

Further to  
the "Roman  
remains"  
(at The Granary)  
item under  
1961 in the  
Commentary—  
these have  
been  
discovered in  
1938 slightly to  
the N., overlooking  
the Lea valley.



[“Herts Advertiser” Photo.  
Mr. R. Gillingwater, Manager on the building site, and an employé, holding portions  
of a vase and Roman tiles.

## WORKMEN'S “FIND” AT HARPENDEN

### POTTERY AND TILES UNEARTHED DURING BUILDING OPERATIONS

Pieces of Roman pottery and roof tiles have this week been unearthed by workmen engaged in the erection of houses on land in Crabtree-lane, Harpenden, and it is thought that their discovery is evidence of the former existence of a Roman villa on the site.

The “find” was first brought to the notice of a “Herts Advertiser” reporter by Mr. W. H. Johnson, Surveyor to Harpenden Urban Council, who showed him a piece of pottery on which a floral design appeared in relief, and which had been given to him by Mr. Large.

The reporter paid a visit to the site, on the South-East side of Crabtree-lane, on which Mr. R. Colin Large, of 119, Park-street, Luton, and his partner, Mr. J. Wilks, are building 116 houses, covering ten acres of land. The land formerly belonged to Mr. Dolphin Smith.

#### A Large Roman Vase.

Mr. Large showed the reporter the parts of a handle of what had formerly been a large vase, and pieces of what are believed to be Roman tiles, embodying the interlocking design which is in use nowadays. These pieces showed that the tiles of a bygone era were of very solid construction and of unusual thickness.

The discovery was made when men were excavating for the footings of houses which are being built on a saucer-shaped depression. The footings were unusually deep on this account.

Mr. Wilks, who was watching operations at the time, told the reporter “When the

men limbed the stuff out I said ‘Be careful, I think you are in the middle of a Roman bath!’”

Mr. Wilks gave it as his opinion that the depression in the earth at the spot was formerly “a dew-pond.” A pond of this kind was so constructed that the night dews ran to the bottom and were preserved by layers of clay and straw.

#### Another “Find.”

Another “find” was actually made while this conversation was taking place. One of the men who had been working at a higher level suddenly appeared with a large scallop—obviously of no antique value—and a piece of glazed pottery. This is in the shape of a small jug and its roughly-finished interior base is evidence of its antiquity.

Some bones, presumably those of an animal, have also been unearthed during digging operations.

The site overlooks the Lea Valley and may well have been occupied by the Romans as a commanding position. Evidence that they occupied other parts of the Harpenden district has already been provided by the discovery of many fine examples of Roman pottery in the fields of Rothamsted Experimental Station.

#### A Roman Villa.

Mr. H. E. Broad, of Rothamsted-avenue, Harpenden, who is a member of the St. Albans Architectural and Archaeological Society, later visited the site and inspected the “finds.” These, he says, are definitely Roman, though he is not certain of the date. It is his opinion that the pieces of tiles and pottery are evidence of the previous existence of a Roman villa. A large area of land has yet to be built upon, and it is hoped to find further traces of a Roman villa.

Mr. Large has expressed his readiness to hand over the “finds” to any interested Authority, and it is felt that they will make a valuable addition to the collections of articles that are already in the care of Harpenden Urban Council for inclusion in a future Harpenden museum.