

THE ANTIQUITIES OF HAYLING ISLAND.

By TALFOURD ELY, M.A., F.S.A.

“And islands that are set the bord’ring coast before ;
As one among the rest, a brave and lusty dame
Called *Portsey*, whence that Bay of Portsmouth hath her name ;
By her, two little Isles, her handmaids (which compared
With those within the *Poole*, for deftness not out-dar’d)
The greater *Haling* hight; and fairest though by much,
Yet *Thorney* very well, but somewhat rough in touch
Whose beauties far and near divulged by report,
And by the Tritons told in mighty Neptune’s Court
Old Proteus hath been known to leave his finny herd,
And in their sight to sponge his foam-bespawled beard.”

(Drayton, *Polyolbion*, 2nd song, line 431, foll.)

Walking along the South coast, some thirty years ago, I reached a point near West Wittering, where I had to take boat to Hayling Island, that “Deserted Island” as it has been called by a well-known critic. Deserted, indeed, it may well seem to the traveller who reflects that the wave now rolls and the shingle spreads over many a broad acre once tilled by the hand of man. The written history of Hayling begins in 1045 with the grants by Queen Emma and Bishop Alwyn of the Manor of Hayling to the church and monks of Winchester on occasion of her successfully passing through the ordeal of treading barefoot on nine red-hot ploughshares.¹

This portion, however, of the grateful Emma’s bounty was not long fully enjoyed by the good monks of Winchester, for after the Conquest it was the Abbey of Jumièges that held the greater part of Hayling by the Conqueror’s gift, as we learn from a confirmation by Henry II.² Such was the irony of fate, for Emma’s accuser, Robert, was “*monachus Gemeticensis.*”

¹ Rudbörn, *Histria Major Wintonensis*, in Wharton’s *Anglia Sacra*, p. 235; Dugdale, *Monasticon* (Caley’s edition), I, pp. 194, 207, 208.

² Ellis, *Introduction to Domesday*,

Book I, 327. Ex dono regis Willielmi in Anglia majorem partem insulæ Harengee, cum ecclesia, et decimas totius insulæ, exceptis decimis leguminis et avenæ in terra episcopi Wintoniensis; et

In the reign of Henry III a priory was built in Hayling, the site of which has been identified near Tourner Bury,¹ a lucrative dependency which brought a yearly revenue of 1,100 gold crowns to the Norman abbey² till the suppression of the alien priories by Henry V, who bestowed this Benedictine cell on his new foundation of Carthusians at Shene. When the latter was dissolved Henry VIII granted the Priory of Hailing to the College of Arundel, in exchange for another estate.³

Long before this, however, there must have been a church in the island, a church eventually swallowed up by the encroachments of the sea in the times of the Edwards, its site being still known as "The Church Rocks," at some distance from the present shore.⁴

To this now lost church once belonged, apparently, the ancient font placed near the pulpit in South Hayling church; a font traditionally said to have been washed up by the sea. Its curious shape, partly square, partly curved, and also the existence of a large hole in one side as well as the small hole at the bottom, made me think it had been a cistern rather than a font; while the Vicar of Hayling, who kindly acted as my guide, informed me that some thought it had been originally a Roman fountain.

This church of St. Mary, South Hayling, though later than the one submerged, is of early English style, dating from the latter part of the thirteenth century. It is spacious, and its arches are remarkably large and bold. They spring from points considerably above the capitals of the columns, which are so slender that it has been found necessary to restore them in *granite*. The bases, with heads of animals at their corners, remain intact. The clerestory windows are placed not above the arches, but above the columns, so there is space below them for

in eadem insula saccam et socham et tol, et team, et infanethes cum omnibus aliis consuetudinibus. *Carta Regis Henrici Secundi*, quoted in Dugdale's *Monasticon*, Vol. VI, p. 1087.

