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REPORT AND COMMUNICATIONS.

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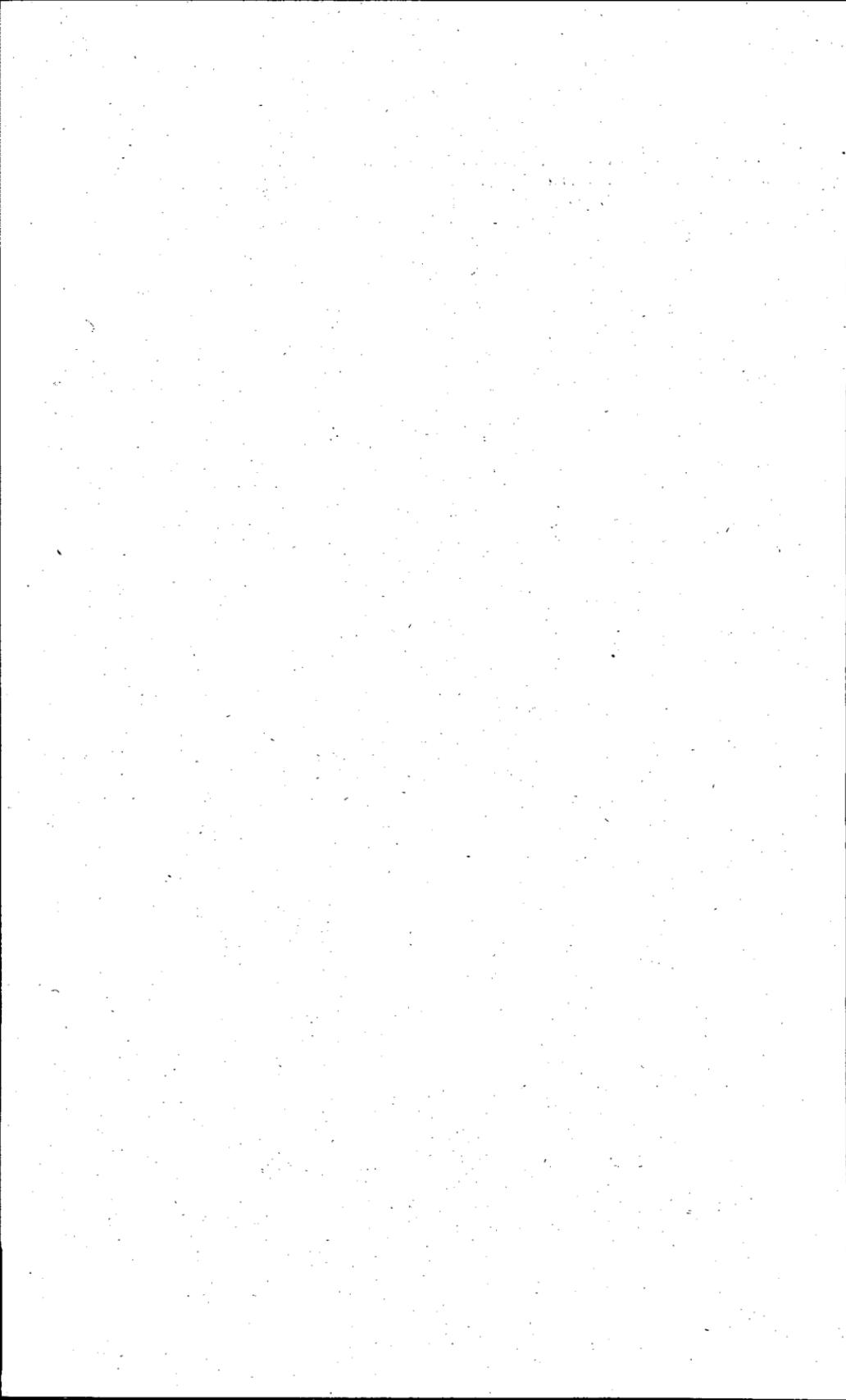
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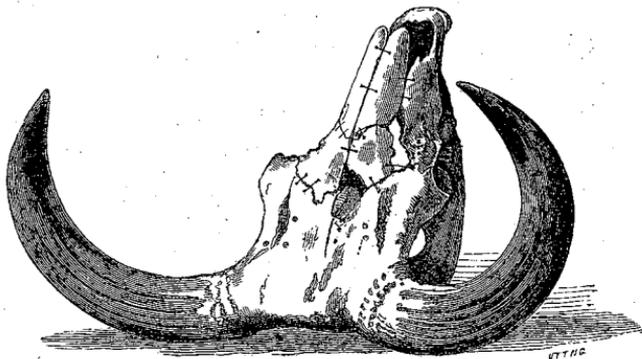
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SKULL OF BOS PRIMIGENIUS WITH CELT.

