

The Discovery of Human Remains near Marlow

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[Abstract of a paper read before the Berks Archæological
Society, April 25th, 1925.]

In the Thames Valley a mile north-east of the town of Great Marlow there is a spread of brick-earth, about half a mile in diameter, resting on gravel belonging to what the Geological Survey call the Flood Plain Terrace. The age of this terrace, although but few fossils have been found in it, would appear to correspond with the Later Palæolithic Period. Any human remains, whether bones or artefacts, which it might contain would be of very great interest provided they could be proved to be contemporary with the formation of the deposit.

The surface level of the Marlow brickearth is about one hundred feet O.D., or twelve feet or so above the present level of the Thames near by. Its thickness is from four to five feet, and it is extensively worked for brickmaking.

For several years past the present writer has kept in touch with the workmen and has often visited the pits without making any discovery. It was not till January 14 in the present year that the clay diggers came across the skull and some bones of a man at the base of the brickearth near its junction with the underlying gravel. The remains were nearly five feet from the surface, and although the section was most carefully examined no trace could be seen of any disturbance in the overlying material. It might therefore be presumed that they were natural fossils of the same age as the brickearth, and not the result of a burial in the usual sense of the word. A few days afterwards the complete skeleton of a badger was found in a similar position and only a few yards away.

The skull was submitted to Sir Arthur Keith, who came to the conclusion that it was that of an old man who had met with a violent death, possibly by a tree falling on him. The time of the accident was probably in the second or third century A.D., as there was a certain resemblance between this specimen and

some skulls which were discovered in a Roman villa at Hambledon, a few miles away from this site, twelve years ago, and sent by Mr. Cocks to Sir Arthur Keith for determination. In the present case Sir Arthur thinks that there may have been a deliberate burial, all traces of which would in the long course of time in such a material as the brickearth have disappeared. Still, it seems very desirable that some further evidence should be discovered both as to the date of the human remains and also as to the age and mode of formation of the brickearth itself, the latter being a problem of considerable geological interest.

The skull has been presented to the Natural History Museum, South Kensington, where it will be available for future reference.

The Protection of Ancient Buildings

We have been asked by the Secretary of the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings to insert the following letter. We hope both our readers and the members of our Society will respond to this appeal. The objects of the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings are well known to many of us, for two years ago the members of the Berkshire Archæological Society had the pleasure of hearing a lecture from Mr. Powys on the work of his Society.—(Editors, *Berks, Bucks and Oxon Archæological Journal*.)

The Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings,
20 Buckingham Street, Adelphi, London, W.C.2.
4th September, 1925.

DEAR SIR,

I would ask if you will kindly print this letter in the next issue of your Journal? The purpose of it is to draw the attention of your members individually to the work of this Society, and to the urgent need for increased subscriptions. My Committee is sure that your members will agree that the fact that your organisation is affiliated with our own and subscribes a guinea a year to our funds signifies that your Committee considers that the work done by this Society deserves support. I would therefore point out that this Society finished the year 1924 with the sum of £3 3s. od. in hand; yet so