

## Harborough Cave, nr. Brassington.

### II.

#### DESCRIPTION OF THE FINDS.

By REGINALD A. SMITH, F.S.A.



THE circumstances in which operations were conducted at Harborough Cave precluded any exact record of stratification, hence it is on internal evidence alone that any classification of the objects discovered must be based. Though some of the specimens must remain archæological puzzles till some happy discovery in the future furnishes an explanation, many of the finds tell their own tale, and enable us to review the various occupations of the cave by man from remote times to the seventeenth or eighteenth century. Whether it is permissible to begin its history in the Palæolithic period, when animals that are now extinct or only represented in distant countries, roamed over Britain and disputed the supremacy of man, remains to be decided by further research; but there can be little doubt that the hyæna tooth, 3 in. long, recovered from this cave belonged to an animal that once lived on the spot. It is an established fact that hyænas of various species, as well as the cave-lion, various bears, the mammoth, rhinoceros, and other unlikely animals once occupied our country in force when it was still joined to the Continent, and Derbyshire itself has produced in Creswell Crags one of the most important series of human and animal remains of that period in the kingdom. An interesting document of that early date is now preserved in the British Museum in the shape of a rhinoceros bone that was carried into one of the caves at Creswell Crags by a beast of prey,

and gnawed by a hyæna, the teeth marks being still distinctly visible. The Harborough Cave tooth, therefore, is not an unprecedented find, but it is now impossible to decide whether the hole at the root of the tooth was bored by contemporary man or by someone at a later date, who found the tooth in the Palæolithic stratum. In any case, the perforation is of ancient date, and the probability is that the tooth served as a pendant to decorate some inhabitant in the older Stone Age.

A triangular hammer-stone of quartzite probably dates from the Palæolithic period, but nothing else from this cave can be definitely assigned to such an early date, though much may remain under the blocks of stone that have fallen from the roof; and we pass at once to the Bronze Age, as the Neolithic period seems to be unrepresented here, unless, indeed,

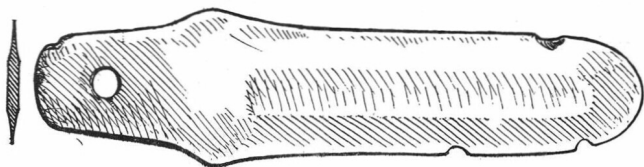


Fig. 1. Bronze Knife, with Section.  $\frac{1}{4}$

a few flint flakes (some burnt), a perfect pear-shaped arrowhead, and an unfinished arrowhead of the same material are to be attributed to this, rather than to the succeeding age of metal. Such round-scrapers, points, and worked flakes are common to both periods, and as bronze arrowheads are unknown from Britain, it is presumed that flint was used for the purpose till the introduction of iron. At Ravenscliffe Cave, on the other hand, two polished celts point definitely to human occupation before the invention of metal. The characteristic knife here illustrated (fig. 1) was certainly made before the introduction of iron. It is in good preservation, though chipped in places on the edge, and the handle (of horn, bone, or wood) was attached by a rivet, now missing, a round hole being bored in the broad tang to receive it. It dates probably from the latter part of

the Bronze Age, though knives were then generally provided with a socket for the handle, and further discoveries are necessary to fix a precise date for the tanged series. Socketed knives, and one like the Harborough Cave specimen but without a rivet hole, were found in Heathery Burn Cave.<sup>1</sup>

Another item of the Bronze Age is a small fragment of reddish pottery, with three parallel grooves, that seems to belong to a so-called "drinking-cup," generally found with unburnt bodies in graves of the time when metal was still scarce; and possibly to the same period belong the two thin bands of gold (fig. 2) that now look somewhat like finger-rings, though one has a pointed end that suggests an ear-ring. The total absence of ornament from a smooth surface that invited the engraved geometrical designs of the Bronze Age renders the date uncertain, but in the companion cave at Ravencliffe two



Fig. 2. Gold Circular Bands. †

grooved bands of gold were found dating from the Bronze period, and the metal was then plentiful, especially in Wiltshire.

A grey hone-stone, 2.6 in. long, but originally longer, and nearly an inch wide, is difficult to date with precision. Such stones have been found in Bronze Age hoards, as at Dowris, King's Co. (British Museum), and were evidently used to sharpen bronze tools; but they are also met with in the succeeding age of Iron.<sup>2</sup>

It will be convenient to consider next the miscellaneous specimens, illustrated half natural size, on Plate I. That they all belong to one period is possible, but must not be assumed, and the majority may be referred to the early Iron Age, that is, to the period between the end of the Bronze Age (about 400 B.C.) and the Roman Conquest by the Emperor

<sup>1</sup> *Archæologia*, liv., pp. 98, 99, figs. 4, 5, 6.

