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Publisher: Routledge
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Archaeological Journal

Publication details, including instructions
for authors and subscription information:

<http://www.tandfonline.com/loi/raij20>

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Edward Smirke Vice-Warden of the
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Published online: 11 Jul 2014.

To cite this article: Edward Smirke Vice-Warden of the Stannaries.
(1867) Some Account of the Discovery of a Gold Cup in a Barrow in
Cornwall, A.D. 1837, Archaeological Journal, 24:1, 189-195, DOI:
[10.1080/00665983.1867.10851381](https://doi.org/10.1080/00665983.1867.10851381)

To link to this article: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/00665983.1867.10851381>

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Gold Cup found in a Barrow in Rillaton Manor, Cornwall.

Now preserved at Osborne. Height $3\frac{1}{4}$ in., diameter at the mouth $3\frac{3}{8}$ in.

The bottom of the Cup, showing the terminal corrugations, as seen from below, and the central knob.

Exhibited by permission of the Queen, and of the Prince of Wales, at a meeting of the Royal Archaeological Institute, June 7, 1867.

The Archaeological Journal.

SEPTEMBER, 1867.

SOME ACCOUNT OF THE DISCOVERY OF A GOLD CUP IN A BARROW IN CORNWALL, A.D. 1837.

By EDWARD SMIRKE, Vice-Warden of the Stannaries.

It gives me great pleasure to avail myself of the gracious permission of Her Majesty, and of His Royal Highness the Duke of Cornwall, to submit to the inspection of this Society a remarkable cup of gold which was disinterred from a barrow or tumulus of earth, as long ago as the spring of 1837, on the waste of the Duchy manor of Rillaton, in Cornwall.

I have a perfect recollection of the discovery, having been at that time in frequent communication with certain officers of the duchy, who kindly described to me the circumstances under which the cup was found.

I have since also personally received from one of those officers, Mr. George Freeth, of Duporth, in Cornwall, a full confirmation, from his own knowledge, of the contemporaneous statement of the then mineral agent of the Duchy, Mr. Colenso, who was instructed by the late auditor, Sir George Harrison, to make careful inquiries on the spot and to embody the result in a written statement of facts.

The information so obtained is entirely worthy of reliance. It was contained in three letters written on the 10th, 19th, and 20th of May, 1837, of which this paper may be taken as a fair abstract.

Shortly before that time, some labourers, in search of stone for building an engine-house on a mine on the manor, thought they could more easily obtain some from a large mound of earth and stones which had been standing from time immemorial, with three others, on a part of the moor

about half a mile from the well-known masses of granite locally called the "Cheese-wring."

The mound or barrow was about thirty yards in diameter. After removing part of the superincumbent earth and stones, they came upon a vault or cist of rough masonry forming an oblong four-sided cavity, consisting of three vertical stones on each of the longer sides, of one stone at each end, a large flat one below, and a large flat covering stone above. The length of the whole vault was 8 ft., the breadth $3\frac{1}{2}$ ft., and the height about 3 ft.

None of these granite blocks had any visible tool-mark on them ; but they were regularly arranged, the upper stone being about 5 ft. below the surface of the mound. The vault extended in length from N. N. E. to S. S. W. In the opinion of Mr. Colenso, the mound had been already disturbed, and the central part of it had been thereby somewhat depressed ; but I do not understand from this that the vault or cist itself had been apparently disturbed ; on the contrary, a sketch by Mr. Freeth represents both the horizontal and vertical stones as in their proper position.

At the northern end of the vault were found human remains, consisting of the crumbling portions of a skull and other bones almost pulverised.

Within the vault, and about $3\frac{1}{2}$ ft. from this north end, were found two vessels lying near each other, one being of earthenware, the other and smaller one being the gold cup before us.

When first observed, there was a small flat stone, about 16 in. square, leaning diagonally against the inner west side of the cist, apparently (as my informant suggests) for protection of the vessels, of which the earthen vessel was unfortunately broken by the tool used in disengaging it from this stone.

Mr. Colenso states in his letter that the earthen vase must, in his opinion, originally have contained the gold one, which probably fell out of it when the larger earthen one was broken ; but neither he nor Mr. Freeth saw the two *in situ* in the vault ; so that the opinion was founded on the description of the workmen.

Some other articles were also found in the cist, and were sent up to London with the cup, but they are not now forthcoming. This is to be regretted ; for, on the old

principle of "*noscitur a socio*," these other relics, found in company with the cup, might have thrown light on the age or date of the cup. They were however seen by Mr. Freeth, now the only attesting witness of their nature and aspect. They were sent up in four packages or boxes, containing the following articles, as described in the letter accompanying them, viz., portions of the fictile vessel called by the writer the "urn;" a small bit of "ornamental earthen ware;" something like a metallic "rivet," and other undescribed articles, as well as small portions of the human bones already mentioned. With these were also enclosed what remained of a certain spear-head or sword blade, which was about 10 in. long when first seen in the vault, but was afterwards broken by removal.

