

MISCELLANEOUS NOTES

DESTRUCTION OF RICKSON'S PIT, SWANSCOMBE

Rickson's pit was one of the classic exposures of the Boyn Hill terrace deposits in the Swanscombe district. Since the discovery in 1935-36 by Alván T. Marston of the Swanscombe skull in the gravel of the Barnfield pit, and its recognition as the second oldest human fossil yet found in Europe, the Pleistocene beds of this locality and their contained Stone Age industries have achieved an international reputation. In March, 1954, an area of five acres of the Barnfield pit was presented by The Associated Portland Cement Manufacturers Limited to the Nature Conservancy for preservation as a Geological Reserve.

Half a mile east of the Barnfield pit there existed until lately a worked-out gravel pit bordering the east side of the road from Galley Hill to Springhead (National Grid Reference 609743). This pit is known in the literature of Palaeolithic archæology as Rickson's pit or otherwise the Barracks pit. It was worked commercially for gravel and sand from about 1930 until 1934 after which it became overgrown and the exposures obscured. In 1952 the A.P.C.M. cleared away almost the last traces of the beds overlying the chalk in this area with mechanical excavators preparatory to extending their enormous chalk quarry which occupies much of the Ebbsfleet valley to the south-east. At the time of writing (July, 1955) this deep quarry has eaten away most of the site occupied by Rickson's pit and the rest will follow in the next few months. This may therefore be a suitable opportunity to summarize the archæological significance of the site and mention the publications in which the evidence has been recorded in detail.

The lowest bed in Rickson's pit was unquestionably equivalent to the Lower Gravel of the well-known Barnfield section, and contained prodigious quantities of Clactonian flakes and cores. I estimate as a result of some digging which I undertook in Rickson's pit that the artifacts occurred in the Lower Gravel at the average rate of one to every two cubit feet of gravel. At a higher level there was a stratum of current-bedded sand and gravel which formerly yielded numerous Acheulian ovate implements of a slightly later type than the pointed hand-axes most commonly found in the Middle Gravel of the Barnfield pit. Pointed hand-axes have been obtained in Rickson's pit, however, from a horizon just above the shell bed covering the Lower Gravel. The beds here which may be correlated with the Barnfield Middle



*Photo: Ashmolean Museum*

Pendant from Strood ( $\frac{1}{2}$ )

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Gravel, though in part of a slightly later age,<sup>1</sup> have also produced flake implements of Clactonian III and early Levalloisian form, and from the Upper Loam (or Brickearth) J. P. T. Burchell obtained Levalloisian cores.<sup>2</sup>

The following published accounts record archæological and geological data relating to Rickson's pit:

Chandler, R. H., *Proc. Geol. Assoc.*, XLIII (1932), Part 1, pp. 71-2.

Dewey, H., *Quart. Journ. Geol. Soc. Lond.*, 88 (1932), pp. 35-56.

Burchell, J. P. T., *Antiquaries Journal*, XIV, No. 2 (1934), pp. 163-66.

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### A ROMAN JET PENDANT FROM STROOD

The pendant (Pl. I) is one of a number of objects which were recovered in 1838-39 by Mr. Humphrey Wickham from the site of a large Roman cemetery in Church Field, Strood, near Rochester.<sup>3</sup> The cemetery itself came to light during building operations. In 1927 the pendant, with no associated objects, was given to the Ashmolean Museum by Sir Arthur Evans, as part of the collection of his father, Sir John Evans. It then bore a label "Humphrey Wickham Collection" and the date "1838," and this, together with its obvious likeness to Roach Smith's illustration, leaves no doubt that its provenance is correct.

The pendant (Ash. Mus. 1927.563) is roughly oval in shape, 2 in. long by  $1\frac{3}{4}$  in. wide, with a tubular lug for suspension at the top. The reverse is plain; on the obverse is a conventional Gorgon's head in low relief. The head is shown in profile, looking to the right, with the hair bunched up in large waves. Above it is a pair of wings decorated in incised cross-hatching; round the outside of the head are four snakes, of which two spring from below the chin, and one each from either side of the head. When found a thin bronze torc, about 4 in. in diameter, was threaded through the loop, but this was not with the pendant when it came to the Ashmolean in 1927.

