

Records of Recent Archæological Finds in Herts.

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IN placing the following Notes upon recent Archæological Finds in the County before the Members of the Society a word of explanation seems to be needed.

This entirely novel departure has certain definite objectives. The most obvious of these is the promotion of a closer co-operation between the Members of the Society and the Museum Authorities in the work of saving from destruction or oblivion material most precious in the development of the history of the County. We are painfully aware of the fact that during the seventy years of the Society's existence, long before the Hertfordshire Museum was founded, many specimens of considerable local interest have either found their way into the hands of private collectors, or to the care of distant museums. It is to be regretted, moreover, that numerous objects of this character, which have been exhibited from time to time before the Society, cannot now be traced, nor is the record of them sufficiently precise to enable us to appraise aright their true value and importance.

Yet much as we may deplore these facts, we may rest assured that the soil of Hertfordshire still hides numerous valuable links with the past, and it behoves us therefore as a Society to see to it that no further losses are sustained to the detriment of Local Archæology.

A matter of almost equal importance to the saving of such treasure lies in the acquisition of *data* which shall contribute to a fuller understanding of its place and value. It would seem a platitude to remark that some of the most useful enterprise of local antiquaries consists in the recording of "Finds" of *local* occurrence; yet very little work has been done in this direction of recent years. The systematic collection of *data* alone affords the means whereby sound deduction on general lines may be drawn in extenuation and just classification of what is already known; and it is therefore important that a thorough system of recording "Finds," more particularly those of

the Pre-historic, Roman and Saxon Periods, should be undertaken. It does not follow that because an object is ancient, it should find a place *on exhibition* in a public museum. We refer more particularly to sherds of pottery, indecipherable coins, and scraps of metal without apparent significance; but if such things are preserved with full particulars as to their origin, there can be no loss and possibly some gain in the furtherance of research.

In the cases of the Hertfordshire Museum there are many specimens of local origin, which still await further investigation. The following notes are partly put forward with a view to placing on record the existence of certain examples, which fall within this category; and it is earnestly hoped that their publication may have the welcome effect of bringing forward Members of the Society willing to expend more time and patience upon their elucidation. "*Semper aliquid novi*" is a maxim bearing significant truth where objects of antiquity are concerned.

1. CISTERCIAN WARE JUG FROM KENSWORTH.

Until within comparatively recent years no distinction was drawn between the so-called "Staffordshire Black Glaze Ware" of the Seventeenth Century and the finer fabrique which is now called "Cistercian Ware." This latter type of pottery derives its name from the fact that numerous sherds have been discovered on the sites of the ruined Cistercian Abbeys of Yorkshire. The circumstances of its discovery prove that it was made prior to the year 1540. It may at once be distinguished from the later, but somewhat similar Staffordshire Ware, by the fact that it is thinner and harder in the body, and the glaze exhibits a brownish-black tone with iridescent reflections, due to the admixture of oxide of iron instead of manganese dioxide—the adjunct that imparted the dark purple tone to the later ware.

Now whereas almost any excavation of importance in St. Albans brings to light more or less numerous sherds of the Seventeenth Century pottery, and the Museum Collection contains several examples of characteristic beakers or tygs, with one or more handles, mugs, wine tasters (often miscalled bleeding bowls), etc., Cistercian Ware appears to be comparatively scarce. The Collection exhibits but two examples, the property of the author.

The first is the base of an elegant little *tyg* with three handles, found during the recent building operations at the St. Albans Grammar School; and the second example, which is the subject of this note.

This specimen is an unusually large and perfect Jug, with the characteristic drooping handle to be seen on the green glazed Farnham Ware of the same type and period; the mouth is lipped, and the body of the vessel bulbous in form. The height is eight inches, and the greatest width seven inches. The particular interest which is attached to this example lies in the fact that it was found on the site of a disused brickfield at Kensworth, where, from time to time, numerous fragments of a similar type have been found. The character of the body, which is composed of a very fine red brick-earth, appears to approximate very nearly to that of the soil in the neighbourhood, and it is possible that a pottery kiln existed on the spot.

It is generally admitted that although Staffordshire was the site of the chief manufacture of the Seventeenth Century Black Ware, small kilns existed throughout the country localities where suitable clay was to be found. There is no evidence to show in what places Cistercian Ware was made other than in the Northern Counties, and further investigation at Kensworth might be productive of some interesting results.

