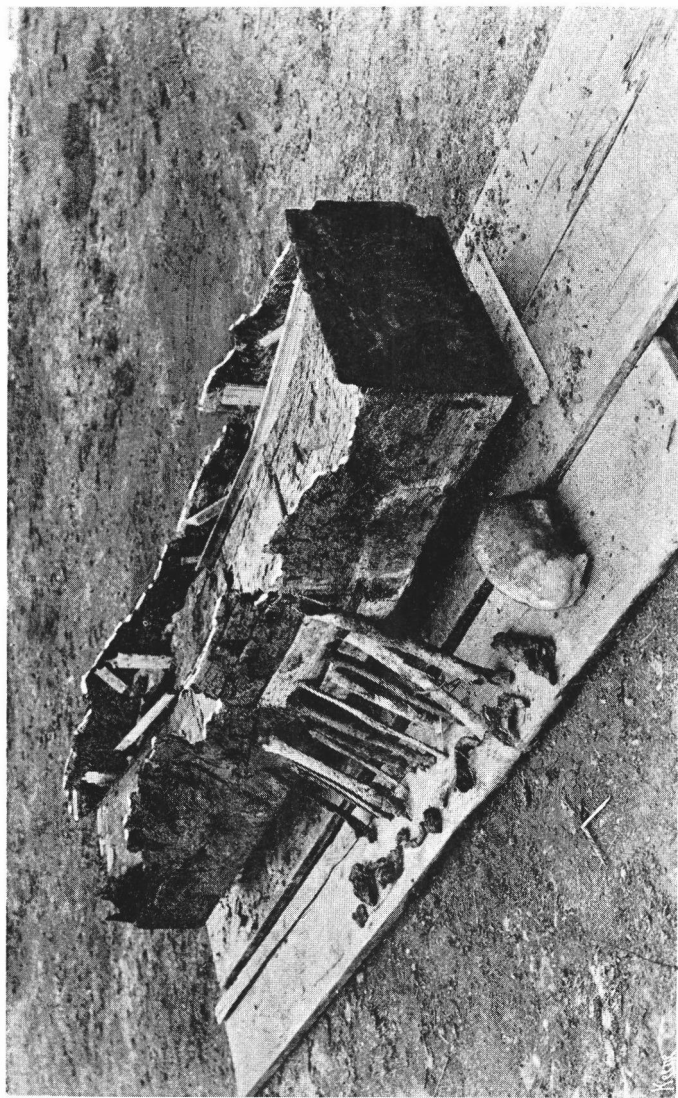


PLATE I.



RID KEENE LTD. DERBY.

STANLEY GRANGE INTERMENT. THE REMAINS.

Discovery of an Early Interment at Stanley Grange.

BY THE REV. CHARLES KERRY.



ON September 22nd, 1903, during the formation of a drain on the west side of the farm buildings, an interesting discovery was made at Stanley Grange Farm,* about six miles north-east from Derby. It comprised a rectangular oak coffin containing human remains and a small glass phial. The lid of the coffin lay three feet one inch below the surface, but as the ground has obviously been raised in recent times, its position was not more than two feet below the present natural level. At each end of the coffin were two circular holes; those at the head being three quarters of an inch in diameter, four inches apart from centre to centre, and eight and a half inches at their centres above the floor of the coffin; those at the foot, one inch in diameter, three and a quarter inches apart from centre to centre, and eight and a half inches at their centres above the floor. The following are careful measurements and particulars of the coffin:—

| | | ft. | in. |
|----------------------------------|-----|-----|-----|
| Length, outside measurement | ... | 5 | 11½ |
| „ inside „ | ... | 5 | 9 |
| Width, outside „ | ... | 1 | 3 |
| „ inside „ | ... | 1 | 1½ |
| Depth, greatest, right-hand side | ... | 0 | 11¾ |
| „ „ left-hand side | ... | 0 | 12½ |
| Thickness of floor | ... | 0 | 1⅛ |
| Form :—Rectangular. | | | |

* No. 15 Dale Abbey Parish, Ordnance Survey Map, 1881.

Position:—The feet of the interment were to the west-south-west, and the head was below the cowhouse wall, six feet six inches from the door into the stackyard.

Material:—Oak, and, as no traces of metal were found, it may be assumed that pegs were used instead of nails.

Condition:—The coffin looked more like charcoal than wood, and yet in places the oak was fairly sound. It was much broken, and had to be carefully restored before the photograph for Plate I. could be taken.

The human remains within consisted of the upper portion of the skull, a portion of the jaw containing three teeth, and the principal bones of the arms and legs, but the pelvis, spine, and shoulder blades were absent, and probably had perished. The skull, which was $7\frac{1}{8}$ inches long by $5\frac{7}{8}$ inches broad, was of somewhat unusual form in an interment of the period to which this relates, having prominent superciliary ridges—a very early tribal feature, almost of a pre-historic character. The bones were only held together by the osseous external coating, for the inner substance had entirely lost its nature.

On the right-hand side of the head was a small glass phial of a greyish green tint, which, when found, was covered with beautiful iridescence, but this, unfortunately, no longer remains. It is three and a half inches high by one and a half in diameter, and hexagonal in form (see Plate II.).

Without any doubt the interment dates from remote pagan times, for it was laid with the feet to the west, and the phial is an instance of the heathen custom of burying with their dead any object conceived to be useful or desirable for the deceased to possess in the future state. This would in every respect meet the supposition of a Roman burial at some period in the occupation of Britain during the first three centuries and a half of our era, or rather of a burial by that far larger section of the invaders who were not of the Christian

PLATE II.



RD. KEENE, LTD., DERBY.

STANLEY GRANGE INTERMENT.

THE GLASS PHIAL. Exact size.

community. Burial within towns was then utterly prohibited. The Romans buried their dead by the side of the public roads outside their cities, and in the gardens of their country villas, or in any spot selected, it may have been, by the deceased in his lifetime.

Derby, as such, did not then exist and Stanley had no name at all; but it is highly probable that a Romano-British track passed through the place from Derventio, a fortified Roman station (now called Little Chester), to some other place westwards; and I am led to think so because, about the year 1250, there was a field in Stanley called "*Portway*," which about that time was given to the monks of Dale.* This word "*Port*" is usually connected with Roman roads in the vicinity of their stations. Of this we have an example in the parish of Pentridge in "*Portway*" House and farm, close to the old Roman road from Little Chester to Chesterfield; and many other examples may be found in England. There is an interesting name of another field in Stanley, given to Dale Abbey about the same time as the former, "*Deadman Field*."†

Stanley is a Saxon name, and could not have been assigned until some time after the Saxon invasion in 447. It signifies the *Lea*, or meadow of *Stone*, or perhaps of *the* stone—some large stone set up in memory of some chieftain or event, forgotten ages ago, the stone having meanwhile been broken up, like so many others in this country. There may have been, and probably was, a Roman villa somewhere near the site of the Grange, since it was customary in the latter period of their occupation for wealthy Romans to erect such homes outside their fortified towns, and this burial may be considered as suggestive evidence.

By direction of the coroner the human remains were re-interred by the police in Stanley churchyard.

* Vol. xxiv, p. 83 of this *Journal*.

† Ditto, pp. 84, 85. This may be a mere coincidence, but it is possible that as the interments would then be barely a foot below the surface of the soil, it may have been discovered and left undisturbed in deference to the ancient superstition, which still survives in many districts, that misfortune attends those who disturb the dead.—ED.