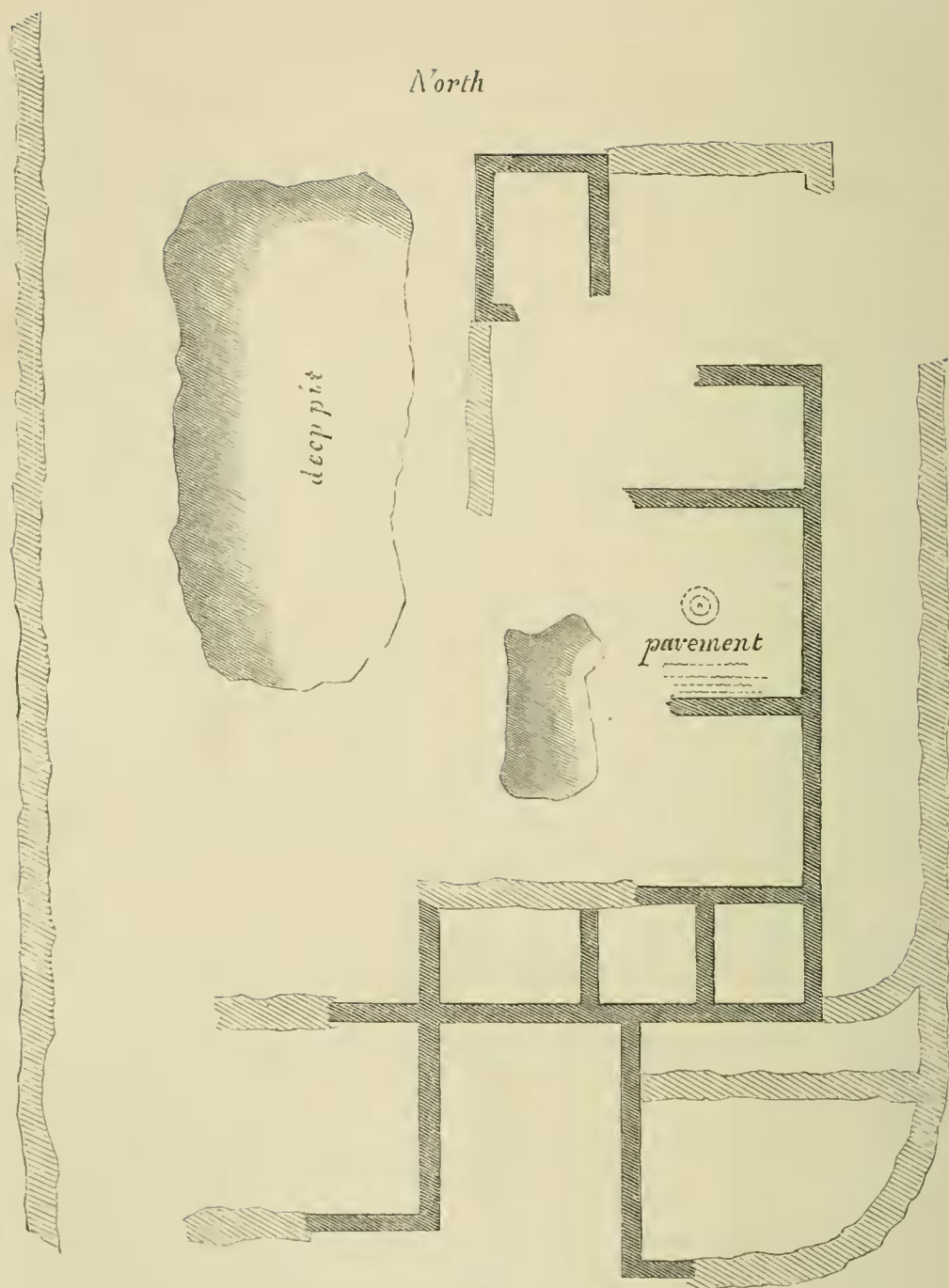


North



Scale.—12 ft. to the Inch.

REMAINS OF ROMAN VILLA ON THE HEATH. WALTON ON THE HILL, SURREY.

The dark tints indicate the recent trenches from which foundations have been removed, the lighter ones more remote excavations.

# Surrey Collections.

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## I.