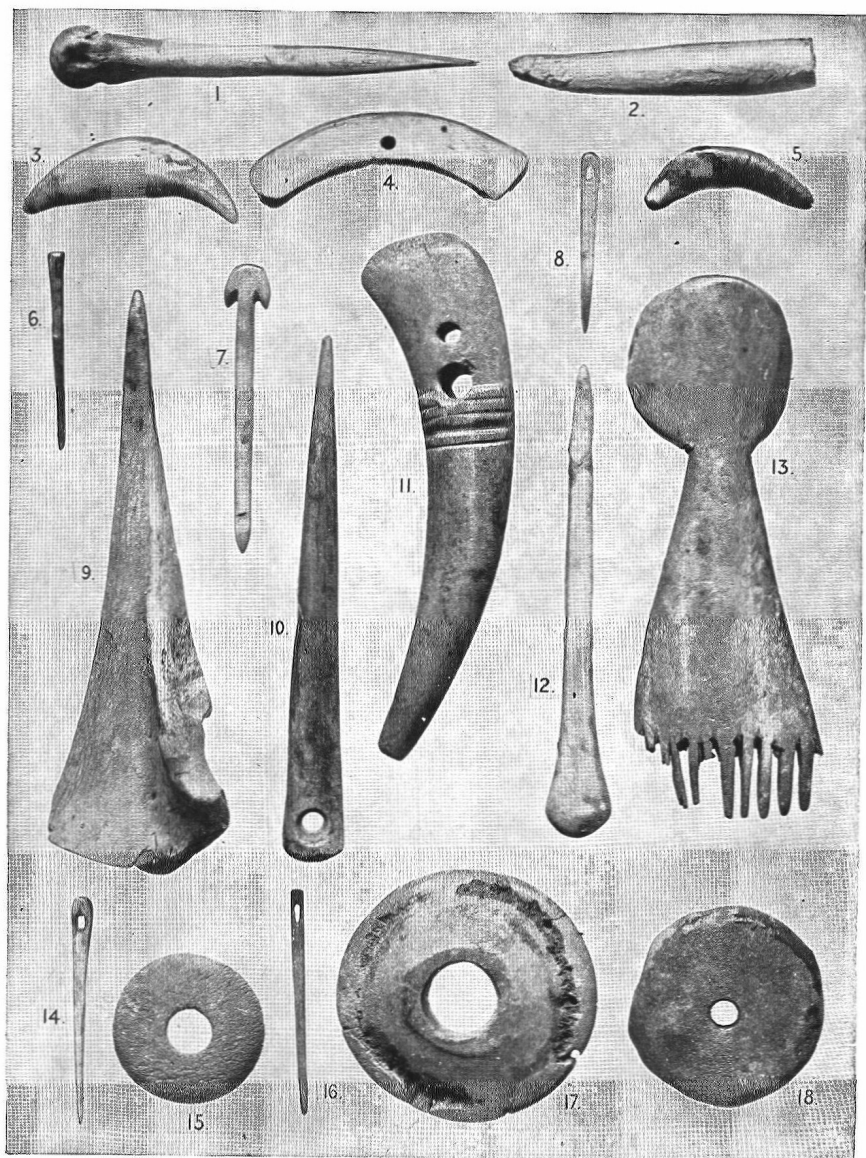
<sup>2</sup> *Archæologia*, xlvi., pl. xxiv., fig. 29.

Claudius in the middle of the first century of the Christian era. The animal bones have been kindly identified by Mr. E. T. Newton, F.R.S. Purely natural are two canine teeth, No 3 (wolf) and No. 5 (horse), but one of four other wolf teeth was perforated at the base, and probably worn on a necklace in the same way as the hyæna tooth already mentioned. No. 4 is one of seven boars' tusks, trimmed and perforated for similar use, while six unpierced are preserved from the cave, measuring from  $2\frac{1}{2}$  in. to 4 in. long. There was also one tooth that has been assigned, with some diffidence, to the Arctic fox (*canis lagopus*), and the tip of a roebuck's antler, 6.2 in. long. Nos. 1 and 12 are specimens of borers, chiefly of sheep and ox bones; but one, 4.6 in. long, is made from a horse's splint-bone. They were probably for piercing skins preparatory to sewing; but the needles found (Nos. 8, 14, 16) are somewhat slender for work of that sort, and suggest rather fabrics of wool or linen. On the other hand, numerous needles, still smaller and more finely finished, have been found in a Palæolithic cavern at Bruniquel, Tarn-et-Garonne, France,<sup>1</sup> and it is barely possible that fabrics of any kind were made at that date. The survival of several perfect needles shews that the sewing of skins was performed with great dexterity; and the care bestowed on the manufacture of the needles is sufficient indication that they were intended to last. Their approximate date is indicated by finds at Hod Hill and Spettisbury, Dorset, in the British Museum. Fig. 6 is a needle with the eye broken, and the bone skewer (No. 10) was probably used like the modern bodkin. Fig. 2 is a bone object of uncertain use, roughly hacked to a blunt point;<sup>2</sup> and No. 7 is an ornamental pin, probably worn in the hair. Pointed tools like No. 9, readily made from the ulna of the red-deer, have been found in Denmark and regarded as daggers of the Stone Age.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Specimens figured in *Stone Age Guide* (British Museum), fig. 48.

