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ANCIENT CAMBRIDGESHIRE.

A COMPREHENSIVE SURVEY OF VESTIGES OF EARLY OCCUPATION IN CAMBRIDGESHIRE AND ADJACENT PARTS OF ESSEX, CHIEFLY THE RESULT OF PERSONAL OBSERVATION.¹

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FROM the earliest ages a strong desire has prevailed among men to enquire into the history, manners, and customs of their predecessors in the world, especially in their own country. This arose, most probably, from a wish to compare their present with a former condition, but whether it proceeded from laudable motives, or a spirit of idle curiosity, is not our province to enquire ; it certainly did exist, though the means of gratifying it were limited in proportion as manuscripts and books were rare, or accessible only to few. If then, men were to be found, who under the most disadvantageous circumstances made this study their special object, as the art of printing and education advanced together, their number of course was multiplied.

In this country, no less than abroad, such was the case, and from the commencement of the XVIth and XVIIth centuries, continued efforts were made by zealous antiquaries to elucidate the ancient history of our island. These gradually but steadily increased in number down to our own times, when, within the last thirty years, in conjunction with the wonderful advance of education, science, and art, they have spread far and wide, seeming almost to keep pace with the railroads and electric telegraph. To the increased facilities of communication the extension of this study is

¹ The following pages comprise the Address delivered by Mr. Neville, as President of the Section of Antiquities, on

the occasion of the recent meeting of the Institute at Cambridge.

undoubtedly materially indebted, bringing us as they do in close contiguity with the monuments of Egypt, Greece, and Rome, and last, among Archaeological discoveries, though first in antiquity and importance, with the marvellous palaces of Assyria. Throughout Europe, local museums and societies have been established, nor has England been slow to follow the example, so that instead of a few central bodies, almost every county can now boast of its own antiquarian community.

Every true Archaeologist must rejoice in this happy change, and I believe I am not in error when I state my conviction that these local branches have been planted, and are fostered by the annual visits of the parent societies to different parts of the country ; such a visit as we have this year assembled in the University of Cambridge to take part in, under most favourable auspices. Although objects of general antiquarian interest come within the scope of our proceedings on these occasions, those of a local nature claim precedence as tending to throw light upon the ancient history and inhabitants of the county in which we may be assembled. Having been called upon, on the occasion of the visit of the Institute to Cambridge, to preside over the section especially devoted to enquire into this branch of our Agenda, and having been continually engaged during the last ten years in Archaeological investigation of the borders of Cambridgeshire and the adjacent parts of Essex, I do not feel as unequal as I otherwise should, to the undertaking, and will, therefore, proceed to give a comprehensive view of the principal features elicited in the course of the excavations and researches to which I have alluded. In enumerating the various interesting spots to which I am desirous of directing attention, as having produced, either at some former period, or in recent times, remains of the early British, the Roman, and Romano-British, or the Anglo-Saxon periods,² I must remind you that

² At the Meeting of the Section of Antiquities, at Cambridge, the Proceedings were opened by the Discourse here given. Mr. Neville had kindly prepared, in illustration of his subject, those portions of the Ordnance Survey in which places occur where discoveries were stated to have been made. The vestiges of the different periods were also distinguished on the maps by various colours. We

hope that at some future time Mr. Neville may permit us to give a complete map of the district to which his researches have been so successfully addressed, when the further enquiries which he has actually in progress and in contemplation may have augmented a mass of evidence, of so much value in throwing light upon the ancient geography of Britain. In the mean time we may refer our readers to the Map of

I have chronicled them only from personal observation, without pretending to give a complete and unerring catalogue.

In taking an Archaeological survey of a country, the objects which first naturally attract the eye, are the most prominent features of ancient occupation presented on the surface, such as Roman roads, earthworks, and tumuli. To begin with the roads : the old ways, though they must have been very numerous, are now nearly obliterated and difficult to trace, frequently only appearing at intervals where their direction suits the course of the modern track. Of this kind is that upon Streetway Hill, connecting the road from Six Mile Bottom to Little Wilbraham with the village of Great Wilbraham ; but the most perfect and extensive ancient road, as far as I know, in Cambridgeshire is that marked in some maps as the Wool Street.

