

ON A ROMAN BRITISH CEMETERY AT INGHAM,
NEAR BURY ST. EDMUNDS.

No apology is I think needed in bringing to the notice of the Institute the discovery at Ingham of an ancient burial place though made so long ago as 1873, during the construction of the railway between Bury St. Edmunds and Thetford.

From year to year I had intended throwing the notes I had made into a paper for the pages of our Proceedings, but an indefinite hope that I might be able to make further excavations upon the site, and so add to my knowledge of the extent of the cemetery, and the characteristics of the people there buried deterred me. As the matter stands, had it not been for the kindness of Mr. Barham, the gentleman in charge of the railway works, who gave me prompt notice of the discovery, and kept me well informed of every fresh find, probably little would have been heard of it. To him, and the careful co-operation of the very intelligent foreman of the navvies (Allen) employed upon the spot, I am indebted for nearly all the particulars here recorded.

The site of the cemetery* is to the north of the village of Ingham in a field known as the Cow-path Breck, which is immediately to the west of the road to Thetford, and between it and the farm road to Bodney Barn, which in part occupies the line of an old trackway (the Cow-path) that once led from Ingham to Elveden and the country beyond. Here in excavating for the cutting at a point a very few feet in advance of the 5th milestone from Bury the first interment was met with. This was seen by

*The position of the Cemetery will be found carefully indicated on the new Ordnance Map of the parish.

Mr. Barham before the grave was completely broken up, who favoured me with the details respecting it.

Interment No. 1 lay $4\frac{1}{2}$ feet below the surface in a north and south direction, the head to the latter point. Iron nails were found with it, also the fragments of a globular urn of dark pottery of about three pints capacity. The men could not say how the urn lay in relation to the body; but they believed it to have been perfect when first exposed. The remains of the skull and long bones were reserved for my inspection and were those of a person of middle age and slight build, but in a too decayed and fragmentary condition to admit of satisfactory determination.

Twenty yards to the northward of this was interment No. 2; extended in a similar direction at a depth of 5 feet with the head to the north. No relic accompanied, but the skeleton was fairly well preserved and was that of a very short person. Iron nails were also found with this burial indicating a slight coffin, for the nails were of small size. Upon my first visit (Nov. 29th) I removed from the grave the leg bones of this skeleton, which, with the skull, I brought away for future examination.

Some yards further in advance, just behind where the navvies were engaged, I found in the fallen earth some fragments of a large vase of fine red pottery, having a peculiar cream-coloured paste upon its surface, and upon further search the remaining portion of it *in situ* at about 10 inches beneath the ground. The vase had contained calcined human bones, of which I took from it a few fragments. Some way off I found a vase cover of red ware which may have been deposited with the cinerary urn, but which was not of the same kind of pottery.

A little beyond this point a group of rubbish pits were met with, containing animal bones in small quantities, and the usual fragments of pottery. Some were of a coarse dark ware, bearing a stellate pattern in relief, which I do not remember having met with before in the district.

At 18 feet north of these upon the western edge of the central cutting was interment No. 3—that of a woman who had been buried in a coffin at the same depth as the previous ones found, but in a grave directed East and West. At her head, which lay towards the west, was a nicely preserved “drinking cup” of Durobrivian* pottery, $6\frac{1}{2}$ inches high, ornamented with bands of markings, impressed by some wheel-like tool. Among the bones, which were badly preserved, were some dozen or more horses teeth.

No. 4. At 44 feet north of last, near the centre of the cutting, was another interment, at about the same depth and direction. The bones were much decayed and unaccompanied by relic.

No. 5. At 34 feet beyond No. 4 and upon the western edge of the cutting, another west and east interment was come upon. Body much decayed. With it was found a fragment of coarse red ware resembling Samian, which had formed portion of a bowl. Upon it in low relief and somewhat rudely executed, were the figures of two dogs of the bull, or mastiff type; probably part of a hunting scene in which the wild boar was the quarry.

No. 6. At 17 feet from last, on the opposite side of the central cutting, another interment had been found on the morning of my third visit, which I had the pleasure of seeing in position. It was that of another very short person who had been buried at a depth of some $3\frac{1}{2}$ feet, in a grave with the head to the north-east, and to all appearances in a coffin much longer than was required. The skeleton was well preserved and belonged to an individual of sixty years or upwards. The skull was perfect, and with that of No. 2 supplies the only evidence we have of the racial characteristics of the people here interred. This, the last interment seen by me, occurred at a distance of 178 yards from the southern boundary of the field.

