

SOME NOTES ON THE ARCHÆOLOGY OF HAMPSHIRE.

Communicated by J. P. WILLIAMS-FREEMAN, M.D.

Mr. O. G. S. Crawford, B.A., of East Woodhay, whose special study of the north-west portion of the County will soon be published by the Clarendon Press, has sent me some notes on field work that he did last autumn in the Southampton District, and has empowered me to make what use of them I like for the benefit of the Hants Field Club.

I have accordingly arranged them in three papers:—

- (1) A Note on the Discovery of some Bronze Age Urns at Stony Cross, in the Parish of Minstead, New Forest.
- (2) A Note on Prehistoric, Roman, and Saxon Nursling.
- (3) A Detailed Account of the Course of the Roman Road from Winchester to Ringwood, *via* Nursling.

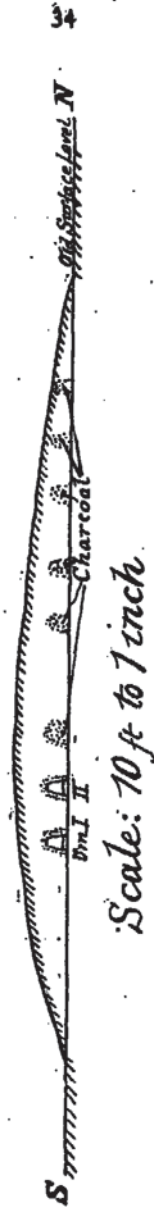
The first two papers are here given; the third is held over for future publication. J. P. W.-F.

NOTE ON THE DISCOVERY OF TWO BRONZE AGE URNS AT STONY CROSS, IN THE PARISH OF MINSTEAD, NEW FOREST, DECEMBER 28TH, 1912.

BY O. G. S. CRAWFORD, B.A.

While tracing a Roman Road on Saturday, December 28th, 1912, I was led to a gravel-pit through which the road should have passed. The pit is situated in the Parish of Minstead in the New Forest, and occupies a piece of waste land on the South side of the Ringwood and Romsey main road, 600 yards due East of the Compton Arms Hotel and

SECTION OF BARROW AT STONY CROSS, MINSTEAD, NEW FOREST.



Scale: 10 ft to 1 inch

The base line is that of the ancient surface level, so far as this could be determined.

150 yards South-east of the eighth milestone from Romsey. In the section exposed in the pit at the point where I had reckoned the Roman road should be, I noticed a layer of loose, discoloured gravel, lying upon the firm, undisturbed gravel below, and naturally concluded that the Roman road had here been cut through. Upon examining the section more closely I observed what at first appeared to be a mass of burnt matter which had in some way become involved in the material of the supposed road. I scratched it with my walking-stick and suddenly saw on either side of the burnt matter a thin line of pottery closely embedded in the gravel. Close by was another burnt mass similarly enclosed by pottery. I set to work at once to remove what remained of both pots, with the result that one was removed in fragments with fair success. The other (the one which first attracted my attention) was of a much thinner ware and very friable, and in spite of the utmost care it was only possible to remove a few pieces whole. In this account I shall call this first friable urn number one, and the second harder one number two. Both urns proved to have been inverted upon the old surface and filled first with sand and then gravel. When the pressure of the gravel broke through the bottoms of the urns, they became filled with stones; in which in the course of time the sides of the urns became firmly embedded, so that when exposed in the gravel-pit they were hardly noticeable. I mention this to show that it would be quite possible for gravel-diggers to work right through the barrow beneath which they reposed without even being aware of its existence. The mound is of slight elevation and quite invisible amidst the holly scrub and gorse and the remains of old gravel workings. About a third of the urns had been destroyed more probably by naturally weathering of the section exposed than by working, as this part of the pit is not now being used. There was not a trace of burnt bone and it appears that the remains of the cremation have perished through the infiltration of water and the absence of preservative material. Urn No. 1 was about 1 foot $1\frac{1}{2}$ inches high. It is of very thin friable ware and encircled at about $1\frac{1}{2}$ inches below the rim by a

plain raised rib. Urn No. 2, is of thicker; harder ware. It is encircled $2\frac{1}{4}$ inches below the rim by a raised band ornamented with finger-prints, showing that it belongs to a type common in the South of England, especially in Hampshire.

On the south of the interments containing these two pots were several masses of burnt material, of a similar shape to those in which the urns were placed and at a distance of about three feet from each other. They are probably the remains of interments placed in wooden buckets or baskets. Only on some such supposition can their shape and vertical sides be explained.

PREHISTORIC, ROMAN AND SAXON NURSING.

BY O. G. S. CRAWFORD, B.A.

