

29 NOV 1967

PROCEEDINGS
OF THE
CAMBRIDGE ANTIQUARIAN
SOCIETY

(INCORPORATING THE CAMBS & HUNTS ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY)



~~VOLUME LX~~
JANUARY 1967 TO DECEMBER 1967

LVI - LX
1963 - 67

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*Published for the Cambridge Antiquarian Society (incorporating the Cambs and Hunts
Archaeological Society) by Deighton Bell, 13 Trinity Street, Cambridge*

Printed in Great Britain at the University Printing House, Cambridge

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NOTES

TREVOR A. BEVIS, JAMES HITCHCOCK, C. B. DENSTON
AND MARY D. CRA'STER

THE FONT AT ST WENDREDA'S, MARCH

Visitors to Saint Wendreda's church, March, who enter the building by the south porch, hardly give a second glance to the font nearby. An octagonal pedestal supports an octagonal basin, the latter inconspicuously carved with geometrical designs (Pl. II *a*). Its plain, and at first sight unremarkable, character has led in the past to its being mistakenly identified as Perpendicular,¹ but it is the church's oldest possession.

The present incumbent (The Rev. A. C. Turnbull) was the first to observe that the font had originally been square, the corners having at some time been cut away, it is assumed, to correspond with the general style of the building. The writer subsequently studied the carved designs and made drawings, thus establishing that the font was Norman.

Before its proportions were reduced, the font was 2 ft. 6 in. square and had three designs on each side. The designs comprised circles, within which had been carved a cross with splayed ends (Pl. II *c*), and four-petalled flowers whose petal ends penetrated a circle (Pl. II *b*). The font could well have been reshaped and placed on a new pedestal at the same time as the tower was added and other alterations made late in the fourteenth century, in order to bring it into harmony with the new work.

In the author's opinion, the font can be dated between 1100 and 1150. Its presence indicates that the present church, which has no visible work earlier than the thirteenth century, was preceded by a Norman one, which may in turn have risen above the foundations of a small Saxon church dedicated to an obscure Saxon lady.

T. A. B.

A DISORDERLY RECTOR AT ELY, 1594

The following document is folio 109 of Cambridge University Library Additional Manuscript 6605. The recipient of the letter is not indicated, but it is presumably the bishop of Ely.

Right Worshipfull o^r duties remembered Whereas we wer lately Chosen Churchwardens of Trinitie pish in Ely and understandinge that Sr. Richard Ffyston our Minister there is unlawfully placed or alowed for Want of lawfull allowance Institucon or Induction as behoveth & our office by Comen due ought to enquier and psent the same as we suppose. And forasmuch as he hath of long tyme served that Cuer in that unlawfull Contempt without any such lawfull allowance and is a veri Contentiouse man livinge Idelly not applyinge his booke hanntinge Alehouses & unlawfull games amongst the poorer sort of people & somtyme playinge in his owne house pvokinge

¹ See C. H. Evelyn-White, *The Churches of Cambridgeshire*, p. 132.

some poore psons to loose there Mony there sometymes in the night season very unlawfully. He doth not Catachize the youth of the pish as he should he did never preach he hath Caused lately a pulpit to be made for him to reade the divine service wthout the Consent Counsell or agreem^t of the most Substantiall of the pish and wthout yo^r order as it is reported he beinge placed heartofore in the highest place in the Chancell of the same Church Wher all the Ministers heartofore have alwayes used to read the Divine service Sithence the erection of the same Church when all the people might very well hear the Divine service The most pte of the men beinge placed in the Chancell & the Women in the body of the Church he hath left the place of the Chancell wher the men are seated & hath placed himself among the women wch place dyd pcure extraordinarye Change to the pishoners wth no little murmor & Contraversye the former place more Convenient more Lawfull & more Antient, but he is so Willfull, stobern, & so stout of behavior as he hath moved of Late much Contenton & is soe proud & haghtie as when the Churchwardens did bringe hym the booke lately to enter the Churchings & buryalls he requiered the Churchwardens to bringe pen & ink or else he would not record the same. He did lately take upon himself at the request of c'tane psons to make sertaine obligacons to use of the stock of the poore & to be sealed & deliv'ed to the same psons to us wthout our Consent previtie or agrement

Yo^r Worshipp at Comamndm'

Willm Alan John goodriche

Of all wch matter We thought good our office & dutie to advertise yor Worshipp Desiring yor WoP. to take such order hearin as to yor wisdom shalbe thought best. And soe humblye Wee doe take our leaves Ely this xth of ffebruary 1594.

J. H.

HUMAN REMAINS FROM WANDLEBURY

The bones were uncovered by workmen using a bulldozer while extending the area of the cricket pitch. They were found within 2 or 3 ft. of the top of the embankment, near its southern end, but the exact position could not be recorded.