<sup>2</sup> A similar specimen at Glastonbury, *Proc. Som. Arch. Soc.*, li., p. 95, pl. v., No. H. 310. Further specimens of bone are illustrated in *Bristol and Gloucs. Arch. Soc. Trans.*, xxiii., 262-75; xxvi., 138-49; xxvii., 331; and *Suffolk Inst. Arch. Proc.*, x., 187, figs. 1-4.

<sup>3</sup> *Mémoires de la Société des Antiquaires du Nord*, 1896-1901, p. 125.



OBJECTS FOUND IN HARBOROUGH CAVE.

That the manufacture of cloth was understood in the early Iron Age of Britain is clear from the occurrence of spindle-whorls, No. 15 (epiphysis of ox) and No. 18 (micaceous sandstone), and of a bone hand-comb (No. 13) to press down the weft on the loom. Whorls for spinning the thread are found in considerable numbers abroad on Bronze Age and later sites, but in this country do not seem to have come into use before the introduction of iron; at least, they are not found in graves of the Bronze Age, where they would naturally be buried with the women. The rounded end of the comb is not so common as the point (more or less sharp) or the transverse oblong; but all shapes were contemporary, and used by the same people, as is clear from their discovery in the ancient British marsh-village at Glastonbury.<sup>1</sup>

Two objects of red-deer antler on the plate remain to be noticed. One (fig. 17) is a crown neatly shaped and perforated, but rather large for a spindle-whorl, and perhaps worn as a bead. The other (fig. 11) is somewhat mysterious, but probably served as the cheek-piece of a horse's bridle-bit. It is ornamented on one face only, and the larger hole is a little worn towards the concave side on the ornamented face, and on the back towards the convex curve. The friction of a thong through the hole attached to the bit would have this effect; and though it is difficult to understand exactly how some other examples found in Britain<sup>2</sup> were utilised, there is proof that such cheek-pieces were used in ancient times. Specimens of bronze have been found in Switzerland dating from the Bronze Age,<sup>3</sup> and a pair made of goat's horn were attached to an iron bridle-bit which was found in a grave at Czikó, Tolna, Hungary.<sup>4</sup> With an extended skeleton were

<sup>1</sup> Examples are cited by Mr. St. George Gray in Glastonbury Report, 1902, p. 11 (*Proc. Som. Arch. and Nat. Hist. Soc.*, xlviii.); *Iron Age Guide* (British Museum), fig. 131.

<sup>2</sup> As at Glastonbury (*Proc. Som. Arch. Soc.*, li., p. 87, pl. v.; liii., pl. vi.)

<sup>3</sup> Explained in *Revue Archéologique*, li. (1888), 52.

<sup>4</sup> Hampel *Altthümer des frühen Mittelalters in Ungarn*, ii., 273; iii., pl. 208. Specimens illustrated in Forrer's *Die Pferdetränke*, pl. i.; and their use discussed in *Archæologia*, liv., 109 (Heathery Burn Cave).

found, in addition to the bridle, the remains of a horse, part of an iron harness buckle, a pair of iron stirrups, iron knives, and fragments. The horns were decorated with bands of incised lines and the ring-and-dot pattern, the hole through the centre being long and narrow, as on some British specimens. Austrian specimens have been described as shuttles, but this explanation is not convincing.<sup>1</sup>

In bronze bridle-bits of the late Keltic (early British) period the horn or bone cheek-piece is sometimes replaced by a fairly large ring, sometimes richly enamelled. A plain specimen of

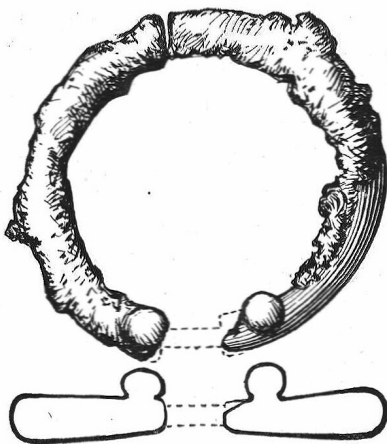


Fig. 3. Ring of Bridle Bit.  $\frac{3}{8}$

bronze (much rusted) has been found at Harborough Cave (fig. 3) that is now broken and imperfect, but once had a slender connecting limb (to hold the bit) between the two terminals, which have knobs like those on bronze bridle-bits from Ireland, and also from charioteers' burials in Yorkshire.<sup>2</sup> Another connecting link with Yorkshire may here be discussed in connection with the most important relic from Harborough Cave.