Other pendants of this type have been found in Britain—in York<sup>4</sup> and in London,<sup>5</sup> and on the Continent in France,<sup>6</sup> Germany<sup>7</sup> and

<sup>1</sup> Report on the Swanscombe Skull, *Jour. R. Anthr. Inst.*, LXVIII (1938), p. 45.

<sup>2</sup> *Procs. Prehist. Soc. E. Anglia*, Vol. 6 (1931), p. 256.

<sup>3</sup> C. Roach Smith, *Collectanea Antiqua*, I (London, 1848), Pl. XI, Fig. 5; *Archæologia*, LXVI (1915), 572, Fig. 5; E. T. Leeds, *Celtic Ornament* (Oxford, 1933), 97, Fig. 29a.

<sup>4</sup> G. Home, *Roman York* (London, 1924), Pl. facing p. 176.

<sup>5</sup> Ash. Mus. 1948.72.

<sup>6</sup> Ash. Mus. 1927.560.

<sup>7</sup> W. Hagen, "Kaiserzeitliche Gagatarbeiten aus dem rheinischen Germanien," *Bonner Jarhubücher* 142 (1937), Pl. 30.

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Belgium.<sup>1</sup> Where the circumstances of the find are known, the pendants seem to have come from rich graves, and were presumably luxury articles.<sup>2</sup> Their purpose would certainly have been that of averting evil spirits.

The style of the carving varies from the classical, of which Dr. Hagen figures four examples<sup>3</sup> to the more stylized which represent the Gorgon as a mild and not at all frightening figure, with the snakes filling in the field, and not entwined in the hair as they should be. The Strood pendant is obviously one of these. Dr. Hagen suggested that jet for the Continental objects was most probably exported from Whitby in Yorkshire and worked in the Rhineland, in or near Cologne, but the presence of three Medusa pendants, other jet pendants with busts in relief, and many other jet objects in York, so near to the source of the jet, leaves no doubt that there were capable craftsmen working in this country, and it may well be that the Continental jet objects were, in fact, exported from Yorkshire in their finished state. The Strood pendant has features in common with both Continental and Yorkshire pendants. Several of the other examples have only four snakes, as opposed to greater numbers on the more classical carvings, and the incised cross-hatched wings are almost universal.

In one respect, however, the Strood pendant appears to be unique. On no other example known to me does the Gorgon's head appear in profile, and it is clear that the artist, having chosen this style, was not at home with it himself, for the wings and snakes still appear as on frontal portraits. The profile head, and hair style bunched up in thick masses appear on the native coinage of central Gaul, combined with spiral motifs, not unlike snakes and the artist may well have been trying to combine two ideas.<sup>4</sup>

Though Mr. Wickham was active in preserving the material from the Strood cemetery, he appears to have left no record of the associations of the objects. Coins found in the area ranged from the first to the fourth century A.D., the earliest being one of Antonia (mid first century A.D.), the latest of Gratian (A.D. 367-83). The pottery, illustrated by Roach Smith, could cover an equally long period.<sup>5</sup> Two of the other Medusa-head pendants, however, can be dated by association.

<sup>1</sup> M. Amand, "Objets en jais d'époque romaine découverts à Tournai," *Latomus* XI, pt. 4 (1952), Pl. XIV.

<sup>2</sup> Hagen, op. cit., p. 84-5.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, Pl. 30, nos. E.11-14.

<sup>4</sup> C. G. Muret, *Monnaies Gauloises de la Bibliothèque Nationale* (Paris, 1889), Pl. XXI; P. Lambrechts, *L'exaltation de la tête dans la pensée et dans l'art des Celtes* (Brugge, 1954), Fig. 12. Profile Medusa-heads also occur on cameos, but generally very classical in style, with the wings shown in profile and the snakes properly entwined in the hair (E. Babelon, *Camées de la Bibliothèque Nationale* (Paris, 1897), Pl. XVI-XVIII).