The cup was forthwith sent to King William IV. by Sir George Harrison; but the demise of his Majesty within a week or two afterwards will sufficiently account for the temporary disappearance of the treasure. In all probability the contents of the boxes were not sent to the Palace with the cup. Sir George himself did not long survive, and my friend Mr. Freeth's memory is now the sole depository of the secret of those lost relics. He speaks of them with a natural distrust of his recollection after an interval of thirty years, and in relation to objects at that time, in themselves, of little ostensible interest. He remembers the fragments of metal, and of the blade; and also the fragments of pottery, of a "reddish brown" color; and he has some recollection of some pieces of ivory, and of a few glass beads.

Such is all that I can offer to supply the place of the miscellaneous contents of the cist, other than the cup, which has alone been preserved for our gratification and instruction.

In order further to identify this cup, you will bear in mind the accession of our Queen, and her subsequent marriage,—events of such engrossing importance as to leave little room for thought or inquiries about the cup. It is easy to understand that the discernment of the Prince Consort distinguished this golden spoil, at a subsequent period, from other royal plate. The record of its finding was brought to light and annexed to the relic; and it now has its place of deposit, at the wish of his Royal Highness, in the Swiss Cottage of the Queen at Osborne.

This highly curious cup,—so far as I am aware, unique,—

measures in height $3\frac{1}{4}$ in.; diameter at the mouth $3\frac{3}{8}$ in.; at the widest part of the bowl $3\frac{1}{2}$ in. The handle measures $1\frac{1}{2}$ in. by $\frac{7}{8}$ in., greatest width. The weight of the cup is 2 oz. 10 dwts.; its bullion value about £10. The handle, which has been a little crushed, is attached by six little rivets, three at the top and three at the bottom, secured by small lozenge-shaped nuts or collars. This appendage, it should be observed, seems, at least in its present state, fit only for a means of suspension, barely affording sufficient space for the smallest of fingers to be passed through it. Indeed, the cup does not stand firmly on its base, and I have doubts whether it was intended to do so. On the bottom of the cup there are concentric ribs or corrugations, like those on the rest of it, around a little central knob about $\frac{1}{4}$ in. in diameter. Thus the corrugated fashion of work extends over the entire surface. The prevalence of this corrugation in early gold ornaments may have been caused by some constructive advantage; as we see in the frequent use, in our own times, of thin wavy sheets of metal for temporary and other buildings, whereby a greater degree of strength is obtained, with economy of metal. This, in objects of gold, would of course be a cogent consideration.

With regard to the mode of manufacture of such a cup, I have had the advantage of obtaining the valuable opinion of Messrs. Garrard, who carefully examined and weighed it. They found in it no sign of solder, or any rivet used except for attaching the handle; and they considered that a like cup, of the same material, might be produced without difficulty out of a single flat lamina of thin gold, hammered or beaten into a similar form. They recognised it, immediately, as belonging to a type of Scandinavian antiquities that had occasionally been brought under their notice. I mention this, because some practical gentlemen, to whom I showed it last summer, considered the workmanship to be of a character which it would not be easy to reproduce without a mould.

Since the re-discovery of this very remarkable treasure-trove, I have looked in vain for any like cup, of the same material, to which so early a date can be assigned (at least since the well-known prize won by the valiant "Carodac!"); and have been kindly aided in my search by friends more learned than myself in the history of such art. Mr. Way has pointed out to my notice a cup of amber, of a character

not dissimilar, found near Brighton several years ago. It was found in connection with remains of a so-called Keltic character, and is figured in the *Sussex Archæological Transactions*, and also in this *Journal*, vol. xv., p. 90. The small handle has some resemblance to that of the present cup, but the material distinguishes the two. The *general* outline or form of the gold cup is by no means rare, and might find a type in more than one period of early art, especially in fictile ware. I observed several such earthenware vases, from Boulogne, in the late Paris Exhibition, in the inner circle, which might pass for fac-similes of the present cup (except the handle), with like annular horizontal undulations of the surface.

Gold armlet found at Cuxwold, Lincolnshire.

