

(A) General View looking East.



(B) General View looking West.
ROMAN BUILDING AT COMPTON.

A ROMAN BUILDING FOUND AT COMPTON.

BY

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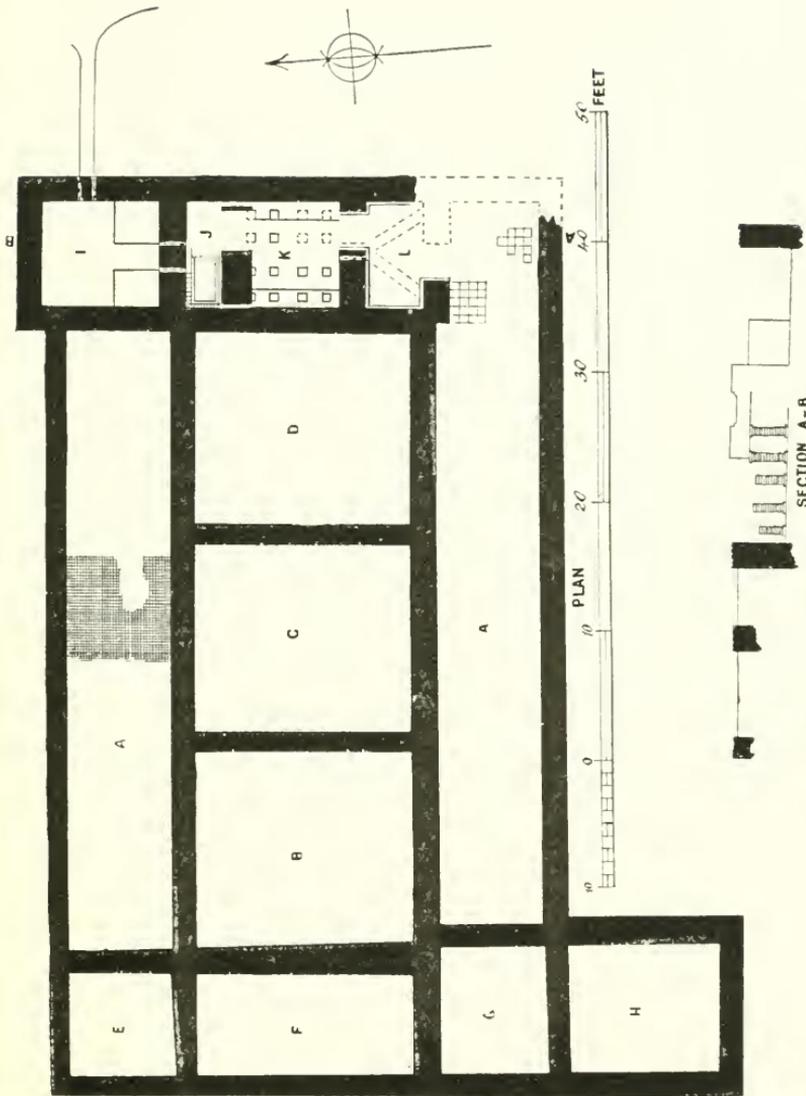
THE accidental discovery of foundations in the grounds of Mrs. Watt's house, Limmerslease, Compton, adds another Roman building to the somewhat scanty list of such remains in the county. Seventeen Roman buildings are noted in the *Victoria County History* (IV, pp. 343-78), but of the majority of these the record is vague and unsatisfactory. Three are described and illustrated in our own *Collections*, viz., Beddington, Titsey and Walton-on-the-Hill. Another at Chiddingfold was excavated by the Rev. T. S. Cooper, F.S.A., in 1883, but a full account has not yet been published. The pottery, glass, bronze, etc., found on the site, and also a copy of the plan, are now in the Guildford Museum. A small excavation at Abinger in 1877 gave promise of a large house, but the work was not carried on. A plan published in the *Builder* (XXXVI, p. 19, Jan. 5, 1878) shows that three rooms were uncovered, one eleven feet square, the other two eleven feet by seven feet six inches, and all paved with coarse red tesserae. The coins and objects found have recently been presented to the Guildford Museum by Lord Farrer. The building at Beddington, found in 1871, during an extension of the sewage farm, is described in the *Collections* (VI, pp. 118-21, with a plan facing p. 118). A not very satisfactory account of the building and pavement found at Walton-on-the-Hill¹ is in the *Collections* (II, pp. 1-13,

