

He procures, however, the least heap who takes that which is nearest the town; and then every one rides away with his share, and keeps the whole of it. When the wealth of the deceased has been thus exhausted, then they carry out his corpse from the house, and burn it, together with his weapons and clothes; and generally they spend the whole substance by the long continuance of the body within the house, together with what they lay in heaps along the road, which the strangers run for, and take away.

“It is also an established custom with the Estonians, that the dead bodies of every tribe or family shall be burned; and if any man findeth a single bone unconsumed, they shall be fined to a considerable amount.”

The coincident testimony of Tacitus, which I now proceed to give, is most remarkable; and whether we consider the peculiar habit of gathering amber, or, what is more important, the affinity of language, goes far towards shewing that the *Æstii* were not strangers to our ancestors.

“Ergo jam dextro Suevici maris littore *Æstiorum* gentes alluuntur, quibus ritus habitusque Suevorum, lingua Britannicæ proprior. Matrem deum venerantur: insigne superstitionis, formas aprorum gestant. Id pro armis omnique tutela, securum deæ cultorem etiam inter hostes præstat. Rarus ferri, frequens fustium usus. Frumenta, cæterosque fructus patientius quam pro solita Germanorum inertia laborant. Sed et mare scrutantur, ac *soli omnium* succinum, quod ipsi Glesum vocant, inter vada atque in ipso littore legunt,” &c. &c.—Taciti Germania, cap. xlv.

I. W.

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#### DISCOVERY OF A SAXON INTERMENT AT LONG WITTENHAM.

Communicated by the Rev. James C. Clutterbuck.

AN interesting discovery has recently been made at Long Wittenham, in Berkshire, where remains have been brought to light, of a later age than the period to which the foregoing memoir relates. The following account, which has been kindly supplied by the Rev. J. C. Clutterbuck, vicar of the parish, may most appropriately be connected with the memorials of Berkshire antiquities.

“The ancient arms and remains, (of which representations are here given,) were lately dug up in this parish; I was

unfortunately not apprized of the discovery until they had been removed by the workmen. I can therefore only give such information as to their position, with reference to the skeleton with which they were lying, as I obtained from the labourers.

“Long Wittenham lies on the right bank of the river Isis, about midway between Abingdon and Wallingford, a mile and a half west of Dorchester, and one mile north-west of the ancient encampment on Sinodun Hill. The exact spot where the discovery occurred is on the right hand side of the road leading from Wittenham to Wallingford, about one hundred yards south of the site of the ancient village cross, from which the road takes its name.

“The discovery was made by some labourers employed in digging the foundations for a cottage. At about three feet below the surface of the soil one of them struck a pickaxe into a human skull, and he subsequently dug out the remainder of a skeleton, lying with the head to the south, and the feet to the north. Over the left shoulder, by the side of the head, was an earthen vase which was unfortunately broken to pieces, and of which all the fragments were not collected; close by the side of the vase was a spear-head of iron, in good preservation, measuring 11 inches in length: on the same side lower down lay a two-edged iron sword, measuring 2 ft. 11 inches in length, and  $2\frac{1}{4}$  inches across the blade. On the right side was found a small knife or dagger, six inches long, with one edge; on the breast were a number of fragments of iron, amongst which was apparently the boss of a shield, of conical shape, terminating in a squared projection, rising about half an inch, and measuring about three-eighths of an inch across. On a fragment of iron, which appears to have formed an outer rim to the boss, was an iron stud or bottom, covered with a very thin plate of silver; of these studs there were four in all; a fragment of iron which appeared to have formed a circular hoop, ending in a hook, and other remains of various forms and dimension, were also found.”

These curious vestiges will be readily recognised as marking an interment of the early Saxon age; and a remarkable conformity in the fashion of the weapons and objects deposited with the corpse, in their relative position in the tomb, and other details, may be noticed in the sepulchral discoveries of this period. The head is usually found to the south; the iron sword, the entire length being mostly about thirty-five

REMAINS FOUND AT LONG WITTENHAM AND BLEWBURY.



Sword of iron.

Found at Long Wittenham

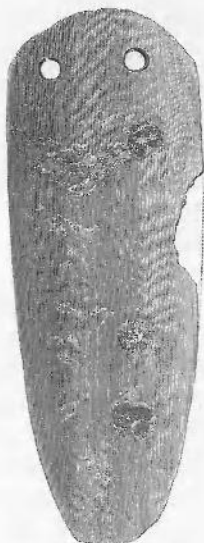


Spear-head of iron

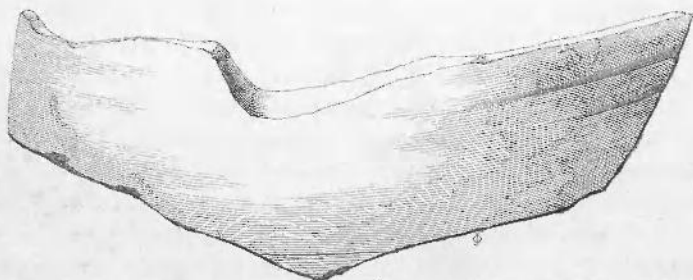
Found at Long Wittenham



Hook, found at Long Wittenham



Bronze instrument, found at Blewbury  
(Page 282.)