* So called from its place of manufacture, Castor, in Northamptonshire;

the Durobrivæ of the Romans.

The year 1874 had now set in, and with it a continuance of wet, wintry weather, which prevented me from visiting the place so often, and the men from taking the care they had previously done of what they found. About this time also the ganger was changed, and the fresh man, although carefully instructed by his predecessor and myself, failed to do much more than keep count of the number of graves actually noticed, twelve in all, before the limits of the cemetery were passed. These he informed me lay generally across the line of the cutting, which would be in an east and west direction, and that the bones were nearly all too much decayed to preserve for my inspection. Nails were observed in some of the graves, and in one was a vessel of pottery, which was broken up before it was noticed.

- Thus, in the progress of the cutting, nineteen interments were observed, including the one after cremation, a small number considering the amount of ground disturbed. That some were overlooked during the rough operation of picking down large masses of the surface soil into the trucks to be immediately moved away, I have no doubt; indeed when we consider the mode in which the cutting was excavated, and that the work was commenced before it was well light in the morning, such a result can hardly be wondered at. To this cause chiefly I must refer the non-discovery of any coins or small articles of metal, although I cannot learn that any such were ever found upon the field during agricultural operations,* a fact somewhat remarkable considering the period at which the cemetery was in use and the proximity of the Roman station at Icklingham, where coins, and especially the small brass of the latter emperors, are abundant.

The enquiry remains as to what period and people this cemetery must be assigned. Questions, simple at first view, but not altogether unattended with difficulty. That of time seems to me to be the easiest of solution. It is to the human

*A most careful search, more than once renewed, made by myself, upon the field, has failed to discover any object—even a

shard of pottery—that would indicate the site of a cemetery or settlement in the vicinity.

remains recovered from graves No. 2 and 6 alone that we can turn for evidence tending to solve the second. These consist of complete skulls and the leg bones of both skeletons, and the humerus of No. 6, representing individuals of fair average cranial capacity, but of very short stature. Unfortunately no measurements were taken of these skeletons before they were disturbed so that we shall have to rely for an approximation of the stature upon one of the formulæ in use by osteologists for calculating the height of the individual from the length of either the humerus and femur, or the latter in conjunction with the tibia. Adopting the method given by the late Prof. G. Rolleston in describing the crania found by our esteemed honorary member, the Revd. Wm. Greenwell, F.S.A.,* which, however, is not the most liberal, a height of only 4ft. 7in. can be assigned to the occupant of grave No. 2, and 4ft. 8½in. to that of No. 6†. In the latter case the estimate is apparently confirmed by the humerus yielding corresponding results.

If these individuals could be taken as fair examples of those occupying the rest of the cemetery, the question of race would be considerably complicated. The fragmentary long bones from other graves seen by me, however, certainly belonged to persons of more average stature. It is, nevertheless, very remarkable that the only human remains preserved to us, and from graves so far apart, should present so great a similarity both in stature and head form.

The skulls, notwithstanding certain differences of detail, have a great general resemblance to each other, a circumstance usually observable in crania belonging to ancient and comparatively little mixed races. Both are slightly phænozygous, that is, the zygomatic arches are visible when the skulls are viewed in a vertical aspect. As they have an average breadth index of .80, they may be classed

* British Barrows, p. 564

† I am inclined to believe that this estimate is below the actual stature of the individuals by nearly one inch. As

with extra long femora so with exceptionally short ones, some allowance should be made.

as brachycephalic, or of the shortened oval form. This brachycephalism is due to the full development of the parietal tubers, by which the regular contour of the oval is interrupted, and a slight appearance of angularity given to the posterior region of the skulls. Their vertices also viewed from behind are somewhat roof shaped. In each case, but more especially in that of that from grave No. 6, the somewhat narrow and recedent forehead is compensated by the presence of well marked frontal tuberosities. In both also the orbits are oblique and almost lozenge shaped, whilst the nasal bones are prominent, indicating acquility, and that the organ they supported was no inconspicuous feature upon the faces of these early dwellers at Ingham.