In the *Carta de Haringey, per Regem Henricum Primum*, "Sciatis quod ego concedo S. Petro Jumeticensi Haringejam, et omnia quæ ad illam pertinent, cum saca et soca, et tol, et team, et infangenethes, cum aliis omnibus consue-

tudinibus; nec volo pati ut aliquis quicquam inde auferat neque minuet."

¹ Longcroft, *Topographical account of the Hundred of Bosmere*, pp. 176, 177.

² Deshayes, *Histoire de l'Abbaye royale de Jumieges*, p. 51.

³ Tanner, *Notitia Monastica Hampshire*, XVI; Dugdale, *op. cit.*, VI, p. 1049.

⁴ Longcroft, *op. cit.*, p. 307.

splaying, and thus giving more light to nave and aisles, which would otherwise be too dark, their windows being but small.

The church contains many curious features, and especially noteworthy are two crowned heads carved on corbels, and supposed to represent Edward I and Eleanor of Castile; the symbolical heads carved on a font, which though of later date than the one already mentioned, seems older than the present church; and a serpent—or, rather, dragon, for I detected a leg—which has somewhat incongruously found its way *within* the sacred edifice.

In the churchyard stands one of the finest yew trees I have ever seen.

Smaller, and perhaps more ancient, is the picturesque church of St. Peter at North Hayling¹; and not far from this stands the oldest house in the island, recently repaired by its owner, Mr. Carpenter Turner.

The existing Manor House, in spite of its venerable appearance, dates only from 1777; but it stands on the site of an older building, the Grange, to which belonged the moat, the square well in the garden, and the ancient manorial dovecote, a most interesting structure, with its vast number of niches for the former inmates. The privilege of possessing such an establishment was jealously reserved,² and it was not every man who could set one up. So Selden remarks,³ “The matter is, whether he be a man of such Quality, that the State allows him to have a Dove-house, if so there’s an end of the business, his Pidgeons have a right to eat where they please themselves.”

Close to the Manor House is the old Tithe Barn, with its lofty roof supported by oak posts. Its stone basement is said to date back to the fourteenth century. According to Mr. Trigg⁴ the building is 140 feet in length by 40 in breadth, and “is capable of holding upwards of 150 loads of sheaf wheat.”

In 1293 we hear of the prior holding a “watermill

¹ The abbey church of Jumieges was dedicated to the Blessed Mary and St. Peter, hence probably the dedication of the two Hayling churches to those two saints.

² See David Murray, *An archaeological Survey of the United Kingdom*, p. 78.

³ *Table Talk*, p. 40, Arber's edition.

⁴ *Guide to Hayling Island*, p. 28.



OLD MILL, HAYLING ISLAND.

worth by the year 60s."¹ This was no doubt the ancestor of the tidal mill, some of whose charred timbers are still standing about half-way up the eastern coast of the Island, though in 1877 the mill was destroyed by fire. Such mills, the feeding ponds of which are filled by the rising tide, are now, I believe, far from common.²

At no great distance are the remains of a saltern, perhaps the one mentioned in *Domesday*.

A little to the south of the mill is seen the wood covering Tourner Bury or Tunorbery, an ancient enclosure of doubtful origin. A space of some acres is surrounded by an earthen rampart, now about 6 feet high, and a fosse originally no doubt at least as deep.³ The enclosure is nearly circular, with a greater diameter of 240 yards and a lesser of 200.⁴

All other Hampshire camps are on elevated sites,⁵ but Tourner Bury is nearly on the sea level.

As yet nothing has been found to identify the people who constructed and held this stronghold. Some refer it to Aella and his Saxons, but it is more probably of Celtic origin. Local antiquaries speak of the Romans as having had something to do with it. If so, they probably inherited it from the natives, for there is little about the place characteristic of Roman work, though in connection with it there are said to be traces of a Roman road.

Mr. Trigg's recent excavations seem to prove its British origin⁶; and Mr. Roach Smith speaks of it as a "British or Celtic oppidum."⁷

Till recently the relations between Rome and Hayling Island were, to say the least, somewhat uncertain. Discoveries made within the past few years have, however,

¹ *Guide to Hayling Island*, p. 55. In Dugdale, *op. cit.* VI, 34, we have "Hayling Mol'auat," valued at £1 in the *Valor Ecclesiasticus*, 26 Hen. VIII.

