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Investigations and Excavations during the year.

*Wealden Archaeological Research Group*. Mr. A. B. Cardwell reports: The Wealden Archaeological Research Group was to have begun excavating the Roman remains at Farningham Farm, near Cranbrook, this year but postponed this project and turned instead to a more recent iron-working site at Hammermill Farm, Biddenden. On this site, which is thought to have closed in the latter half of the seventeenth century, the 'bay', or dam, of its original pond, and much of the man-made channel, which once conveyed the water to turn the foundry wheels, are still clearly defined. It seems likely that the site will be found to contain both blast furnace and forge.

Excavation has been started to locate the site of the furnace at the foot of the bay, and abundant brick and tile debris, which is in places at the present soil surface, has facilitated this preliminary work. There is much evidence here of furnace workings: slag, roasted ore, burnt brick and stone and deposits of ash.

By following the layers of brick and tile rubble, the wheel-pit was found, its rim lying some 4 ft. below the present surface and its depth as yet unknown. It is loosely filled with bricks and tiles which must have slid into it as the building decayed. Remnants of timber shoring clearly define the sides of the pit, and it is still an underground watercourse. Its wet clay provides recreation for a large number of contented leeches and, although these creatures make undesirable companions, they do help to delineate the buried parts of the leat which powered the bellows.

Prominent among the small finds so far discovered are fragments of clay-pipes, which fortunately include some bowls; only a few pot-sherds have been found.

Next year the watercourse will be further excavated, and it is hoped that this will help to orientate exactly the furnace building which can then be uncovered.