<sup>1</sup> *Mitteilungen der Anthrop. Gesellschaft in Wien*, xxxiv. (1904), pl. viii., figs. 1, 2, p. 68.

<sup>2</sup> Arras, E. R. Yorks., in British Museum; Greenwell, *British Barrows*, p. 454; and *Archæologia*, lx., 280, fig. 22; 285, fig. 29.

The brooch here illustrated (fig. 4) belongs to a small but important series that throws some light on the obscure history of Britain in the centuries immediately preceding the Roman Conquest. Like many specimens of its time, the brooch is beautifully patinated and in good condition, minor defects being made good in the suggested restoration. The material which has been inlaid in the bow, and attached by pins to the foot, has a pinkish surface, opaque and fairly soft; but the boss on the disc of the foot has been broken in two across the centre, where the bronze pin still remains, and one half has been lost, the separation having probably taken place at

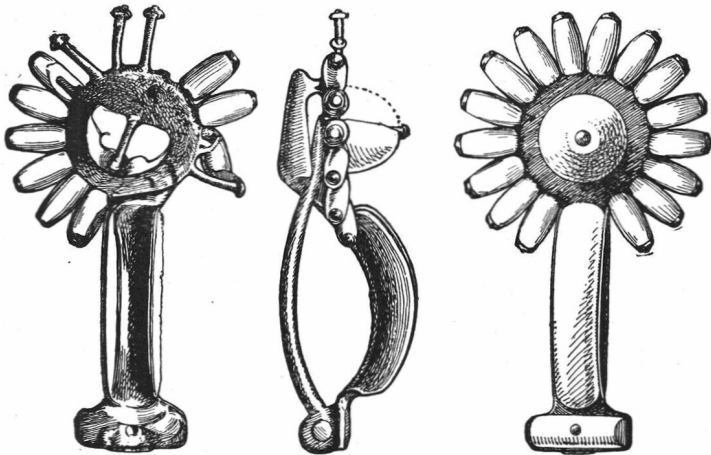


Fig. 4. Bronze Brooch set with Coral. Harborough Cave.  
(Top and side views, with restoration.) †

the time of its excavation. The remaining portion is darker in colour and more glass-like inside, and there can be little doubt that the material is coral. Confirmation of this opinion has been obtained from Prof. A. H. Church, who independently and without hesitation took the same view on examining it. The colour and quality of the decayed surface closely resemble those of other inlays in ornaments of the period, and vindicate what has hitherto been more or less of a conjecture, as analysis of the material had proved of little value, and opinions were still divided between shell, coral, glass-paste, and enamel. Cases in point are the peculiar pin from the Thames at



Hammersmith,<sup>1</sup> in Canon Greenwell's collection; a wheel-headed pin from the Danes' graves at Kilham, E.R. Yorks.;<sup>2</sup> and a brooch, almost identical with that from the Cave, that was found in the "Queen's barrow" at Arras, near Market Weighton, E.R. Yorks.<sup>3</sup> Perhaps the most striking characteristic of both brooches is their plumpness, when compared with the majority of specimens of the late La Tène period, with which they seem to be contemporary. The prototypes of the La Tène series, dating from the fifth century B.C., are indeed as plump, and are also richly ornamented; but as we cannot readily assign the British pair to so early a date, some other explanation must be sought. Structurally, they are related to the La Tène series, but differ in the head, or that end of the bow to which the pin is permanently attached. While the ordinary brooches of the La Tène period (our early Iron Age) have bilateral spiral springs in one piece with the head and pin, the two in question have a transverse tube at the head, with an axis, on which works the hinge of the pin. This mode of fixing the pin suggests the Roman period, and, apart from these instances, the hinge system does not seem to have been adopted except under Roman influence in the first century of our era. Further evidence is needed to decide whether the Britons used the hinge on brooches independently in the pre-Roman period, or whether the coral-inlaid brooches owe this feature to Roman models introduced at the Roman Conquest, or in the century between that and the Julian invasion. The presence of definitely Roman brooches in the Cave make the latter hypothesis a plausible one, but the work is clearly late Keltic (native, as opposed to Roman), and the use of coral is another difficulty.<sup>4</sup> According to Dr. Salomon Reinach, the learned director of the French Museum of National Antiquities at St. Germain-en-Laye, that material was not used in the Keltic world after

<sup>1</sup> *Archæologia*, lx., 271, fig. 18.