There is an armlet, found in Lincolnshire (already published in this *Journal*, and of which the representation is here reproduced), which, both in respect of material and of workmanship, might be a counterpart of the cup, but for its application to the purposes of a personal ornament, instead of a cup. Indeed the corrugation of thin gold seems to be a mode of metallurgy that has been resorted to in various analogous objects in that metal, which have been referred to as early, or Keltic manufacture, quite unconnected with Phœnician, Roman, or Saxon work: such as is the gold corslet found at Mold, in Flintshire, which is now in the British Museum,¹ together with some other small

¹ This remarkable relic is figured in *Archæol. Journal*, vol. xiv. p. 292. the *Archæologia*, vol. xxvi. p. 422, and in

portions of like sulcated, or punched laminæ of gold in the same glass case with the corslet. The diadems, or gorgets, of gold, figured in Sir W. R. Wilde's Catalogue of the Gold Antiquities in the Museum of the Royal Irish Academy,² also afford examples of a like treatment of gold laminæ for the purposes either of ornament or of increased strength. For the latter purpose, those who have observed the growth of shells of deep-sea mollusks, must recollect how often the like purpose of protecting their brittle envelopes seems to be effected by annular folds or corrugations of the outer material.

But I will not further pursue this consideration, in the hope that my friend, Mr. Way, who can speak *ex tripode archæologico* on the subject of English gold-finds, may be tempted to give us the benefit of his own observations *in subsidium* to the present imperfect references.

One of the letters of Mr. Colenso above referred to, calls the attention of his correspondents to the three other untouched tumuli, adjacent to the one in which the cup was discovered; and suggests that what the miners call a *cross cut* might be productive of further discoveries of interest in that unexplored ground. As yet I have not heard whether this useful hint has awakened the curiosity of our Cornish co-adventurers in this field of metallifodine enterprise. Considering that this Northern district has already produced the lunettes of Padstow and of St. Juliot, to say nothing of the lost *μανιάκης* or *στρεπτόν* of Looe Down, of which I reminded my Cornish friends in October, 1866,³ I cannot forbear to hope that they will find out some "Stannary process" for facilitating the exploration of the other Rillaton tumuli.

I cannot refrain from mentioning here, that, during the presidency of the Prince Consort over the Duchy Council, an incident occurred which may supply a laudable example to lords of manors elsewhere. When an application was made, in my own recollection, by the contractors of some great works near Plymouth for a lease or liberty to quarry granite, at a tonnage or royalty, in Rillaton manor, the council prohibited the removal or quarrying of any within a certain prescribed distance from the Cheese-wring. That colossal pile of tabular slabs of rock, whether visited as a

² See especially the ornaments figured, *ibid.* pp. 22, 23, and 24.

³ Journal of the Royal Institution of Cornwall, vol. ii. pp. 138, 139.

geological phenomenon ; or as a picturesque object ; or as a Druidical altar or idol according to the more favourite local opinion, standing in the midst of the Caradon copper mine district a few miles north of Liskeard, has thus been protected from demolition.

SUPPLEMENTARY NOTICES, RELATING TO A GOLD CUP FOUND IN A SEPULCHRAL CIST NEAR THE CHEESE-WRING, AND ALSO TO SOME OTHER GOLD RELICS IN CORNWALL.

It is remarkable that amongst the numerous objects of gold found in Great Britain none should have occurred, as I believe, of the like description as the cup which, by the gracious favor of her Majesty, we are now permitted to publish. The precious relics heretofore brought to light have been exclusively of the nature of personal ornaments. In Ireland, as Sir W. R. Wilde informs us,¹ it is supposed that the native gold was the metal with which the primitive inhabitants were first acquainted, and a greater number and variety of objects of gold have there been found than in any other country in North Western Europe. These likewise consist, for the most part, of articles connected with personal decorations, and it is remarkable that they have rarely occurred, as in other countries, with sepulchral deposits. Ancient Annals² give us even the name of the artificer by whom gold was first smelted in the woods of Wicklow, three centuries before the Christian era, and affirm that by him were goblets and brooches first covered with gold and silver in Ireland. Banqueting vessels of the precious metals, as Sir W. Wilde states, on the authority of the Annals, were not unknown to the Early Irish ; he points out, moreover, that some golden cup-shaped vessels in the Copenhagen Museum, which have been found suspended in tombs, strikingly resemble, when viewed in an inverted position, certain Irish relics of the same precious material and workmanship, noticed by Vallancey and other writers as regal caps or helmets.³

¹ Catalogue of the Antiquities of the Royal Irish Academy, by Sir W. R. Wilde, *Metallic Materials*, p. 355 ; *Antiquities of Gold*, p. 1.

² See the curious tradition preserved in the Book of Leinster, given by Dr. Todd, *ibid.* p. 7.

³ Compare especially Worsaae, in the