### ROMAN PAVEMENT, ETC. UPON WALTON HEATH.

BY W. W. POCKOCK, Esq., B.A., F.R.I.B.A.

READ AT A GENERAL MEETING OF THE SOCIETY, HELD AT LAMBETH PALACE,  
31ST OCTOBER, 1856.

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ANYTHING relating to the Romans, those great masters of the ancient world, must be interesting, on their account, even if comparatively trivial in itself. Their history, like that of other nations, is too much a page of wars and murders, to afford any general insight into their every-day, in-door life and habits, the scenes so dear to every English heart; and yet so deeply have these imperial republicans stamped their impress upon the whole region of mind throughout Europe, that no investigation seems traced to the fountain-head, that does not extend back at least as far as the period of the Cæsars.

If this absorbing interest attaches to everything Roman throughout the world, how much more when the object of our research relates to our own beloved isle! We do not deny that these foreigners were the conquerors of our land; we are flattered by their

admission that it was "reduced to obedience only, and not to servitude." We rather boast the length and obstinacy of the struggle our hardy forefathers maintained against the science and discipline of the legions; for though we have but a one-sided testimony from contemporary history, and that, scanty at the best, penned by those least inclined to do justice to the subjugated, we cannot but admit the superiority of the invaders in point of science and of art. Gladly, therefore, do we hail every discovery that withdraws, however partially, the thick veil in which the Anglo-Roman period of our history is enveloped.

It is in this spirit, that I invite attention to the discoveries lately made on Walton Heath, which though, so far as I know, some of the most considerable yet brought to light in the county of Surrey, have not produced, hitherto, anything like the splendid works of Bignor, in Sussex, or Woodchester and Cirencester, in Gloucestershire.

Walton Heath is part of the high ground forming the southern rim of the chalk basin of London, and of which Banstead and Epsom Downs are parts adjacent. It lies in the crow's flight from London to Chichester, and in a direct line with Farley Heath, where lately, such numerous Roman remains have come to light. It is also in the direct line from Sandwich or Richborough, the *Ritupiæ*, and head-quarters of the Roman fleet, to Kingston or Walton on Thames, where, it seems, Cæsar first crossed the river, and in which vicinity, it appears, the Romans built their first bridge across that stream. The Roman street from London to Chichester must have passed at no great distance, if not across, the heath; and not far from here, must be the most hopeful search for the long-lost *Noviomagus* of Antoninus.

This Roman station, which has been looked for in Dartford, Croydon, Guildford, and perhaps a score more places, is described in the "Itinerary of Antoninus," compiled probably in the reign of Hadrian, or about A.D. 120, as situated on one of the roads from London to Canterbury, passing, not through Rochester, but through Vagniacæ, probably Maidstone. Ptolemy, the geographer of about the same date, calls it the capital of the Regni, who inhabited Surrey and Sussex, in which he is also supported by Richard the Monk of Cirencester, who, in the fourteenth century, professed to compile an itinerary of Roman Britain from an ancient Roman MS., and is generally considered a good authority. Chichester, probably the Regnum of Antonine, was, in the time of this emperor, reached from London through Winchester and Clausentum, or Southampton. But at a later date, the road from Chichester ran by Bignor and Pulborough, in Sussex, to Oakwood, in Surrey; thence by Ockley and Anstie Bury Camp to Dorking; and for a considerable portion of this distance, it still remains under the name of Stane Street. From Dorking it ran towards London, through Croydon or Wallington, either over Mickleham Down or Walton Heath, the road across which, still in use, has much of a Roman aspect, and in so doing it probably joined the road to Maidstone at Noviomagus.

There seems good reason for supposing, that the whole of the country from Maidstone to Salisbury, was one unbroken forest, almost impervious to the Roman legions, the densest part being about the wild of Surrey. This Mr. Long supposes to have been the reason for the road to Chichester going round by Reading and Winchester, the wood in that direction being less thick.

This south-east portion of the island was the part



first reduced by the Romans, Claudius having been instigated to the invasion by Bericus, doubtless the Veric, son of Comius, whose coin Mr. Tupper found on Farley Heath. Two powerful tribes, twenty towns, and the Isle of Wight were subdued at this time, and Cogidunus made king of at least a portion of the reduced territory, the seat of his kingdom being at Chichester. And it is probably attributable to the fact related of him by Tacitus, to the effect that this chief remained faithful to the Romans down to the age of Agricola, that we hear so little mention of his dominions in the history of those early times.