¹ Military trenches have recently (September, 1915) revealed the existence of another Roman building at Walton.

with a plan as frontispiece). From a note on the plan it appears that the foundations were mostly removed, whilst the pavement seems to have perished from neglect and wanton damage. The building found in the park at Titsey was thoroughly excavated in 1864 by the late Mr. Granville Leveson-Gower, F.S.A., and described by him in the *Collections* (IV, pp. 214-37, with a plan at p. 219). It is also noticed in *Archæologia* (LIX, p. 214, with plan) by the late Mr. George E. Fox, F.S.A., who was of the opinion that it had been used as a fulling establishment. The objects found during the excavation have recently been deposited in the Guildford Museum.

The foundations of the building at Compton were found early in 1914 by workmen employed by Mrs. Watts to enlarge the kitchen garden. During trenching operations the men ran into a mass of loose flints and building material, and a little further on into solid masonry. Mrs. Watts was at once informed, and finding that something unusual had been struck, sought the advice of the Society as to its nature and how best to proceed with its examination. A visit to the spot soon established the character of the remains, and, with Mrs. Watts's full concurrence and permission, the Society decided on excavation. To enable this to be done, a subscription list was opened, and with the assistance of numerous friends, together with a grant from the Society and one from the Research Fund of the Society of Antiquaries, the entire building was uncovered and was visited by the Society during the Annual Excursion in July, 1914.

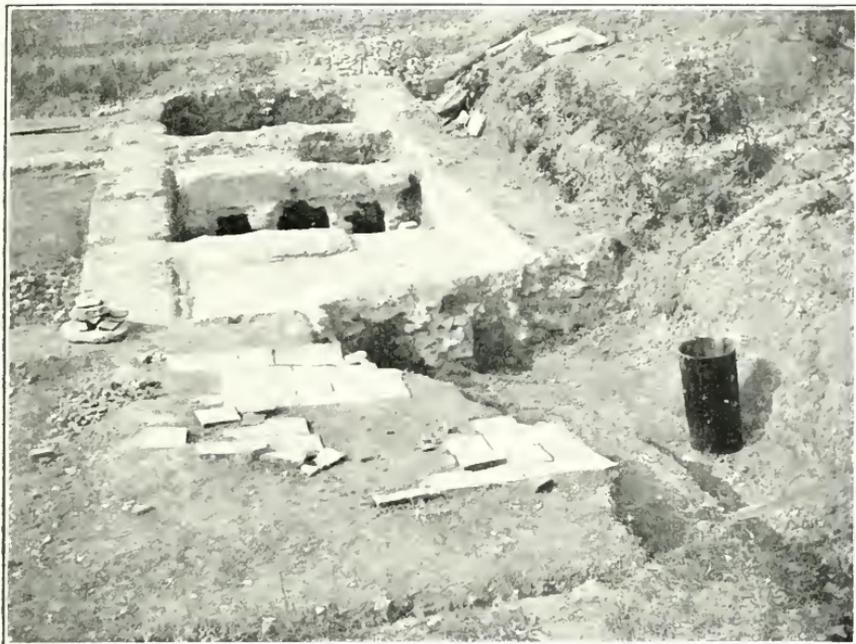
The house is just at the foot of the Hog's Back, facing nearly due south, and the foundations give a plan consisting of two corridors, one on the north and one on the south side, with rooms between and at the western end, whilst at the eastern end is a complete little set of baths. In length the house measures seventy-two feet and in width forty feet. The foundations throughout are of flint and Bargate stone. At the south-western angle is a room (ii) projecting thirteen feet



