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Bristol Archaeological Notes For 1901-2

by J. E. Pritchard
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BRISTOL ARCHÆOLOGICAL NOTES FOR 1901.

II.

By JOHN E. PRITCHARD, F.S.A.,
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“The leading object and intent of Archæology is MAN, and man’s ways and works. . . . He has everywhere left scattered behind and around him innumerable relics, forming so many permanent impressions and evidences of his march and progress. These impressions and evidences the Antiquary searches for and studies.”

THE demolition of the remaining portion of the Norman walling near the Pithay slope, upon the site of Messrs. Fry’s new factory, which had not been removed by the end of 1900,¹ was recommenced at the opening of the year, and by the end of January this section of that great work of defence had been totally cleared. (Plate I.)

As the wall did not run on to a definite termination, there is no hope now of fixing the exact position of the Upper Pithay Gateway, which must have been somewhere near this spot.

The entire stretch of these massive foundations actually destroyed, from St. John’s slope to the Pithay slope, comprised about 370 feet, and included the crumbling base of the Tower to which Seyer refers to as a well tower.² He says:—

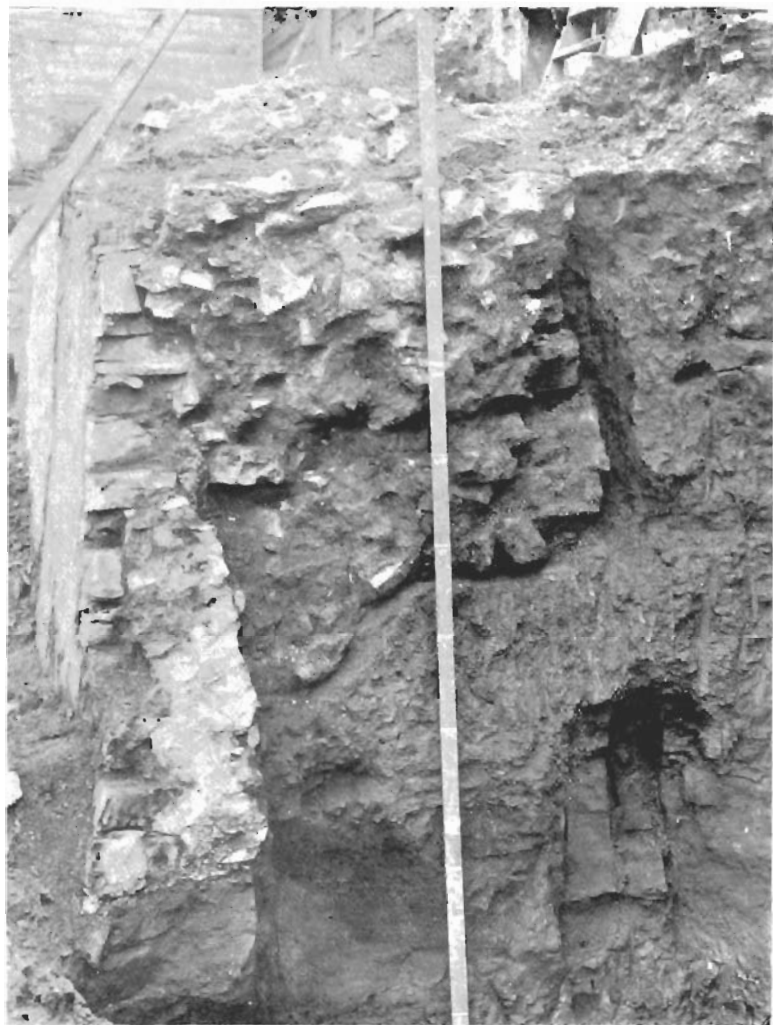
“A short distance before you come to St. John’s churchyard is still to be seen a semi-circular tower (but mutilated) projecting outward from the wall, and now forming part of a house in Tower Lane, probably so called from this very tower. The stone of division

¹ See *Transactions*, vol. xxiii., p. 264.

² Seyer (Rev. S.), *Memoirs of Bristol*, 1821, vol. i., p. 266, Sec. 70.



PORTION OF NORMAN WALL BETWEEN THE PITHAY AND ST. JOHN'S SLOPE.



