

X.—PREHISTORIC NOTES

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The following notes on material of the prehistoric periods from Northumberland and Durham have accumulated over a number of years. Partly for this reason I have not hesitated to retain the phrase "in the Society's collection" and analogous expressions, where appropriate, though the objects in question are today lodged in the Museum of Antiquities in the University of Newcastle. On the other hand I have eliminated the implication that any of these things may still be found in the Black Gate Museum.

It is a pleasure to acknowledge here the kindness of Mr. John Tait in drawing for me figures 1-4; and of Dr. David Smith and Mr. Charles Daniels in making the arrangements to this end.

1. *A Rare Flint from Darlington*

In the collection of the Darlington and Teesdale Naturalists' Field Club is an unusual flint implement, and I am grateful to the Club for the opportunity of publishing it. All that is known of its history is that it was found in May or June 1931, in the course of excavations for building in Elton Road, near Abbey Road, Darlington, five feet below the surface in "fairly sandy soil", and was presented to the Field Club by Mr. A. Moss.

It is a curved angle-flake of a grey-brown mottled flint, of fine workmanship, $6\frac{1}{2}$ inches long and triangular in section (Pl. XIV). The concave inner face is one inch wide, and unworked; the back, with a worked central ridge, has two faces, each $\frac{3}{4}$ inch wide; and both edges are steeply trimmed. All secondary work has been carried out by

pressure-flaking. Altogether it is a fine piece, and its appearance so far north as Darlington is a matter for surprise. But on the face of it the account of the discovery seems to show that it was a genuine find, and not a collector's piece gone astray.

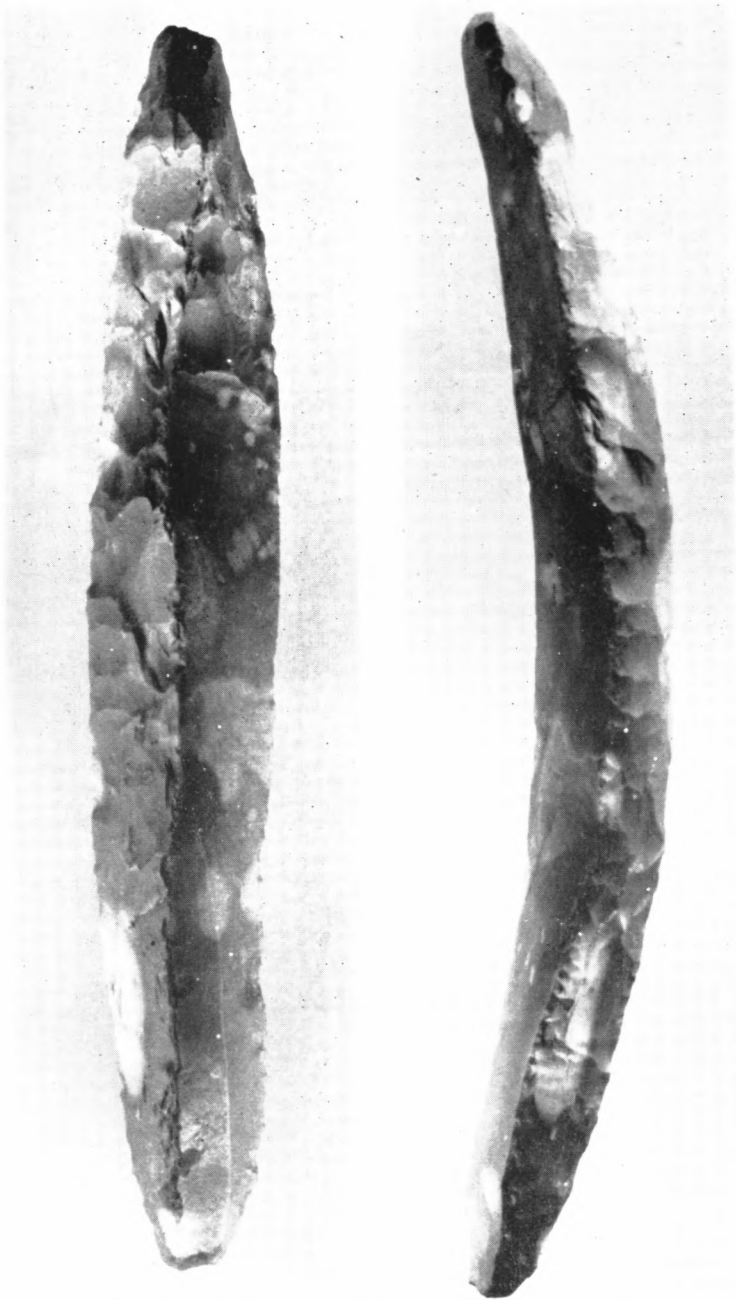
The type dates from the Early Bronze Age, and is found fairly widely distributed in Northern France (where it may commonly be seen in provincial museums), and in the Channel Islands.¹