PLAN OF ROMAN BUILDING AT COMPTON.

beyond the corridor line, and at the north-eastern corner the back wall of the stokehole (1) projects two feet beyond the corridor. Traces of a floor of *opus signinum* were found in room B, and of a mortar floor in room D, but no trace of flooring was found in any other of the rooms; all were dug over to the bottom of the foundations. The corridors had been paved with coarse tesserae, drab, blue and red; none were found *in situ* in the southern corridor, but many loose ones occurred all through the corridor. At its eastern end, opposite to the entrance to the baths and on a slightly higher level suggesting a step, this corridor had been paved with square tiles, some two dozen of which remained in position (*see* plate II, A). The northern corridor still retained a fairly complete patch of tesserae, about eight feet square, and many loose ones were found all along between the walls as well as traces of the mortar bed in which they had been set. In the north-eastern corner of room E a good-sized store-pot had been built into the wall, but of this pot only a few broken fragments remained. As there was no trace of any floor in room C, it is possible that it served as a passage between the two corridors. The southern corridor may have been an open one with a pentice roof supported by wooden posts on a low dwarf wall, but of this no trace was found, nor were there any indications of doorways in the main building. Broken roof tiles suggest that the building was thus roofed. The eastern wall of room F was of unusual thickness, starting at its northern end at two feet and gradually widening to two feet nine inches; the reason for this is not apparent unless due to bad setting out.

The most interesting portion of the building is the small set of baths (*see* plate II, A) in the eastern range, having an inside measurement of twenty-nine by eight feet, and consisting of three heated rooms, with the stokehole for the hypocaust at the northern end. The entrance to these baths appears to have been from the southern corridor over the tile pavement already mentioned. Unfortunately, the south-eastern corner of the main wall and half the cross wall of room L had been



(A) The Baths looking North.



(B) The Hypocaust of the Baths.

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destroyed at some previous time, probably by the grubbing of a tree. The room L may be regarded as the *apodyterium* or dressing-room. It was entered by a doorway, presumably three feet in width, one side being broken away, and was floored with *opus signinum*, with a quarter-roll moulding in good preservation round the remaining sides. It was warmed from the main hypocaust by a couple of flues crossing the room in the shape of the letter V, with a box tile in each corner to produce a draught and to carry off any smoke. The channel connecting the two flues with the main hypocaust under room K passed through the inner wall close under the doorway leading into this room. This doorway, which was three feet in width and well defined (*see* plate II, B), led into room K, which may be looked upon as the *sudatorium*, or sweating-room, the hottest chamber in the range. The floor had disappeared, but most of the tile pilæ, which originally supported it, remained in place, one standing to a height of three feet (*see* plate II, B). From the marks remaining on the plaster on the inner surface of the walls, it is clear that a jacketting of box tiles ran round three sides of this room: this jacketting continues behind the cross wall separating this room from room J, and encircles the latter, where no fewer than thirteen remain in position. Room J may be looked upon as the hot bath, as it immediately joined the stokehole and the blocks of masonry which originally carried the hot water tanks. The eastern end had fallen in, but the western end was in good preservation and showed a small tank, about three feet in width, made of *opus signinum*, with a well-preserved quarter moulding round the inside (*see* plate III, B). A solid wall, two feet in thickness, and without any trace of a doorway, divided this room from the stokehole. This latter was about nine feet in length by about eight feet in width, and was mostly built of Bargate stone, the walls standing about five feet in height from the bottom of the pit. The flue passing through the wall was two feet in width, with slight traces of a circular tile head (*see* plate III, A). On either side were solid blocks of masonry about four

