

NOTES OF PRESS CONFERENCE TAKEN ON 11th NOVEMBER 1971

AT NEW SCOTLAND YARD, S.W.1.

WITH DETECTIVE INSPECTOR HOUGH, BURTON-
ON-TRENT

Q: Who found the skeleton of the body?

A: On the 26th March, late evening, by this gentleman who lives nearby, he was on his way to do a bit of shooting and saw what he thought was an inverted saucer in the ground, which is near to one of the banks of the River Trent. There's no connection with the water, no possibility of it having been washed up. He retraced his steps, it was going dusk, he scraped away at the saucer and found the top of the skull. We preserved the scene and dug it out next day under the guidance of Doctor [REDACTED] from Guy's Hospital, a very eminent man. That was the next day, 27th.

The body had been buried in a sitting position, on his haunches, and was tied hand and foot with a polypropylene durable twine. The earth had subsided somewhat since the body was put there, vermin had become interested and scraped away and revealed the top of the skull.

Following that the post mortem. Doctor [REDACTED] gave his estimation of the age, between 25 and 35, most probably late twenties. Since then he's had the pelvic bones over at the Smithsonian Institute, Washington, where the head of the department there, the Department of Anthropology, arrived at a mean age of 29 years 2 months, with an extreme range of 23 to 39. Doctor [REDACTED] gave details of a similar case when, after employing the services of an artist they had an identification within a very short time. He had a partial upper denture, extensive dental treatment in the form of fillings to the lower jaw and the partial upper plate carries four teeth, they are back teeth, one anterior, seven molars. He was obviously a man who was sensitive about his appearance.

The only item of clothing was a pair of socks, yellow socks, a mixture of nylon and wool. A lady's gold wedding ring

[REDACTED]

on his right ring finger manufactured in nearby West Bromwich but the firm there say that they distribute nationwide, no particular reason to think it was sold in the Midlands. The ring was manufactured in 1967 or 1968 which gives rise to further thought. He was either married about that time or for some reason bought one for his own use.

His description, 5' 8", slight build, slender hands, small of foot according to the hosiery trade a man who was probably very light on his feet. Short, medium brown hair.

We have eliminated over 400 suggestions from Forces all over the country and from members of the public who've been anxious about males in that age range, having read the newspapers locally. The local newspapers caused some interest and people came up with one or two names which were easy to eliminate. Fingerprint eliminations - it was by no means a skeleton, what deterioration had taken place had been fairly rapid.

Q: Can you tell us something about the scientific investigations?

A: Apart from the examination of the pelvic bones in Washington, Doctor [REDACTED] has had a mortologist working on it - an expert in death, at Guys. The Forensic Science Laboratory at Birmingham have examined the organic stomach content and muscle and they've excluded the possibility of any of the conventional poisons so we have no cause of death, but it could have been any of the conventional methods. There were no bone injuries.

Q: If he was tied up with twine presumably he could have been guilty of one or two things.

A: That gives rise to certain schools of thought. There's no reason to think now that he's from Burton because the easiest and the most promising line of enquiry was through the dental profession and as far as Burton is concerned that didn't take very long. There are eight in the town, to a ratio of two technicians. We

can exclude all possibility of this man having been to a dentist of Burton.

Q: Am I not right in saying that you said he might have been Australian?

A: It isn't even worthy of comment because that's an isolated opinion.

Q: It's not necessarily your opinion.

A: No.

Q: The fact that you've got fingerprints, there's a possible criminal record?

A: It doesn't look very promising now.

Q: Was there any stomach content?

A: Yes.

Q: He could be a foreigner.

A: He's a white man.

Q: This is a Continental habit, the wedding ring on the right hand.

A: Even if he was a foreigner he must have come into the country about 1968.

Q: What's happened to the rest of the skeleton?

A: There's a bit in America, a bit in Birmingham and Guys.

Q: Can you tell us anything about the process about which the photographed reconstructions were made?

A: These were done by the young ladies employed in the Illustrations Department at Guys by arrangement with Doctor [REDACTED] and there is

some scientific means, but I think it's largely by their own intuition.

Q: Based on their experience of bone structure.

A: A great deal of experience because they are employed solely on line drawings for text books.

Q: It was based on measurements.

A: Yes very much so.

Q: How many missing persons have you checked?

A: We've eliminated just over 400. Now we are being more precise because the American estimate of 29, 2 months is only a recent development. By virtue of that we have been able to put a few more in the dead section of the filing system.

Q: No clothing at all?

A: Nothing at all.

Q: The method of producing these photographs in the [REDACTED] came as a result of your discussions?

A: Yes, they are hoping to get them over to America as well.

Q: The time of death they can help out on?

A: Yes.

Q: What about time of death in your case?