Fragment of Roman Pottery, found at Blewbury. (Page 281.)

inches, was deposited at the left side, and the spear at the right, the point in a line with the head, as if the weapon had been placed in the right hand of the deceased warrior. Occasionally the spear-head measures as much as fifteen inches in length. The single-edged knife is commonly found at the right side, in the same position as the dagger of later times; the shield was evidently laid upon the body, and the umbo, attached by several flat circular studs, is sometimes found between the thigh bones. At the feet occasionally may be noticed a fictile vessel<sup>a</sup>. Several examples have been recorded, shewing that the fashion of plating with silver the blunted point of the *umbo*, as also the studs with which it was attached to the shield, probably of wood, was not unusual. Douglas gives a representation of an *umbo* thus ornamented, found near Ash, in Kent<sup>b</sup>. Another example is supplied by an interment described by Sir Richard Hoare, discovered in a small tumulus on Rodmead Down, Wiltshire. Mr. Cunnington notices a fragment of thin silver, which possibly had been destined for a similar purpose, found, with an umbo and remains of the "iron-period," in another barrow in the same county, near the village of Codford<sup>c</sup>.

Fictile urns have been found, but not very frequently, in the tombs of this period. In form, they are distinct from the peculiar cinerary urns of the British age, and they are mostly ornamented with zigzag impressed patterns. A good example of coarse red clay, is given by Douglas, found in a tumulus on Barham Downs, near Canterbury<sup>d</sup>.

The opinion that these remains are Anglo-Saxon is also confirmed by the representation, given in Douglas's *Nenia*, plate I., of remains found in a tumulus opened on Chatham Lines, in Kent, in the month of September, 1779. The body was deposited entire, and with the head to the south, as that at Wittenham, but in a cist: the sword, knife, and spear were in the same relative position, and precisely of the same make; the earthenware bottle, also of the same fashion, and described as of the same material, viz., red earth, was at the feet, instead of being by the head, and the boss of the shield between the thigh bones.

<sup>a</sup> Compare Stukeley's account of remains found near Charteris, in the Isle of Ely, *Gent. Mag.*, March, 1776.

<sup>b</sup> *Nenia Britannica*, pl. 7. p. 26.

<sup>c</sup> *Ancient Wilts*, vol. i. p. 47; *Archæologia*, vol. xv. p. 345.

<sup>d</sup> *Nenia*, pl. 11. p. 47.

It may not be uninteresting to add that Douglas describes the umbo of this shield as four inches in diameter, and four studs were found near it. The Saxon shield he supposes to have been small and orbicular, with a boss in the centre, the whole diameter not exceeding eighteen inches<sup>e</sup>; the spear-head was fifteen inches long, the shaft having been of ash. The sword,  $35\frac{1}{4}$  inches long, two inches broad, flat, double-edged, and sharp pointed, apparently had been inclosed in a wooden sheath, covered with leather; while that at Wittenham must have had precisely the same dimensions, as the cross-piece at the extreme end for securing the handle is lost. Neither, according to the peculiarity of Saxon swords, had any guard to the handle. The knife also was in a wooden sheath, and had impressions of cloth discernible upon it. The bottle of red earth is described as twelve inches in height, and five inches in its largest diameter. It appears to have been of precisely the same fashion and material in both cases; and was probably part of the military equipment, and tied at the back, like our knapsack.

Mr. Douglas refers (p. 128, note) to the representation of a Saxon foot-soldier's dress, given in an illuminated MS. of Aurelius Prudentius, marked Cleopatra, c. viii. in the Cottonian Library, and attempts to give a date by observing that the Saxon Heptarchy was established in 582, and burials within the walls and near to churches (even "in tumulis paganorum") commenced in 742. These Saxon interments must have taken place in the interval. If so, the remains at Wittenham may have been deposited about the year 600, as there is nothing whatever to denote that the individual was a Christian.

It may be added that a curious Saxon fibula, from the Ashmolean Museum, engraved in vol. iv. p. 253 of the *Archæological Journal*, was found in the breast of a skeleton in Milton North field, near Abingdon, which is not far from Long Wittenham; and that as the camp on Sinodun Hill, which almost adjoins Wittenham, is of the description called Danish, this individual may possibly have fallen in an encounter with that people, such contests having been very frequent in the neighbourhood.

<sup>e</sup> Nenia, Obs., p. 128.