

ROMAN REMAINS FOUND AT RAMSGATE.

BY ROBERT HICKS, M.R.C.S.

WHEN Thanet was completely isolated, the sea flowed in at Reculver, covering the marshes between that place and Birchington, and running in the course of the Stour found an exit into Pegwell Bay, near Richborough. The channel which thus separated Thanet from the mainland was broad, shallow, but navigable, and it became the high road for all vessels during many centuries. Entering at the port of Richborough they found their way into the North Sea at Reculver, avoiding the dangerous navigation around the North Foreland.

At each mouth of this channel were early built the two important fortresses of Rutupium (Richborough) and Regulbium (Reculver), and no doubt very considerable garrisons were stationed at each. Neither of these forts was situated at any considerable altitude. The cliffs, however, at Ramsgate, and beyond Broadstairs, are very high, and afford perfect facility for keeping a good look-out into the open sea, exactly in that direction from which danger was most to be apprehended.

If you stand on the West Cliff in Ramsgate, at the end of what is now called St. Mildred's Road, and where many Roman remains have been discovered,

you will easily perceive the walls of Richborough Castle; it is indeed within signalling distance, especially by the aid of beacons, from which the Isle of Thanet takes its name, some say; *Tene* meaning a fire or beacon. If, on the other hand, you stand on the East Cliff at Ramsgate, above the Granville Hotel, you will have a fine view into the North Sea. Near this spot, under the Granville itself, and also close by in the garden of the house now called Conyngham Lodge, Roman remains have been unearthed. To those dug up in the last-mentioned place I must call especial attention. Two graves were disturbed, each containing the remains of a skeleton, and a vase of Upchurch ware with each. Among these bones are two portions of the upper jaw belonging to one of the persons interred, and in it canine teeth are uncut, and still remain in the jaw; there are also several milk teeth in good preservation but loose. The other skeleton was about the same age, but none of the bones were preserved. Here is absolute proof that *children* were buried here, which tends to shew that this was no hurried encampment, but a place of more permanent occupation, as children point to the presence of women, and women and children would not be found in temporary camps.

I believe all the more prominent headlands along the coast had permanent posts of observation, until you reach the lower cliffs of Birchington, when you are again within signalling distance of Reculver.

And now for the necessity of such organized posts. The forefathers of this our English nation were adventurous, daring, and warlike. Finding their own lands overstocked, and Britain much more tempting, they sailed from Denmark, Jutland, and

England (which we now call Schleswick), and the low districts of Holstein, never neglecting an opportunity for landing, always to pillage, it might be to conquer. The Romans, a nation pre-eminently skilled in military matters, took care to guard any place likely to be attacked or surprised. Hence the necessity for these posts of observation. History shews that when the fortresses were left to moulder, and the organized look-out was neglected, then the blow, so long warded, fell with such violence and ferocity that very few of the aboriginal inhabitants survived to tell the tale.

I will now describe in more detail, and as shortly as I can, the different finds, only remarking that it seems always necessary to build a house in order to discover them; for whenever we have made an attempt by trenching, in a likely spot, we always draw the covers blank.

ON THE WEST CLIFF.

A.—*At Mr. Southee's West Cliff School.*

1. A large vase of pale brown ware (9).
2. Cinerary urns (6) (14) of pale brown ware; one with burnt bones and one with bronze fibula (10).
3. Urns of coarser make.
4. A coarse clay patera (26), and a small one (20).
5. An imitation Samian ware plate (18), and two bronze fibulæ.

Close to this find was a hole containing bushels of bones, principally of pigs and boars, but some of deer. This seems to have been one of the "dust holes" of the camp.

B.—*At Mr Johnston's, close to the former.*

A Samian patera (19).

Two bottles of brown ware (15) (16).

Mr. Southee's and Mr. Johnston's houses are both situated in St. Mildred's Road.



Photographed by R. Hicks.

Theo. Kell, Lithographer,
40 King St Covent Garden.

ROMAN REMAINS, AND SOME CELTS, FOUND IN OR NEAR RAMSGATE.

C.—*A little further off on the West Cliff.*

One small bottle of light brown ware (7).

One Samian ware patera, with a raised pattern (17), and a fibula (17a).

D.—*On West Cliff, under what is now No. 77 Cambridge Terrace.*

A bottle of brown ware (3).

A Samian patera of very fine ware (4).

A glass Lachrymatory in perfect preservation (5).

Several very large nails, as if from a coffin, and the bones of a man, of which the first and second cervical vertebræ were quite perfect and intact; with them were found several teeth of a horse, leading to the supposition that a horse's head, at least, had been buried with the man. All these remains were found within a radius of two hundred yards.

ON THE EAST CLIFF.

E.—*In the garden of the house now called Conyngham Lodge,* were found two Upchurch vases (1) and (2), and skeletons of children. I have good reasons for knowing that more interments exist in the garden, which have not been disturbed—perhaps some day the Marquis Conyngham will kindly give us permission to dig.

F.—*In the road beyond the Granville farm.*

A black vase (11) with skeletons.

A brown vase (12) with skeleton.

G.—*Under the Granville Hotel* several vases were found.

HIGH STREET, RAMSGATE.

H.—*Near the top of the Street,* a fragment of an earthen vessel (21), the bottom of which was perforated with three round holes. The fragments (22) (23) (24) were found with it.

I hope that further house building will lead to more discoveries.

The large *amphora* (25) placed in the centre of the top line on the plate was discovered in the parish of St. Peter's. Of the Celtic remains shewn in the

plate, those found in Ramsgate are two polished stone celts (27) (28), and a beautiful flint knife (29), discovered together on West Cliff; they appear at the right hand lower corner of the plate. The bronze celt (30) was dug up on the site of the South-Eastern Railway Station at Minster.

The burnt bones, found in the urn numbered (6) on the plate, are shewn, in a modern glass vessel, between that urn and figure (3).

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