

Notes

ARCHÆOLOGICAL REMAINS FOUND AT SHEPTON MALLET

MISS MARGARET D. HIGGS and her nephew, in making a tennis lawn at 'Greenacres', Compton Road, Shepton Mallet, in April 1934, became involved in digging trenches down to the rock. They came to a place where the rock had been hollowed out circularly. This hollow, depth 3 ft. below the natural surface of the rock, was filled with loam. In it four small flint flakes of slight interest were discovered, and a long, narrow flake of grey flint, well struck. Further digging revealed a trench in which a human skeleton was found in a sitting posture, one arm bent with hand on shoulder. It appeared to be seated in a small hollow in the rock.

It is stated that there is an old trackway a short distance away at right angles to the trench.

Mr. C. E. Burnell said that most of the bones of the skeleton were broken and several of them looked like old fractures, 'leading one to think that the ground may have been disturbed before'. Among the remains sent to the undersigned was part of the lower maxillary showing a line of five teeth including three molars, two of which were considerably ground down. The individual was fully adult.

With the skeleton one piece of thick, rude pottery was found; it is so irregularly formed as to permit no satisfactory determination of the curvature of the wall, so that we cannot construct the original diameter. It comes from an angle in the vessel's profile probably that of the base. The decoration and the colour (light brown on grey) of the ware clearly point to the Bronze Age, and in the Museum at Taunton is part of a very similar vessel found at Small Down Camp, near Evercreech and Shepton Mallet (see *Proceedings*, 1, ii, 32-49; and lxxix, lxxv-lxxviii). It appears to be more over-baked than the average cinerary urn. It is apparently of the early or early-

middle Bronze Age (*circa* B.C. 1600–1800). Mr. Christopher Hawkes regards it as belonging to a very variable group normally assigned, without much regard to typology, to the 'food-vessel' class.

H. ST. GEORGE GRAY.

THE MEARE LAKE VILLAGE EXCAVATIONS, 1934

THE examination of the eastern group of dwelling-sites at the Meare Lake Village was resumed on 20 August 1934, and continued until 13 September, after which the filling-in was done.

Excavations were carried on simultaneously at two places and five men were employed. The work undertaken included the examination of Mound X, and a section, 10 ft. wide and 110 ft. in length, running N. and S., through portions of Mounds XV, XVI and LI. These mounds were not clearly defined before digging began, as they formed part of the large central group of dwelling-sites on which the shed is now situated. A third cutting was made immediately in front of the shed, 5 ft. wide on the S. side of the datum line for a length of 30 ft. between the 250 ft. and 280 ft. points.

Mound X was a fairly large and symmetrically-shaped mound, consisting of three floors and two remarkable series of superimposed hearths. No timber substructure was discovered. This condition shows that the dwelling-site belonged to the latest occupational period at a date when the surface of the peat was consolidated, and capable of supporting the clay floors unaided.

The section through Mounds XV, XVI and LI was an unusually interesting piece of work, the most notable feature being the large accumulations of lias stone covering the clay floors. The N. and S. diameter of this area was roughly 65 ft. In one place the masses of stone were 3 ft. in depth. The stone had no apparent arrangement; neither did any of the blocks show tool-marks. Nothing was found among the stone and rubble to date the construction, and so far the only guide has been the discovery of a few fragments of Norman or early medieval pottery found near the surface.

At the present time the precise purpose of this stone-work remains an unsolved problem. It is the intention of the directors to open up a much larger area, when it is hoped the object and date of its construction may be disclosed.

Among the smaller objects discovered were the following :—

Antler.—Perforated hammer with square hole, toggle-like fastener, and six weaving-combs.

Bone.—Sawn and perforated tibia, 'toggle' with pricked ornament, three 'bobbin's, and a worked shoulder-blade.

Beads of Glass.—Two blue beads, a bead ornamented with yellow spirals, an amber-coloured ring-bead, and six beads found together (five of clear glass, two ornamented with yellow spirals, three with yellow chevrons, and a plain yellow ring-bead).

Bronze.—Two fibulae, two spiral finger-rings, small buckle and two rings.

Iron.—Bill-hook, small bar, file, and other worked fragments of iron.

Lead.—Two worked pieces.