<sup>2</sup> *Proc. Soc. Ant. Lond.*, xvii., 120; *Archæologia*, lx., 269, fig. 17.

<sup>3</sup> *Archæologia*, lx., 296, fig. 43. The site is about 85 miles north-east of Brassington.

<sup>4</sup> This point is more fully discussed in *Proc. Soc. Ant. Lond.*, xxii.

about 250 B.C., its place being taken by enamel. Though plentiful in Europe during the two preceding centuries, the supply from the Mediterranean coasts (especially from the Hyères islands off Toulon) was suddenly diverted about that date to India, where an eager demand had sprung up on account of the supposed prophylactic qualities of coral. This information is afforded by Pliny, and is quite explicit; but there are several instances in Britain of coral used for ornamenting bronze at a date that must be later than A.D. 250, and may be little earlier than the Christian era. There was, however, in Britain a similar transition to enamel, which for some time was only produced in one colour—a red that was

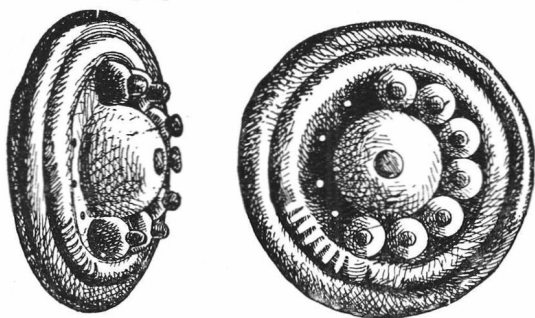


Fig. 5. Bronze disc with studs of enamel, Bugthorpe, E.R. Yorks. §

an evident attempt to imitate that of coral. Moreover, the enamel was at first not laid on flat, in hollows prepared for it on a metal face, but made in the form of studs and attached by means of bronze pins through the centre. A disc so ornamented, that was found in a warrior's grave with a sword at Bugthorpe, E.R. Yorks., is here illustrated (fig. 5) for comparison with the Harborough Cave brooch, which has the earlier material attached in precisely the same manner. It is interesting to note in confirmation of this view that the Bugthorpe sword, found with enamel, is a little later in style than that found with coral in a warrior's grave at Grimthorpe, E.R. Yorks.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Both swords are in the British Museum; *Iron Age Guide*, figs. 85, 86, p. 105.

Bronze brooches clearly of the Roman period, but more or less influenced by native taste, may next be mentioned. The bow of fig. 6 is of provincial Roman type, with two perforations in the catch plate and a slight moulding at the foot. The pin is missing, but sprang from an opening in the underside of the oval tube that forms the head of the brooch. This tube may have protected and concealed a long spiral spring of which the pin formed part, or may have served as a hinge

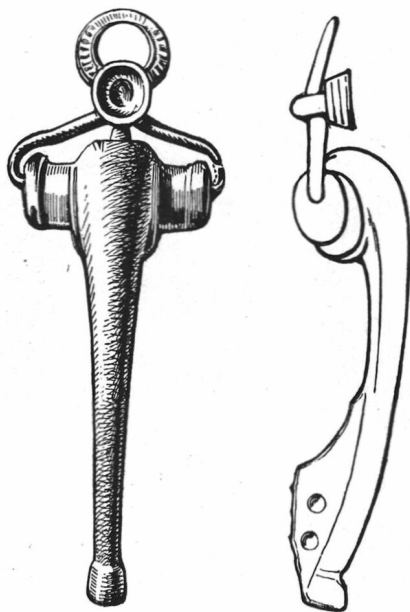


Fig. 6. Bronze Brooch. †

for the pin. From either end issue wires that join below an empty setting (for coral, enamel, glass, or precious stone), and continue as a ring with an eccentric opening for holding the chain that once joined a pair of these brooches. The wires issuing from the head are, in earlier specimens, functional; that is, they are caught on a hook projecting from the head, and increase the tension of the spiral spring; but in this case they rest on a peg, and merely serve to support the ring. The next type (fig. 7) is practically confined to Britain, though

some examples have been found in North-west Europe.<sup>1</sup> Its main characteristics are the trumpet-shaped head, the moulded bow, and the terminal which develops ultimately into a box-foot.<sup>2</sup> The loop at the head is here of wire, with a separate collar below (corresponding to the hollow setting of fig. 6), and the ends are caught in the spiral spring which supplied the tension for the pin (now missing). A somewhat later stage is illustrated by the third specimen (fig. 8), which exhibits