The use of these "points" or "daggers" is uncertain, but they were probably used either as fabricators—tools for flaking flint by pressure—or perhaps as stabbing weapons. In the country of origin they are always made of the famous honey-coloured Grand Pressigny flint, and are indeed one of the most characteristic and most widely diffused of the products of that industry. The traffic in these flints from the mines and workshops of Grand Pressigny was in full swing during the Megalithic period, and extended to the Channel coast, but does not seem to have reached this country.

There are, however, in England a number of local imitations. The Darlington piece belongs to this group in that the shape copies that of the Pressigny "daggers", while the brown mottled flint appears to have been chosen because of its resemblance to the true Pressigny flint. Several other examples of the type are known,² and it is generally agreed that as a class they are in fact English derivatives or copies of the Continental "daggers" made of Grand Pressigny flint. Among these the sharp triangular section of the Darlington piece, combined with the fine pressure-flaking in Bronze Age technique, seems to be unparalleled. It is perhaps the finest known from this country, and the Darlington and Teesdale Naturalists' Field Club is to be congratulated on the possession of so notable a specimen.

¹ Jacquetta Hawkes, *Archaeology of the Channel Islands*, vol. II (1937), 62-3, and fig. 11.

² E.g. J. Evans, *Stone Implements*, ed. 2 (1897), fig. 233, found near Cambridge; a possibly genuine import is in the Blackmore Museum, Salisbury, said to have been found "in the neighbourhood", *Antiquity*, VII (1933), 166n.



1, 2. Curved flint angle-flake from Darlington (1:1)

2. *Two supposed discoveries of Scandinavian material in Northumberland and Durham re-examined*

There are in the Society's collection two objects, or groups of objects, unquestionably of Scandinavian origin, for which a local provenance has been claimed, in one case by the writer. In both cases the evidence for these claims calls for re-examination.

Some years ago, in a paper entitled "Fragments of a Bronze Sword in the Black Gate Museum",³ I identified two pieces of a bronze blade in the collection⁴ as fragments of a sword of a well known Danish type. They had been previously described by the late Parker Brewis in the Northumberland County History in a note stating that they were found near Corbridge.⁵ This provenance I accepted, and drew the conclusion that our fragments were indeed evidence for relations with Denmark during the Bronze Age. The intervening years have convinced me that the statement in this source must be wrong. Brewis could never recall his authority for making it; and it appears probable that a mistake arose through a haphazard association in the museum cases of these fragments with something else which did come from Corbridge. In his note Brewis says "found near Corbridge along with pieces of Bronze Age pottery, and presented . . . by Mr. Joseph Forster." The food vessel from Corbridge presented by Joseph Forster in 1813 has always been easily identifiable through the excellent drawing of it published at the time.⁶ We know that the records of the donations to our Society in the early years, as published, were singularly accurate and complete; but there is no mention in those records of any bronze fragments (nor of any more pottery) accompanying the food vessel.

³ *AA* 4, X (1933), 119-205, pl. XIV.

⁴ No. A27.

⁵ *NCH* X (1914), p. xvi—Addenda to p. 6.