2. EARLY LEADEN SEAL MATRIX OF THE BAILIWICK OF ST. ALBANS.

The present specimen is undoubtedly one of considerable local interest, and deserving of further investigation. It consists of a Seal Matrix in lead, acutely oval in form, with a loop at the upper end of the face for suspension, there being no stem. The total length, including the loop, is 2.3 inches, width 1.3 inches. Upon the face is inscribed a well executed heraldic wyvern (in centre), surrounded by the legend, "SIGILL BAILIVI DE SCI ALBANI," apparently an abbreviation of "Sigillum Bailiviciñæ de Sancti Albani," transc. "Seal of the Bailiwick of St. Albans." The specimen was found in St. Albans, and is lent to the Museum by the author.

In the "Guide to the Mediæval Room, British Museum," p. 195, it is stated:—

"Attention may here be drawn to the seals used for the customs, and for the delivery of wool and hides, which are interesting in con-

nection with mediæval commerce and administration : also to the group of rough, unpretentious seals used to authenticate labourers' passes under the Statute of Cambridge of the year A.D. 1388. During the period preceding the rising of Wat Tyler numbers of villeins and serfs had begun to leave their homes in the country in order to obtain freedom by residence of a year and a day in the towns. This led to a great scarcity of labour; while many of these men became vagrants and robbers to the public danger. The Statute provided that all persons changing their abode must produce passes sealed with a seal, giving the name of the county, hundred, rape or wapentake in which they lived."

The subject of this note, although of finer execution than the majority of such matrices as are here described, is undoubtedly Fourteenth or early Fifteenth Century, and may possibly have been used for a similar purpose.

3. ARMORIAL PENDANTS FROM ST. ALBANS.

In a communication delivered to the Society on 13th December, 1911, entitled, "A Find of Pottery and other objects in the High Street, St. Albans,"¹ the author described, amongst other objects, an Armorial Pendant of the Fourteenth or Fifteenth Century.

The specimen is similar in form to two others, which have been added to the Museum Collection of recent years, their descriptions being as follows:—

ARMORIAL PENDANT, of bronze, shield shape, with loop at upper end for suspension. Extreme length, 1.8 inches, width 1.1 inches. Surface of the bronze originally gilded, traces of the gilt remaining, inlaid with Limoges enamel. The Arms are those of Clare and Hertford, the blazoning being "Or, three chevronels Gules." The red enamel is in an excellent state of preservation. This specimen was found on the site of Messrs. Fisk and Son's new premises in the High Street, and has been deposited in the Collection by Mr. William Fisk.

The above was exhibited before the Society of Antiquaries of London by Mr. William Page, F.S.A.

ARMORIAL PENDANT, form as above, extreme length 1.6 inches, width one inch. Entire surface of the face originally enamelled, that of the ground alone remaining, the bearing being decipherable from the indent. Blazoning:—"Gules, an Eagle dis-

¹ The material of which this paper was largely composed is being incorporated in a future article of a more extensive character.

played (? Sable)." The Arms have not yet been identified. This specimen was found at Cunnynhame Hill, St. Albans, and presented to the Collection by Mr. F. A. Giffen.

ARMORIAL PENDANT, form as above, extreme length 1.6 inches, width one inch. Entire surface enamelled, that of the device having almost perished. The Arms are those of de Bohun, the blazoning being "Azure, a bend Argent cotised, between six lioncels rampant Or." "From St. Albans," presented to the Collection by Mrs. Macquoid.

The Museum contains another example of a different form, from which the enamel and any trace of gilding has entirely disappeared. The remains of what must once have been a very fine specimen consist of an almost circular disc, with the sharp ends of a cross-saltire projecting from the periphery, the spaces between the arms of the cross and the rim being excavated doubtless for the reception of enamel. This example was found on the Black Grounds, St. Albans.

There is a fair amount of contemporary evidence to show the uses to which these badges were put. Perhaps the most common lay in their being carried on the person of heralds, and retainers of noble houses, to show upon whose business they travelled. Chaucer, in "The Flower and the Leaf," alludes probably to this fashion in the following lines:—

"And after them came a great company
Of heraudis and pursevaunts eke
Arrayed in clothes of white velvet,
And every man had on a chapelet
Scotchonis and eke horse harness indede
They had in *sute* of them who fore them yede."

The connection of the scotchon (escutcheon) with horse trappings is also an intimate one. The "Guide to the Mediæval Room, British Museum," p. 55, gives evidence of pendants of this description being hung in a row along the peytrel,² the band crossing the chest of a knight's horse, and otherwise attached by means of special metal fittings. Mention is also made of a sepulchral effigy at

² For an example *vide* the early bone Seal Matrix, insc., "Sigillum Ricardi de Vierli," Herts County Museum.

