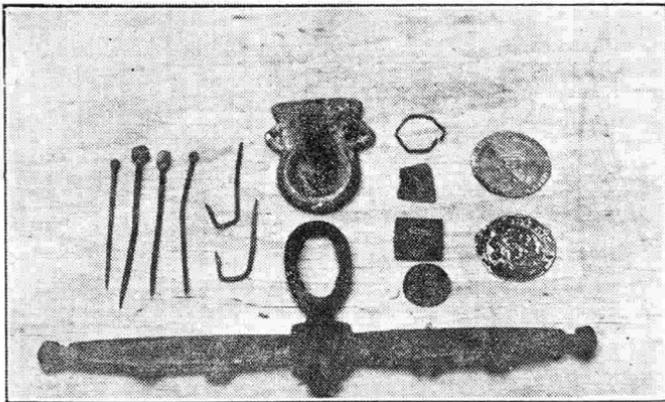


Photo. Waddell.

"POLTERING FOR A GALLOONA." THORPE, 1911.



PINS. FISH AMPULLA RING. LOUIS D'OR.
 HOOKS. WEIGHTS. HEN. VIII.
 GOAT.
 FRAME OF POUCH (Gypcière). THORPENESS FINDS.



Thorpeness
From an old Sailing-Chart.

“POLTERING FOR A GALLOONA.”

THE THORPENESS FINDS, APRIL, 1911.

BY CHARLES GANZ.

This phrase is locally used to describe the search by longshore fishermen and others for what the tide may wash up on the Suffolk sea-coast. In April, 1911, an unusually high tide encroached on the sandy pentlands of Thorpeness Point, which are north of Aldeburgh. Several objects were picked up out of the wash of the waves (see illustration). Such was the prominence given by the newspapers to these discoveries, that it was imagined that a veritable El Dorado had been discovered, and one result was that all the formalities of a Coroner's Inquest were instituted to decide whether it was a case of Treasure Trove (i.e., gold and silver).

The oath taken by the witnesses was worded in phrases dealing with Treasure Trove. The finders, weather-beaten salts and a coastguard, deposed that they had picked them up below high-water mark; one stated, “he actually took them from the water, for he was wearing his sea boots at the time.”

“The weather was rather severe and the heavy seas had taken away in places about 30 feet of the cliff. The sand had been scoured along the coast

for a distance of about 200 yards. The bronze coins were green with verdigris, and the silver ones were black."

In local parlance the clay exposed on the beach is called *Platimore*.

The sea also exposed old wells in the sands. 20 years ago there had been 30 to 40 wells to be seen. The Crown's representative claimed the collection from the Receiver of Wrecks.

The Crown based its claims on the fact that houses with wells had existed on Thorpeness till 1685, for the date of the coins showed a gap at that date, and also put forward the plea that the coins found, had been collected by a collector, while the recent coins had been lost from time to time on the sands.

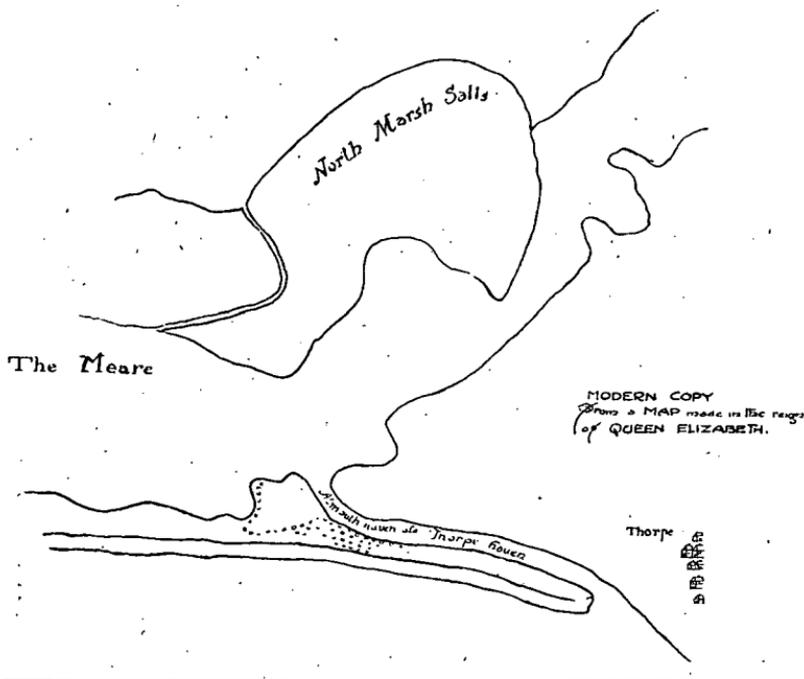
The Receiver of Wrecks quoted the Merchant Shipping Act of 1894 as to flotsam and jetsam.

The whole question turned on whether they were found below ordinary tide or above. If above ordinary high water mark it might be treasure trove; if washed ashore and left there as the sea receded, then jetsam, but if unearthed and washed down, might be treasure trove.

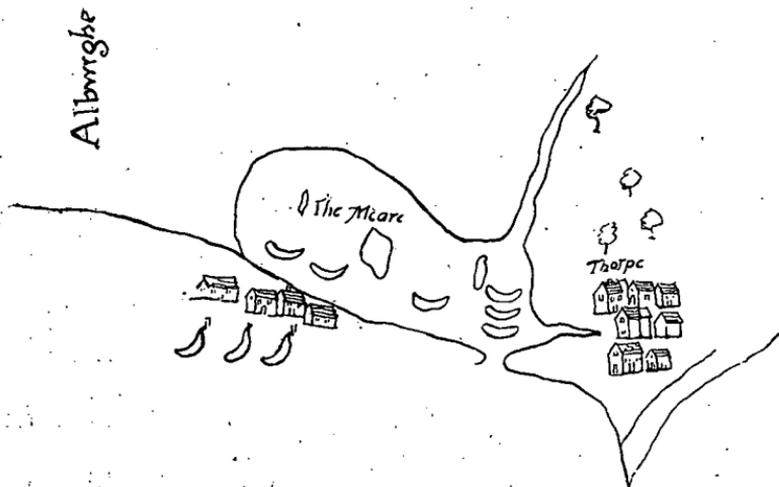
After a long inquest, the jurymen, with one exception, gave a verdict of "Not Treasure Trove." The Coroner, in ancient formula then read, "Various persons deposited inland at Thorpe, gold and silver, owners not known, and the said coins were not the property of our Lord the King."