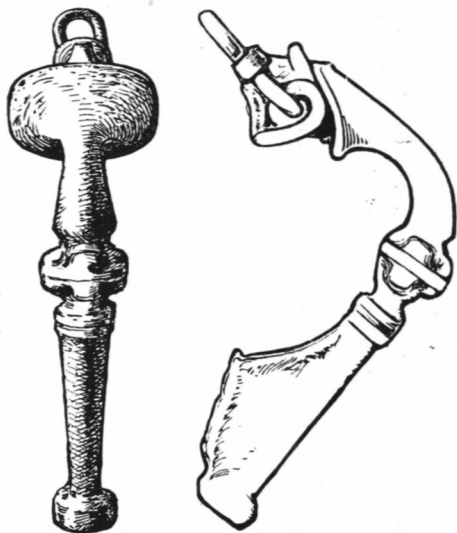


Fig. 7. Bronze harp-shaped Brooch. †

the same general features, but has a ring in one piece with the head, and had the pin fixed (probably by means of an axis through a short spiral) in two perforated lugs. This stage of development dates from the late second or possibly the third century.

Harborough Cave also yielded a brooch which is commonly found in such situations, as at Dowkerbottom Cave, near Settle, Yorks.,<sup>3</sup> and seems to date from the second century.

<sup>1</sup> Examples cited in *Mitteilungen über Römische Funde in Heddernheim*, ii., p. 40.

<sup>2</sup> *Archæologia*, lv., 185.

<sup>3</sup> Roach Smith, *Collectanea Antiqua*, i., pl. xxvii., fig. 4.

The pin has not survived, but is indicated by dotted lines, and the peculiar written terminal is also illustrated. This last is generally found on penannular brooches of the period,

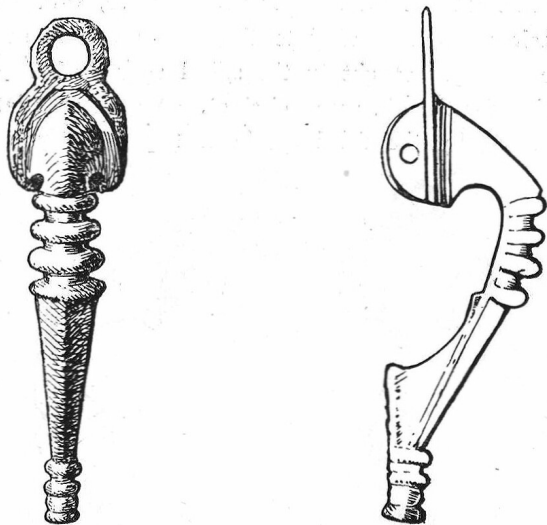


Fig. 8.—Bronze harp-shaped Brooch. †

though sometimes rendered much less noticeable by rubbing when in use. The parentage of these brooches is fairly established, and their descendants can be traced through several centuries, especially in Ireland. The principle is the

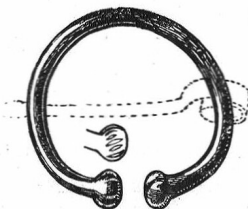


Fig. 9.—Bronze penannular Brooch. †

same in all but the latest, the pin being passed through the two pieces of cloth to be joined, and then lifted through the opening so as to rest on the outer face, away from the terminals (as shewn in fig. 9). Penannular specimens of the first century

are known from Stamford Hill, Plymouth,<sup>1</sup> and from Colchester (in the Castle Museum), while a somewhat earlier form occurs at Glastonbury.<sup>2</sup>

A roughly cut sard intaglio (fig. 10), evidently of Roman



Fig. 10.—Sard intaglio of Athene.  $\frac{1}{4}$

date, is intended to represent Athene (Minerva) with a Victory in her extended hand, and the gem was probably set in a finger-ring. Of three Roman coins, two appear to be of Trajan (98-117), and the third is hopelessly corroded; but

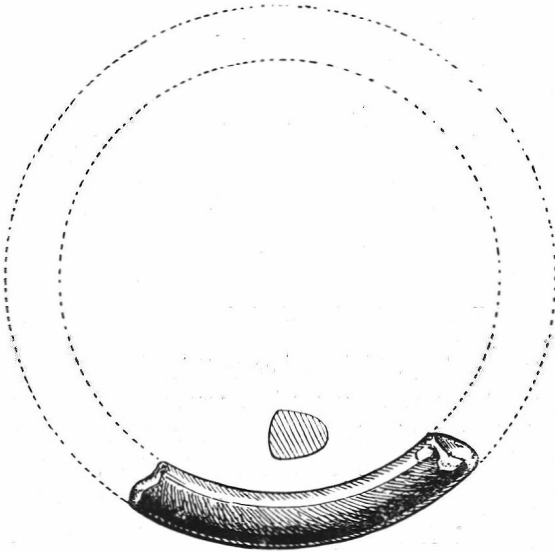


Fig. 11.—Portion of Shale Armlet.  $\frac{2}{3}$

they agree well enough with the other Roman finds, and suggest that the Cave was inhabited in the second century. To the same period may be assigned a fragment of bronze

<sup>1</sup> *Archæologia*, xl., 503, fig. 3.