<sup>5</sup> Roach Smith, op. cit., Pl. IX and X.

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The Tournai medallion bears on the reverse the bust of a Roman lady in relief, whose hairstyle resembles that found on portraits of Julia Mamaea and shown for the first time on her coins of A.D. 226-27. Under Gordian III (A.D. 238-44), the style changed, and the medallion should, therefore, presumably be placed sometime between A.D. 226 and 238.<sup>1</sup>

One of the York pendants was found in a lead coffin with, among other objects, two coins of Septimius Severus (A.D. 193-211). These two examples suggest, therefore, that pendants carved with heads of Medusa were certainly being made in the early part of the third century, Dr. Hagen's opinion was that the earliest date of worked jet in the Rhineland was about A.D. 200 and that the majority of objects belonged to the latter part of the third and beginning of the fourth century.<sup>2</sup> Other jet pendants in the Yorkshire Museum have busts whose style suggests a Constantinian date in the fourth century A.D., but whether the Medusa-heads had gone out of fashion by then cannot be determined.

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#### HASTINGLEIGH

Miss Mary W. Harwood, author of *Kentish Village: Hastingsleigh*, reviewed in Vol. LXVI (1953), points out an error in Hasted's account as printed in the folio edition, Vol. III, p. 305.

Reference to Aug. Off. Parts. for Grant E. 318/1008 in the P.R.O. has shown that the lands called Blakestoke owned by the abbey of Robertsbridge appear among demesne lands in Sussex, not Kent, and that the entry probably refers to Blackstock in Hellingly, Sussex, not Hastingsleigh, Kent.

The error, which is omitted from Hasted's second edition, is yet another example of the unreliability of his first.

#### SCADBURY MANOR, CHISLEHURST

A theory, postulated by an American, Mr. Calvin Hoffman, that the Kentish playwright Christopher Marlowe was not killed (as history records) at Deptford in 1593, but survived to write all the works attributed to Shakespeare, has made Scadbury the focus of world-wide interest.

It is beyond doubt that Marlowe was often at Scadbury, the home of his patron, Sir (then Mr.) Thomas Walsingham, and it may well be that some of his plays were written there. He was certainly there in May, 1593, for, on the 18th of that month the Privy Council directed

<sup>1</sup> Amand, *op. cit.*, p. 480.

<sup>2</sup> Hagen, *op. cit.*, p. 86.

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Harry Maunder, the Queen's Messenger, "to repaire to the house of Mr. Thomas Walsingham in Kent, or to anie other place where he shall understand Cristofer Marlowe to be remaining and . . . to apprehend and bring him to Court in his companie." In 1925, Dr. J. Leslie Hotson discovered, in the Public Record Office, Queen Elizabeth's pardon of Ingram Frizer for his part in the poet's death on May 30th, 1593. Frizer was the agent or servant of Thomas Walsingham, as were also Skeres and Poley, the only other persons present at the death. These circumstances, says Mr. Hoffman, support his theory that the affair was "framed" and that another body was buried at Deptford in the name of Marlowe.

In support of his hypothesis, the American seeks the original manuscripts of the Shakespeare canon, which, if found, he would expect to be over the name of Marlowe. The ancient timbered manor house of Scadbury was pulled down about the year 1751. Mr. Hoffman has gone over the footings with a mine-detector in the hope that the last Walsingham owner, on selling the manor c. 1650, might have left these manuscripts behind in an iron chest. This search unsuccessful, the American now seeks permission to open the supposed tomb of Sir Thomas Walsingham in the Scadbury Chapel of Chislehurst Parish Church. There is an inscription to Sir Thomas on a mural monument to the memory of his grandfather, Sir Edmund Walsingham, Lieutenant of the Tower of London under Henry VIII. The panels of the tomb immediately below are of the "Decorated" period and have obviously been re-used. The tablet above is dated 1581 and does not appear to have been disturbed since its erection. Sir Thomas died in 1630. However, Mr. Hoffman feels that this tomb may contain manuscripts or other objects which might throw light on the Marlowe mystery.