A: About the Summer of 1970, it would include the Spring. Doctor [REDACTED] would extend it to include the Spring.

Q: What parts of the skeleton were taken to America?

A: Pelvic bones.

Q: A completely new process, is it?

A: Yes.

Q: There was a precedent, it's been done somewhere I believe.

A: I don't think so, it's only been done where suspects have been seen.

Q: The fact that you've come to the Yard today, does that mean you suspect he might be a London man?

A: We've saturated our own names locally. Judging from the place it was buried you would have put your salary on the fact that he was a local man, but as time has gone on, first of all through the enquiries we've made and the local dentists, coupled with the fact that we've had little or no response locally, there's no reason now to think that he is local. Therefore he could have travelled, I think he was tied up, stripped before he was tied, for reasons of identification I would guess at, and secondly he's been tied for ease of transport, in some sort of transport.

Q: How deep was the hole into which he had been put?

A: About four feet. The top of his skull was showing through. I think there would be a certain amount of subsidence, then vermin had become interested.

Q: Looking at the description, it seems to suggest a certain type of person.

A: There's nothing to back that theory up at all. We could be so wrong.

Q: Did the general pattern, the build of the man, etc. would suggest somebody like a dancer who could travel.

A: The intriguing thing about it is, whilst if he had a wife there might be reasons why his wife hasn't acted, presumably he's going to have parents at 29 years of age.

Q: You say tied up, can you elaborate on that, would trussed up be nearer the mark?

A: Yes there's a slight difference.

Q: Was it tied so that he was forced into the squatting position?

A: No.

Q: You think he was killed somewhere else?

A: I think so, yes. The Motorway's about 40 minutes away. Local B roads, etc. Forty minutes in the other direction we've got the M.6.

Q: Is there anybody that the Yard wants?

A: [REDACTED] entered into that.

[REDACTED] Mr. Hough has done all the missing persons.

Q: This is the first time this particular process has been used?

A: I am told that it is.

Q: What sort of spot is it?

A: It is a restricted bit of ground, the side of an old flint mill mentioned in the Doomsday Book.

Q: What's the dentists' opinion of the dental work?

A: It's surprising the variety of opinions we've had, some technicians wouldn't look at it, other technicians say it's not a bad denture. The general opinion is that it's National Health.

Q: Have you tried the big dental hospitals?

A: Yes.

Q: He actually went to Washington?

A: Yes. He had a full head of hair.

Q: What is Doctor [REDACTED] position at Guys?

A: He's in the same department as [REDACTED].

Q: What department at Guys is that?

A: The Illustrations Department. They do illustrations for the compilation of text books.

I picked up a book in the library by a Russian who had done a lot with this. It's not a text book, an account of his work in this line, in particular identification of bodies and the reconstruction, the sculpture of faces, building them on to human skulls. He started by doing it with historical figures. Working with the police has met with great success.

Q: What are you asking for?

A: The only thing from my point of view, if anyone has got any idea at all. About four things this man must have left behind him, a car, bank account, family - somebody's got to know about this man. Can't lose a man of 29 without all trace. It's so easy to eliminate people. If he was able to walk through the door I should know him because we know so much about him.

Q: There must have been some impression on the fingerprints.

A: No there were marks.

Q: What type finger marks did he have?

A: I can't say.

Q: You're pretty certain that the word to use is murder.

A: Yes, you've seen the photographs.

Q: Was he killed on the spot?

A: My guess is that he wasn't. He's been carted there. This is the reason for coming here and talking to you all. The site is not

frequented, owned by Burton Flour Mill. The man was out shooting, he had permission. It's a well respected firm of gunsmiths in the town, from their workshop window they overlook this bit of ground. It's about 300 yards, but they couldn't see this spot. In the Summer months it's a right jungle - first dig the hole and then come back later. If they'd made a better job of putting him in there we shouldn't have been talking here now. It was an ideal spot.

Q: The person who put him there would have to know the area.

A: It might open new doors when we find out who he is.

Q: What is your appeal if anybody can help?

A: If anybody has any information, it can be anonymous, from there we can - it's so easy to eliminate these people. We'd like as many suggestions as possible. It's only a matter of finding out personal details of that man. There are certain lines of enquiry through which we can eliminate them. I'm stuck with about half a dozen I can't safely throw to one side, because you've got to be sure before you write to tell the relatives they can be eliminated.

Q: Where do you want the information channelled?

A: To the Police Station, Burton-on-Trent, or to the local Police.

POLICE ENQUIRIES:

PARTIAL DENTURES FOR CLASS III OCCLUSION

HAVE you made any partial upper dentures for patients with a Class III occlusion during the last five years? If so was the upper right first molar immediately replaced by the denture? Should the answer be yes then you may be able to help the police with the identification of a body recovered from a shallow grave at Burton-on-Trent in March this year. Despite extensive enquiries the body has not yet been identified and the police would be very grateful if you would search your records to see if this was your patient.