² A tidal mill is mentioned on the first page of *Domesday*. For the loan of the block illustrating the destroyed mill the Institute is indebted to Mr. H. R. Trigg.

³ *Oppidum autem Britanni vocant cum silvas impeditas vallo atque fossa munierunt. Caesar, De Bello Gallico, V. 21.*

⁴ See *A Topographical and Historical Account of Hayling Island*, published at Havant in 1826.

⁵ See Mr. Shore, *Hampshire Field Club Papers*, No. 1 (1887), p. 22.

⁶ Mr. Trigg recently had two trenches dug across Tourner Bury, and others at right angles to these. He found only two pieces of British pottery and remains of fires under the surrounding earthwork. He is convinced that the place is not Roman.

⁷ *Journal of the Royal Archaeological Institute*. XXX, p. 435.

proved indisputably that Roman influence *did* penetrate to this remote corner of the land.

Not far from the northernmost point of the island, and a little to the west of North Hayling Church, a large field of 20 acres bears the name of the Towncil Field, an appellation that has been interpreted as a corruption of *Council*, with a derivation from either *concilium* or *consilium*. It seems to me that the change of the first letter in this name may be due to the Teuton invaders, to whom "Tun" or "Town" would be a familiar sound.

A variation of the name, viz., "The Town's Hall Furlong," is found in *A Topographical and Historical Account of Hayling Island*, published in 1826; and it has been suggested that the original form may have been Tunstall, a place-name occurring in at least seven English counties. Another variant is "Townsel."¹

Be this as it may, the field in question comprises within its limits indubitable tokens of Roman civilisation, though they are not ordinarily visible to the passer-by.

I for one spent a considerable time in traversing the neighbouring land, and only guessed at the position of the buried foundations by noting a certain slight swelling in one of the fields.

On a subsequent visit I had the help of the farm bailiff, who unearthed with his stick a portion of the wall composed of a rough soft stone, together with flints, many of which also lay on the surface of the ploughed land. I was informed, however, that in summer, just before harvest, the plan of a large building, with inner partition parallel to the outer wall, is easily traced by the corn ripening much more quickly above these foundations.

I had myself no opportunity of tracing and measuring the outline of the structure, but according to a sketch shown me by Mr. H. R. Trigg, and one sent to me by Mr. Carpenter Turner, its plan was that of a Basilica, with apse and surrounding aisles subdivided into several chambers.

Mr. Trigg (who gives the length as 131 feet, with a breadth of 63 feet²), informs me that he came upon other

¹ See below, p. 291.

² *Op. cit.*, p. 25.

foundations, including one of circular form ; and he has shown me a bronze finger-ring, an iron spear-head, several portions of tessellated pavement, and much pottery—black, drab, and “Samian”—the fruits of some slight excavations. He also possesses a fine sepulchral urn, 12 inches high by 10 inches in diameter, discovered in an adjacent field. Of his Roman coins I will speak presently.

Two “Roman plates” are in the possession of Mr. W. C. Turner, the present owner of the Towncil Field. In 1896 I called on this gentleman twice, but was not fortunate enough to find him at home, so it was at the time impossible for me to ascertain whether the potters’ names were to be found on the ware, as I had been told was the case.

After leaving Hayling, however, I received from Mr. Turner a letter, of which the following is an extract :—

“Some years ago, when putting in ordinary drain pipes, the men found the two plates I have about 200 yards from the ‘Townsel,’ and at a depth of about 18 inches. The plates are round, of the size housewives call pudding plates. One is of the common thick brown, or nearly black, ware so often seen in museums ; the other is red, and probably was glazed. It is much thinner, and of better design than the brown. I think it is Samian. It had something stamped in the middle:

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, but unfortunately the men, rather elated at the discovery, and not waiting for my arrival, nor knowing that these articles, having been there over 1,000 years, must be very fragile, broke them in removing them from the retentive clay soil, and, alas ! erased the stamp (at least it cannot be deciphered) by *scraping* the soil from it.

