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On three Skulls found near the London Road, Gloucester

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ON THREE SKULLS
FOUND NEAR THE LONDON ROAD, GLOUCESTER.

By JOHN BEDDOE, M.D., F.R.S.

A FEW weeks ago Mr. John Bellows sent me three skulls which had been found at Gloucester in the course of some excavations. He also kindly supplied me with the following facts relating to them :—

The skeletons to which they belonged were all found at one spot, about three-quarters of a mile from the City Cross, and on the east side of the London Road, which is the old Roman Road. They all lay with their feet to the east, at a depth of about 4 feet below the surface; and no objects whatever, such as weapons, ornaments, or remains of coffins, &c., appear to have been found with them.

They lay, as has already been stated, near the Roman Road; but there is nothing else in the circumstances to indicate that they were Roman or Romano-British. The orientation makes it probable that they had been interred since the advent of Christianity.

The three skulls are all masculine. I have no other bones wherefrom to conjecture their age; but Nos. 1 and 2 are probably those of men in the prime of life, while No. 3 may have belonged to a man of middle age. The teeth in all are perfect, though a little worn by attrition; in No. 3 only is there a sign of commencing caries.

In all three the back-head is full and rounded, and the palate more round than oval; and in all three the nasal aperture has probably been long and the nasal bones probably prominent.

No. 1 is remarkably brachycephalic for an English skull; and I do not think that this is due to the posthumous deformation

which, however, undoubtedly exists. The *norma verticalis* is a broad ellipse : the *norma occipitalis* rounded : the sutures generally open. The fulness of the anterior temporal region is remarkable : this is a Roman feature, not common in any of our British races. There are two cuts on the frontal, not penetrating, which may have been received during life.

No. 2 is ovo-elliptic in the *norma verticalis* : it has a frontal suture, but is not in other respects at all remarkable : though somewhat broad, it belongs to a type pretty common among "Saxon" Englishmen. There is a little postparietal flattening, but no "absätzung" of the occiput.

No. 3 is the least perfect of the three calvaria : the forehead is narrow, and the *norma verticalis* is pyriform, the *norma occipitalis* being rounded.

It seems probable that these are the remains of soldiers, buried where they fell in some skirmish ; but as to their date and attribution I remain in doubt. There was a good deal of fat unctuous earth inside No. 3, and I was at first disposed, on that account, to think the date not very remote : that of the siege of Gloucester by Charles I. occurred to me ; and Mr. Bellows had nothing to allege against the notion. But after thorough cleaning the bones did not confirm my first impression of their recency. They may be no older than the Parliamentary war ; but I think it possible they may be very much older. Perhaps some subsequent discovery may throw more light on the matter than I have been able to elicit.

TABLE OF MEASUREMENTS OF SKULLS FROM LONDON ROAD,
GLOUCESTER.

	LENGTHS.				BREADTHS.						
	Glab-Max.	Front-Inial.	Glab-Inial.	Oph-Max.	Front Min.	Step.	Zygo.	Auric.	Max.	Mast.	Aster.
1	7.1	6.9	7	6.9	3.9	4.6	5.2?	4.8	6	5.2	4.7
2	7.4	7.3	7	7.4	4.2	4.8		4.8	5.9	5	4.2
3	7.3		7.1		3.9?		5.2	4.6	5.7	5	4.25
Av.	7.26	7.2	7.03	7.15	4	4.7	5.2	4.73	5.86	5.07	4.38

	HEIGHTS.		CIRCUMFERENCE.				ARCS.		LENGTHS.		
	Bas. Breg.	Bas. Max.	Max.	Front-Inial.	Glab-Inial.	Oph-Inial.	Nas. Inial.	Trans.	Cereb.	Forcemen.	Naso-bas.
1	5.4	5.5	20.2	20.3	20.1	20.3	12.6	13.2	1.6	1.5	4.1
2	5.4	5.5	21	21	20.9	21	13.2	12.8	1.8	1.5	4
3	5.5	5.5							1.8	1.6	4.1
Av.	5.43	5.5	20.6	20.6	20.5	20.6	12.9	13	1.73	1.53	4.07

	BR.	CIRCUM.		ORBIT.		FACE.	INDICES.			
	Trans. Bas.	Ant.	Post.	Breadth.	Height.	Length.	Lat.	Alt.	Orb.	Fac.
1	4.9	10.3	9.9	1.50	1.26	2.87	84.5	76.0	84	56.9
2	5.0	10.5	10.5				79.73	72.97		
3				1.53	1.30	3.00	78.08	75.34	84	57.1
Av.	4.95	10.4	10.2	1.51	1.28	2.93	80.77	74.77	84	55.5