

# THE LOUSYBERRY LOOT

Stimulated by Marjorie Wright's amusing speculations about the origin of the name LOUSYBERRY the Editor enjoyed a flight of fancy, under the above title, in *Newsletter* No. 9. No doubt readers noted that the find was ostensibly made on the date known to the Romans as KALENDS APRILIS (1st April) and realised that the Loot exists only in the Editor's imagination.



Sculpture of a  
Centurion  
which is rem-  
arkably complete.

Entering into the spirit of the thing a reader in New York wrote:

I was most interested to read of the recent excavations in Lousyberry Wood, perhaps because the fragment of the carved centurion bears an astounding resemblance to my son Paul.

In spite of my present domicile I was born in Kent and although Quinn is often thought to be an Irish name family lore has it that it is an abbreviation of a Latin one. I wonder if Julius Laberius had a relative by the name of Quintus or some such appellation.

Do please inform me where these interesting objects may be viewed.

MAUREEN QUINN

(Candidates might include:

MARCUS FABIUS QUINTILIANUS, a celebrated rhetorician who taught rhetoric in Rome and considered that education in the subject should begin in the cradle. He wrote a treatise on the corruption of eloquence.

QUINTILLA, a courtesan of Rome.

CURTIUS RUFUS QUINTUS, a Roman historian admired for the floridness of his style but criticised for his glaring mistakes in geography as well as history.

(ED.)

Further light may be thrown on the derivation of the name 'Lousyberry' by the following letter;

Dear Editor,

The impressive scholarship of your correspondents, Marjorie Wright and Philomena Kennedy (*Dover Society Newsletter* 9, pp 53, 53) must not be allowed to pass without receiving the recognition they deserve. But perhaps the following may help to amplify the derivation of the term "Lousyberry" and soften the constant embarrassment to your Hon. Treasurer.

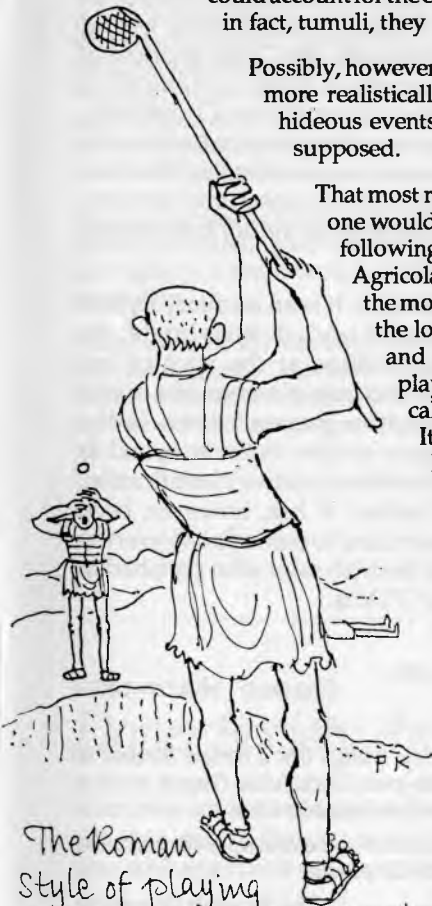
As is often the case with place names the source of this unusual name must surely be a mixture of historical allusion compounded by allegory and fantasy. Just to dispose first of all of the second element of the name, it seems clear that all the "berry" place-name endings are misspelled variants of the more usual "bury" (= *barrow* from OE "*burian*" = *a burial place*). This could account for the evidence of the tumuli (*Wright, loccit*), although if these are, in fact, tumuli, they would be ancient in Roman times.

Possibly, however, the tumuli have another origin which would relate them more realistically to the Roman occupation, though not directly to the hideous events which finally named the place, than has hitherto been supposed.

That most reliable historian, Tacitus, recording with all the filial piety one would expect of a son-in-law (*Agricola, cap XLVII*), tells us how, following his advance into Caledonia in about AD 82, one Julius Agricola, whilst Legatus Praetorius, became absorbed by one of the more heathen pastimes of the local Celts. Possibly devised by the locals as a form of wargame designed to improve stamina and teach the reading of rough terrain, the wargame was played on a winding, sinuous course, and was for that reason called by the Romans "*sinus*", or, in Middle English "*gulf*". It seems ironical that it is not the Roman but the Middle English name which has come down down to us in the great game of golf.

It is known that the sole legacy of Roman occupancy in many parts of England, particularly down the northwest coast, is a number of supposed tumuli sites, which, in fact, are no less than Roman golf courses. It is suggested that the tumuli in Lousybery Wood are also such remnants, and this is borne out by the finds there, which are typical of similar finds in other *cava undevicesima*, which appear to have been hallowed places set apart for the propitiation of the gods of the course. So much for "berry"; by the time the events recounted below unfold themselves the *iter sinuum* would have become indistinguishable from truly ancient burial sites.