“I think there must have been a *large* encampment round about the ‘Townsel,’ because when draining we came across so many small trenches or ditches, parallel, and apparently open, and for the purpose of carrying off surface water, the land being so flat. Into these open drains refuse must have been thrown, as we constantly found fragments of charcoal, ashes, and especially quantities of oyster shells, etc.

“About forty years ago a plowman here found a valuable twisted gold wire British ring ; it got into the possession

of the Longcroft family at Havant, and I believe one of them must have it now."

Last August I was more fortunate in finding Mr. Turner at home, and he showed me the two plates. The red one is remarkably light, and evidently of superior material.

Mr. Turner most kindly allowed me to select specimens from a considerable number of fragments of pottery discovered from time to time in the neighbourhood, and he directed my attention to a low cliff on the western shore of the island in which such fragments often occur.

Of all the contents of Mr. Trigg's interesting collection of local antiquities the most important for our purposes are the three Roman coins found in or near the Towncil Field, viz., a denarius of Antoninus, and two bronze coins, one a *dupondius*, or middle brass of Augustus, the other of Faustina.¹ The latter is in good condition, but the former is of especial value, for bronze coins of Augustus are rarely met with in this country. The obverse is inscribed "Augustus," the head being well preserved; the reverse presents the letters C.A. in a wreath, in reference to *Caesareia Augusta*, probably the modern Saragossa. The usual view, however, is that these coins were struck specially for Syria.² So our bronze coin may have been treasured in the pocket of a Roman soldier or a *mercator* till it passed from the south-east of the Roman Empire to a province in the extreme north-west.

The legions stationed in Britain were the second (*Augusta*), sixth (*Victrix*), ninth, fourteenth, and twentieth. Of these the sixth did not reach Britain till the reign of Hadrian, when the southern part of the island had been thoroughly pacified and reduced to subjection; so that this legion is not likely to have been employed in Hayling.

It was the second legion, as we learn from Tacitus,³ that was placed by Claudius under Vespasian's command, when that general undertook the conquest of the Isle of Wight and the neighbouring coast.⁴ The second legion may well, therefore, have visited Hayling.

¹ This coin must have been struck between A.D. 141 and 161.
See *Eckhel*, III, 339.

³ *Histories*, III, 44.

⁴ See Suetonius, *Vespasianus*, 4.

I am not aware, however, that any of these legions of Britain had been engaged in the east during the early empire. It must, nevertheless, be borne in mind that besides the regular legions recruited in Italy, large bodies of troops were raised in the various provinces to guard the distant frontiers of the empire. Thus the fortifications, extending from Wallsend to Bowness on the Solway, were entrusted to the care of Spaniards and Batavians, Gauls and Thracians; and among the Roman remains discovered during the excavation of the camp at South Shields, the tombstone erected in memory of Regina by the Palmyrene Barates¹ shows that Syrians also found shelter under the imperial eagles.

There is nothing, indeed, in this monument to show that Barates was a warrior. He may have belonged to that tribe of *mercatores* who followed in the wake of armies then as in all other times; and it is possible that our coin, if struck for distant Syria, was brought to Hayling by one of his fellow-countrymen employed in similar business. It is, however, unlikely that a *Syrian* coin would have a *Latin* inscription (though some colonies have); and Mr. Grueber thinks that the long straight back of the head on this coin has a Gaulish look.²

Though so little is yet known as to these Roman remains, they seem to have attracted some attention even seventy years ago; for in *A Topographical and Historical Account of Hayling Island*, published anonymously³ in 1826, I find the following remarks⁴:—

“In the north parish there still remain some remarkable appearances of a building of great magnitude. About the centre of Stokefield, in a part of it called the Town’s Hall Furlong, there is a slight elevation, or brow as husbandmen designate it, which has evidently not been raised by nature but by the levelling of materials which constituted the foundations of a building. . . .