Zurich dating from about A.D. 1400, which shows a knight wearing a small armorial shield upon his camail.

Pendants of this character were common in the Fourteenth and early part of the Fifteenth Centuries, but they are of comparatively rare occurrence in the collections of any but the large museums.

4. WEAPONS AND OTHER RELICS FROM THE BATTLES OF ST. ALBANS.

Of recent years a special effort has been made to obtain for the Museum Collection objects which may be attributed with a tolerable degree of certainty to the two Battles of St. Albans. Owing to the fact that certain minor excavations have taken place within the past few years upon sites of some importance in this respect, the several specimens, which have recently found their way to the Museum cases, although few in number, are deserving of some comment. There still continues to be a lamentable lack of the larger weapons, notably swords, and hitherto no single piece of armour has come to light. It is much to be regretted, moreover, that such objects when discovered by navvies, agricultural labourers and others, are almost invariably offered to the highest bidder, and as such an individual is very often merely a curio-collector, who is prepared to go to a fancy price for the possession of such historical relics, it is obvious that the Museum can acquire only a part of the total finds of this character.

Undoubtedly the most interesting specimen which has hitherto been discovered is a Dagger of a rather scarce type. It is in the collection of Mr. W. J. Pavyer, and its description is as follows:—

DAGGER, blade of triangular section; quillons of brass, unevenly situated on the tang, short and drooping, grip missing; decorated ball pommel.

The chief interest of this specimen in comparison with others lies in the existence of a misericorde type of blade on a short weapon, and the uneven construction of the quillons.

The next two examples are of value in showing the survival at a late period of the knightly Misericorde, or Dague a Roelle, a type frequently represented on monumental brasses from the earlier part of the Fourteenth Century, but rare in most museums.

MISERICORDE, or DAGUE A ROELLE, blade of triangular section, present length 10.25 inches, probable original length 15 inches, greatest width one inch; guard circular, composed of a cup-like base of steel, surmounted by a disc of the same metal; grip missing, length of tang four inches; pommel missing. Found at Woodlands, London Road, St. Albans; presented to the Collection by Mr. L. D. Hyland.

MISERICORDE, blade only, length 10.5 inches, greatest width 0.9 inch, length of tang 3.75 inches. Found in Cotton Mill Lane; presented to the Collection by Mr. A. E. Gibbs, F.L.S.

The following appear to be weapons of more common use, which, although conforming to a general character of similar design, vary in the more intimate detail.

DAGGER, broad quadrangular blade, length 9 inches, greatest width 1.5 inches; quillons consisting of a rectangular bar, terminating in ovate knobs, both sides of the guard being finely decorated. Entire length 2 inches; grip missing; tang 3.75 inches in length; ball pommel decorated by means of spiral fluting. Found in Cotton Mill Lane. Purchased.

DAGGER, narrow quadrangular blade, length 7 inches, greatest width 0.8 inch; quillons of pewter, 1.75 inches in width, and slightly drooping entire length; grip missing; tang 3.75 inches in length; pommel missing. Found in Battlefield Road; presented to the Collection by Mr. A. E. Gibbs, F.L.S.

DAGGER, narrow quadrangular blade, length 7.5 inches, greatest width 0.9 inch; quillons of steel, 2.75 inches wide, short and straight, ring-guard; tang and pommel missing. From Park Street; presented to the Collection by Mr. William Page, F.S.A. (The above is in a very advanced state of decay.)

DAGGER BLADE, of moderate width, quadrangular section, length 9 inches, greatest width 0.8 inch; tang missing. Found in Cotton Mill Lane. Presented to the Collection by Mr. A. E. Gibbs, F.L.S.

DAGGER BLADE, narrow width, quadrangular section, length 9 inches, greatest width 0.7 inch; tang missing. Found in Cotton Mill Lane. Purchased. (The above has now been restored with a grip, pommel, etc.)

The Collection embraces, at present, but three arrow-heads, but these are of considerable interest, as showing three different forms of construction.

ARROW-HEAD, of coarse workmanship, socket imperfect; barbs of moderate length and acutely pointed. Total length 1.7 inches, greatest width 0.6 inch. "From St. Albans." Presented by the late Rev. H. Fowler, M.A.

ARROW-HEAD, of fine workmanship, no barbs, the edges of the socket, which extends to within a short distance of the apex, being sharply flanged. Total length 1.5 inches, greatest width 0.75 inch. "From St. Albans." Presented by the late Rev. H. Fowler, M.A.

