

ART. I.—*Three polished stone axes.* By CLARE FELL,  
F.S.A.

*Read at Penrith, September 14th, 1954.*

IN March 1953 Mr C. E. Bean, F.S.A., of Sherborne, Dorset, sent to the Secretary of this Society a note about a polished stone axe from Westmorland, now in his possession. It was found about fifty years ago, during widening operations on the Appleby-Penrith road, most probably near Kirkby Thore; and it was given to Mr Bean by Mr D. Meredith Thomas of Sherborne School, who had obtained it from one of his aunts—either Mrs Thwythes or Miss Ryland, who lived near Kirkby Thore and originally owned the axe. No details exist to give the circumstances of the find.

Mr Bean kindly supplied the drawing here reproduced as fig. 1. He describes the stone as being patinated, except where the chips are shown at the butt and cutting-edge, but he cannot definitely identify the rock from which it is made. The squared sides of the axe are a feature common among the late Neolithic axes of our district.

In recent years two polished stone axes have turned up in the Furness district, in each case with the exact provenance recorded. The first (not illustrated here) was found in 1949 by Walter Booth of Huntsman's Cottage, Broughton Beck, near Ulverston, close to the east side of Stainton Gap farmhouse in the parish of Egton-cum-Newland (National Grid reference 34/293839). He was burying a sheep at the time, and found the axe embedded in clay, two feet below the present ground-level. It is of volcanic ash, well polished, with a few deep flake scars and covered with a smooth white patina. It is  $5\frac{7}{10}$  in. in length, with an asymmetrical cutting-edge 3 in. wide; in section it is pointed oval, and its sides have not

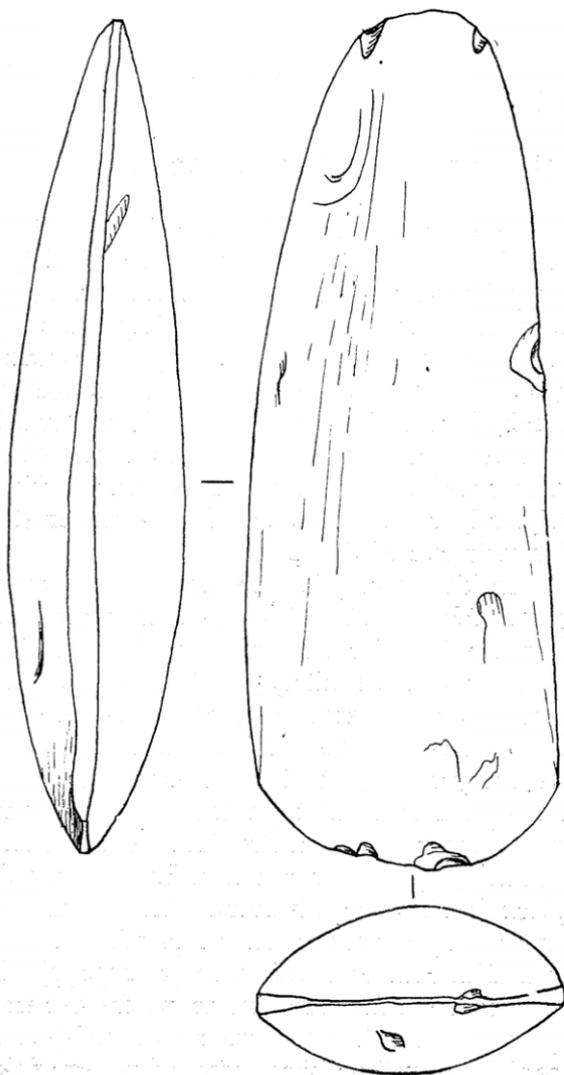


FIG. 1.—Stone axe found near Kirkby Thore ( $\frac{1}{2}$ ).

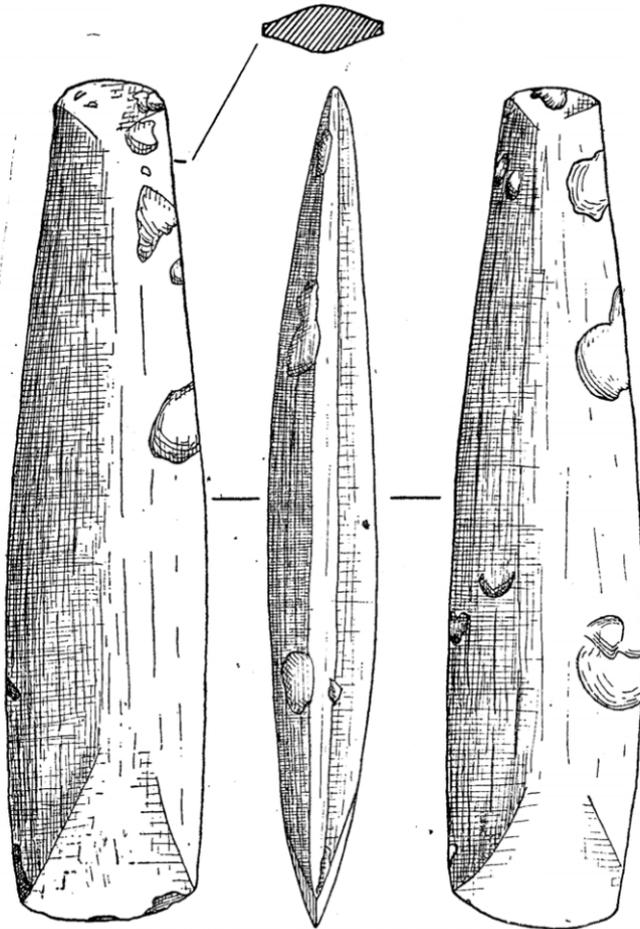


FIG. 2.—Stone axe from Chittery Lane, Ulverston ( $\frac{1}{2}$ ).

been squared. Soon after it was found, it was sent to Edinburgh for examination by Professor Stuart Piggott and Mr R. K. B. Stevenson, who were of the opinion that it probably came from one of the stone-axe factories which are known to have existed in the Lake District

after 2000 B.C. This axe is now in the possession of Mr T. C. Hastings of The Retreat, Broughton Beck, and was illustrated in a note by Mr F. Barnes printed in the *North-Western Evening Mail*, 14 May 1953.

The second specimen from the Furness district is a fine tapered axe, with squared sides and sharpened at both ends, of the so-called Cumberland Club type (fig. 2). It was found in November 1950 by Mr J. R. Marsh, "about three spades deep", when making the garden behind his new house, "Ings", Chittery Lane, Ulverston (ref. 34/287791). It is of a fine grey-green volcanic ash, or tuff, with a smooth patina,  $8\frac{3}{4}$  in. in length and  $1\frac{1}{2}$  in. at the cutting-edge. This type of axe has been found associated with late Neolithic pottery at Ehenside Tarn, Beckermeth, Cumberland.<sup>1</sup> The stone from which it is made is very similar to that used at the stone-axe factory in Great Langdale,<sup>2</sup> and it is extremely likely that it came from that site. This axe is still in the possession of the finder.

<sup>1</sup> *Archæologia* xliv 273 f.

<sup>2</sup> CW2 1 1-14.