

# NOTES ON SOME SAXON INTERMENTS AT RINGMER.

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In the early part of 1879 a Saxon interment was found by the side of the road leading from Glynde to Ringmer, through noticing an iron spearhead much corroded projecting from the face of a slight cutting at the side of the road, as it passes over the shoulder of the hill by the windmill. A few weeks afterwards some excavations were made, under the direction of several members of the Sussex Archaeological Society, which resulted in the discovery of eight interments, seven of which lay nearly parallel to each other, with the heads towards the south-west, and the remaining one pointing almost due north. Between two of these graves were found seven urns, of the ordinary very badly burnt black pottery, placed on the surface of the chalk, which had been carefully levelled to receive them; these were quite plain, and filled with burnt bones, thus affording another example of the well-known fact that burial both with and without burning was in vogue at the same time among our Saxon forefathers. Unfortunately, the urns were crushed into such small fragments that it was found impossible to restore more than one of them. The articles found in the graves were of the usual character, consisting of iron spearheads and knives, and a shield boss; a bronze buckle, some rivets, and there was also a Roman third brass coin, too much corroded to be recognizable. This last by no means disproves that the cemetery belonged to Anglo-Saxon times, as Roman coins are not unusually

found in the same interment with relics undoubtedly belonging to the later race. A remarkable feature was the presence of balls of pyrites in several of the graves : these balls are commonly found in the beds of chalk in the neighbourhood, and are called thunderbolts by the rustics, probably from the sulphurous smell they emit when struck ; this may have caused them to be used as charms, as the specimens found shew no signs of having been used for striking fire, for which they are well adapted. One of these was also found on the levelled surface of the chalk on which the urns were discovered. The iron boss of a shield was found in one of the graves, resting on the right thigh bone, and with many of the finger bones of the left hand fixed to it by the rust ; the large-headed iron nails, which were used to adorn the circumference of the shield, were *in situ*, one lying near the shoulder. It could thus be seen that the shield had been circular, and that its diameter must have been about 2 feet 6 inches. It had been made, as usual, of wood, the grain of which was still visible, preserved in the rust. Although so many splendid collections of Anglo-Saxon relics have been found in the neighbouring county of Kent,<sup>1</sup> comparatively few discoveries of that epoch have been made in Sussex. If any one knows of any specimens found in the county, but not yet described, or of any locality where such have been found, and would communicate with the Secretary of the Editorial Committee, Henry Griffith, Esq., F.S.A., on the subject, he would be glad, as he hopes a paper will be furnished to the next Volume of Transactions, giving a connected account of the Sussex antiquities referable to the Anglo-Saxon race, which have hitherto been discovered and described.

<sup>1</sup> See upon this subject, Bryan Faunett's "Inventrium Sepulchrale," and Roach Smith's "Collectanea Antiqua."