It originates in Cambridge, but my cognisance of it commences with the Gogmagog Hills, whence it proceeds in a south-easterly direction, crossing the turnpike road from Newmarket to London, near Worstead Lodge, and running to the North of Hildersham and Abington at the back of Borley Wood, within a mile of Bartlow, to Horseheath Lodge, and thence to Withersfield, Haverhill, and Colchester. The roads leading from the important station at Chesterford to Cambridgeshire are not very evident ; the principal one, probably, took the modern way into Ickleton, and so on to Duxford (where there is a very Roman looking branch westward to Triplow), and proceeded behind Whittlesford towards Cambridge. Another, proceeding from the north side, was joined at Stumps Cross by the short track from Ickleton, running by Bourn Bridge to the Fleam Dyke. The lines from Chesterford into Essex are more distinct ; from the east side an old road runs below Burton Wood, over Chesterford and Hadstock Commons into Hadstock Village, which it unites with Bartlow, the three-quarters of a mile between these two villages being the most perfect specimen of a Roman way with which I am acquainted. To the west, the old way from Strethall to Ickleton branches into

British and Roman Roads in Cambridgeshire, given by Mr. Babington in the Publications of the Cambridge Antiquarian Society, 8vo., No. III. (Parker, London.) Although less complete in the district

specially the object of Mr. Neville's researches, it will be found to present a valuable summary of information for the whole county.

Chesterford near the railway station ; and on the southern side, traces still exist of a road connecting this point with Littlebury village, and through it with the old Camp on the Ring Hill, in front of Audley End. Still further southward, signs of its progress are very faint, though, no doubt, "Quendon Street" and "Stansted Street," as their names indicate, were in the line of way.

West of the Ring Camp, upon "Chapel Green," still there are remains of another old way passing by Clanver End to Arkesden, in the direction of, and parallel to, the last-named route, and as it comes from Strethall by Littlebury Green, another approach to Chesterford from the south is thus opened. In a yet more westerly direction, near Heydon, Melbourn, and Triplow, the open country is traversed by so many cart tracks that it is almost impossible to distinguish the ancient from the modern, though it is certain that the Icknield Street from Royston did run below Heydon Hill. Here, therefore, must terminate my summary notice of the Roman roads in Cambridgeshire and Essex.

With the earthworks then we proceed.

All residents in Cambridgeshire are doubtless acquainted with the numerous ditches which traverse their county to such a vast extent, and even the casual frequenter of Newmarket Races must be familiar with the "Devil's Ditch," since in his journey from London it is a very striking object ; nor could he fail to observe another of like nature as it crosses the highway. This would be known to him as the Eight Mile Ditch, but it takes different names in its progress, for, while on the left of the turnpike road from Fen Ditton to Fulbourn, where it joins the Caudle Ditch, it is called Fleam Dyke ; we find it on the right-hand side assuming the appellation of Balsham Ditch in its eastward course, from the neighbouring village so named. Five miles to the south, on the property of Mr. Parker Hamond, at Pampisford, there is a third ditch, one termination of which is marked on the Ordnance Map as "Brent Ditch" End, close to Pampisford Hall. It runs apparently in a parallel line with the one last mentioned, crossing, also, the Newmarket Road between the "Two Mile Hill" cutting and Abington Park.

There is still another fosse belonging to this vicinity, though rather further removed than the three already enumerated, which commences immediately below the high

ground of Heydon and Chishall Downs on Lord Braybrooke's property, and may be traced for a considerable distance, running lower than Heydon Grange, across the Barkway and Cambridge Road, till it loses itself on Melbourne Common. The frequent interruptions in their course, to which, for agricultural convenience, these great earthworks have been subjected, increases the difficulty of ascertaining them exactly, and indeed there is little doubt that in many places they have thereby been wholly obliterated. Without entering at large into a discussion on the "*vexata quæstio*," as to their probable origin and purposes, whether they are to be viewed as the works of early Britons, Romans, or Anglo-Saxons, and were intended for defences, or as limits to kingdoms and territory, I shall take the opportunity of noticing some ancient remains discovered under my superintendence upon and around them, which may possibly throw some light on the subject, and proceed to the next branch of my survey, the Tumuli, with which the surface of the open country between Newmarket and Royston is studded in the vicinity of these dykes.

I have examined thirty of these barrows, all in the neighbourhood, some close to, and others actually upon the earthwork. Mutlow Hill, the last opened, of which an account was given in this Journal in 1852,³ affords a fair criterion of the general contents of all. The same rude sun-burnt vases occur, except in one near Triplow, where a good Roman urn was found; the same interments also by cremation, one case again only excepted near Chrishall Grange, with innumerable third brass coins of the lowest empire, or their rude imitations.