The skull from grave No. 2 is a regularly formed, symmetrical cranium of a person from 30 to 35 years of age, probably of the male sex. It weighs only 25ozs., including the lower jaw. From the rough and granulated appearance presented by the surface of the skull, and the diaphanous texture of its parietes, particularly the temporal bones, which are thin and in places porous, it is most probable that the owner was the subject of some disease, which either caused absorption of the bony matter of the skull or greatly retarded its formation. All the sutures, including the frontal, are persistent and open so that a slight fall would in all probability completely disarticulate it. Two Wormian bones present themselves in the course of the lambdoidal suture; one of which, at the junction of the latter with the sagittal suture is seven-tenths of an inch in width. The square and characteristic lower jaw, with that of the upper, were filled with a regular and well-formed set of teeth, free from any trace of decay. All were in place at the time of exhumation, and, with the exception of the wisdom teeth, were much worn, indicative of the coarse nature of the food upon which these people subsisted:

This skull exhibits a peculiar depression which extends across the head for a distance of some six inches, imme-

diately in rear of the coronal suture. It is about an inch in width and resembles a deformation which characterises certain ancient dolichocephalic crania that have been found in the chambered barrows of Gloucestershire, North Wilts, and elsewhere, which is thought by some to have been caused by the continued use of a constricting bandage passed round the head in a vertical direction. In this case it may have been so produced in an attempt to remedy the unstable condition of the bones referred to above rather than the result of any tribal custom. The leg bones of this skeleton measures, Femur 13ins., Tibia 12 ins. The skull from grave 6 does not call for any lengthened remarks. Its weight is 2lb. 1oz., and from its size and the marked character of its muscular attachments is no doubt that of a man. All the sutures are closed and in part effaced, whilst the state of the teeth confirm these indications of age. In the upper jaw there remain only the incisors, canines, a bicuspid, and a 3rd molar. The alveoli of the other teeth are absorbed and obliterated. In the lower jaw all except the first bicuspid and the 3rd molar of the dexter side remain. All are well worn and much encrusted with tartar. Viewed in profile it will be seen that the jaws of this skull are somewhat prognathic and that the supra orbital prominences, and the frontal tubers are markedly developed. The most remarkable features on this cranium are, however, its hardness and fresh appearance, and the small size of its foramen magnum, which is lozenge-shaped, and only 1.3 in. in length by 1 inch in greatest breadth. The length of the long bones of this skeleton were, Femur $15\frac{1}{2}$, Tibia $12\frac{1}{2}$, Humerus 11 inches.

Appended are the measurements of the two skulls, expressed in inches and tenths, after the method adopted by the late Dr. J. Barnard Davis, F.R.S., tabulated with other well authenticated examples of Celtic crania.

* British Barrows, p. 571-599.
 + Memoirs of the Anthropological Society of London, Vol. III, Table II, p. 48.

	Circumference.	Intermastoid arch.	Length. Glabello-inial Diameter.	Breadth.	Maximum Frontal. Breadth.	Height.	Face.		Indices.	
							Length.	Breadth, Interzygomatic.	Breadth : Length = 1·00. Cephalic Index.	Height : Length = 1·00.
Ancient Briton : Green Gate Hill . . .	20·	14·7	7·	5·6	4·8	5·3	4·4	5·2	·80	·75
Ditto Heslerton	20·3	—	7·	5·6	4·7	5·4	4·7	5·2	·80	·77
Ingham Cemetery : Grave No. 2 . . .	20·3	14·2	6·95	5·7	4·7	5·2	4·6	5·	·82	·74
Ditto Grave No. 6 . . .	21·	14·6	7·3	5·75	4·7	5·3	4·9	5·	·78	·72
Average,	20·65	14·4	7·1	5·7	4·7	5·2	4·7	5·	·80	·73
Average measurements of the skulls of five brachycephalic men from round barrows in Yorkshire, &c.*	20·9	—	7·	5·7	4·8	5·4	4·6	5·3	·80	·76
Ditto of 70 skulls, male and female, from round barrows in various parts of England†	20·9	—	7·	5·8		5·5	4·7	5·4	·80 ⁵	·77

With regard to the question of race. Taking into consideration all the facts presented and the close agreement of the Ingham skulls both in general character and measurement with those of the well identified ancient Britons cited, I think it may be concluded that the individuals to whom they belonged formed part of a community of that people, who to some extent had adopted the Roman customs, including that of disposing of their dead, but who had intermixed but little with the foreign elements introduced into the country during the Roman occupation. The skull from grave No. 2 it will be seen resembles very closely indeed both in its form and measurement that of the Briton from the Green Gate Hill barrow, near Pickering, in the North Riding of Yorkshire, figured in plates 3 and 4 of the *Crania Britannica*, and to that from the barrow at Heslerton Wold, in the East Riding, opened by the Rev. William Greenwell.* Both the latter are regarded by their describers as typical British skulls of the Bronze period of this country.