<sup>2</sup> *Proc. Som. Arch. Soc.*, liii., pl. v., No. E. 259.

scabbard-binding (as at Hod Hill, Dorset, and Glastonbury<sup>1</sup>), and fragments of an armlet and bracelet of Kimmeridge shale (figs. 11 and 12) turned on the wheel; but the latter may possibly be of pre-Roman (late Keltic) date, the turner's wheel having been known in Britain before the Roman occupation. Similar bracelets were found in Dowkerbottom Cave, Yorks., and in the lake-village at Glastonbury.<sup>2</sup>

One piece of the so-called Samian ware is preserved from the Cave, the base apparently of a bowl (Dragendorff's type 31), probably made at Lezoux, Puy-de-Dôme, and dating from the

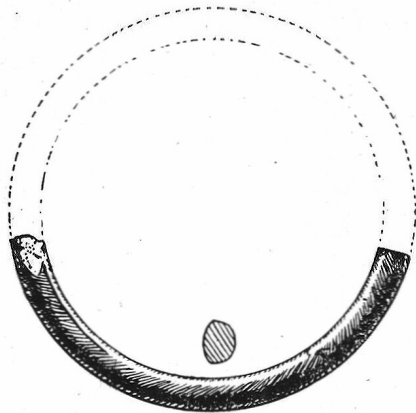


Fig. 12.—Portion of Shale Bracelet.  $\frac{3}{4}$

early second century. The other pottery is not easy to date precisely; but, apart from modern wares (soft and hard red-ware, with brown glaze), there are two or three pieces that have all the appearance of late Keltic ware, with incurved rim and fairly smooth brown surface, while some is so thick and coarse, and full of gritty particles, that an earlier date seems necessary. It may belong to culinary vessels of the Bronze Age; but domestic ware of that date is rare in these islands, and the roughest pottery is not always the earliest. Some pieces, 0·8 in. thick, have a black core with red surfaces,

<sup>1</sup> *Proc. Som. Arch. Soc.*, lii., p. 116, No. E 247.

<sup>2</sup> *Proc. Som. Arch. Soc.*, li., p. 97, No. K 29; lii., p. 98, No. K 30.

and others are black with pale yellow surface. There are but faint traces of decoration, a raised knobbed band being visible on one fragment.

The ironwork seems to be all of the same period, which can be fairly determined by reference to other finds of the same character. The curved, pointed knife-blade (fig. 13), for

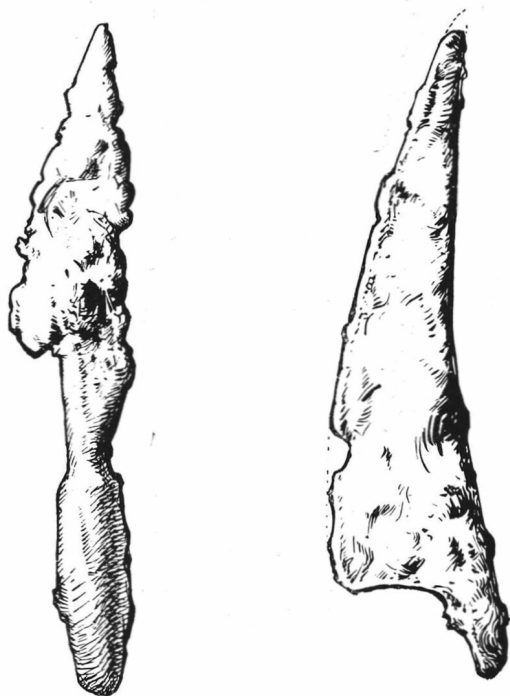


Fig. 13.—Iron Knives.  $\frac{3}{4}$

example, occurs at Hod Hill, Dorset (British Museum<sup>1</sup>), and the figure beside it is a similar knife, rusted, with what seems to be a small bone-handle. There are two lance-heads of iron (fig. 14), one in good condition with entire socket and one rivet hole, and the other with the socket accidentally split

