



---

Human Skull and Fragments of Bones of the Red Deer, etc., Found at Birkdale, Near Southport, Lancashire

Author(s): George Busk

Source: *The Journal of the Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland*, Vol. 3 (1874), pp. 104-105

Published by: [Royal Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland](#)

Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2841064>

Accessed: 16/06/2014 09:35

---

Your use of the JSTOR archive indicates your acceptance of the Terms & Conditions of Use, available at <http://www.jstor.org/page/info/about/policies/terms.jsp>

JSTOR is a not-for-profit service that helps scholars, researchers, and students discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content in a trusted digital archive. We use information technology and tools to increase productivity and facilitate new forms of scholarship. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.



Royal Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland is collaborating with JSTOR to digitize, preserve and extend access to *The Journal of the Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland*.

<http://www.jstor.org>

from a tomb at Yca; stone corbels from the city of Huamanchuco; and vases from Truxillo, Chocope, Cuzco, Lake Titicaca, and other localities.

---

The President read the following paper:

HUMAN SKULL *and* FRAGMENTS of BONES of the RED DEER, *etc.*, found at BIRKDALE, near SOUTHPORT, LANCASHIRE. By Prof. GEORGE BUSK, F.R.S., President Anthropological Institute.

IN carrying out the main sewerage of Birkdale, an old land surface deeply covered with blown sand was proved to exist over the larger part of the area sewered. This surface commences in the lowest part of the ground by Fine Jane's Brook as a peat bed, and gradually thins westward into a sort of peaty soil, and upon the latter were found the above remains. The geology of the district is fully mapped out and described by Mr. T. Mellard Reade, F.G.S., the Engineer of the works, in a paper read before the Liverpool Geological Society, November, 1871, entitled the "Post-Glacial Geology of Lancashire and Cheshire."

In cutting the sewer in Gloucester Road, at a depth of 8 feet, the old land surface was reached, and at a point marked X on Mr. Reade's map, plate 1, immediately opposite the shop of Mr. Kershaw, the human skeleton to which the skull belongs was found. It lay on the south side of the trench, and the skull was severed from the rest of the bones by the sheet piling of the trench. The remainder of the skeleton is still in the ground as it would have been difficult to extract it. Mr. Kershaw, who secured the skull and the accompanying fragments of Red Deer bones, *etc.*, has presented them to the Museum of the Royal College of Surgeons.

The skeleton was hard down in the peaty soil bed, and covered with blown sand. It is difficult to estimate its age, but it occurs on the top of a bed, the equivalent of which in Cheshire, is, according to Mr. Reade, the peat bed that overlay the Leasowe skeleton, and above an extension of which are the beds at Hoylake from whence great numbers of Roman remains have from time to time been extracted. The presence of the bones of the Red Deer seems to point to the fact that the skull is of considerable age, and as the blown sand extends inland at least one mile this also leads to the same conclusion. The blown sand itself also shows unmistakable evidence of age from the numerous signs of previous cultivation at various levels intercalated in it, especially towards its eastern or landward margin.

The land surface, of which that in Gloucester Road is an extension, is shown in section *d* to *c*, plate 4, of Mr. Reade's work, and always rests upon either blue laminated marine clay,

or blue silt (on the *latter* in Gloucester Road). These underlying beds, which occupy in Lancashire an area of about seventy-five square miles, have been denominated by Mr. Reade, the "Formby and Leasowe Marine Beds." The antlers of the Red Deer have been found in these beds *underlying* the old land surface at points 1 and 2, plate 1; and at the same places various marine shells occur.

In the explanatory section, plate 1, the relative positions of the Birkdale and Leasowe skeletons are marked,—it is, however, necessary to bear in mind that the recent silts, "coloured green," are not present at Birkdale at the point where the skull was found, and that there, as before described, the upper bed consists wholly of blown sand resting directly upon the old land surface.

The skull found in the excavations of Wallasey Pool (now in the Liverpool Museum) is smaller than either the Birkdale or Leasowe skulls, but is in character more like them than are any of the other skulls in the Museum. The correspondence between the Birkdale and Leasowe skulls in measurement is remarkable, the former has, however, a more arched parietal.

The skull is very heavy, but this may partially arise from the infiltration of peroxide of iron which is common to the blown sand. Other animal bones have been found on the same land surface at various points, and generally are coloured blue in places by a deposit of phosphate of iron. The skull, it is perhaps necessary to state, was washed and "cleaned" by Mr. Kershaw; the bones were named by Mr. Thomas J. Moore, C.M.Z.S.L., Curator of the Liverpool Museum.

The meeting then separated.

---

APRIL 22ND, 1873.

Professor BUSK, F.R.S., *President, in the Chair.*

THE minutes of the previous meeting were read and confirmed.

J. H. LAMPREY, Esq., was elected a corresponding member; GEORGE HARTLEY, Esq., H.B.M.'s Consul at St. Paul de Loanda, was elected a local secretary for Loanda.

The following presents were announced, and the thanks of the meeting voted to the respective donors:—