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WINDSOR STAMP CO. (Dept. CN), UCKFIELD, SUSSEX

EARLY CHRISTIANS IN A KENTISH VILLAGE

Archaeologists have found the remains of what they believe may be the earliest Christian place of worship that has yet come to light in this country.

Their discovery, made at Lullington, in Kent, crowns two-and-a-half years' work on a task which may be likened to solving a vast and intricate jig-saw puzzle; they have pieced together thousands of fragments of coloured wall-plaster discovered in the Roman villa there by Lieut.-Colonel G. W. Meates and his helpers.

These fragments were the remains of pictures that had covered the walls of an upper room, but about A.D. 367, when the villa was destroyed by fire, had fallen into the basement.

PATIENT WORK

In 1950 the CN described the patient work lying ahead of the experts in reconstructing these pictures.

These experts expected to find the kind of art that pleased the Romans 16 centuries ago; but now that they have painstakingly put together the main outline of the wall pictures, they have revealed that the people who lived in this house were Christians, who probably used an upper room for worship.

Two of the reconstructed pictures show an early Christian symbol. It is called the Chi-Rho,

and is a monogram formed of the first two letters of the Greek word for Christ. Each of these symbols was painted in a brilliant red on a white background and surrounded with a wreath of flowers, fruit, and leaves.

The other pictures they have pieced together show human figures, in 4th-century costume, some of which have their arms outstretched in an early Christian attitude of prayer.

More work lies before the archaeologists. They are keen to excavate the rest of the basement of the villa; for it is possible that the figures with arms outstretched were looking across at other pictures on the opposite wall. The secret of what was on the other wall lies hidden in that part of the basement not yet excavated.

FURTHER EXPLORATION

Unfortunately, the key to the secret is held up because a modern road runs over that part of the basement, but it has been suggested that the road might be temporarily diverted to enable archaeologists to explore this place which is of such deep interest to all Christians.

The men who are making this fascinating journey into the past are Lieut.-Colonel G. W. Meates, Mr. C. D. P. Nicholson, who restores the plaster, and Professor J. M. C. Toynbee.

STAMP NEWS

FOUR stamps are to be issued in Holland to commemorate the 300th anniversary of Jan van Riebeeck's landing in South Africa; they will carry a surcharge to pay for a memorial to Riebeeck. A similar set is to be issued in South Africa.

THE birth of composer Vincenzo Bellini 150 years ago is marked by a new Italian stamp.

THE centenary of the death of José Artigas, Uruguay's great champion of political freedom, is commemorated by a set of 12 stamps showing the stages of his campaign.

PERU has issued a set of six air-mail stamps honouring the 400-year-old San Marcos University.

THE QUEEN'S FIRST GEORGE MEDAL

The Queen's first awards of the George Medal have been made to two R.A.F. men.

While a game of football was in progress at Benson, Oxfordshire, last November, a plane crashed half a mile away.

In their soccer kit, two of the players, Flight-Lieutenant Lawrence Newton and Leading-Aircraftman Richard Riseborough, raced to the spot and, in spite of exploding petrol tanks, twice went into the burning wreckage and managed to pull clear two of the crew.

Warrant Officer Sidney Motte, who also gallantly went to the rescue, has won the Queen's Commendation.

The Buckingham at Ravenswyke

Continued from page 9

An hour later they were home. Juliet grabbed Simon and kept him out in the garden while Charles went indoors with his mother and father. The sun was down and the dark falling over the moors when Charles came out and stood with his friends by the gate.

"Mother says she wants to thank you properly presently. Father seems fully recovered. He's in his bath now, and says he's going to have a decent meal with us later. Come out on the moors for a short while. After all this excitement we can do with some fresh air."

"What a day!" Simon said. "And what a story we can tell

when we get back home. I don't suppose they'll believe half of it. What shall we do tomorrow?"

"I'll tell you what I'll do," Charles said quietly. "You two can do what you like, but I'm going to do everything I possibly can to help the police catch that man, Cartwright, and the old red-headed devil who left my father there. I'll never forget what those two men did to my father, and I know that mother will never be happy until she knows that Cartwright has been caught. Will you help me?"

"It's a rum sort of holiday," Juliet said, "but we will."

To be continued

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