Bowshaped bronze Roman fibulæ were taken from several tombs, and in many there occurred small nests of the chipped flints commonly mis-called arrow-heads, but of which the Abbé Cochet has given a very simple and satisfactory explanation in his "*Normandie Souterraine*," where he details their discovery in graves along with the iron *briquets* for striking a light. This accounts fully for their being found amongst the necessities provided for the dead, as well as for their universal occurrence with funeral remains, whether of early or late antiquity, in my experience.

³ Arch. Journ., vol. ix. p. 226.

In directing attention to the Tumulus on Fleam Dyke, I must not confound the circular foundations of chalk discovered at its base with the other contents, for though the Roman remains, coins of both higher and lower empire, with one of the British Cunobeline, all taken from the débris of a building, may not be without importance as referring to the origin of the fosse, to discuss them would furnish materials for a separate dissertation. A similar remark applies to many of the antiquities and sites I have occasion to notice ; I have therefore determined merely to enumerate all those specially deserving of notice in succession, commencing with the point in Cambridgeshire most distant from Audley End as my centre, namely, Dullingham, whence I have a small Roman vessel. Hare Park has produced a fine leaf-shaped spear head of white silex, ploughed up there. Cambridge presents abundance of Roman remains of all kinds ; a gold coin of Cunobeline, discovered near the College walks, is in the possession of Mr. Litchfield. Bottisham claims notice on account of the Romano-British Tumuli in the vicinity ; Great and Little Wilbraham are remarkable for the discoveries of Roman coins of both empires and remains, and more especially for the extensive Saxon cemetery described in the "Saxon Obsequies."⁴ Fulbourn has produced two leaf-shaped swords of yellow bronze, with Roman coins ; and the late Richard Manning, a pensioner residing near the spot, described to me, to use his own words, "a square brick grave in which were some glass and pottery vessels, which he saw broken into here, several years since, by workmen who destroyed them." I would fain take advantage of this occasion to enquire whether any record is extant, or any vestige exists of such a discovery. Mutlow Hill and Fleam Dyke have already been noticed. In the open country between Balsham and Worsted Lodge I opened several Romano-British Tumuli, as well as the remains of two or three on the Fulbourn Valley Farm. A gold finger-ring, set with an intaglio on sardonyx, dug up in the garden of Gogmagog Hills, was shown me by

⁴ It was from this remarkable cemetery investigated by Mr. Neville, in 1851, that the first great collection of Anglo-Saxon remains was obtained, now preserved in his Museum at Audley End, and forming, with his more recent collections from

Linton Heath, one of the most extensive series of reliques of their period in England. A *situla* found at Little Wilbraham in 1850, and presented by the late Mr. Deck to the British Museum, has been figured in this Journal, vol. viii. p. 172.

the late Lord Godolphin, and Douglas, in his "Nenia," details the excavation of barrows there.⁵ Notice was given me some three or four years ago, that a Roman hypocaust had been ploughed into at Stapelford, and might be explored, but I was unable to attend to it at the time, and am not aware of its having been disturbed. Many horse-shoes and skeletons are stated to have been found in the low grounds about Babraham, but I have never seen any, and cannot therefore give their description. In the gravel pit at Bourne Bridge, Romano-British pottery has been turned up; at Hildersham I have seen Roman pottery; at Pampisford there have been found Roman coins, of which Mr. Parker Hamond can doubtless render a correct account. Whittlesford and Duxford are Roman, as their names import. From Hinxton I have a coin of Offa. Ickleton boasts the remains of a Roman villa, which partook largely in the numismatic yield of its neighbour Chesterford, in Essex. But I must not cross the Rubicon of the Borough Ditch into that county without taking a complete farewell of Cambridgeshire, and to effect this, will retrace my steps in an easterly direction to Borley Wood and Horseheath, where are found many Roman coins of the higher and lower empires. Nor can I pass over without mention the discovery of a hoard of *denarii* at the latter place, nearly thirty years ago; they are still in the possession of Mr. Batson, of Horseheath Lodge.

Linton, though producing Roman coins, is better known to the numismatic authorities at the British Museum, as having furnished a very rare Saxon sceatta.⁶ There is Roman pottery in the heavy lands at Linton; and on Linton Heath I had the good fortune last year to fall in with a second Anglo-Saxon cemetery, the details of which have been given in this Journal.⁷ That this place should be prolific in remains is not surprising, considering its close proximity to Bartlow, which latter village being situated in both counties, enables me to pass over the border to the celebrated Tumuli there. As is natural in such a vicinity, coins of the whole series are to be found, but my own experience has produced them in the greatest numbers of the very lowest empire,

⁵ Another very curious Roman ring, of silver, stated to have been found on the Gogmagog Hills, was exhibited to the Society of Antiquaries by the Bishop of

Carlisle in 1776. It closely resembled those figured, Arch. Journ., vol. viii. p. 37.