The other skull from Ingham with a breadth index of .78 accords well in this and other respects with the sub-brachycephalic skull of the Briton from a barrow in the vicinity of Stonehenge, opened by Dr. Thurnam.

The average measurements that follow in the table embracing so large a number of examples of round barrow skulls, which individually, as might be expected, differ in their proportions, confirm remarkably the opinion offered above. They show, however, that the Ingham skulls are somewhat deficient in relative heights, and in breadth of face. According to the observations of Drs. Thurnam and Rolleston the average height of the male British brachycephali was about 5 feet 8 inches†, but then it must be remembered that the individuals from whose remains this deduction is made had been accorded burial in the barrows, and were not the rank and file of the

*British Barrows, p. 579.

†Memoirs of the Anthropological Soc. of London. Vol. III., p. 73.

tribes, but most probably chieftains,* who, doubtless, as among barbarous people of the present time were chosen principally on account of their superior stature and prowess. The low stature of the two Roman Britons from the Ingham graves, as before stated, I regard as exceptional, although I think it might be shown, from even the scanty data at command, that the native population of the district at the time of the Roman invasion were a short people rather than otherwise.† It is probable too that as tribesmen of the fierce and warlike Boadicea, they would, after their revolt, be subjected to much harsh and harassing treatment at the hands of their conquerors, and their conditions of life altered. This, with the sense, of semi-servility and degradation, from which as a once free, but now conquered people, they would for a time suffer, would not fail to exercise a deteriorating effect upon the stature and physique of the race.

As to the period from which the cemetery at Ingham was in use, I am inclined to place it at the middle of the fourth century of our era. Cremation, there is reason to believe, was then, at any rate for a time, fast falling into disuse in Eastern Britain, especially among the poorer portion of the people. The old rites of Celtic heathenism, particularly those relating to the final disposal of the dead, were giving way under an indirect influence of Christianity, although it is well known that the old notions and superstitions long afterwards retained a hold upon the minds of the less civilised portion of the inhabitants.

The transition from cremation to inhumation was a gradual one; hence it is no uncommon thing to find, in Roman British cemeteries, urns containing burnt bones, mingled with apparently Christian graves, and occasionally interments which had, to all appearances, been

*British Barrows, p. 112.

†Of the two instances of skeletons uncovered by myself in barrow exploration, one a man (a contracted secondary interment) measured but 5ft. 1in, and

the other, a girl of 18, only 4ft. 3in. The finding of skeletons in the Suffolk barrows is rare, most of the interments being made after cremation.

subjected to the double rite of Christian burial and heathen burning, so far as the latter could be accomplished within the narrow limits of a grave, by kindling a fire upon the coffin.*

The oldest portion of the Ingham cemetery appears to have been first intersected by the railway cutting—that which occupied the southern edge of the plateau overlooking the shallow valley in which the “water pit” is situated, and from whence, or the springs that gave rise to it, it is probable that the ancient folk derived their supply of the essential element. The graves at this point lie north and south, and it was here that the instance of cremation occurred. Further in the field the graves were oriented, which would be regarded by some persons as sufficient evidence that these people, if they had not actually embraced Christianity, were at least yielding an outward conformity to its teachings. The presence of the horse teeth in grave No. 3, however, savours suspiciously of paganism, unless indeed we are prepared to believe that they formed no portion of the interment, but found their way into the grave by accident. The finding of an urn either at the head or foot of the body has now ceased to be regarded as actual evidence of heathenism, as it is known that in later times,† when Christianity is believed to have been firmly established, similar vessels, filled with “holy water,” were so placed in the grave, under the belief that the corpse was liable to be tampered with by evil spirits, and that the “holy water” would frighten them away.

In what direction, or how far the cemetery extended, it is, of course, impossible to say; but it is probable that, were further explorations made upon the site, it would be found that the graves were disposed in groups about the field, and that the dwelling-places of those who used the cemetery were not far away; probably traces of them

* An undoubted instance of this came under the writer's notice in the ancient cemetery of Mitchell's Hill, Icklingham.

† Gentlemen's Magazine, 1864. Vol. I., p. 608.

would be found ranged along the old trackway, or adjacent to it.

