

ART. XVIII.—*Four Polished Stone Axes.* By JAMES
MCINTYRE.

THE axes here described comprise a group of three found together at Belmont near Penrith and a single specimen found at Keswick. Two of the group (Nos. 1 and 3) and the Keswick axe (No. 4) were exhibited at the Durham meeting of the Society in October, 1935 (*Trans.* N.S. xxxvi, p. 219). The owner of the third Belmont axe (No. 2), who is at present stationed abroad, was home on leave in August, 1936, and very kindly brought the axe North with him and placed it in my hands for inspection.

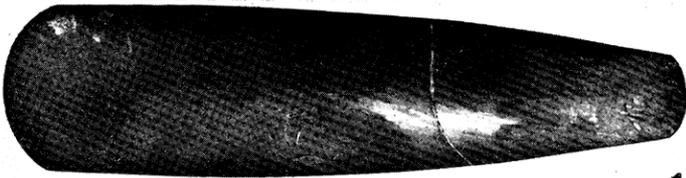
THREE AXES FROM BELMONT.

The farmhouse of Belmont is situated about $1\frac{1}{2}$ miles WSW. of Penrith and was built about 70 years ago by Mr. Francis Williamson. In trenching for foundations, a workman discovered the three axes lying together and handed them to the owner; they are now in the possession of his grandchildren, Mr. A. B. and Miss Williamson, of Little White, Brancepeth, co. Durham, and their brother, Engineer-Captain E. Williamson, R.N., of 44 Westcombe Park Road, Blackheath, to whom I am much indebted for allowing me to photograph and record their heirlooms.

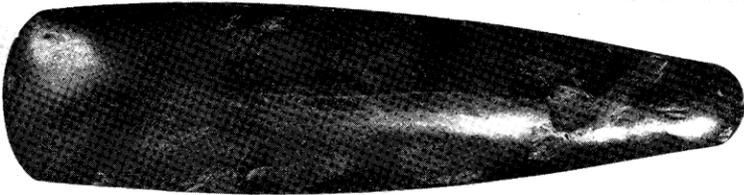
The measurements and weights are:—

| | <i>length.</i> | <i>breadth.</i> | <i>weight.</i> |
|--------|---------------------|---------------------|--------------------------|
| No. 1. | 11 in. | $2\frac{3}{4}$ in. | 2 lb. $8\frac{1}{2}$ oz. |
| No. 2. | $12\frac{1}{4}$ in. | $3\frac{3}{16}$ in. | 4 lb. 2 oz. |
| No. 3. | $12\frac{7}{8}$ in. | 3 in. | 4 lb. |

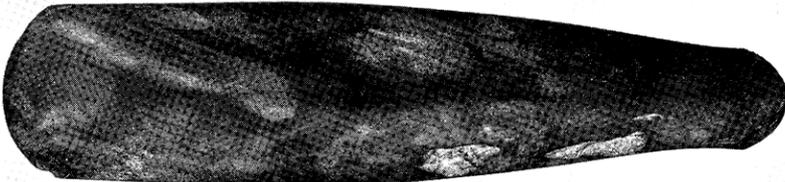
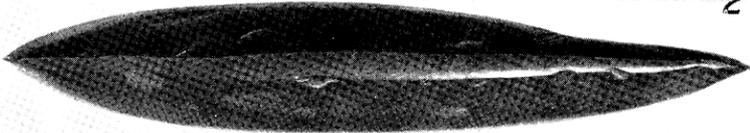
Of large size and made of greenstone, this group is of the thin-butted type which is characteristic of the area.



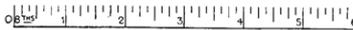
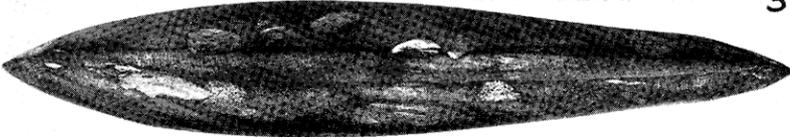
1



2



3



Scale of Inches.

THREE POLISHED AXES FROM BELMONT.

