

## SILCHESTER.

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Report by J. B. KARSLAKE, Esq., F.S.A. on excavations carried out by him in 1911, since the Society of Antiquaries ceased to excavate the site.

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Since the conclusion of the regular excavation of the site of Calleva within the walls there is little further to report with regard to the site.

The only matter of interest to be recorded is the result of an investigation of some earthworks at a point about 300 yards south-east of the east gate situated in a small copse known as the Beeches. Excavation at this point revealed the existence here of the line of the outer entrenchment.

This entrenchment, as is well known, can be traced readily beyond the north-west and south faces of the City Wall; but hitherto on the east side no traces of it were to be found, and it was conjectured to have been included on this face within the limits of the succeeding enceinte of the wall. This now is seen not to have been the case, as not only at the point mentioned have some 150 yards of the trace of the ditch and mound been recovered, but also an entrenched entrance way by which the early British track must have entered the Celtic Oppidum before the Roman roads were laid out. At this point the mound was returned inwards some 50 feet so as to flank the entrance, and a ditch some 6 feet deep and 15 feet wide bounds the passage on either side. Somewhat in advance of the mound on the southern side of the entrance was a small circular entrenched enclosure about 50 feet in diameter altogether, and inside about 12 feet, which may have served as a sort of stockaded tower guarding the entrance. There were

slight traces of a similar enclosure corresponding on the north side, but cultivation had reached too near the earthwork on this side for any definite plan to be recovered.

In the rear of the entrance were also two pits, one filled with a peaty deposit, suggesting their probable use as soakaways for any flooding of the ditches or roadway.

Unfortunately, no objects by which any date can be assigned to the works were found. Beyond a few fragments of Roman black pottery and a small portion of an amphora handle in the filling of the trenches, the only object recovered was a fine flint "hammer stone" in the bottom of the circular enclosure. It is interesting to note that the roadway which was apparently some 6 feet broad, and without any trace of metalling, does not enter at right angles to the line of the entrenchment, but at an angle pointing northwest and in the direction of the later Roman east gate.

And it suggests the early approach to Silchester was not from the east or London direction but rather points to the direction of the Hogs Back—clearly visible from this point—and the line of the prehistoric way along the downs, later known as the Pilgrims' Way.