Kimmeridge Shale.—Three parts of armlets.

Whorls.—Seven spindle-whorls of stone, one of bone, one of pottery, two of baked clay, one of antler and one of Kimmeridge shale.

Flint.—Four scrapers, two knives and a long core.

Stone.—Four hammerstones, and a 'hoard' of 306 slingstones; also a pair of saddle quern-stones, and two other querns.

Pottery.—A good series of ornamented fragments, and parts of vessels which can be restored.

A few fragments of Romano-British pottery were found under the flood-soil of Mound X. Some medieval pottery has been previously referred to.

Roman Coins.—Two 'third brass' coins, much decayed, were found under the flood-soil of Mound X.

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GEORGE VIVIAN OF CLAVERTON

AN article on an amateur artist, George Vivian of Claverton, appeared in the number of *The Connoisseur* for January 1935 (Vol. xcv, 29-31). The connection of the Vivians with Claverton began only in 1816 when John Vivian (1756-1828) purchased the manor and estate from Allen Tucker, representative of the celebrated Ralph Allen. John Vivian was the second son of Matthew Vivian of Penelewey, near Truro :¹ he became a successful barrister and was Solicitor to the Excise of England and eventually a Bencher of the Middle Temple. It had been his intention to restore the old manor-house of the Basset family at Claverton, but 'the walls were not considered to be in a sufficiently safe condition to permit certain repairs and additions contemplated by him ; he was therefore induced to think of erecting an entirely new house, which was ultimately carried into effect after the designs of Sir Jeffery Wyatville'. The new house was reminiscent of Ammerdown which had been built about 1788 from the designs of James Wyatt, Sir Jeffery's uncle. The old house was pulled down in 1820 : it was nearly of the same size as The Hall at Bradford-on-Avon and of about the same date.

John Vivian died in 1828 and was buried in the Temple Church. He left Claverton to his second son, George, a traveller, an artist and a collector.² George Vivian (1798-1873) completed the new house and added the picture gallery. Later he restored the Church and altered, or built anew from his own plans, almost every cottage and house on the estate : the landscape of the Claverton side of the Avon valley is still as he left it, or as he intended it should be when the trees of his planting had grown to their full size.

In 1837 he published *Some Illustrations of the Architecture of Claverton*, a series of zincographs by Louis Haghe³ chiefly from drawings signed by C. J. Richardson.⁴ Most of these drawings had been made before the demolition of the old house when

¹ *Visitations of Cornwall*, edited by J. L. Vivian, 545.

² Waagen, *Treasures of Art in Great Britain*, Letters xviii and xxvi.

³ *D.N.B.*, xxiii, 438.

⁴ *D.N.B.*, xlvi, 222.

C. J. Richardson was only sixteen years old, and are believed to have been early drawings by Vivian retouched by Richardson for publication. A few drawings by W. Twopenny and G. Moore were added to complete the series.

For John Murray, who was a personal friend, Vivian made copious architectural notes which were used in the compilation of the famous handbooks.

Vivian travelled in Albania, Greece, Italy, Russia, Scandinavia, Germany, Spain and Portugal before 1841, making drawings wherever he went. His work was remarkable for topographical accuracy, a quality of considerable value before the invention of photography. He achieved an individual style, and was particularly successful in suggesting an immense expanse of country by emphasizing the horizon-line.

The following are the titles of three folio volumes of drawings published by Vivian :—

Spanish Scenery by G. Vivian Esq^{re}. 1838.

Scenery of Portugal and Spain by G. Vivian Esq^{re}., on stone by L. Haghe. 1839.

Views from the Gardens of Rome and Albano ; drawn by George Vivian, Esq., and lithographed by Mr. J. D. Harding.¹ 1848.

On the suggestion of the Prince Consort, Peel persuaded Vivian to become a member of the Commission appointed to consider ' whether advantage can be taken of the New House of Parliament for the purpose of encouraging by means of their interior decoration—the Arts in this Country '.

Claverton was sold by the Vivian family in 1869 : the manor and a large part of the estate were purchased by Henry Duncan Skrine of Warleigh in 1874.

A. W. VIVIAN-NEAL.

¹ *D.N.B.*, xxiv, 336.