feet in height, plastered on their northern faces and finished on the top with a coat of *opus signinum*. They probably held the tanks for the hot water needful for the bath in room J. The bottom of the eastern wall of the stokehole was pierced for a drain which was traced for about ten feet from the wall where it turned north and south, unfortunately into the crops on the north, and under the spoil bank on the south. It was decided to hold over its further excavation pending the removal of the spoil bank, but owing to a shortage of labour caused by the war, it had to be abandoned, at all events, for the present. The walls of the stokehole showed signs of reconstruction and heightening carried out in a much rougher manner than the work elsewhere. This rough work continued up to and included the southern wall of room J, so that it appears probable that an alteration was at some period made in the plan of the baths. It looks as though the original plan provided for stokehole, large hot chamber, and dressing-room, and that at a subsequent date the bath J was inserted in the northern end of the hot chamber, thereby reducing its size. The wall dividing the two was of the same rough work as the upper part of the stokehole, and the jacketting of tiles which ran all round the hypocaust was still in place behind the inserted wall, which wall also rested on and was supported by the *pila* of the hypocaust. The southern face of this wall was plastered with cement, which was covered with holes, suggesting a keying for a more ornamental surface, but no coloured plaster was found in the hypocaust. One *pila*, partly under the wall, retained on the top tile about three inches of floor plaster, *opus signinum*, so that probably the floor level of the room was about one foot below the level of the adjoining rooms; if so, there must have been a step down from each. A small set of baths, somewhat resembling the Compton one, was found at Wheatley, Oxfordshire, in 1846, and is described and illustrated in the *Archæological Journal*, II, pp. 350-56. Apparently the building stood alone, but the excavations were not continued, so its position as regards the house is uncertain.



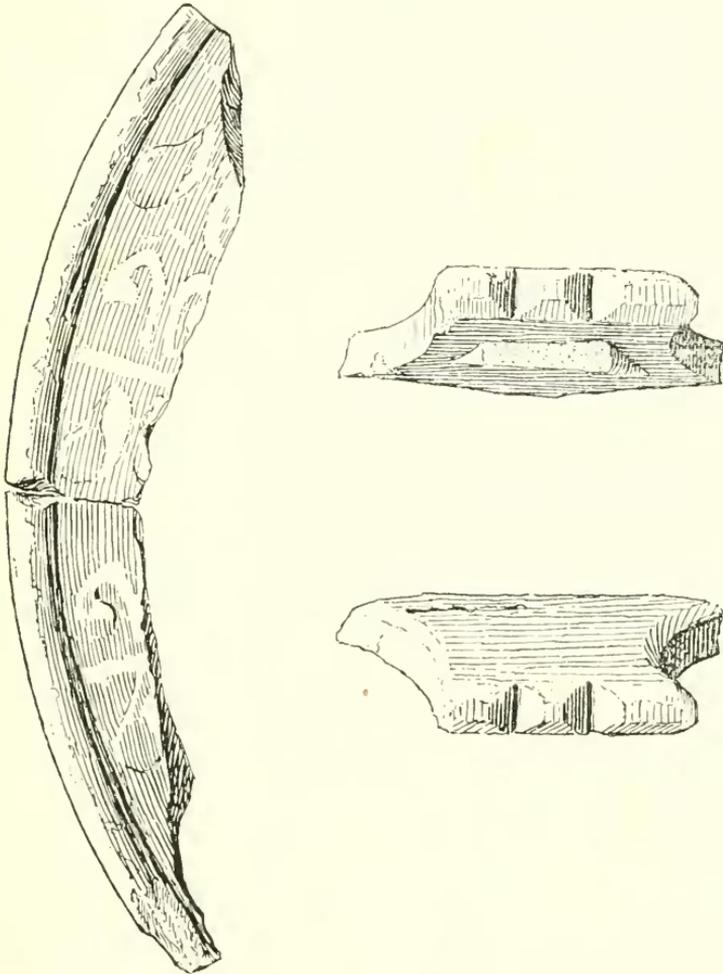
(A) Stokehole of the Hypocaust.



(B) Hot-water Bath.

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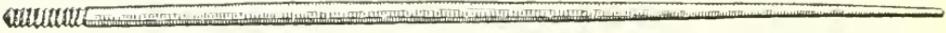
Beyond a quantity of broken potsherds but few objects, and only three coins, were found at Compton. A fragment of wall plaster, painted a reddish brown colour, was also picked up.



