

Richard Rawlinson (editor)  
Miscellanies on several curious subjects  
London  
1714

MISCELLANIES

On Several

Curious Subjects:

Now first Publish'd from their

RESPECTIVE ORIGINALS.

<vignette - portrait of Anthony Wood>

LONDON: Printed for E. CURLL,  
at the Dial and Bible over-against St.  
Dunstan's Church in Fleetstreet. 1714.

43

A Copy of a Letter from Robert Plott,  
L. L. D. Keeper of the Ashmolean  
Musæum in the University of Oxford;  
design'd to be sent to the Royal Soci=  
ety in London.

GENTLEMEN,

On Monday last I went to Chilham, to  
view the Tumulus of Quintus Durus  
Laberius, which is not in the Form of any  
Roman Barrow I ever saw, being more like  
one of our present Graves; I pac'd it, and  
found it to be seventy of my Paces in  
Length, and twenty in Breadth. This La=  
berius was a Tribune, slain in one of Cæsar's  
Engagements with the Britains; the Country-  
People, to this Day, call it Julaberries Grave.  
About half a Mile from hence is a handsom  
Seat of Mr. Diggs's, built within the Trenches  
of Chilham Castle, the Keep of which is yet  
standing, and made Use of for a Brewing-House.

<28 Aug 1693>

44

On Tuesday I went back again to Richborow,  
to make a more strict Enquiry after some Par=  
ticulars of Antiquity; the one was whether  
it was possible that Richborow could ever  
have been Part of the Isle of Thanet, as some  
Authors affirm. I found that the Lands at  
Gossehall and Fleet, which lye on the West  
Side of Richborow, are situated lower than the  
Lands which the Stower passeth by, and while  
we were here, I met with several Sea-Shells  
in the Meadows. On Wednesday I luckily  
hit on a double Intrenchment in a Wood,  
within three Miles of the antient City of  
Canterbury, a City honour'd with the English  
Primacy; the inward Trench contains an  
Acre and half, the outward one about four  
Times as much: It is very probable that  
this was the Place where Cæsar met with the  
Britains in his second Expedition; for he  
says, that after he had left Quintus Atrius to  
defend his Ships, at that Time lying above a  
Mile and half wide off the Town of Sandwich,  
he march'd twelve Miles up into the Coun=

try, where he met with the Britains near a River, and forced them first of all to retire into one of their Fortifications, and afterwards, forcing their Lines, beat them from thence: Camden contends this Battle to have been at Chilham, though the Distance does not agree, neither are there any Ruins of a Fortification to countenance his Assertion. On

45

Thursday I walk'd to Hyth, along a Roman Causeway raised high, and paved with Flint. This is one of the Cinque-Ports, and formerly contain'd six Parishes, that of St. Nicholas only now remains, the Chancel is rais'd extremely on grey Marble Pillars. In the Charnel-House are great Numbers of Bones, and some of them very large; the Inhabitants have several Traditions of these Bones, which, as fictitious, I shall omit; they are white and thin; I took the Dimensions of some of the largest. Two Miles from hence are the Ruins of Saltwood Castle, formerly belonging to the See of Canterbury; it seems to have been a stately Structure, is of an oval Form, and twenty five Rods in Length. Within two Miles of Folkstone is a Fortification of Earth called Castle, which has one Trench towards the Sea, and sometimes one, at other times two Trenches towards the Continent, according as the Nature of the Hill requires. On Saturday I visited Stutfall Castle, a Roman Station; this was the Portus Limenus, whose Ruins include eight Acres of Land, and are in Form of an oblong Square; the Walls are composed of a rocky Stone, and a Mortar made of the Sea-Sand and small Pebbles; at two Yards Distance run double Rows of Roman Brick 14 or 15 Inches long. Within a Quarter of a Mile from Lymne Church is Shipway-Court,

46

a Field where the Lord-Warden of the Cinque-Ports are sworn, and Causes concerning the Ports try'd. From hence I walked on the Beach to Romney, and this Morning from thence hither, passing most of the Way through the old Chanel of the Rother. These are all the Observations I have made in my Journey through this Part of the truly loyal County of Kent, which will no ways recompence the Time lost in the Perusal of this from,

GENTLEMEN,

Your Humble Servant,

R. PLOTT.

Apledore Sep.

3. 1693.

<This letter is chiefly notable for its report of the discovery of 'a double Intrenchment in a Wood, within three Miles of the antient City of Canterbury' – evidently the earthworks in Bigbury Wood, though Plot does not use that name. His book about Kent was never written. This letter – despite its being reprinted by John Nichols in 1783, to fill up some empty space at the back of 'Bibliotheca Topographica Britannica', No. VI, part II, pp. 62–4 – did not attract any attention. When the Bigbury earthworks were rediscovered in the 1870s, it was thought by everyone that they had never been noticed before. The Kent Archaeological Society's annual report for 1872–3 (written by the Hon. Secretary, T. G. Godfrey-Faussett, and read on 24 Jul. 1873) includes the following paragraph:

The most important work achieved by the Society this year is connected with a large intrenched British settlement in Bigbury Wood, Harbledown, near Canterbury. Although so extensive, being three-eighths of a mile long from east to west, and a quarter of a mile wide from north to south, this British settlement has not been marked upon the county maps, nor has it been noticed by the historians of Kent. By the experienced eye and indefatigable industry of our valued member, Mr. R. C. Hussey, the lines of the intrenchment have been completely traced. At his instance your secretary has represented the matter to Major General Sir Henry James, who is at the head of the Ordnance Survey Office. Sir Henry James courteously consented to have the ground inspected by one of his officers; and the result of the intervention of our Society is that the mounds of the intrenchment have been admirably sketched by Lieut. Wynne of the Royal Engineers, and that the plan of the British settlement will be fully displayed upon the two forthcoming Ordnance Maps of the Canterbury district. They will be upon the extensive scales of six inches, and twenty-five inches, to one mile, respectively. Sir Henry James has just consummated his courteous kindness, by presenting to the Society the original sketch made by Lieut. Wynne. It will be engraved for our next volume of *Archaeologia*, and will be accompanied by a description of the British settlement, kindly written for us by Mr. R. C. Hussey. (*Archaeologia Cantiana*, 9 (1874), lxxxvii)

Richard Charles Hussey (1805–1887), architect, settled in Harbledown when he retired from business in about 1870. Plot made one quick visit; Hussey, living close by, was able to make a thorough exploration of the earthworks. Even if he did not discover them, he certainly does get the credit for making them part of the archaeological landscape. The promised paper was published in the same volume of *Archaeologia Cantiana*, with a coloured reproduction of the hand-drawn map.

Lieut. Wynne, by the way, was Warren Richard Colvin Wynne (1843–1879). Promoted to captain in 1875, he was sent out to South Africa in 1878 and died there of fever in the following year (ODNB).>