

**SPECIAL WINTER MEETING AT
COLCHESTER.**

A special winter meeting was held at the Town Hall, Colchester, on Wednesday, 24 February, 1926, and was largely attended by members from a wide area. Mr. G. F. Beaumont, F.S.A., presided in the unavoidable absence of the President.

At the first session, commencing 5.15 p.m., the Rev. Canon G. H. Rendall, Litt.D., LL.D., gave a lecture on "The Growth, Make, and Development of a Country Manor (Dedham)," illustrated by a specially prepared and printed map, copies of which were for sale and are still obtainable (price 1s.). Dr. Rendall carried back village origins to this period when east Essex was part of Danelaw, and to the pre-Conquest tenure of the manor by Aelfric's Camp. Showing how the confines of the township and the site and configuration of the village were determined by the fords of the Stour, the Black brook and the Shir-burn, he dwelt on the importance of water marks—brooks, ditches, marshes, water-locks, fish and cattle-ponds—as landmarks of the past; by their aid, and from a study of old roads, field-paths, and place-names, coupled with manorial records, he was able to trace the distribution of arable (demesne and communal), pasture, meadow and wood-land throughout the area. For population and agriculture Domesday gave the base-line. Manorial records, grants, customals and rentals indexed the developments of sheep-farming, and the textile industries trade, and showed the effects of the Black Death and the Peasants' War. In the holding of the manor by Lords so distinguished as the Earl of Essex, Michael de la Pole, Sir John Fastolf and others, no feature was more interesting than the 1240 partitioning of the manor by John de Stuteville, and the sub-infeudation of a secondary manor held for a wreath of red roses on every John the Baptist's day, by the Priory and Nuns of Campsey until the Dissolution.

Following a vote of thanks to Dr. Rendall, proposed by Mr. Beaumont, the gathering was hospitably entertained to a light repast in the Mayor's Parlour, by the Mayor and Mayoress (Councillor and Mrs. A. W. Piper), who were cordially thanked for their kindness, the Mayor briefly expressing his pleasure at receiving his guests. Seven new members were afterwards elected.

Mr. W. Gurney Benham, F.S.A., then gave an account of the painted wall-inscriptions, dating from c. 1500, lately revealed at 18 North Hill, Colchester (see p. 96). A vote of thanks to him was proposed by the Rev. W. J. Pressey, F.S.A., and seconded by Mr. W. Duncan Clark.

The second session opened at 7.30 p.m., when Mr. P. G. Laver, F.S.A. read a paper on "The Excavation of a Tumulus at Lexden," illustrated by lantern slides. After carefully describing the position, condition and excavation of the tumulus, which is 100 feet in diameter, and 9 feet in height in the centre, Mr. Laver proceeded to give minute details of the contents of the mound. The wealth of grave furniture included remains of a chariot, the chain-mail of

the warrior, and much household stuff. Prominent among the finds was a silver medallion of the Emperor Augustus, the only one of its kind found in Britain. The date of the tumulus was apparently about the beginning of the Christian era. Attention was called to: (1) the evidence of deliberated destruction of the grave goods before interment; (2) the importance of the personage interred; (3) the cultural significance of the discovery.

On thanking Mr. Laver for his paper, which is to be printed in *Archaeologia*, Alderman Benham said he would also like to mention, on behalf of the Town Council, their appreciation of the work in connection with the excavation accomplished by Mr. Laver and his brother, Captain H. E. Laver, who had devoted an enormous amount of time to supervising the excavation, and to the treatment and preservation of the interesting remains which had been found. Mr. H. Wilmer, F.S.A., who seconded, stated that the discovery was of great importance and historical value.