<sup>1</sup> A similar knife but with straight back was found in one of the Settle caves (*Coll. Antiq.*, i., pl. xxx., fig. 9); another at Glastonbury, *Proc. Som. Arch. Soc.*, liii., 126: cf. *Wilt's Arch. Mag.*, xxvii., 285, fig. 5; and *Archæologia*, xlvi., pl. xxiv., figs. 6 and 7.



and imperfect. The ferrule (fig. 15) must have belonged to a spear-shaft, and would have been too heavy for such heads

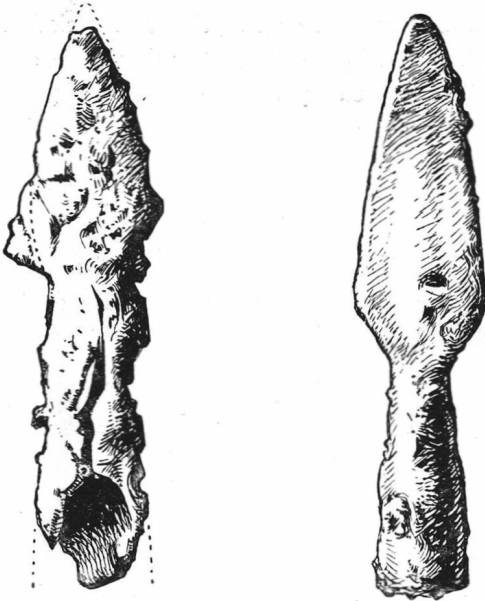


Fig. 14.—Iron Lance-heads.  $\frac{2}{3}$

as those here illustrated.<sup>1</sup> The socket is round and intentionally split, as is also that of a heavy iron tool, perhaps a chisel (fig. 16). The latter closely corresponds to one found with



Fig. 15.—Iron ferrule of spear.  $\frac{2}{3}$

other iron tools of British or Romano-British origin from Lakenheath, Suffolk, now in the British Museum. The last

<sup>1</sup> The proportion is given by a Viking specimen figured in Dr. Anderson's *Scotland in Pagan Times: Iron Age*, p. 19.

specimen illustrated (fig. 17) seems to be a strike-a-light, with a hole or holes for suspension at the girdle. Such implements continued in use with flint for striking fire till the introduction of lucifer matches, and were represented in our Bronze Age by lumps of iron pyrites.<sup>1</sup> Apart from associated objects, the present example would be difficult to date; one very similar



Fig. 16.—Iron socketed tool.  $\frac{3}{8}$

is in the Museum of National Antiquities at Edinburgh (*Cat.*, p. 336). An iron disc, of indeterminate use,  $2\frac{1}{2}$  in. in diameter, is in fair condition, but of a larger one,  $4\frac{1}{2}$  in. in diameter, only part remains; there are also two tapering sockets, with a maximum opening of  $\frac{3}{4}$  in., one containing an iron hook; but they are evidently incomplete.

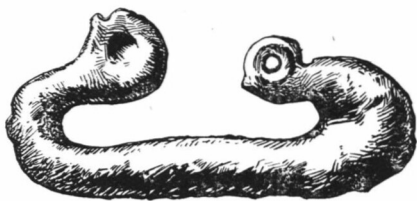


Fig. 17.—Iron Strike-a-light.  $\frac{1}{4}$

It must be more than a coincidence that the caves of Derbyshire have yielded remains of a definite facies, which corresponds to the middle period of the Roman occupation. Practically all the datable remains from these retreats point to the second and third centuries of our era, and it is no longer

<sup>1</sup> Greenwell, *British Barrows*, fig. 31; *Stone Age Guide* (British Museum), fig. 130.

possible to look upon the cave-dwellers of Derbyshire as Romano-British refugees at a time when the Midlands were being overrun by Anglo-Saxon invaders. Prof. Haverfield has recently discussed this point, and the evidence from Harborough Cave is all in favour of his views. He discards J. R. Green's picturesque suppositions, and relies on the coins and datable brooches, which shew that the caves were occupied by Romanized Britons in reduced circumstances centuries before the Teutonic conquest, and were deserted before the end of the Roman domination. Their occupation was a tolerably long one, and cave-life seems to have been a settled practice for two or three centuries rather than a temporary expedient in time of danger. "Here, we may think, dwelt some of the poorest and wildest among the hillmen of the Pennine range, living (it may be) largely on robbery, doubtless suspected by their neighbours, but seldom caught. Such householders exist even in our own crowded modern life, though they do not occupy natural caves. We need not wonder at their prototypes in the past."<sup>1</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> *Victoria History of Derbyshire*, i. 242. Professor Haverfield's chapter has several illustrations of cave relics.