Thus the Receiver of Wrecks became the custodian.

But it was not till June, after a question in the House of Commons, that the finders received their treasures again.



MODERN COPY from a MAP made in the reign of QUEEN ELIZABETH.



ELIZABETHAN CHARTS OF THORPENESS.

(Cottonian MS., British Museum.)

[Ang. 1. 1. 64 and Add 8987. Art 137.]

The articles included coins dating from the Roman Era to the present time.

Faustina, A.D. 140, Silver coin.

Quarter Louis d'or in excellent preservation, 1610-43.

Edwardian coins (some halves and quarters).

Henry VI., VII. and VIII. groats.

James I. farthing., Charles I. silver groat.

Charles II. silver fourpence, 1679; Harrington farthing; a cut halfpenny of William the Lion, King of Scotland, 2nd issue, 1165-1214.

Nuremberg tokens.

16th-17th Century Tradesmen's tokens—Tovill, of Laxfield; Stebbing, grocer, of Woodbridge; Nicholas Shepherd, of Saxmundham; Robert Spencer, of Rickingale. Thomas Postle, of Southwold.

An Admiral Vernon's Commemorative Medal, dated 1739.

A Memorial Medal (Rev. C. H. Spurgeon).

A bronze ring, $\frac{3}{4}$ inch, with an ornamented riband of dots.

A heavy bronze ring, 1 inch, with the stone cavity empty.

A thin bronze ring with floral ornamentation, evidently a woman's ring.

Wire-headed bronze pins of various sizes from $2\frac{1}{2}$ inches. Bronze fish hooks. A bronze bodkin.

Fragments of bells.

Ornamented broken bronze clasps (? off books).

A 5-inch 13th century key and an encrusted adze head.

An antique lead tally, used by a merchant for goods, with the arms of Westminster.

Several small penny-weights, on one of which are a rose, "E.C." and an open hand, "8.5.G.I."

A small bronze badge of a crowned lion *passant*.

Part of a 14th or 15th century bronze $4\frac{1}{2}$ -inch frame of a pouch or purse with religious inscription in *niello*, "Ave Maria [Domi]nvs Tecvm. I.H.S."

Another ($6\frac{3}{4}$ -inch) complete, with a much obliterated inscription, the centre shield showing, obverse, fleur-de-lys, and on the reverse, "I.H.S."

Similar frames of *gypcières* are exhibited in the British Museum. "These pouches (*gibecières*, *gypcières*) were pockets of stuff, often richly embroidered, and their metal frames were frequently nielloed, gilded, or damascened. In the 14th and 15th Centuries they often bore religious inscriptions, of which 'Ave Maria, gracia plena,' etc., is perhaps the most frequent." (British Museum Guide, 1907, pp. 40 and 242).

Mr. F. Mentieth Ogilvie, of Oxford and Sizewell, has in his possession a similar $6\frac{3}{4}$ inch long handle found 18 years ago on Thorpe Ness, which is inscribed "Ave Maria I.H.S., G acia Ple—. A Dominv —, Tecvm," and he has also various coins and other objects found at the same time. (Compare Gardner's "Dunwich," 1754, pp. 96, 97. Plate iv., p. 97, of a *gypcière*.)

A 14th Century lead "*ampulla*" (small flask) used as a pilgrim's sign. This is stamped with some saint's attribute, a single arrow; the *ampulla* measures $1\frac{3}{4}$ by $1\frac{1}{2}$ inches.

The wearing of such signs is mentioned in early works, notably in Langland's "The Vision of Piers Plowman," and in Chaucer's "Canterbury Tales."

In the shallow wells, of which the sides were protected by barrel staves, were found some broken 14th century pitchers and fragments of black ware with the potter's thumb marks. (See Illustration).

I am indebted to Mr. Cecil Lay for copies of old Elizabethan Charts from the British Museum, Mr. Waddell for the photograph of men looking for finds

and Mr. Wynford Swinburne for that of the ancient pitcher, now preserved in the Aldeburgh Literary Society's Museum.

For reference I would refer to the Numismatic Journal, Vol. I., 1905, "Treasure Trove. The Treasury and the Trustees of the British Museum," by P.W.P. Carlyon-Britton, F.S.A., President, "B.N.S.," London.

Thorpeness Finds in 1887 are recorded in "Notes about Aldeburgh," Dr. N. F. Hele, 1890.

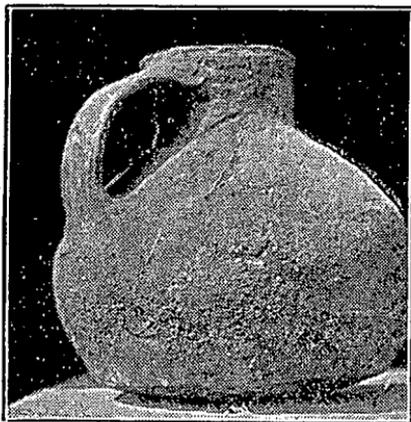


Photo. Swinburne.

OLD-ENGLISH PITCHER