That the Romans occupied Surrey extensively is evidenced by the frequency of their remains. Brayley, in his history, mentions no less than twenty-six distinct localities in which they occur, and he might have added many others. Of these Gatton, Wallington, Kingston, Chertsey, Egham, Sunningdale, Send, Worplesden, Holmbury Hill, Farley Heath, Anstie Bury, and Blechingley form a complete circle of which Walton Heath is the centre.

In the year 1772, Mr. Barnes called the attention of the Society of Antiquaries to Roman antiquities discovered on this heath, consisting of foundations, walls, and some portions of a flue, and a small brass figure of Esculapius engraved in the *Archæologia*. In 1808 there still remained a large earthwork, supposed to have been the *Prætorium* of a Roman station. At one time a cottage was erected on the spot by some peasant, out of materials found there, but after a while the parochial authorities, as I understand, interfered, and enforced its demolition.

My attention was first directed to these vestiges of Roman occupation, by my friend, the Rev. Ambrose

Hall, in a conversation arising out of the Chertsey meeting of this society, affording, consequently, an illustration of the mode in which the operations of such an association tend to bring into the light and to gather as into a focus, the fragments of information scattered throughout the county. Having inspected some tessellæ, remains of pottery, and other articles, he had himself dug up upon the spot, and learning that the remaining foundations were being destroyed for the sake of re-using the materials in a garden wall, a visit was soon arranged, and a very little labour sufficed to uncover a considerable portion of the pavement. At the same time I measured the trenches, from which rough masonry, consisting chiefly of flints, had lately been removed. These are distinguished on the plan annexed by the dark colour, whilst the lighter tint marks excavations made at a period more remote.

The walls appear to have been little more than a foot in thickness, and the foundation to have been laid about three feet below the present surface, the pavement found being generally a foot below the turf, which distinguishes this site from the thick heath and gorse of the surrounding common. The excavations made extend over a space not more than 40 yards square; but a very slight removal of surface reveals abundant remains of Roman fictilia at very considerable distances around, especially to the eastward, affording ample scope for enterprising diggers.

Of the spaces within the walls, several retained a large portion of their pavements, mostly executed in red tesserae,  $1\frac{1}{2}$  to 2 inches square and an inch thick, of a coarse material, and apparently laid without reference to any figure. But the only one of an ornamental

character yet brought to light, is in an apartment towards the middle of the eastern side of the space occupied by the remains, and about 21 feet square. The design, it will be seen, consists of a central circle containing an urn, and surrounded by four semi-circles and four small squares disposed at the angles, all being included in a larger square, formed by a wide border, of a bold and elegant pattern, consisting of circles and points, the former containing alternately a heart and a figure resembling the seed of the columbine. On the outside of this larger square is a Greek meander, then a band of white; and lastly, the large red tesserae, before described, complete the whole.

The central urn already alluded to had its base toward the east, but was so indistinct in its markings when first discovered, and has since been so injured by a ruthless hand, that I am not able to speak with precision as to its exact form and details. It, however, was executed with great care, and in it I discovered two colours, that I could trace in no other part of the design. One of these was a deep crimson, and the other a purple or violet. This urn was surrounded by a circular border, consisting of a guilloche in three colours and two bands executed in two colours. This circle was enclosed in a square, formed by a double twisted guilloche, of not unfrequent occurrence at Cirencester, Woodchester, Frampton (in Dorsetshire), Alborough (in Yorkshire), and elsewhere. One of the angular spandrils was filled by a heart-shaped ornament, and I believe the others to have been similarly occupied.

Each side of this inner square is flanked by a semi-circle of equal diameter, already alluded to, and formed by a border of a triple plat and bands, and within this the guilloche and bands first described, and which is



continued across the cord as well as round the circumference of the circle.

The interiors of these semi-circles are filled up with series of smaller semi-circles, and each of the centres is occupied by a flower of three petals.

The angles of the general design are occupied by the four smaller squares, formed of the same guilloche, containing an effective and not uncommon border in two colours, the centre being filled by a double endless knot.

By far the greater part of the cubes employed in this floor, were only sun-dried clay of a fine texture. Some were cubes of chalk, and the rest pieces of broken Samian ware, upon many of which the portions of figures or ornaments of various kinds occur on the under side.