SECTION OF NORMAN WALL
BETWEEN THE PITHAY AND ST. JOHN'S SLOPE.

between St. John's and Christ-church parishes is fixed in the wall of the tower, by which circumstance it may easily be found. Within this tower is a deep well, for the security of which, perhaps, the tower was built. The well lies under the front shop, close to the town wall, which is even hollowed out, in a small degree, to make room for it. A former possessor about sixty or seventy years ago, after clearing it out to a considerable depth, came to a wooden floor, which he was unwilling to disturb, and therefore covered up the well."

But the tower¹ has now been examined very carefully to the lowest foundations, and no traces of a well, or of any water supply, could be found. Two deep wells,² however, exist without the wall, and these, doubtless, were sunk for the supply of the city; in one of them some octagonal wood piping was found. The correct line of the wall between the points referred to, however, in many places is fully 12 feet farther north-east than that marked on the Ordnance Map of Bristol.

All traces of the original height of the wall must have long disappeared, probably since the last dwellings were erected upon the line of what is known to us as Tower Lane. Externally the masonry was found to be carried down to a considerably greater depth in some places than others, the extreme outer portion always resting upon the red sandstone foundation, whilst the inner face was built against the mass of red marl. (Plate 2.) There was evidently a ditch below the wall at this spot, and the land beyond sloped down to the winding waters of the Frome, where the outer wall of defence was erected. It is well to note that the local firestone had been used

¹ The diameter of this tower was 23 ft. 6 ins.

² The nearest well, 8 feet distant, is 3 feet 6 inches diameter and has a depth of 65 feet; and the other, 15 feet off, is 6 feet across and 120 feet deep: neither was connected with the tower.

throughout, in building, and the wall was not "faced" on either side.

Now, the matter for greatest regret in connection with these important excavations is that not a single specimen of either Saxon or Norman coinage has been brought to light, by which it had been hoped that some evidence might have been thrown upon the probable date of the building of the wall. But various other items have "turned up" during the year, the majority from what can only be termed as rubbish pits within the space still being excavated, which it may be interesting to describe in detail.

COINS AND TOKENS.

SQUARE FARTHING OF BRISTOL, 16th Century, found in the angle of the Norman walling and the Pithay slope, without the wall, on January 1st. This is the only specimen I know of having come from *dry* excavations: all others discovered during the past quarter of a century having been "dredged up" from the Harbour.¹

Obv.: C.B. (Civitas Bristol.)

Rev.: The arms of Bristol within a circle, a ship issuing from a castle to the right.

NUREMBERG COUNTER, in imitation of a shilling of Charles II., date about 1675.

Obv.: CAROLVS DEI GRATIA, bust of Charles II. to right.

Rev.: AZA. GOTTL. LAVFF. RECH. PFE. COUNTER
(Aza Gottlieb Lauffer Rechnung pfennig Counter),
Shields, etc., as a shilling of Charles II.

These counters were used for cards and other games.

*CHARLES II. TURNER OR TWO PENCE*² (1660—1684).

Obv.: CAR. D.G. SCOT. ANG. FRA. ET. HIB. R. Crown
above C.R., on right mark of value II. = 2d.

Rev.: NEMO. ME. IMPVNE. LACESSET. Thistle with
leaves, not crowned.

¹ See *Numismatic Chronicle*, vol. xix., plate 17, No. 2; *Proceedings Clifton Antiquarian Club*, vol. iv., plate 20, No. 2.

² See Grueber (H. A.), *Handbook of Coins of Great Britain* (1899), p. 206, Fig. 207.

These pieces are sometimes attributed to Charles I. This was turned up during drainage operations, in Deanery Road, close to the Cathedral.

*JAMES I. AND CHARLES I. FARTHING TOKENS.*¹

Many have been found by the men engaged in the harbour dredging during the year.

17th CENTURY TRADERS' TOKEN.

Obv.: JOHN SPRAKE. IN. TANTON.

= a pair Scales.

Rev.: IN. SOMERSET-SHIER = I. G. S.

This came from the harbour dredgings, and is in fine condition. English traders' tokens of the 17th century are now much sought after, as throwing endless light upon the commercial life of that period.

*WILLIAM AND MARY FARTHING*s—date 1694—several; and much miscellaneous copper coinage, considerably worn.

*GEORGE III. SHILLING*² (brass).