In a field immediately adjoining Nursing Farm, on the North of the road to the Mill, there is marked on the 6-inch O.S. Map [Hants, lvi., S.E.] " 'The Walls' (supposed site of monastery)." I do not know what historical evidence there is for the existence of a monastery at Nursing, nor for what reason, if such existed, this spot has been selected as the site. Traces of a roughly circular earthwork can still be seen in the field, but the Southern portion, if there was one, has been obliterated by a small gravel-pit and by Nursing Farm itself. On the 1810 1-inch O.S. map, and on the 2-inch manuscript from which it was engraved, the outlines of the ramparts are very plainly marked. From

the South-west corner of the earthwork a raised bank runs in a North-westerly direction ; and nearly parallel to it there is at the present day a " water-ditch," cutting off a gravel promontory to the west bounded on three sides by the Test. Are these ancient or modern works ? I think it is in the highest degree likely that the circular earthwork (" The Walls ") is ancient and probably prehistoric. The " water-ditch " may be modern, but more probably it marks the site of a promontory fort unconnected—structurally at anyrate—with " The Walls." It consists of a bank thrown up between two ditches along which in flood-time the water rushes with great force.

Close to Nursling Farm is a huge gravel-pit from which railway ballast was obtained about 30 years ago. In excavating that part of it which was called Armsea (on the tithe-map) there was found a great number of Roman remains—including a bronze statuette, quantities of Samian and other pottery, and three wells. Some of the objects were acquired by Dr. Blackmore, of Salisbury. There are also a few things in the Southampton Museum which are said to have come from Nursling, and I am told that a Mr. Parker of that town has some in his possession. The soil has now been removed to some depth over a large area, but enough discoveries have been recorded to make it certain that an important Roman settlement existed on the site. Fortunately the area within " The Walls " has been left undisturbed.

Several tell-tale place-names occur in the neighbourhood. The bridge across the " water-ditch " is called Conager Bridge. The word—more usually spelt Coneygar—is a form of Coney-garth, " coney " being the old word for " rabbit," and " garth " for " warren." Though not necessarily associated with ancient remains, the word is frequently found near earthworks, owing to rabbits burrowing into the loose rubble of the ramparts. About a mile to the North is Cold Harbour Field and a lane of the same name leading to the Manor Farm of Lee.

A site with so many natural advantages is not likely to have been overlooked by prehistoric peoples. Commanding the lowest ford on the Test, which is also tidal up to this point, it was at once both ford-settlement and port. The bend of the river encircles on three sides an easily defended gravel spur, having an extensive outlook up the valley and down Southampton Water, and projecting like a natural causeway over the marshes towards the opposite bank.* In early days the crossing of a wide valley was a difficult undertaking, involving considerable risk, and in winter often impossible. At each end of the crossing one would be sure to find some sort of a caravanserai where the wayfarer could refresh himself and his beasts, and rest awhile before embarking upon the next stage of his journey. The construction by the Romans of a passage across the marshes, by increasing the traffic must have added greatly to the prosperity of the adjacent settlement. Whether this passage consisted of a gravel causeway or a wooden viaduct or corduroy road we do not know; but not the smallest trace of it is visible to-day, and for other reasons the latter alternative is the more probable one. Of whatever material it must have needed constant attention to repair the damage done by winter floods, and during the troubled time when the Saxons were coming it must have been neglected and perhaps destroyed. The marsh once more became an obstruction, until the first stress of the invasions was over and the invaders had leisure to build another bridge lower down, thus diverting the traffic and originating a new settlement at Redbridge. The decay of the old site, begun with the destruction of the causeway, was hastened by the growth of its rival; until at last, despoiled and shunned by the Saxons, it came to be a "cold harberewe," the haunt of native "nutshell-folk," shivering at night beneath the roofless walls which were the sole surviving token of Rome's protectorate.

* The alluvium is narrower here than at any point below Romsey.

NOTE ON THE ANGLO-SAXON BOUNDS OF
NURSLING, A.D., 877.

[W. de Gray Birch, *Cartularium Saxonium*, Vol. ii.,
No. 544].

[Grant by Bishop Tunbiorht to the Refectory of Winchester, of land at Nutsclilling, Nutshalling or Nursling, on The River Test, Co. Hants.]

Hii sunt termini terre. Aerest from thaem hlidgate
scioteth se merc on gearnes ega. Thonne be suthan hriod
eg on terstan. Thonon andlang testan on merc flot.
Thonon andlang fliotes on bodding med. Thonon on boddan
stan. Thonon ut on aclieh. Thonon on stemnes peth.
Thonon on grindan broc. Thonon on heslea on there byri
hyrne. Thonon ut on hedenes dene. Suth ut on thet hlid
gaet.

TRANSLATION.