These events have stimulated further research into the history of Scadbury and it is to record the writer's efforts in that field that these notes are written.

Webb, Miller and Beckwith's excellent *History of Chislehurst* (1899) refers to Queen Elizabeth's visit to Scadbury in 1597, but gives no exact date. The authors also say that the date and place of the knighting of Thomas Walsingham had eluded them. The Minutes of the Privy Council and the State Papers (Domestic) of that year, taken together, provide the answer. In the Privy Council Minutes of July 18th, Thomas Walsingham is an "Esquire." At the next meeting, on July 24th, he is Sir Thomas. In the State Papers is a letter from Cecil to the Earl of Essex, written on July 26th, in which he says "on Wednesday night; I being at Greenwich and the Queen at Mr. Walsingham's . . ." That Wednesday was July 20th and as Cecil refers to Mr. Walsingham on that day, he must have been knighted by the

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Queen on her departure from Scadbury on the following day, Thursday, July 21st, 1597.

A direct outcome of this discovery was a pageant "Elizabeth and Walsingham" produced at Sidcup Place on Coronation Day, June 2nd, 1955. On the same day was unveiled on Chislehurst Common, a village sign commemorating the Coronation of Queen Elizabeth II and having in the head a carved representation of the first Elizabeth's knighting of Walsingham in 1597. No drawing of old Scadbury has been traced. In the writer's opinion, it must have compared fairly closely with Ightham Mote on which, therefore, the background of the carved sign is based.

The present Lord of the Manor, Mr. H. S. Marsham-Townshend, has kindly made available two old documents. A Valuation of 1734 describes the situation as "healthfull and pleasant . . . having as fine a Landskip within the Compass of the Eye and as much variety as I ever saw before." The house is entered as "a large Old Timber Building of no value more than as old materials." An Inventory of the entire contents in 1727 names 39 rooms, passages and offices, among them the Great Gates, Great Hall, Brown Parlour next the Privy Garden, and a little Brown Parlour. A White Staircase led to the upper floor, where are named, among other apartments, Queen Elizabeth's Room over the Great Parlour, and Sir Edward (Bettenson's) Room. There was a Steward's Hall, a Servants' Hall, Kitchens, Brew House, Dairy and three cellars (these last being all that remain *in situ*).

Over a period of ten years, from 1925, Mr. H. S. Marsham-Townshend systematically excavated the moat, removed the trees which covered the ruins and took steps to preserve the footings then uncovered. The work in the moat disclosed vertical cracks in the lower walls which doubtless were the cause of the demolition in 1751.

In 1936, during the industrial development of the Cray Valley, the Manor Farm at St. Mary Cray was demolished. One of its wings was found to contain most of the timbers of a medieval hall with an excellent king-post roof. The stripping of a partition wall on the ground floor revealed the "screens," each half-arch being a single piece of oak. Mr. Marsham-Townshend, on finding that these timbers exactly fitted the footings of the former hall at Scadbury, had them re-erected there, so that a medieval hall, complete with screens, once more stands amidst the moated ruins of Scadbury. It may well be that this is the original hall once frequented by Christopher Marlowe and in which Thomas Walsingham entertained Queen Elizabeth.

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Condensed from two papers prepared by the author and read to a party of members of the Society and representatives of County and local bodies at Scadbury on St. George's Day, April 23rd, 1955.

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### THE WOOLWICH AND DISTRICT ANTIQUARIAN SOCIETY

The Woolwich and District Antiquarian Society celebrated its 60th birthday by an exhibition and dinner at Well Hall, Eltham, on Saturday, September 3rd, 1955. The Society has thus a long record of usefulness, in excursions, manifold publications and excavating work. It has enjoyed the encouragement (financial) of the Borough Council and the Mayor was one of the guests of honour. After dinner, a presentation was made to Mr. F. C. Elliston Erwood, who had recently vacated the post of President after 21 years service in that capacity. The presentation took the form of one of the latest model V.H.F. wireless sets and Mr. Ellison Erwood made a sincere and moving reply. The Society was represented by Dr. Gordon Ward who conveyed a cordial message of greeting from our President.

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