¹ See Bruce, *The Handbook to the Roman Wall*, p. 239 (third edition).

² This *dupondius* of Augustus was found a few years ago on the site of a trench dug by Mr. Trigg in the Towncil Field, in which trench he found the spear-head and *tessera* mentioned above, p. 291, and a British imitation of a coin of Postumus, who

reigned from A.D. 258 to 267. Other coins are said to have been found in the Towncil Field.

³ Since this was written I have seen the *Bibliotheca Hantoniensis*, in which the above work is referred to Richard Scott.

⁴ pp. 94–96.

Curiosity, however, has never induced the proprietor of this part of the field to descend below the penetrations of his ploughshare."

It is further stated that a parallelogram occupying nearly an acre "is described by a line of 3 feet in thickness. Within this figure, and at about 14 feet distance, another is found, and joined to it by lateral lines of nearly the same thickness, at various intervals around, so as to exhibit areas between the two of unequal dimensions. In the centre of the whole there is a perfect circle of nearly 40 feet diameter, the line describing which is somewhat thicker."

The unknown writer concludes with the remark: "We are not prepared to render any account of the building which existed here other than what conjecture may furnish."

These words were written upwards of seventy years ago, and we do not seem much better informed at the present day.

Looking, however, to the plan of the foundations in question, although one might at first sight be inclined to compare it with those of the Basilicas at Wroxeter and Silchester, yet in the absence of any record of the existence of a town in the neighbourhood, it will be safer to suppose we are dealing with a private house of the "courtyard type." For such a residence the locality would be most suitable. There is not, indeed, that attractive slope in the ground which seems so often to have decided the site for a Roman villa,¹ but on the other hand there were great facilities for obtaining such important commodities as fish (including oysters), salt, and wood, together with the advantages of water carriage and excellent harbours close by. While protected by its insular position, the settlement lay only a couple of miles off the main road joining *Portus Magnus* (Porchester) with *Regnum* (Chichester), and was within easy reach of both those important stations, by sea as well as by land.

That the manufacture of pottery was carried on in Hayling in former times is shown by the existence of "pot-holes," *i.e.*, holes from which clay has been taken, as well as by the frequent occurrence of fragments of

¹ *e.g.*, at Chedworth and Morton.

earthenware in the north-western portion of the island.¹ These traces of ceramic industry occur at no great distance from "the Towncil Field," and belong no doubt to the same settlement.

With a view to deciding the character of this settlement, I set to work last summer with spade and pickaxe, and after tracing the substantial foundations of various walls, I discovered in one of my trenches, about 21 feet long, upwards of fifty tesserae, which had obviously formed part of a mosaic pavement.

This established the Roman origin of the remains.

In August next I hope to resume my digging, and to learn more as to the antiquities of Hayling Island.

The derivation of the name Hayling is not easily settled, as it occurs in several very different forms. I have myself found in *Domesday* and other early documents no fewer than twelve varieties. If we had to deal simply with the *Domesday* forms, Halingei, Helinghei, and Helingey, we might cite the analogous cases of Heligoland and Holy Island, and derive the name from *halig*—holy. This would fall in well with the prevailing idea of the island sanctuary, as Greece had her holy island of Delos, Rome her *Insula Tiberina*, devoted to Æsculapius, the northern Pagans Rügen, with its worship of Hertha, the Christians their hallowed Lindisfarne.

But the case is complicated by the existence of the variant Haringeja or Haringey as early as Henry the First's charter, while Henry the Second's also has Harengée, and Tanner writes "Hailing *olim* Haringeye." This might seem to point to a derivation from *haering*, with reference to fisheries.

Since the island fell so completely into the hands of the Church early in the eleventh century, and before the *Domesday Survey*, the name might easily have been corrupted (with a very slight change of consonant) into one more in keeping with its clerical associations.

¹ See Trigg, *cp. cit.*, p. 25.