ARROW-HEAD, of very flattened section with broad barbs, socket of fair length, situated distinctly below the barbs and containing the pin used in shafting. Total length 2.25 inches, greatest width 0.6 inch. From the Garden of Monastery Close, Abbey Mill Lane. Presented by Mr. Chas. H. Ashdown, F.R.G.S. (A somewhat similar example to the above is now in the Letchworth Museum.)

As previously stated, the Museum does not at present possess a sword or sword-blade that can with certainty be attributed to the period under consideration. One example, however, may possibly be a relic of the Battles, but it neither possesses evidence of sufficient age nor is the weight that which one would expect to find in such a weapon.

SWORD-BLADE, double edged, total length 32 inches, greatest width 1.5 inches, length of tang 6 inches. A narrow groove occurs for a short distance on either side of the upper end, in which appears a roughly executed inscription consisting of the letters I.V.I.N. or J.U.I.N. "From St. Albans." Presented by Detective Sergeant Pike.

The most abundant present-day evidence of the Wars of the Roses are to be found in the military and other spurs, which can be dated accurately within the second half of the Fifteenth Century, which have come to light in various parts of St. Albans and neighbourhood. The Museum Collection embraces upwards of ten specimens of different types.

These examples appear to fall naturally into two distinct groups: those with moderately short shanks and those with long ones. It is generally known that the lengthening of the shank was necessary on account of the use of bulky horse armour, the flank being inaccessible to a short spur. During the Fifteenth Century spurs of exaggerated length accompanied the sollerets with attenuated toes; the Guildhall and London Museums contain specimens with a total length of over twelve inches, and when it is remembered that the foot gear was at least half again the necessary length, the appearance of the wearer can be more easily imagined than described. Considerable interest is attached to a specimen in the London Museum, in which Spur, Pouleyn (Shoe), and Stirrup of this epoch are shown together. The enormous rowels, with a varying number of spikes, are of a later period, and are no doubt due to the dictates of fashion; the present specimens exhibit, for the greater part, rowels of small or moderate size.

Horse Shoes of very broad form intended to protect the frog from damage by caltrops are of very frequent occurrence in St. Albans, but owing to the difficulty of accurately dating such specimens it is impossible to state the exact number which may be attributed to the period under discussion.

The Collection embraces one example of the Caltrop, which, from the circumstances of its discovery, appears to be an undoubted relic of the period. Unfortunately the specimen is imperfect, but it may be stated that objects of this character are exceedingly scarce in museums, a fact which seems to indicate that their inhuman use was to a large extent discouraged.

CALTROP, originally consisting of four spikes, of which three remain; length of spikes 2 inches to 2.25 inches. From the Allotment Gardens, Cotton Mill Lane, St. Albans. Presented by Detective Sergeant Pike.

In addition to the above specimens, the Collection comprises certain minor objects, which may have reference to this important historical event, but it is to be hoped that other material may gradually come to hand to strengthen these far too slender links with a strenuous past.

5. ANGLO-SAXON REMAINS FROM KINGS WALDEN AND TODDINGTON.

In the "Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries of London," 2nd series, Vol. xxv., p. 183, appears a Paper by Mr. Reginald Smith, F.S.A., of the British Museum, upon Finds of Anglo-Saxon objects from Kings Walden, Herts, and Toddington, Beds, exhibited before the Society by the author of the present note in June, 1913.

It is unnecessary, perhaps, to recapitulate in detail the highly interesting observations made by this eminent authority upon the several objects, which are now deposited in the County Museum. It may be sufficient to state that the Hertfordshire Find has been determined as being that of a complete female interment, dated at about 670 A.D., consisting of the following objects:—

Pair of bronze brooches, 2.7 inches in length.

Another brooch of different form, 2.75 inches in length.

The remains of another in gilt bronze.

One of a pair of girdle hangers, 5.4 inches in length.

Pair of bronze tweezers.

Fragments of bronze, possibly the lip of a drinking cup.

Fragment of pottery.

The specimens from Toddington, Beds, appear to have been similar to others already recorded. They were discovered as far back as December, 1844, but have only recently come into the safe keeping of the Museum. The various items composing this Find are as follows:—

A knife. A strike-a-light.

Tweezers and ear-pick of bronze, connected by a ring.

A bronze pin, 3.7 inches in length.

Two wire rings, 0.8 inch and 0.7 inch in diameter.

Back plate of a circular brooch.

Twelve glass beads. A fragment of pottery.

It may be remarked that there is a noticeable paucity of Anglo-Saxon remains in the Collection, the only other *locally found* objects of that period being:—

A penny of Æthelred II., struck at the Hertford Mint.

A spear-head from the site of Verulam.

Three spear-heads from Ickleford.

Another from Pirton.