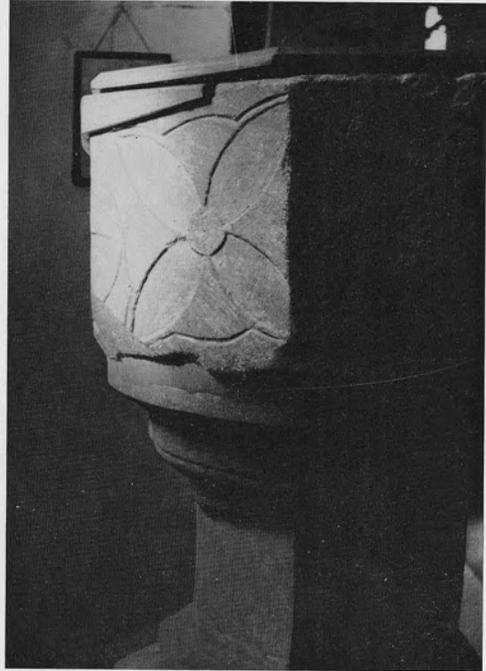
Human remains were also reported to have been found at the same site, when the area was originally levelled for the pitch, at least eighty years ago.

In view of the position of these finds of human skeletons, just outside the south-eastern perimeter of the hill-fort ramparts, it seems quite possible that this was an Iron Age burial ground. The remains uncovered in December 1966 had been broken by the bulldozer passing over them and were deposited at the laboratory in fragments. Prior to examining the remains, the bones were repaired inasmuch as this was possible, resulting in the reconstruction of two complete femora. The remains were representative of two individuals, though the majority of the material was from one skeleton. The individual represented by the most bones was a large robust male, whose stature was approximately 5 ft. 11 in. The stature was obtained by taking the maximum length measurements of the femora, and applying the measurements to the regression formulae of Trotter and Gleser (1952),¹ for 'whites'. An age at death for the individual was able to be ascertained from the degree of closure of the ectocranial and endocranial aspects of the sagittal suture which could be observed on a few of the cranial fragments. An age was also able to be

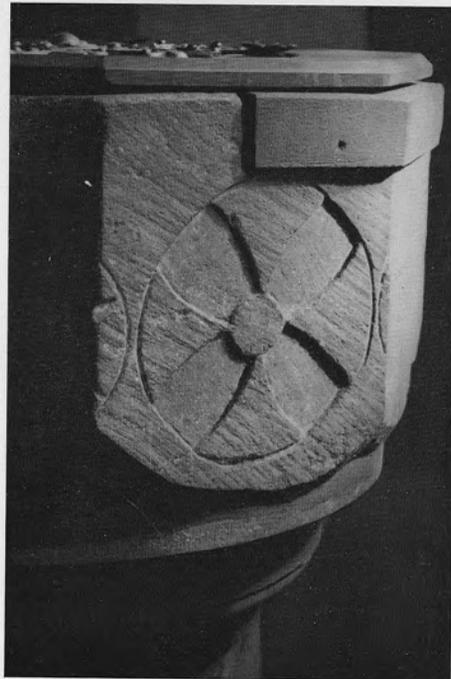
¹ Mildred Trotter and Goldine C. Gleser, 'Estimation of Stature from Long Bones of American Whites and Negroes', *Amer. J. Phys. Anthropol.* N.S. x (1952), pp. 463-514.



(a)



(b)



(c)

Font at St Wendreda's, March.

obtained from the degree of attrition of three molar teeth, no conflict occurring between the two sets of criteria, the age being estimated as approximately twenty-five years. The oral health of the individual was not very good, as half of a mandible preserved displayed signs of abscesses in the sockets of the three molar teeth, and possibly in the socket of the second premolar tooth. Five teeth were also present among the remains, two of which had medium sized caries, and in a third, which was a molar tooth, carious decay had affected half of the occlusal surface down to the neck, leaving a large cavity. The abscesses affecting the tooth sockets had also affected the roots of four of the teeth, leaving them with a slight bulbous appearance. Slight deposits of calculus, or tartar, also adhered to four out of the five teeth.

The second individual was represented by fragmentary shafts of a femur, a tibia, and a humerus. The individual was an adult, but the shafts of the long bones were not of so large proportions as similar bones of the other individual. The sex of the individual was undeterminable from such a scanty proportion of a skeleton, but it was possible the individual was a female.

C. B. D. and M. D. C.

A POSSIBLE HOARD OF DECORATED FLAT AXES FROM
LITTLEPORT, CAMBS.

In 1965 an Early Bronze Age flat axe was brought into the Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology for identification. It had 'rain' decoration on both faces, and herring-bone tooling on the edges (Fig. 1). There was a very slight incipient stop-ridge.

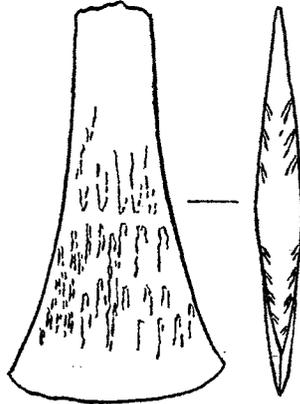


Fig. 1. Flat axe from a hoard (?), Littleport, Cambs. Scale $\frac{1}{2}$.

The owner did not wish to part with it, although it transpired that it had been dug up in a garden at Littleport a few months back, *together with several other similar pieces* which had been put into the dustbin.

In view of the rarity of hoards of this date, and the lack of finds of decorated axes of this type in East Anglia,¹ it was thought worth while to publish this information, scanty though it be.

M. D. C.

¹ J. M. Coles, 'A Flat Axe from Chatteris Fen, Cambs.', *Proc. C.A.S.* LVI/LVII (1962/63), pp. 4-8.