

ARCHAEOLOGICAL NOTES.

RECENT EXPOSURE OF HUMAN REMAINS AT BREEDON.

Breedon-on-the-Hill is less than a mile beyond our county border, but that puts its antiquities, etc. within the domain of Leicestershire archaeologists and I have no intention of trespassing seriously on their moral preserves. But the site being within ten miles of our county town the recent exposure there of a large number of human bones has naturally excited some curiosity on our side of the boundary and the essential facts may be here recorded without prejudice to the conclusions of our Leicestershire colleagues. Breedon is rather under than on its hill, the latter a fine plateau of exceptionally pure magnesian limestone whose configuration has been much modified by extensive quarrying. This plateau was encircled by very irregular but roughly oval earthworks—the Bulwarks, much of which have been quarried away. This earthen vallum combined with the obviously British name suggested to me that the settlement was at least pre-English, but the authorities have been very reserved in dating it even by period and the distinguished antiquary Mr. A. W. Clapham who has brought the surviving early decorations of the church into first-class importance holds that the earthworks are medieval—perhaps as early as Danish times. There must have been a church here, and from the surviving fragmentary decorations an important one, while Mercia was still a distinct kingdom, but very little is known of it. In 1144 A.D. it was given to a college of Austin canons at Nostell, but there is evidence some parochial rights were reserved. The present structure is

the fine E.E. east-end or chancel of the church of this cell of Nostell canons with an earlier Norman tower once central, west of which presumably was a nave serving the parish, now lost.

There is a fairly large churchyard bounded by a wall at the present time, but the recently unearthed bones are from ground well beyond this wall and were exposed in the course of clearing the surface adjacent to the quarry face preliminary to further cutting back. These exposures were reported to the Leicester Museum authorities and the Keeper of Antiquities there, Mr. F. Cottrill, watched the proceedings by invitation of the quarry owners, and will probably report in the *Antiquaries Journal* for 1943.

A member of our Society, Mr. C. Dallman, in September, 1942 called my attention to these discoveries and I arranged for a few of us, including the Hon. Sec. and the Hon. Editor to visit the site with Mr. Dallman as leader. Several heaps of long bones with some skulls were examined and a shallow pit near the lip of the quarry was pointed out as 'the hole from which a heap of bones had been exhumed,' from which I assumed the bones had been buried there as bones and not as recently dead bodies, as the number of the latter represented by the bones could not have been contained in the hole indicated. I therefore assumed they represented a clearance of the churchyard, which was often a periodical process in early times and that the remains were not prehistoric but medieval. Later I heard that locally some ill-natured criticisms had been made of these conclusions, which may or may not have been justified. A subsequent visit and information from Leicester, the latter stating the skeletal remains were mostly found undisturbed and lying east and west confirmed my conclusions they were christian and medieval but finds of pottery, small and uncertain fragments of which I myself saw turned up, had satisfied Mr. Cottrill

they, i.e. fragments of pottery, belonged to the later Iron Age—i.e. British, and therefore the earthen vallum, as originally assumed, probably belonged to the earlier period and not as Mr. Clapham had assumed, to medieval times. This all seems confirmed by a still more recent find by Mr. Dallman of a weavers comb and other bone implements probably serving for early weaving.

W. H. WALTON.

ROMAN COIN FOUND AT MILTON, DERBYSHIRE.

In the summer of 1934 the Swadlincote and Ashby Joint Water Committee erected a new pumping-house in a field known as Sandylands, on the lane from Milton to Foremark. During the excavations a Roman coin was found at a depth of approximately four feet. It was handed to Mr. J. D. Metcalf, the resident engineer, who presented it to the Repton School Museum, where it now remains.¹

The find has been examined by Mr. Mattingly of the British Museum, the great authority on Roman coins. His terse description, slightly expanded, reads:

“Follis, A.D. 296-305. Diocletian: minted at Lugdunum, mint mark LG. On the reverse: Genio populi Romani.”

Lugdunum (the modern Lyons), capital of the great Roman province of Gaul, became the Imperial mint of Augustus in 15 B.C. In his book, “Roman Coins,” Mr. Mattingly states: “In bronze, or rather a very poor alloy of silver and bronze, Diocletian struck three denominations, (1) the well-known Genio populi Romani coin, weighing about 150 grains, with laureate head of Emperor . . .”

This specimen of a silver-washed bronze follis is much worn and battered. How it came to be at the spot in

¹ The coin has recently been deposited in the Derby Museum by the Repton School authorities.—Editor