⁶ Vide Hawkins' Silver English Coins.

⁷ See page 95, in this volume.

Theodosius, Honorius, and Arcadius in particular. A denarius of the first of these emperors was sent me from Castle Camps, and from Shudy Camps I have seen a bronze ladle. All this locality teems with vestiges of the Latins, and it is only surprising that the smaller building should have been at Bartlow, while the extensive ruins and infinite variety of remains scattered all over Sunken Church Field, Hadstock, point out that place as the residence of the chief of the settlement. Coins from Domitian downwards are here abundant, particularly those of Carausius and Allectus, with denarii of Severus Alexander, Gallienus, and Postumus. In Ashdon, a village nearly joining Bartlow, Roman pottery and early coins have been met with. Chesterford is so well known, that I need only remark respecting it, that a perfect series of coins might have been formed thence, if all those removed by antiquaries at different periods were now available. The numerous other remains and houses round it, prove it to have been a place of importance. Littlebury occasionally produces a Roman coin, while from the Ring Camp at Audley End, though we have the evidence of our eyes as to its nature, and Stukeley mentions that a gold coin of Claudius and a silver patera were found there, I have never seen any traces of Roman occupation, except a coin of Titus, and one of Carausius from the adjacent field. In the flower-garden at Audley End fragments of Roman pottery have been turned up, and also a coin of Vespasian, amid the débris of mediæval buildings. The interesting Museum at Saffron Walden displays many coins and Roman fictilia, brought to light near that town. From specimens in the valuable collection there, I am enabled to add Lindsell to my list of places which have furnished mementos of the Roman conquerors; and in the more immediate parishes of Debden, Wimbish, and Widdington, pottery and coins have been discovered. Debden, Stanstead, and Dunmow, may also boast of having each produced a gold coin of Cunobeline.

Retracing my steps by Quendon Street, Rickling, and Arkesden, all Roman sites to the west of the house recently excavated at Wenden,⁸ Elmdon, and Chrishall, with their store of bronze spears and palstaves, must not be omitted.

Langley and Heydon give further proof that the county of

⁸ See page 77 in this volume.

Essex was tenanted to its borders by the Latins, and the open country between the last-named place and Royston, Melbourn, and Triplow, is filled with the Tumuli of their contemporaries or successors.⁹

Having reminded you of the proximity of the Branditch to these tombs, I must crave indulgence for this imperfect sketch of ancient Cambridgeshire and Essex, as I know them, and conclude in the words of Horace, only substituting Triplow for "Brundisium,"—

"— longæ finis chartæque viæque est."

R. C. NEVILLE.

NOTE ON THE MEMOIR ON THE ANGLO-SAXON CEMETERY AT
LINTON HEATH, BY THE HON. R. C. NEVILLE.

(See page 104, in this Volume.)

OUR attention has been called by Mr. J. Barnard Davis to the error of the press, which inadvertently occurred in describing the interment at Linton Heath, No. 37. The skeleton was stated to be that of a male, whereas it should have been a *female* of about forty years of age. A considerable number of beads of amber and glass lay near the neck. It does not appear, it should be observed, that the occurrence of such ornaments in tombs of the period necessarily proves that the person interred was a female, since it is believed that necklaces were occasionally worn by men. We cannot too highly esteem the value of the information so readily afforded on all occasions by Professor Owen, Mr. Davis, and Professor Quekett, in the elucidation of archæological enquiries.

⁹ A detailed account of tumuli excavated at Triplow Heath and Melbourn has been given by Mr. Neville in his "*Sepulchra Exposita*," in 1848. In that interesting volume, as also in his "*Antiqua Explorata*," many particulars may be found regarding various discoveries prosecuted under Mr. Neville's directions, and to which he has briefly adverted in the enumeration above given. It is to be

regretted that these volumes, comprising the results of his earlier researches, were printed for private distribution only; Mr. Neville had the kindness to present copies to the Library of the Institute, where they may be consulted by those of our readers who are interested in the vestiges of the earlier inhabitants of Cambridgeshire and Essex.