

ART. XVIII.—*A Note on some West Cumberland Stone Axes.* By MARY C. FAIR.

Read at Carlisle, June 19th, 1934.

THANKS to Mr. Wilson, Head Master of Gosforth School, who has got them together for me to examine, I have been enabled to inspect and describe four stone axes collected in this district, I think by the late Dr. Charles A. Parker.

Three of them are already recorded by the late Mr. W. G. Collingwood in his "Inventory" and by the late Dr. Charles A. Parker.

No. 1. Stone axe, west of Hall Senna, 1855, by Taylor Poole. This must have been a fine implement when complete: only the butt portion remains, ground to a sharp edge for use as cutting implement. When complete it must have been at least 9 ins. long. It has the straight strips ground at sides.

No. 2. Fragment of chisel-shaped implement, $3\frac{3}{4}$ ins. long, 1 in. wide at cutting edge, $1\frac{3}{4}$ ins. wide at butt. Weight, $5\frac{1}{2}$ ozs. Duck-bill shaped, broken at wide end. Found near Rainors, Gosforth, Laneside, by G. Armstrong, 1886.

No. 3. Fragment of chisel-shaped implement, 4 ins. long, $1\frac{1}{8}$ ins. wide at cutting edge, 2 ins. wide at butt. Weight, $7\frac{1}{4}$ ozs. Duck-bill shaped, broken at wide end. Found Farcroft, Gosforth, 1885, by G. Armstrong.

Both these implements have narrow straight strips ground at sides. Numbers 1, 2 and 3 are of material that is common in the Lake District: Dr. Hollingworth, of the Geological Survey, kindly reports of *No. 1.* "It is probably a rather acid (silica rich), type of lava. The

bulk of the Lake District lavas are andesite and softer and less flinty than this, though this type is quite common." *No. 2* "is either a fine-grained flinty ash (or tuff), such as is common in the Gable area, or possibly a lava as mentioned in connection with *No. 1.*" *No. 3* is similar. "The patina of these implements indicates that the main fracturing took place before the patina was formed, and they show recent minor fractures. Appearances suggest they were discarded implements."

The straight strips ground at the edges of these and a great many other examples of stone axes found in this district are a feature of the technique employed by local axe makers: Mr. Gray informs me that many examples housed at Tullie House have these ground off sides, the strips ranging from $15/16$ th to $\frac{1}{4}$ in. in those axes I have examined. Mr. Dewey, of the Geological Survey, suggests the possibility of these side-strips indicating early Bronze Age, a suggestion I think very sound. The implements of the type having this feature are very finely made and finished, and the workmanship is highly skilled.

AXE No. 4. This, as far as I can discover, has not been previously recorded, and I am most grateful to Mr. Wilson for drawing attention to it, as its find-spot is Fell End, *Ennerdale*, the first stone implement noted for our Society from there. Fell End is not far from the site of the re-erected Stone Circle. This implement is different from our usual polished type: It is formed from a hard, close-grained river pebble, sausage-shaped, 6 ins. long, its butt naturally tapering off. It is $1\frac{1}{4}$ ins. thick, and $3\frac{3}{4}$ ins. across at the cutting edge which has been beautifully ground to great sharpness and finely polished. The remainder of the implement has been left in its natural state without any attempt at finishing. The implement must have been an effective one though less refined than the usual form of finely polished implements found in West Cumberland.

These 4 implements are housed in Gosforth School Museum, under Mr. Wilson's able care.

TWO STONE AXES FROM ESKDALE.

No. 1. By the kindness of Mrs. J. H. Rea, I am able to record a new stone axe from Eskdale. It is a portion of a very hard, finely-grained local green-stone, 4 ins. in length, $2\frac{1}{4}$ ins. wide, and $1\frac{1}{4}$ ins. thick. The cutting edge is almost perfect and still sharp, and the polish is very fine. The sides have the usual ground-off straight strips, $\frac{5}{16}$ th to $\frac{1}{4}$ in. in width. The implement was found during the laying out by estate workmen of the rock-garden at Gatehouse, Eskdale, during 1904, at a spot known as "T'Deid Neuk."

No. 2. This axe was found in 1881 in a peat-moss at Porterthwaite, Eskdale, by the late Rev. W. S. Calverley. It bears the label of the Royal Archaeological Institute No. 7, so has been exhibited before that Society. It is noted in the late Mr. W. G. Collingwood's "Inventory." It is $6\frac{7}{8}$ ins. long, with pointed butt, $2\frac{1}{2}$ ins. across at its widest point, roughly chipped to shape, unpolished. It suggests an unfinished implement, lost or thrown away before completion. There are modern chips, but patination is ancient. The material is similar to that of the three first Gosforth axes, flinty volcanic ash or tuff, of local occurrence.

These two implements are housed in Mrs. J. H. Rea's Gatehouse Museum, and I tender to her my grateful thanks for permission to record them and the help she gave me in doing so.