The deceased was a male aged 25 - 35 years approximately 5ft. 8ins. tall, slight build and small hands with a 9ct. barrel style ring on the right ring finger. His hair was medium brown and had been cut short. Post-mortem examination failed to reveal any obvious cause

of death but indicated that the body had been buried within the previous 9 to 12 months; murder has not been ruled out. The only open carious lesion was in the lower left second premolar which had a large mesial cavity; the missing teeth and restorations were as

shown on the chart (fig.1) Minimal loss of supporting bone and negligible deposits of calculus suggest that the periodontal condition was good. The characteristic features of these jaws are the partial upper denture and the Class III occlusion (figs. 2 and 3). The partial upper denture is constructed in veined acrylic resin with two stainless steel clasps and a well extended denture base is cut away from the palatal aspects of the upper anterior teeth. The teeth are of acrylic resin and the upper left canine is proclined and ground mesially because

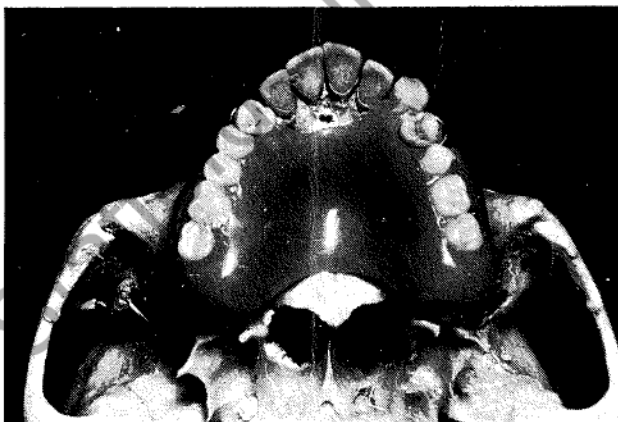


Fig. 2

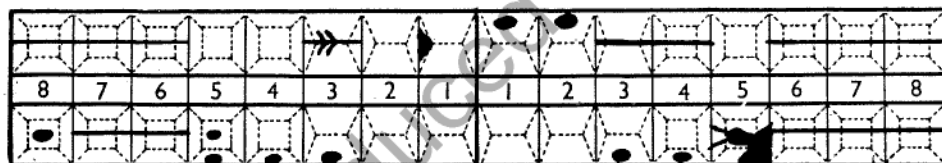


Fig. 1

Can You Help?



Fig. 3

of the occlusion. There are no identification marks or relief areas on the denture but there is a post-dam and in addition the appearance of the fitting surface indicates

that an upper right molar was an immediate replacement.

Any practitioner or technician, who believes that he may be able to help with the identifica-

tion of this body is asked to communicate with the Chief Constable of Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent Constabulary, Stafford, telephone 0785 3311.



Staffordshire POLICE

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BURTON SKULL MYSTERY – CRIMEWATCH APPEAL

Detectives will use fresh technology to make an appeal about a 35-year-old mystery death tonight on Crimewatch.

On 27 March 1971 a man walking his dog found a partially buried skull in a field near a mill off Newton Road in Burton at around 7pm. Police sealed off the area, excavated the site and discovered a man's body buried beneath the surface, in a kneeling position. The man, whose hands and ankles were tied, was wearing only socks and a gold wedding ring. It is believed he had been there for up to a year.

Burton-based detectives launched a major investigation but, despite three years of extensive enquiries, the man was never identified.

A periodic cold case review was recently undertaken by Staffordshire Police's Major Investigation Department, based in Lichfield. As a result, a moving digital facial reconstruction of the man's head was created by a specialist at Dundee University from the skull. A DNA sample was also retrieved by the Forensic Science Service, which will help detectives identify the man if potential relatives come forward.

An appeal using the reconstruction will feature on Crimewatch on BBC1 at 9pm.

Detective Chief Inspector [REDACTED], who is leading the enquiry, said: "Our priority has always been to identify this man whose death has remained a mystery for over three decades.

"Despite the time lapse, we hope these new images may jog people's memory. There could be someone – in Burton or anywhere in the UK - who had a husband, son or brother go missing in the 1970s who they've never traced. If you know somebody who looked like this, we would urge you to get in touch.

"It is very rare for an unexplained death to remain unsolved in Staffordshire and when new investigative tools are available, as in this case, we will take advantage of them."

TELEPHONE [REDACTED]

FAX [REDACTED]

NEWSLINE [REDACTED]

www.staffordshire.police.uk



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE



NEWS RELEASE