With the exception of a few found in the urn, the sun-dried tessellæ were of two different colours, one at least having been tinted with some colouring admixture; and it is probable that the firing was omitted with a view of obviating the red colour that would otherwise have been imparted to the clay. The general size of the tessellæ is half an inch every way.

In the absence of representations of living forms, and in paucity of colours, this pavement is inferior to many that have been found in various parts of the country; but in beauty of outline, severity of taste, and boldness of handling, it is equal to any I am acquainted with. In general outline it greatly resembles one found in Dyer Street, Cirencester, some eight years back; the whole of the interior of which consists of a circle and parts of circles within a square framework. But the introduction of the central and corner squares, in the Walton design, give it such an admixture of straight lines



and curves, as produces a force and character that the Dyer Street pavement does not possess. The variety of proportion and character in the several bands gives it a boldness that leaves nothing to be desired upon that score. It is to be regretted that it was executed in so perishable a material that removing or preserving it uncovered, is quite out of the question ; and the great wonder is, that it has remained so long in so perfect a state, for, though I and my friends uncovered the larger half, we found but few defects in the design. It must, one would think, have been well saturated with oil when first covered up.

I am not about to drag you through the *vexata quæstio* of a Roman house, with its *cubicula*, *atria*, *peristylia*, *tablina*, and *æci* ; nor to discuss how far any or all of these are synonymous terms. But, in order to understand our subject, it is necessary to have a general idea of what a Roman house was.

Those who have examined the Pompeian court at the Crystal Palace, will probably have obtained a sufficiently correct idea of a Roman town residence on a small scale. They will observe that the rooms are all on the ground-floor, and nearly level with the entrance. Indeed, if any rooms were upstairs, they were only store-rooms, or the apartments of the females, and occasionally the sleeping-apartments for the family. The state-rooms and rooms of entertainment were always (or nearly always) on the ground-floor, and in the city or town these were disposed around courts more or less open to the sky, and received their light and air from these courts,—a sufficient reason this for avoiding, as far as possible, the piling of one story upon another. And, forsooth, though in the imperial ages their public works and larger buildings were constructed with amazing

solidity, yet in earlier times, and in private dwellings, the Romans were evidently not a whit better than the speculating builders of our own day; for, low as their structures were, we hear frequently of their falling with a tremendous crash—another sufficient reason for preferring a habitation on *terra firma*, to a five or six-storied house.

A residence of any pretensions would have at least two such courts surrounded by colonnades, which afforded access to the various apartments. These would consist of dining-rooms, parlours or rooms for conversation, picture-galleries, libraries not necessarily very spacious, and probably one or more saloons or apartments which retained the original Greek name of *the house*, as the principal room of our farmers' homes still does in Yorkshire and other parts of the country. Besides these, there would be sleeping-apartments, on a small scale according to our notions, baths on a much larger scale, and domestic apartments; and perhaps nothing is more calculated to excite our surprise, than the limited scale upon which the culinary department is usually designed.

If to these we add the trade department, or stores for farm produce, if the proprietor be a land-owner, and perhaps a garden with fountains and sculpture, accommodation for horses, and, in mansions, a basilica or theatre, and a temple mayhap, we have a pretty complete idea of a house in Rome. And as Rome was the empire, so everything at Rome was the model, and a similar arrangement would be observed in their country as in their town houses, except that, more space being procurable, many of the apartments would be lighted from the outside rather than the interior of the house, and more abundant provision would be made for farm

produce and farm servants ; for it seems to have been a principle always adopted that the whole of a man's establishment should be collected under his own roof, probably with a view to ostentation as well as security. We consequently find the patricians, in their houses at Rome, making ample provision for the entertainment of their clients and slaves, as well as the storing and offering for sale of the various products of their estates.

These pavements, I may be allowed to remark for the sake of the uninitiated, were formed in two or three different ways. Pliny says they had their origin among the Greeks, who, he intimates, were in the habit of covering their flat-roofed houses with them. In such a position they were formed on concrete supported by planking and timbers, a construction for which Vitruvius, the only ancient writer on architecture extant, gives minute directions. Pliny also informs us that they were first introduced among the Romans by Sylla, who used them in a temple he erected to Fortuna at Præneste, and intimates that they afforded the hint for a large portion of the mural and other decorations that subsequently came into vogue. With this agrees sufficiently what Vitruvius remarks, that the pavements in his day formed the most important part of the internal embellishment.

