

# EXCURSION TO GALLEY HILL, NEAR NORTHFLEET, AND SWANSCOMB HILL.

SATURDAY, MARCH 28TH, 1896.

*Directors:* THE PRESIDENT (E. T. NEWTON, F.R.S.),  
F. C. J. SPURRELL, F.G.S., AND H. STOPES.

*Excursion Secretary:* H. A. ALLEN, F.G.S.

(Report by THE PRESIDENT.)

ALTHOUGH the weather was very inclement, a good number of members left Cannon Street by the 2.15 train for Northfleet, and walked to the Chalk and Gravel pit at Galley Hill, where they were met by the manager of the works, Mr. John Hoyle. After the party had made a preliminary examination of the pit and Palæolithic gravel, the President gave an account of the geological position and surroundings of the gravel, under 8 or 10 feet of which the human remains recently described (*Quart. Journ. Geol. Soc.*, August, 1895) had been found.

The Chalk at Galley Hill rises about 80 or 90 feet above the Thames, and is capped by a loamy gravel which at this spot is about 10 feet thick and is covered by 2 or 3 feet of made earth. This patch of gravel continues for about a quarter of a mile to the south, and is nearly a mile in extent from east to west; including within this area the famous pits of Swanscomb and Milton Street, as well as Galley Hill; in all three pits Palæolithic implements have been found in considerable numbers.

This gravel is part of the sheet of High-terrace gravel which, at about the same height, extends over the Chalk from Northfleet westwards to Dartford, and is at a much higher level than the Brickearths of Crayford and Grays, while the Plateau gravel of Prestwich, which is said to extend northward to Swanscomb Hill, is at a still higher level.

The face of the gravel in the pit has been cut back some 10 feet since the discovery of the skeleton; but the Chalk platform remains, and the position of the remains above the Chalk was pointed out by their discoverer, Mr. Robert Elliott.

The characters of the skeleton were then briefly described, especial reference being made to the length of the skull, to its strongly-developed brow ridges, and to the large and equal size of the three molar teeth. The question as to the antiquity of these remains, and the possibilities of error, was very fully

discussed, and the President said he had come to the conclusion that it is in the highest degree probable that the skeleton is really of Palæolithic age.

Mr. F. C. J. Spurrell gave some further account of these gravels, which, he said, were undoubtedly Palæolithic, and alluded to the condition of the mammalian remains which had been found in other pits in the neighbourhood at the same horizon. He was inclined to accept the human remains as contemporaneous with the gravels.

Mr. R. Elliott gave a short account of the finding of the remains.

Mr. Spurrell, being unable to remain with the party, Mr. H. Stopes kindly undertook to conduct the members to the top of Swanscomb Hill; and, as they ascended over the slippery clay, he pointed out the position of certain of the Lower Tertiary beds, of which the hill is formed; and also a mound of Neolithic age, from which many flint flakes were obtained by some of the party. On arrival at the summit the peculiar gravelly soil was examined, and doubt was expressed as to this being part of the Plateau gravel. The party then descended to the village of Swanscomb, where Mrs. Stopes had very hospitably provided tea, which the damp and cold weather made all the more acceptable. After tea, Mr. Stopes' fine collection of flint implements was inspected, and much appreciated.

Very cordial thanks were given to Mr. J. Hoyle and to Mr. Spurrell before the party left the Galley Hill Pit; and, later on, to Mrs. and Mr. Stopes for their hospitality. A walk to Northfleet Station concluded the excursion.

#### REFERENCES.

Geological Survey Map, London and its Environs, or Sheet 1. (Drift Editions.)

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1895. NEWTON, E. T.—" " " " vol. li, p. 505.

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