XXIV. ON A SKULL OF BOS PRIMIGENIUS ASSOCIATED
WITH FLINT IMPLEMENTS. BY CHARLES C. BA-
BINGTON, M.A. F.R.S. F.S.A.

[Read Feb. 23, 1863.]

IT has been believed for some time that species of oxen now extinct coexisted with man in these islands. Abundant evidence of the *Bos longifrons* having served as food for man has been found in Ireland as well as England, and Owen supposes them to have been domesticated by the ancient Britons; but until recently we did not possess any very certain evidence of *Bos primigenius* having been hunted in England. In January 1863, persons engaged in digging for the so-called "coprolites" near the village of Reche, but in Burwell Fen, Cambridgeshire, found a head of that ox lying upon the chalk-marl, and covered by about four feet of peat. It was broken across at the level of the upper margin of the orbits of the eyes, and when first examined the fractured surface was covered by a considerable quantity of peat. None of this peat was removed until the skull arrived at Cambridge, nor had the workmen any means of knowing that anything unusual was concealed by it. Upon its removal a flint celt was found firmly fixed in a fracture of the frontal bone. The celt had penetrated the skull to a depth of $2\frac{3}{4}$ inches, and broken off at what was the outer surface of the skin of the animal, so that it now measures exactly three inches in length. It is a chipped celt formed out of a chalk-flint. The surface exposed by the fracture is evidently old, for its appearance exactly corresponds with that of the

other parts of the celt. It is thinner than the celts usually found, and very sharp. The broadest end of the celt is imbedded in the skull: at the fracture it measures two inches in breadth by three-fourths of an inch in thickness. As it penetrated the anterior lobes of the brain, it must have caused the death of the animal, if driven into the place where it was found during life. Apparently it was broken by having struck the inner surface of the base of the skull. Probably it was fixed in a heavy handle so as to increase the weight of the blow, and so placed as to resemble an adze, rather than an axe. A portion of the frontal bone has been carried inwards with the celt. Such would naturally be the result if the wound was given when the flesh and skin covered the bone, and prevented the broken pieces of the latter from easily becoming detached.

I had the pleasure of examining the skull, in company with Mr James Carter, before all the peat had been removed from the outside of the frontal bone about the celt, and we arrived at the opinion that it was quite impossible that the celt could have been recently placed in the situation where we saw it; and that there was no reasonable cause to doubt its having entered the skull, and caused the injury during the life or immediately after the death of the animal. When we first saw it the interior of the skull was quite full of compact peat, which held the celt tightly in its place; but since that time the peat has shrunk in drying, and it has become necessary to insert a wedge of wood to prevent the celt falling out.

The measurements of the skull are:

	ft.	in.
Total length now that the front part has been added	2	3
Width between the orbits	0	10½
Circumference of the base of the horn	1	1
Length of the core of horn, following the outer curvature	2	2
Distance between the tips of the horn-cores	1	11½

This is about the average size of the skull of *Bos primigenius*.

The discovery of the celt caused a further search to be made in the place where the skull was found, which resulted in our obtaining the anterior bones of the face, which exactly fitted the edges of the fractured surface, and have been carefully replaced by Mr Carter: also many other parts of the skeleton; namely, nearly all the vertebræ, the scapulæ, some ribs, the tibiæ, humeri, sacrum; but none of the smaller bones and no femur.

It is intended that these interesting remains should be deposited in the Woodwardian Museum, so that they may be safely preserved and available for study. They are of great value to the paleontologist from the certainty that they all belong to the same animal. It is believed that no other museum is in possession of so large a part of the skeleton of this species of extinct ox.

We are informed that remains of trees were found with the bones. No naturalist has seen the wood, for none was preserved; the workmen called it yew, and as many yew-trees have been found buried in the peat of the fens, they are probably correct.

It would be out of place to enter here upon a consideration of the paleontographical interest of these bones. Mr Jas. Carter has discussed that subject in a paper recently read to the Cambridge Philosophical Society. But it may be allowable to remark that it has seldom been possible to determine the species of ox to which fossil bones (other than the skull) belonged; and that the discovery of so many parts of the skeleton has afforded an opportunity of describing their structure so as probably to allow of the identification of detached bones of *Bos primigenius*. Much credit is due to Mr Carter for the careful mode in which he has preserved the skull, and the skill which he has shown in determining the osteological character of the other bones.

The annexed wood engraving is derived from two photographs, one representing the skull on the day after its arrival at Cambridge, and the other showing its present state. The photographs were very cleverly taken by Mr Farren. The engraver has made the socket of the left eye appear rather too prominent, from not very clearly showing that much bone has fallen away from its lower side.