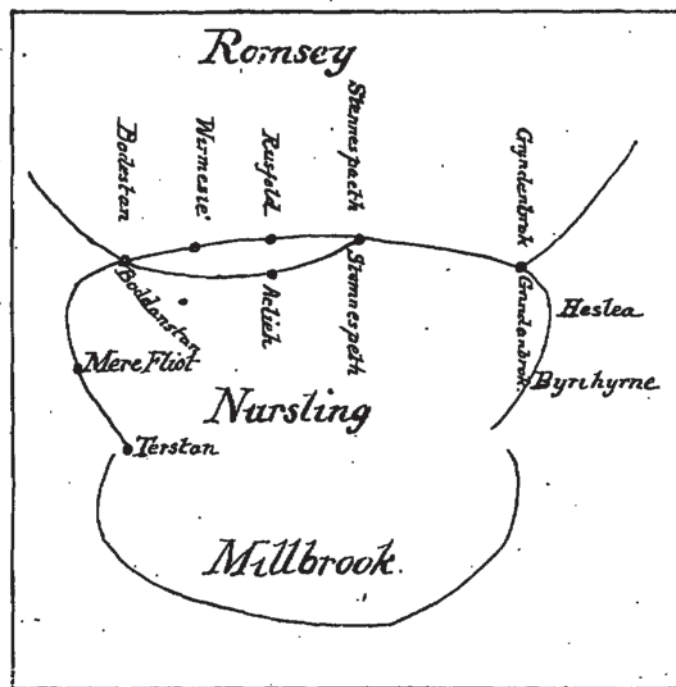
These are the bounds of the land. First from the hlidgate
shooteth (*i.e.*, hits) the mark on gearnes island. Then South
of reed island on Test. Then along Test on mark fleet.
Then along fleet (probably a tidal creek) on bodding mead.
Then on bodden stone. Then on oak lea. Then on stemnes
path. Then on grindan brook. Then on hazel lea on the
burg corner. Then out on hedenes dene. South out on the
hlid gate.

The bounds appear to enclose a piece of land corresponding
roughly with the modern parish of Nursling. They circulate
clockwise and begin somewhere near the mouth of the Test.
On the South Nursling adjoins the parish of Millbrook, of
which two sets of Saxon bounds are preserved. [Cart. Sax.,
iii., 926, A.D., 956 : Cotton Charter, viii., 9 (Edweard, A.D.,
1045), pubd. in Brit. Mus. Facsimiles, Part 4] but the points
of contact between the two are not clear. The earlier
bounds of Millbrook begin at "hreodbrycge," and proceed
"along street." Those of A.D., 1045, also begin at "hreod-
brycge" and go "along-taerstan stream" to "hnutscyllinga
meorce," *i.e.*, the boundary of Nursling.

There are more points in common on the north between Nursling and Romsey whose bounds are also preserved [Cart. Sax., iii., 1187, A.D. 966]. The following names occur consecutively:—

1. *Romsey*.—grynden brok, stennes paeth, rusfeld, wirmesie, bodestan.
2. *Nursling*.—bodden stan, aclich, stemnes peth, grindan broc.

The accompanying diagram represents the mutual relationship of the three parishes as shown by the bounds:—



hríod eg.—Reed island, some small eyot in the Test, perhaps Sedge Island at the confluence of the Test and Blackwater.

bodden stan.—Survives in Badstones, the name of a field half-way between Grove Place and Nursling Church, and lying between the road and the railway.

ac lieh.—Perhaps degenerated into Lee, one mile north of Nursling.

grindan broc.—Must be Tanner's Brook.

byri hyrne.—The first word should denote an ancient earthwork, by the analogy of its use in other charters; *hyrne* means "horn" or "corner." Just at the point where the bounds of Nursling turn abruptly southwards, an "ancient entrenchment" is marked on the M.S. Edition of the old 1-inch O.S. map, plotted (on a scale of 2 miles to the inch) from surveys made in 1806-8. The turn of the parish bounds at this earthwork, and therefore exactly tallies with the itinerary of the ancient bounds.

hedenes dene.—Compare "Hedenesburia," quoted by Wise as the mediæval form of Hengist-bury.

(*To be continued.*)

[Mr. Crawford questions the existence, at Nursling, of a monastery which history has associated with the name of St. Boniface. We are told he entered a Benedictine monastery at Exeter, at the age of thirteen, and afterwards removed to one at Nursling. On his Ordination (c.710) he went to Frisia, and not being allowed to preach by the Pagan chief he returned to Nursling. A field called "The Walls," opposite Nursling Farm, is the traditional site of a monastery destroyed by the Danes in one of their raids (c. 878.) The Church at Nursling is dedicated to St. Boniface, who is commemorated by a marble slab erected in the porch. Woodward and Wilk's (*History of Hants*) quote a writer of the eleventh century who speaks of "*Monasterium quod usque hodie dicitur Nuiscele*." See also Merivale's *Conversion of the West*, Sailer, Müller and other German writers on Boniface. *Ed.*]