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Before polishing, No. 2 appears to have been chipped too deeply at one side of the butt and to have been left much thicker at the other side to compensate for this weakness. The butt-end of No. 3 is expanded and is fish-tail in shape, and this expansion, as our President points out to me, may have been used to prevent the axe slipping from its haft.

All three axes were in good order when found, but some years ago No. 1 was accidentally broken when loaned for exhibition.

AN AXE FROM KESWICK.

This specimen was found at Keswick about 1890 in a field on which Wordsworth Street is now built. The finder, Mr. Arthur Hutchinson, now of Jubilee Terrace, Evenwood, co. Durham, was at that time resident in Keswick and it was whilst digging a hole in the ground in which to bury some broken glass that he discovered the axe at a depth of about eighteen inches.

The measurements and weight are:—

| <i>length.</i> | <i>breadth.</i> | <i>weight.</i> |
|----------------------|---------------------|----------------|
| 10 $\frac{1}{4}$ in. | 3 $\frac{5}{8}$ in. | 3 lb. 12 oz. |

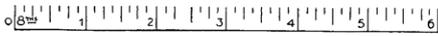
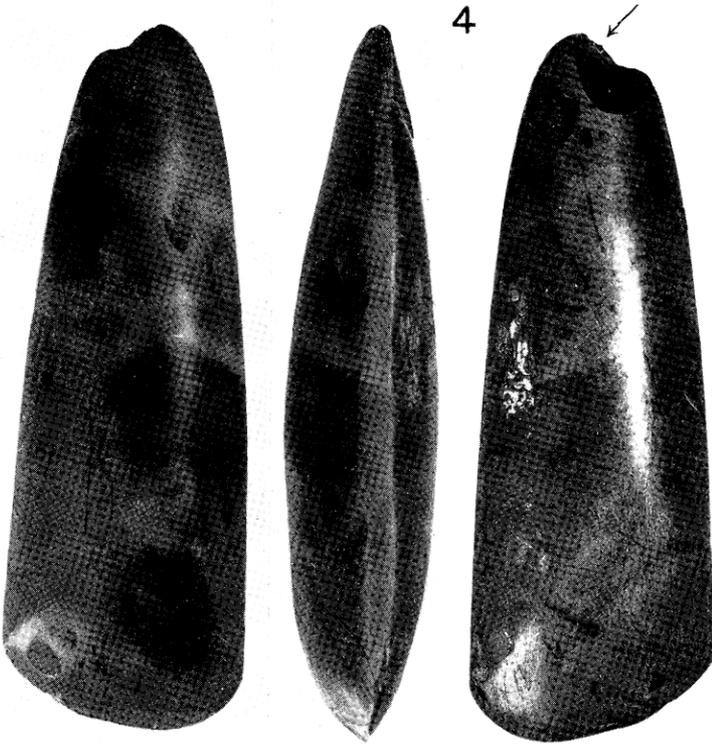
The axe has two features which are perhaps worthy of note and may be related to each other: the cutting-edge is oblique, and a little more than half-way towards the butt-end there is a band of colour which runs continuously round the body of the axe. Lighter in shade than the remainder of the axe and apparently not due to the nature of the stone, the band is two and five-eighths inches wide and is set at an angle of about 80° to the axis or roughly parallel to the cutting-edge.

It is suggested, therefore, that this coloured band may represent traces of hafting and that the axe may have been fitted into its haft when originally lost. If this was so, it would appear that this axe was fixed into its haft at

an angle of about 80° : the angle at which the axis of the modern 'felling-axe' is inclined to its shaft.

Dr. A. Raistrick of Armstrong College, Newcastle-upon-Tyne has kindly examined the stone and reports as follows:

" This polished celt is made of one of the fine " tuffs " of the Lake District (commonly and incorrectly called " ashes "). It belongs to the Scawfell (upper) Tuffs, which are beautifully grained and hardened, and have an unmistakable weathering ' crust,' nearly white when fresh, and dirty cream when old. The subconchoidal fracture also is characteristic. The thin end shows all features. The new chip (indicated by arrow in photograph) shows *white* weathered crust, and *blue-green* ' tuff ' inside.



Scale of Inches.

A POLISHED AXE FROM KESWICK.

Facing p. 154.