It is suggested that the element "lousy" (which would be pronounced "loozy" until about 200 years ago) is derived from the name of an early Christian martyr, Saint Lucy. This luckless Roman lady was the daughter of one of the last of the Tribuni Militum to live close to the Gateway of



The Roman style of playing golf would be considered somewhat primitive today.

136 England. Her latin name was Lucia Grandiloquenta Infortunata, and she was living proof — well, dying proof actually — of the maxim that there is a time to keep silence and a time to speak (*Ecclesiastes III, 7*). This is mainly because, although she loudly proclaimed her Christianity as early as AD 311, her studies had been confined to the New Testament and the wise words of the preacher had thus been denied her.

Her particular misfortune lay in the fact that, had she held her tongue for a year, she would have kept in step with her Emperor, Constantine, who espoused Christianity in 312. Still, you can't win them all, and at least her name is still remembered.

The Vatican records of the saint's immolation (copies available from the Hon. Treasurer, price £5 inc VAT) are unspecific about the mode of her despatch.

But there is no doubt that the event took place on Kalendae Aprilis, an extraordinary coincidence, in view of the Kennedy find. In local legend there is also some oblique reference to Aphrodite, the Greek goddess of love who, indeed, gave her name to the month of April. It is difficult to see how this would cross-refer with the conversion to Christianity, unless, of course, the lusty young lady was taking somewhat literally the notion of the love-feast or *agape* recommended by the Primitive Church. The Vatican will not comment on this aspect, and for some unaccountable reason has banned your present author from setting foot in the Library there ever again.



One further, perhaps trifling, sidelight. It is an ancillary legend that, when the anniversary of Saint Lucy's death is bright, the sun slanting through the trees strikes at the spot of her immolation in such a way that the pale blossom of a shrub which abounds there irridesces with a gorgeous sheen. Sadly, the species of the shrub is not now evident in the area, and as taxonomists at Kew are unable to offer a positive identification, it is probable that it is now extinct. It has, however, been suggested that it may have been related to the earlier-flowering shrub sacred to the memory of the Irish saint who perished in similar circumstances, Daphne O'Dora.

Or, again, it might not.

Yours, etc.,

RICHARD HOLDSWORTH

Figurine of  
Lucia Grandiloquenta  
Infortunata.

The pose is based  
on that of the  
Capitoline Venus.

FOOTNOTE: Our Treasurer, Ken Berry, admits that a certain likeness to family photos of his Great-great-great-great Uncle Julius (known to all as Jubliberry) is evident in the sculpture of the centurion. ED.

Another reader, Douglas Welby, has drawn my attention to the following (genuine) extracts from The Kentish Chronicle:

The Kentish Chronicle

28 January 1817

Thomas Page, a carpenter residing at Ewell, near Dover, having dreamed there was a large sum of money buried on the hill opposite River, above the lime-kiln which belongs to the Old Park and is the property of — Every, Esq., Page applied for and obtained liberty to dig for

the hidden property and set out on Monday last the 20th. January with several other persons under his direction; the spot being pointed out by Page, they commenced their labour, and after being at work a short time they found a skull and a canteen which were nearly decayed, when Page directed the people to dig a little more to the right and they would find a pot, which was done, and also another with a belt and breast plate; the two vessels have the appearance of large copper boilers, and are of very ancient make, they contained a quantity of old coins of gold, copper and other metals, some of them dated 117. This is supposed to be a miracle by the people residing in the neighbourhood, as Page could not have obtained any information from history, he being unable to read or write. 137

4 February 1817

The account we gave on Tuesday last of Thomas Page, a carpenter at Ewell near Dover having found a quantity of old coins in consequence of his having dreamed that some treasure was hid on the hill opposite River, has induced a correspondent to furnish us with an account of the same man having had a similar dream nearly two years ago, when he searched at the same spot and found several silver ornaments, apparently Roman, and which it seems probably belonged to the belt of some warrior. We have seen these ornaments which are in fine preservation and they are inlaid with thin gold and some stones are set in one of them. The following memorandum was made by the Lady who now has the ornaments, at the time they came into her possession, which was shortly after they were found:

Page, a journeyman carpenter, living at Ewell, near Dover, dreamed that if he dug up the ground at a certain place exactly pointed out in his dream, he should find great treasure, he accordingly in the morning proceeded to the spot, and with his knife only dug up these ornaments.

The place at which they were found is on the side of a hill, a little to the left of the turnpike road leading from Canterbury to Dover, about two miles from the latter place, and just by the corner of the road leading to Sand wich. It is reported that other persons in digging afterwards, in hopes of finding further treasures, discovered some human bones. April 1815.

PHILOMENA KENNEDY

---

## *Dover Society Project Support Group*

Members are invited to join our small and select core group on the ground. Our aim is to ensure that our projects are successful. It gets us out for a couple of hours now and again and we experience things other never do!

Contact John Owen 0304 202207