

By the Somersetshire Archæological and Natural History Society. Proceedings Vol. 13.

By the Kent Archæological Society. *Archæologia Cantiana*, Vol. 6.

By the Kilkenny Archæological Society. Nos. 54 and 55 of their Transactions.

By the Historical and Archæological Association of Ireland. Quarterly Journal, Nos. 1, 2, and 3.

By purchase, the Norfolk Topographer's Manual, Woodward. Reformation Gleanings, Gorham. *Camdens Britannia*, Gough. History of Suffolk, Vol. 2, Suckling. History of Thetford, Martin, with M.S.S. notes, and inserted memoranda in the handwriting of the author.

Examination of Suffolk Tumuli.

THE SEVEN HILLS, AMPTON.

The group of circular tumuli known as the Seven Hills, are situated on either side of the high road between Bury St. Edmund's and Thetford, and at about six miles from the first named town. Of the four that originally stood to the West of the road, but little trace now remains, as they were partially levelled some forty-five years ago, when the heath was enclosed, and have been further reduced by the plough. As may be imagined little notice was taken of their contents at the time of removal, though an old laborer who assisted to cart away the soil from them, to fill up a disused chalk pit, remembers an urn of dark earth filled with bones being found; a discovery sufficient, had it been known, to have dissipated the idea entertained, and handed down to us by intelligent local antiquaries—that the mounds marked the resting place of the slain at the battle of Fornham.

The remaining tumuli situated on the East side of the road, and within the parish of Ampton, owe their preservation probably to the paucity of the soil, and to the fact that a plantation of oaks and larch have grown up around them, while they themselves are crowned by some fine old Scotch firs.

The most eastern barrow of the group in the plantation had been very slightly trenched in recently by some friends of the owner of the estate, Hunter Rodwell, Esq., of Ampton Hall, but without any result.

On Tuesday, May 26th, the Rev. Canon Greenwell selecting the tumulus nearest the road, and the most northern of the group last described, began its examination by driving a series of broad trenches from its circumference to centre, and down to the level of the surrounding ground, a mode of procedure rather unusual with the reverend explorer, who adopted it in this instance to avoid injuring the growing trees upon the mound.

The result of the exploration is best told from the notes made by the Rev. Canon as the work went on. The barrow was 82 feet in diameter, and 8ft. 8in. high, and found to be composed chiefly of sand. At a spot 30 feet south by east from its centre, in a hollow 15 inches in diameter, and 1½ feet below the surface of the earth, was found a burnt body. This had evidently been burnt on the spot where it was buried. Another hollow of the same kind was discovered 29 feet east by north from the centre, a foot in diameter and 13 inches deep, also containing a burnt body. Sixteen and a-half feet east, north east of the centre and one and a-half above the natural surface, and therefore within the material of the mound, a third burnt body was found. The bones of the two first bodies were very much consumed, but those of the third imperfectly so. Higher again than this, three feet above the surface of the ground, the workmen came upon an inverted urn containing a burnt body, at about 12 and a-half feet east by south of the centre of the tumulus. The urn was about 14 inches high, but unfortunately it was broken. Its ornamentation was confined to the upper portion, which was

over-hanging and consisted of an alternate series of horizontal and vertical lines made by twisted thongs pressed into the clay while it was yet soft. It was of very common manufacture, and was evidently of very ancient date. A fifth body was found 12 feet south west by south from the centre and seven feet above the surface of the ground, which also gave traces of having been burnt upon the spot.

Such were the discoveries made to the time of the Meeting of the Suffolk Institute being held upon the ground, and referred to in Canon Greenwell's lecture. On Friday morning, as a considerable portion of the mound still remained undisturbed, the work of exploration was resumed, but no further discovery was made till near the close of the day, when at a distance of about 15 feet north west by west from the centre, and just below the surface of the barrow, which in this quarter had apparently been rudely paved with rough flints,* was found another deposit of burnt bones, to all appearances those of a child, and making the sixth interment met with in the course of the exploration.

Owing to the trees, the whole of the north side of the barrow, and a part of the west, and south east sides, was left unexamined; but sufficient had been done to show that this tumulus had been a family burying place, and from the circumstances of the various bodies being found at different depths, that the interments had taken place at intervals of time.

BARTON HILL.

On June 2nd, Canon Greenwell commenced the examination of a barrow at Little Barton, near Mildenhall, lying on the Southern slope of the boulder clay which tops the chalk ridge, in company with one other, another pair presenting themselves at some 200 yards distance, on the summit of the ridge. It proved to be constructed of sand, a circle of clunch some three feet high having been introduced a few feet from the external periphery of the mound. The discovered contents of about two-thirds of the mound were—1st, one unburnt burial, skull missing, lying on its left side upon the top of the clunch circle, near the present ploughed surface, having the feet so turned back that the body must have been bound into its contracted position, and the spine so turned that the broad of the back rested even, or almost so, on the clunch. 2nd, one burnt burial, also on the chalk circle, and therefore partly disturbed by the ploughshare. 3rd, a portion of the skull, &c., of a body buried in the centre of the mound, and a few portions of slack-baked gravelly pottery. There were also the usual remains of charcoal scattered about the original surface of the soil.

Might it not be a possible suggestion that the burials upon the white circle represented offerings to the manes of him buried within it? In this case the absence of the skull of the unburnt victim might point to decapitation as the mode of death. The head would have protruded over the inner rim of the circle, and like that of the central occupant would have perished through the porous nature of the soil.

J. D. GEDGE.

The high road from Newmarket to Norwich crosses Barton Hill, an eminence over-looking the valley of the Larke and the town of Mildenhall. Near upon its highest point are four fine tumuli; two on either side of the road. The most northern of the eastern pair was the one chosen for examination, and the following account taken from Canon Greenwell's own notes will supplement our Local Secretary's kind communication.

* Throughout the whole of the mound large quantities of burned flints were found, together with some few rough flakes of flints, and a portion of a flint "scraper."