Obv.: GEOR. III. D.G. BRITT. REX. F.D. Head to right, below 1819.

Rev.: Garnished shield of arms, crowned and within the garter with motto.

Also a sixpence, similar.

These "forgeries" in brass were evidently intended to be plated in silver, and circulated.

A similar shilling was dug up at the top of St. Michael's Hill, on the Tyndall estate.

In May an *ENCAUSTIC TILE* was found, about 6 ft. below the street level, between Wellington Street and All Saints' Street. It bears considerable foliage, with the Shield of Edward the Confessor, or Westminster Abbey, set in the corner=A cross patonce between five martlets, and is similar to one found on the site of the "White Lion," Bridewell Street, in 1894.³

¹ See Montagu (H.), *Copper, Tin, and Bronze Coinage of England* (1885) for varieties.

² See Grueber (H. A.), *Handbook of Coins of Great Britain* (1899), p 150, No. 862.

³ *Proceedings Clifton Antiquarian Club*, vol. iii., p. 97.

During the month of June, when digging for concrete foundations, between Wellington Street and All Saints' Street, at a depth of 46 ft., the workmen came across *TWO LOGS OF OAK*, measuring 2 ft. 3 ins. in diameter; these were evidently lying on the level of the ancient stream.

Very few early objects of Iron have been found, but in November, at a depth of 15 ft., close to the Pithay slope, a well-preserved *HORSE SHOE* measuring $3\frac{3}{4}$ ins. across was discovered. (Plate 3, Fig. 4.) From the depth whence it was found, and its association with fragments of Norman pottery, there can be little doubt that it belongs to that period: in this opinion Mr. C. H. Read, F.S.A., of the British Museum, coincides, though he tersely puts it "most horse-shoes are a puzzle."



At the same time, a finely-carved bone *HEAD-DRESS PIN*, bearing a Unicorn's head, was found at an almost equal depth. There is one exactly similar at the British Museum. Mr. Read says "the unicorn is certainly not older than 15th century, more likely 16th"; but some experts are inclined to give it an earlier date. Its position in the ditch seems to warrant that opinion, especially as it was found amongst pottery fragments of 12th to 14th century.¹

A small black pottery *CRUCIBLE*, with lip, date uncertain, the shape having been kept up from early times. It was discovered low down in the ditch, and is possibly 12th century.

¹ See Cutts (E. L.), *Scenes and Characters of the Middle Ages* (London, 1872), p. 434. In the "Feat of arms at St. Inglebert's," *temp.* Edward III., the prominent knight in the fray is depicted wearing a helmet with the crest of a unicorn, similar in character to this small carving



FINDS IN BRISTOL.

1. *XVII. Century Money Pot, found 1901.*
2. *Iron Spur, found 1901.*
3. *Brass Spur, found 1900. See "Transactions," Vol. xxiii. p. 269.*
4. *Norman Horse Shoe, found 1901.*

IRON SPUR, probably 14th century, rowel missing. (Plate 3, Fig. 2.)¹

Amongst the *POTTERY* turned up during the year may be mentioned :

Further fragments of handles and rims of the *NORMAN* period, including specimens of the black ware used for domestic vessels.

MEDIÆVAL Period—mostly green-glazed—comprising some fresh types of handles, handsome masked spouts, mask heads and various ornamentations: also a *Red Pottery MONEY POT*,² showing a long narrow slit for receiving the coin, which had been extracted from this specimen by breaking the pot close to the aperture (Plate 3, Fig. 1); and several *CANDLESTICKS* all, unfortunately, more or less imperfect.

Many fragments of *SLIP-DECORATED Pottery*; *DELFT Pottery* of interesting colouring, one fragment of blue and white bearing a decoration of birds, flowers and insects.

The *White DRUGGISTS' POTS*,³ which may also have been used for domestic purposes, included an usually large specimen which measured $3\frac{3}{4}$ ins. diameter by $2\frac{3}{4}$ ins. deep: and another pot of smaller dimensions, having a black glazed surface, which is somewhat rare.

THE TOBACCO PIPES again form a considerable variety. This is not to be wondered at, as Bristol was early a great centre for manufacture. The variety in the shape and size of the bowl is very marked in the numerous specimens discovered.

Those found during the year include many of the several members of the Hunt family,⁴ who must have carried on their trade upon this spot, so plenteous have been the finds of their pipes.