⁶ *AA* 1, I (1822), Pl. VI G; and Donations p. 2—as noted by Brewis, *loc. cit.*, p. 6.

Nor is there any mention of material of this character having been given by Joseph Forster at another time. There has, unhappily, been more than one period in the history of the Society when confusion of this kind in the museum cases could easily have taken place. The bronze fragments could have been received at the museum either separately as an unrecorded gift, or (unmentioned) along with some of the recorded Danish material of which we do know (see *infra*, pp. 214-15). My former acceptance of the Corbridge attribution for this Danish piece is now, therefore, withdrawn. In my view it is incorrect, and should be abandoned.

The other matter is a longer story. Eight fragments of Danish neolithic pottery of the Passage-Grave period⁷ have for many years stood on the record as deriving, along with unquestionable evidence of occupation in the Roman period, from a coastal site between Seaton Carew and West Hartlepool, Co. Durham. It is unnecessary again to review all the successive publications of this material. That was most adequately done, up to the date of his paper, by the late Professor Childe in our own transactions in 1932.⁸ In view of the attention they have received, and the eminence of the scholars who have noticed them, these pottery fragments might until recently almost be said to have assumed textbook standing. These authorities were, however, concerned only with the archaeological analysis of the sherds, and not with the authenticity of their discovery, which (it must be owned) they were entitled to take on trust from our Society.

For a good many years I have myself distrusted the record, but it was Dr. C. T. Trechmann who first published a note of warning. Writing in 1936, four years after Childe's paper, he said: "Some sherds of Danish Megalithic pottery were in the collection of R. Morton Middleton which went to the Blackgate museum at Newcastle-on-Tyne and have been described as coming from this bed, although I can

⁷ Nos. 1883. 10/1-8.

⁸ *AA* 4, IX (1932), 84-88, plates VIII-X.

see no mention of decorated prehistoric pottery in his paper on the kitchen-midden."⁹ Stated thus, however, the argument is not conclusive. For there is a passage in Middleton's account of his operations which *can* be read as referring to these fragments: "All the above named pottery is Roman. There are in addition several fragments of coarse earthenware, rudely hand-modelled, and generally more or less burnt, which Mr. Franks believes to be Celtic or Saxon."¹⁰ Certainly the pieces are not described as decorated, but it was the fact that they had not been wheel-turned, and were "prehistoric" in fabric, that took Middleton's attention. On the other hand a few fragments of British bronze age pottery, probably from cinerary urns, have long been shown with the Roman material from the site, and the reference may be to these, though Franks' opinion seems to hint at something a little more unusual. In the absence of illustrations no decision is possible, but we may accept that Dr. Trechmann did raise a valid doubt on the presence of the sherds among the original excavation material.

These doubts were in due course picked up by Professor Stuart Piggott who, in referring to the passage quoted above, makes the additional point that the fragments as we have them look suspiciously hand-picked as though to form a representative type-series.¹¹ The same thought had occurred to myself also, and if valid would much strengthen the case for their being an accretion from some other source.

Meanwhile in 1946 Dr. Trechmann had again returned to the charge. In an interesting note entitled "Some Reminiscences of R. Morton Middleton," and expressly directed to the question of the reliability of the evidence in this case, he said: "I have never been happy about the authenticity of this record"; and in conclusion, "Until the reported occurrence is confirmed by other finds, or by the finding of Danish flint implements on our coast, personally,

⁹ *PPS* II (1936), 168.

¹⁰ *AA* 2, X (1885), 103-114. The quotation at p. 108.

¹¹ *Neolithic Cultures of the British Isles* (1954), p. 321. By implication he rejects the authenticity of the find without more ado.

I feel sceptical about it.”¹² The note makes two new contributions to our information. In the first place Trechmann showed, from first-hand knowledge of the household, just what sort of an establishment it was from which this material emanated. Of Middleton he said: “He was a born naturalist and collector of the old type. The house was full of specimens, there was a skull of a Babirusa in the bathroom, a vessel from a prehistoric mound in North America in the drawing room. One day a portmanteau of fossils arrived, which Harold and I had to unpack. He gave me various specimens, such as a North American arrowhead and several land or freshwater shells, some of which I still have.” Such a setting could only too obviously have afforded both the material and the opportunity for confusion.

