

1553 Saxon graves info from Rose Robinson

The Saxon cemetery was brought to light by workmen, digging out stone which hindered steam-ploughing operations.

Notes of the graves opened were made by Mr. H. Gale from Jan.29th. 1883 to April 11th, 1884, when the work was taken over by the authorities of the Ashmolean Museum.

Forty-six graves were opened; the special points of interest seem to be as follows: -
The cemetery was of comparatively late date & belonged to a rather poor community. The date might be fixed somewhere after the taking of the cremated which 571.

None of the bodies were cremated which was an earlier custom but some lay in the crouching which points to a survival of an earlier race The majority of the bodies lay on their backs. Only 2 or 3 bodies faced East, which perhaps shows some Christian influence, but it is on the whole, the cemetery of a pagan community.

Regarding the survival, or influence of an earlier race, we must add "a patera" of dark grey ware ...wheel-made & certainly of Romana-British fabric in grave8. "

In grave 27 was found a portion of a pin of bronze wire formed with a large loop at the upper end & a swan-neck bend. just below." It is a type not uncommon in this country, in the late Celtic period & later.

In the same grave, were found 2 small Roman coins, one of Constans & one of Constantius 2, &, probably in grave 14, a large silver pin, 5,3/4 inches long, with a disc-shaped head gilt & decorated. The upper end of the. The shaft was decorated & flattened at the sides to admit of a perforation through which was passed a large ring of silver wire, the end of which were fastened together by a sliding knot. Mr. Thurlow Leeds says of this pin that "It appears to be unique amongst Anglo-Saxon relics both in point of style & in form....

The ring round the disc-head, clearly a Celtic type developed later in Ireland."

The richer relics in grave 14 point to its having been the "grave of some petty local magnate." The large saucer brooches belong to a group of brooches first made in Kent.