When employed as a flooring to the rooms on the ground-floor, they were constructed on one of two principles, the one being on the solid ground, and the other on a substructure by which they were raised two or three feet, the earth being previously excavated to the required depth. In the former case the ground was rammed till it became perfectly solid, and any defects found made good ; and not unfrequently the whole space



was covered with a foundation of concrete, but in any event a layer of pounded brick or mortar was placed to receive the tessellæ. When the pavement was kept hollow from the ground, it was so formed for the purpose of passing fire or heated air under it. The excavation was then roughly paved, and piers, either of brick, stone, or hollow tubes, were erected at short intervals over the whole space. These were capped with larger bricks or tiles, and the whole covered with tiles laid close together to receive the concrete, first coarse and then fine, upon which the tessellæ were to be laid. In either case the interstices of the tessellæ were filled with cement and, if requisite, the surface rendered smooth by rubbing.

The hollow pavement here described is called a *suspensura*, though frequently, with less accuracy, a hypocaust, which is properly the furnace, or the system of flues by which the fire or heated air is brought from the furnace to beneath the floor.

The pavement at Walton, to which I am now directing attention, was formed on the solid ground, with but a slight foundation of pounded brick under it, and as it was usual to form the floors of their principal rooms hollow, for the purposes of warming, that being the only or the principal method adopted of securing that end, we must conclude either that this was not a principal apartment, or that the building was not of a very important character. I adopted the former of these alternatives for the following reasons.

Closely adjoining to the apartment in which this pavement occurs, may be seen a large excavation abounding in remains of tiles and bricks, many of which have been subjected to the action of smoke. This excavation is just such an one as would result from the



pulling up of the foundations of a *suspensura* and *hypocaust*, and upon no other supposition can we account for the remains still going so deep into the ground. But not only so. Though we do not find any of them in their original position, yet there are abundant remains of the tiles which, wherever discovered, are used for the foundation of these hollow floors, and of the square flue tiles, and I believe I may add of the circular ones also, all of which are peculiar to these purposes.

I have, therefore, no hesitation in saying that the pit, measuring fifty or sixty feet long by twenty-five feet wide, was once covered by apartments of a character superior to the one the pavement of which I have just described, though that, from its size and the beauty of the pavement, could have been a room of no mean character. That it was a covered apartment, and not a *cavædium* or *atrium* (open courts), is certain; for a single winter, if not the first storm, would have effectually destroyed the sun-dried *tessellæ*; nor, for the same or similar reasons, could it have been any part of the baths. And yet even in the remains of the palatial residence at Bignor, there is no room analogous to this; they are either smaller, or coarsely paved, or have hollow floors; that is, they are either inferior, or of an altogether superior class. It cannot have been a summer apartment, to which in Italy they would not have put a *suspensura*, for it has a wrong aspect, unless it was lighted from the east, which I think impossible; and it is too near the place of the destroyed *suspensura* to imagine the builders would have hesitated in introducing a hollow floor, if they had considered it necessary.

We therefore seem shut up to the conclusion that this was an apartment of a secondary character; a *tablinum* or entrance-hall, as I believe, and consequently that the

best parts were on a large scale, and elaborate in style, and that what we have already discovered is but a small portion of a large establishment that once existed on this spot, and of which probably considerable remains still exist. Several of the apartments, adjoining that in which this pavement exists, are still pretty perfectly paved with the larger tessellæ, and at a distance of considerably more, I suppose, than a hundred yards, masonry and large paving tiles, 14 inches long by 10 inches wide, have been discovered *in situ*, and considerable quantities of lead in the interstices, evidently molten and running down amongst the masonry drop by drop, leading to the supposition that the building had been destroyed by fire.

The remains discovered consist, in addition to the masonry and pavement, of pottery, exhibiting in some cases the potters' names; fragments of lead, iron, and glass, flue and other tiles, and a coin of the reign of Vespasian. Specimens of most of these I have been able to add to the collection of the Association. I may remark in conclusion that the tiles of various kinds exactly accord with those found in other localities, not only in their general features, but even in the minutiae which appear at first sight accidents of manufacture.

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N.B.—With exception of the points noticed in the text, full authority existed for the restoration of the whole pavement.