TERRA SIGILLATA FOUND AT COMPTON. $\frac{1}{1}$.

The pottery was of the usual character, most of the coarse ware belonging to the second and third centuries. No perfect examples were found. Amongst the fragments are two pieces of a small grey bowl, with a white wash or thin slip round the rim and half way down the

inside; also a portion of the side of an early vase of good hard red clay, with a similar wash as a broad band below the rim; several bits of Castor ware with hunting scenes, similar in type to those found at Newstead and attributed to the Antonine period;¹ two bits



BRONZE OBJECTS FOUND AT COMPTON. 1.

of a vase of thin white clay covered with small particles of sand or clay, said to be of the first and second centuries;² a portion of the bottom of a vase from the Rhine district of hard red clay with a metallic glaze and roulette pattern, probably second or third century; a piece of an indented pot of late date; a base of a late Castor pot, late third or fourth century, and several fragments of imitation terra sigillata, probably belonging to the same period. Fragments of white clay mortars were also found. Of the terra sigillata ware, commonly called Samian, some three dozen small fragments turned up, all, with the exception of a very small bit of a decorated bowl and several fragments of rims of dishes ornamented *en barbotine*, of plain ware, mostly of dishes of form 31 and cups of form 33, of the second century or later. One fragment of rim decorated *en barbotine*

¹ Curle, *Newstead*, p. 254.

² Bushe-Fox, *Wroxeter Report*, 1912, p. 75.

is probably not later than early second century (*see* Bushe-Fox, *Wroxeter Report*, 1913, p. 43, fig. 16, No. 82), and another, of unusual character,¹ is here illustrated full size, as is also a fragment of a flat top of a handle from a bowl of form 34 Dragendorff.² The bronze objects include a rather worn and damaged lion's head with an iron pin at the back; a pin with a spiral head, this object has a fine green patina; and an ear pick or scoop.

The three coins are:

- (1) A small follis of Constantine I, struck at Trèves between 313-17, and still retaining traces of the silvering with which these coins were washed.

Obv. Laureate and cuirassed bust to right. CONSTANTINVS P. F. AVG.

Rev. Figure of sun to left, right hand extended and holding globe in left. SOLI INVICTO COMITI.
Mint mark, $\frac{T|F}{P|TR}$

- (2) A third brass of Constantius II, 337-61.

Obv. Diademed and draped bust to right. CONSTANTIVS P. F. AVG.

Rev. Two soldiers, between them one standard. GLORIA EXERCITVS. Mint mark obliterated.

- (3) A third brass of Valens, 364-78.

Obv. Diademed and draped bust to right. D. N. VALENS P. F. AVG.

Rev. Victory marching left, holding palm and wreath. SECVRITAS REIPVBLICAE. Mint mark doubtful, either PTR or TRP, for Trèves.

A tynne from the antler of a red deer, partly cut through and then broken off, was also found.

¹ For a somewhat similar design *see* Ludowici, *Stempel-Bilder Römischer Töpfer*, p. 251, fig. 36.

² *See* Walters, *Catalogue of Roman Pottery in the British Museum*, pl. XLII, type 34.

The thanks of the Society and of all antiquaries are due to Mrs. Watts for the generous manner in which she placed the site at our disposal, and for the assistance given by her to render the excavation as complete as possible. The writer has also to record his thanks for much kind hospitality during his visits to the work. He has also to thank Mr. R. Garraway Rice, F.S.A., and Mr. A. G. K. Hayter, for many excellent photographs, some of which are here reproduced, viz., plates I and III from Mr. Rice's photographs, and plate II from Mr. Hayter's; also Mr. J. P. Bushe-Fox, F.S.A., for assistance with the pottery, and Mr. A. E. Moon, for the plan. Lastly, it remains to thank the subscribers to the fund, whose generous aid enabled the excavation to be carried out.