¹ Demmin, that great authority on Arms and Armour, says: "Of all accoutrements the spur is the most difficult to classify in correct chronological order."

² See Prof. McKenny Hughes, *Cambridge Antiquarian Society's Proceedings*, vol. viii., pp. 48-49; Brand's *Popular Antiquities* (Chatto & Windus, 1900 Edition), p. 265.

³ See *Transactions*, vol. xxiii., p. 266. ⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 267.

In addition to those recorded in last year's notes,¹ the following have turned up during the year:—

A very fine example bearing a square counter-sunk marked heel, the name given in three lines—

THO
HARTS
HORNE

evidently of a Thomas Hartshorne. This is the first pipe bearing a *square* mark found locally; several of the early Broseley makers adopted this style of marking, but it was not common here.

JOHN TUCKER,	admitted as a freeman of the City in 1662.
A GAUNTLET mark.	Very seldom found.
A TUDOR ROSE mark.	Equally scarce type.
W. E.	William Evans admitted a freeman in 1560.
R. H.	Robert Hancock, admitted a freeman 1655.
E. L.	Edward Lewis, admitted a freeman 1678.
M.	
W. S.	
I. T.	John Tucker. See above.

and a pipe with a long sloping bowl, *temp.* William III.

Only one clay Wig Curler was found: this measures $2\frac{3}{4}$ ins. long, and bears the mark W.A.

With respect to *ECCLESIASTICAL ARCHITECTURE*, there is very little to report. The principal item being the interior restoration of St. Peter's (City). This was commenced early in the year and finished by October, when the building was re-opened. This Church has always been known for its huge Corinthian Altar Piece; and this many of the Vestry would doubtless have abolished, but it was finally decided to have it repaired and re-erected.

¹ See *Transactions*, vol. xxiii., p. 267.

In carrying out the necessary work several interesting discoveries were made: an original pointed doorway on the north side of the Chancel was found: also a piscina and what is probably a credence niche.

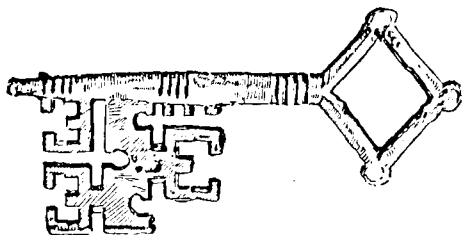
These had all been plastered up in past restorations, but have now been opened up.

DOMESTIC ARCHITECTURE.—A block of dilapidated 17th and 18th century gabled dwellings and shops standing in the centre of the open space, at the end of the Broad Weir,¹ was demolished in January for street improvements.

That quaint passage connecting Prince Street and the Quay, known as "Aldersky Lane,"² was ordered to be closed as a thoroughfare by the Recorder at Quarter Sessions on the 17th of April. There were two quaint over-hanging houses in the row, but they were very much dilapidated, and possessed no features of particular interest.

During November a few interesting finds were made at the corner of Stephen Street, upon the site of the new buildings to be erected for the Scottish Provident Institution. In digging for deep foundations the workmen came across some fragments of late Norman roughly-glazed, and other fragments of 14th and 15th century pottery. Also some portions of red deer antlers, several tine tips and boar tusks.

A beautifully-fashioned *IRON KEY*, with shaped bow, slightly over 4 inches long, was discovered by the workmen at



¹ Shown in Millerd's large Map of Bristol, 1673

² It doubtless took its name from "Aldworth's Key," close by. In Roque's large Map of the City, 1750, it is called Aldersgate Lane: its name was corrupted to Alder's Quay, thence to its recent designation.

the same time. The clearly-cut wards appear to indicate three distinct E's, and its date may be placed at about the 14th century.

Early in December a well-pointed *BONE NEEDLE*, broken at the top, was found at the same spot, at considerable depth.

These relics all probably came from the rubbish pits without the city wall.¹

I have again to thank Mr. Claude B. Fry for permission to watch the excavations in the Pithay, throughout another year; and Mr. Dowling, clerk of the works, has always most courteously rendered me every facility.

¹ Mr. Ledward, Manager of the said Insurance Company, has kindly presented the finds to the Bristol Museum.

For the illustration of the key I am indebted to our member Mr. Reid, proprietor of the *Western Daily Press*