Shortly after the announcement of the find at Ingham, I turned, naturally, to the indices of the volumes of our Proceedings, to see if any antiquities had previously been discovered there, when I found that, so early as 1848,* the late Sir H. E. Bunbury, Bart., had exhibited and presented to our Museum a patera of Samian ware and a Roman urn, and that, in 1850,† Mr. John S. Nunn, who then occupied the Hall Farm, gave us a quern of Herefordshire conglomerate; the two last are still in the museum. The urn is a good example of the ordinary form of vessel used for the reception of the bones after the passage of the body through the "all holy" fire. It is of coarse, ash-coloured pottery, about 9½ in. high, and is labelled, "Found two feet below the surface, in 1825." The quern, a fine specimen of an upper stone, is 18 in. in diameter, and remarkable for exhibiting traces of the iron rim and pin with which it was once mounted.

From enquiries made at Ingham respecting these antiquities, I was led to the conclusion that a second cemetery of the Roman age had existed there, and that it was from thence, in all probability, that the fictilia came. I was so fortunate after this as to meet with an old gentleman (now the Parish Clerk at Ingham), who in his youth had worked upon the Hall Farm, and remembered the discovery of the urns, and who went with me and pointed out the site of this second cemetery. It is situated at the southern extremity of the parish, close upon the Culford boundary, on land formerly heath, which rises to the north from the marshy meadows bordering the stream that flows from Livermere through Culford to the Lark. In the south-western corner of this field is a shallow depression, lying north and south, with a slight ditch in its lowest part. The eastern rise of this is the actual site of the cemetery.

Banham informed me that "it was known that things

* Vol. I., p. 24.

† Vol. I., p. 230.

were to be found there, and that about fifty years ago, one harvest time, during Mr. Worlledge's occupation, after a wet night, when they could not cart, the whole of the harvest men were set to dig over the ground, and they dug from after breakfast to the end of the day, and turned over some four rods of surface. They found about a dozen earthen pots and some earthen bottles and things. Most of the pots had bones in them, and those that were got out whole Mr. Worlledge had."

Banham remembers "no metal being found, only pottery, bits of bones, and patches of dark soil. The men dug to the depth of five feet in some places, in the hope of finding something more."

It is evident that here we have a cemetery antecedent in date to that of the Cow-path breck, in which the dead were interred apparently only after cremation, and that the "patches of dark soil" were either rubbish pits or the sites of funeral fires.

Banham's narrative tallies so well as to date with that affixed to the urn in the Museum that I have no doubt it was one of those found upon the occasion related, and was probably presented with the dish of Samian ware by Mr. Worlledge to Sir Henry Bunbury. I have since also ascertained that the quern stone was ploughed out in near proximity to this old burial place.

I have been informed that vestiges of another ancient burial place were discovered, many years ago, in the near neighbourhood, namely, in the parish of Fornham St. Genovieve, in one of the fields bordering the cross road which leads from the Culford and Bury road to Hengrave water-mill. This was during the occupation of Fornham Hall by the Duke of Norfolk, who, according to my informant, inspected the discovery, and took possession of the antiquities found. The site of this cemetery could not be far removed from the "Kingsbury Hill" referred to* by the late Mr. Gage as "the burial place, according to popular tradition, of three British kings."

* History of Hengrave, p. 10.

I do not apprehend that any of the cemeteries here mentioned, or the settlements to which they belonged, were very extensive; nevertheless, they give colour to the opinion that the Roman road to which the late Mr. Warren called attention† passed across the country somewhere in this direction.

Whilst the railway was in progress through the village of Ingham I looked with considerable interest to the cutting through of the hill upon which the church stands, in the hope that the *via* might there be intersected, and some other remains found; but in this I was disappointed. To the present all my endeavours to trace the old road beyond the copse near the little farmstead at Puttock's Hill have proved fruitless. I am disposed, however, to believe it continued westward to Icklingham.

On the borders of Ampton Park is an old rampart and ditch, extending from the low meadows in a northerly direction nearly as far as the Hall. This may possibly have had some relation to the ancient way. If so, we might look for its passage somewhere just above the low grounds* at the termination of the bank, and in a line with a trackway that passed along the meadows immediately to the south of the second Ingham cemetery, and so onwards through Culford Park to join the line of road across West Stow heath. Further research, and probably excavation, would be necessary to determine these points, which are of some importance in connection with the topography of the district during the Roman occupation.

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† Proceedings Suffolk Institute of Archæology. Vol. I., p. 74. Vol. II., p. 221.

* It may be interesting to note here that a few years ago a nice little bronze spear-head was found by a man ditching in the moor near Timworth Church, and therefore not far removed from the position indicated. It is $7\frac{1}{2}$ inches long by

2 inches in width of blade, a perfect specimen of the same type as that found during the excavations made by the Rev. Harry Jones in Barton Mere, and described by him in the "Journal of the Suffolk Institute," Part II., p. 33.