

ART. II.—*A bronze spear-head from Woundale Raise, Troutbeck.* By CLARE FELL.

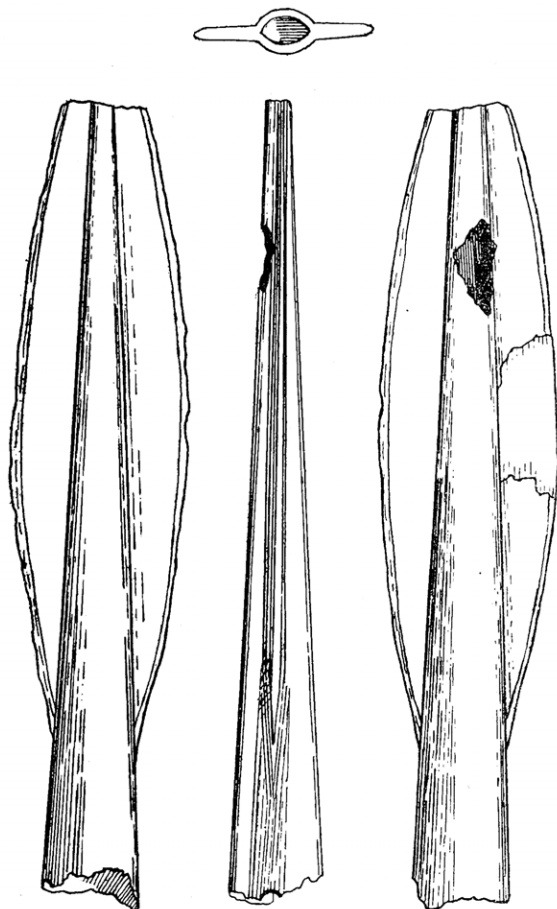
*Read at Penrith, April 2nd, 1949.*

THIS spear-head, now figured for the first time, was found at Woundale Raise, in the parish of Troutbeck, over a century ago; it has been mentioned briefly by H. S. Cowper in CW2 i 135 and by W. G. Collingwood in his Inventory in CW2 xxvi 24. For many years it was in the possession of our late member Mr George Browne of Townend, Troutbeck, and it is still preserved at Townend, which in 1948 became the property of the National Trust. I should like to thank Mr B. L. Thompson for bringing the spear-head to my notice, and for providing the three earlier references to the find which are quoted below.

The weapon is imperfect, for the point of the blade and the end of the socket are broken off, and there is a hole towards the tip of the hollow mid-rib on one side. The wings thicken slightly as they approach the socket, and the edges of the blade are chamfered. There were probably two peg-holes in the socket, for fixing the head to the shaft: traces of one such hole can be seen at the point where it is broken. The present overall length is  $8\frac{3}{4}$  inches and the greatest width is  $1\frac{7}{8}$  inches.

Bronze spear-heads with leaf-shaped blades and two peg-holes mostly date from the Late Bronze Age, and belong to Class V of the classification made by Greenwell and Brewis;<sup>1</sup> but in a recent note Mr J. D. Cowen, supported by Professor C. F. C. Hawkes, suggests that

<sup>1</sup> *Archaeologia* lxi 439b.



BRONZE SPEAR-HEAD FROM WOUNDALE RAISE

the earliest examples must have reached the British Isles during Middle Bronze Age II, i.e. some time after 1250 B.C.<sup>2</sup> The type was originally introduced into this country from the Continent, and probably continued in use in our district considerably later than 500 B.C., when iron weapons began to replace bronze ones in the south of Britain. The Woundale example should be added to the list of local spear-heads given by Miss M. C. Fair in CW2 xlv 172.

The circumstances of the find are not clear, as is shown in the three somewhat conflicting accounts given below:—

(a) "Troutbeck," by a Member of the Scandinavian Society (John Wager), 1876, 28-29:

"These (i.e. the Woundale Cairns), the present writer is informed, were, on the allotment of the commons thirty or thirty-five years since, demolished for the purpose of building stone walls required for dividing the several properties. The large mound is said to have contained a cist formed of four stones, one for each side and end; and within which was found a bronze spear-head, broken both at the point and the socket, now in the possession of Mr George Browne of Troutbeck. The late incumbent informed the writer that it also contained burnt bones; but of any other relics it may have contained he has not been able to learn."

(b) *Westmorland Gazette*, 2 February 1884: "Troutbeck Notes":

"This curious relic (i.e. the spear-head) was discovered about the time when the Inclosure Act was carried out in Troutbeck, near a tumulus or cairn, which formerly stood between sixty and seventy yards from the highway leading from Troutbeck to Kirkstone . . . in the north-west corner of an allotment belonging to

<sup>2</sup> *Proc. Prehist. Soc.* xiv (1948) 217 and 233.

Mr J. B. Forrest. The place where the tumulus or cairn formerly stood may be seen by the short green grass which grows upon it, surrounded by rushes and short bent."

(c) "A Well-Spent Life: Memoir of Cornelius Nicholson," by his daughter Cornelia Nicholson, 1890, 190:

Quoting from an address given by Nicholson to the Kendal Natural History Society's Institute on 7 December 1838: "A British spear-head was found some years ago at this spot (i.e. Woundale Raise), which is six to seven inches long made of mixed metal resembling brass."

It is unfortunate that the source of Mr Wager's information cannot now be checked, but his account is detailed and should be reliable; the third quotation supports it. The particulars of the find held by the Ordnance Survey compare with the second version, but they were not received there until 1897, twenty-one years after Mr Wager's book was published: and the date of the find, given as 1845 on their maps, cannot be correct if the spear-head mentioned by Cornelius Nicholson in 1838 was in fact the one under discussion.

The association of bronze weapons with burials is extremely rare, and two local examples are worth remembering: (1) an object described as a bronze spear-head was found, in an urn of overhanging-rim type, with a cremation at Stainton Head, near Dalton-in-Furness;<sup>3</sup> (2) the bronze sword and spear-head from Butts Beck quarry, Dalton-in-Furness, were found in a cist with an inhumation burial and with the bones of a horse.<sup>4</sup>

The National Grid reference for the site of Woundale

<sup>3</sup> J. Bolton, *Geological Fragments* (1869) 138.

<sup>4</sup> BNFC *Proc.* xvii 213; CWI xv 164.

Raise is 405067, but the find-spot of the spear-head given on the 6-inch and 25-inch O.S. maps is some 400 yards to the south of that point.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>5</sup> I have to thank the Archaeology Officer, Ordnance Survey, for checking his records of this find.