In the second place he added: “It is well to mention that the beach at this particular point is strewn with ballast boulders such as Rapakivi granite, Orthoceras limestone, etc, from the Baltic.”¹³ This introduces an entirely new factor. The Danish pottery fragments might indeed have been found actually on the site, but only as a consequence of the discharge of ships’ ballast in more or less recent times, and therefore without any prehistoric implications whatever.

Another and even simpler possibility may now be suggested. The association of the sherds with the Roman material may, after all, have taken place in our own Museum cases. As we have seen, there is no sure evidence that they did in fact accompany the rest of Middleton’s gift. Furthermore we do know that on at least one occasion the Society has received a gift of Danish pottery; and that that pottery can no longer be identified with anything in the collection today. On 30th October, 1889, R. C. Clephan made a donation of “Fragments of ancient urns from Den-

¹² *PSAN* 4, X (1946), 334-5.

¹³ And in a letter to the writer, 12th Jan. 1937: “Scandinavian ballast etc, is strewn well about this coast.”

mark", not further described or illustrated.¹⁴ That gift, or some other unrecorded (and there have been plenty such), could quite well have been the source of the sherds in question.¹⁵ Confusion in our cases, as already observed, has been only too possible at certain stages in the past. Middleton's gift was made in 1883, Clephan's in 1889; the first specific notice of the sherds was published by Knut Stjerna in 1911, when the association was already accepted. But a false association could have resulted from a single careless spring-cleaning.¹⁶

So it seems that we now have four distinct possibilities:

- (1) The sherds may be a genuine find of Danish pottery brought across the North Sea during the Passage-Grave period.
- (2) They may have been actually found on the site, but only as the result of being cast there in ships' ballast from Scandinavia in modern times.
- (3) The association with the Roman material may have taken place in Middleton's house.
- (4) The association may have taken place in our own Museum.

The first is so inherently improbable on general archaeological grounds that it has caused students increasingly to suspect the authenticity of the record. With half a century of active archaeological research and discovery intervening, and no further finds of a comparable kind, the improbability

¹⁴ *PSAN* 2, IV (1891), 162.

¹⁵ On 30th May 1883 a "collection of prehistoric stone implements from Denmark" was presented anonymously to the Society through the good offices of the Rev. J. C. Bruce (*PSAN* 2, I (1884), 26). These flint implements were always clearly identifiable in the Black Gate and still exist, but the collection thus briefly mentioned might well have included a few fragments of pottery, or even of bronze. Nevertheless I prefer Clephan's gift as the more likely source.

¹⁶ Besides misplaced labels too numerous to recite, at least one such case of false association can be proved to have occurred in the Black Gate collection. This was when a bronze socketed axe of Breton type, obtained in Paris, became involved with Roman material from Chester-le-Street, presented on the same occasion and by the same donor (*AA* 1, IV (1855), Donations, p. 16), and subsequently appeared both in Evans' *Bronze Implements* (p. 116), and in the *V.C.H. Durham* (Vol. I, p. 207), as a Chester-le-Street find! See also *supra*, pp. 211-12.

is very much higher today than it was when the true character of the sherds was first recognised. And every year that passes without the discovery of confirmatory evidence strengthens the case to the contrary.

The second is a contingency always to be borne in mind when dealing with material from the coasts and estuaries near old established centres of shipping.¹⁷ But this alternative, like the first, must be ruled out if we accept the view that the collection of sherds has been hand-picked. There was no hand-picking on the Seaton Carew site. From the composition of the rest of the material it is clear that Middleton kept every last scrap, and handed it all in.

The third is *prima facie* a fairly obvious possibility, especially in view of what Trechmann has recorded about the Middleton establishment. Nevertheless it ignores the fact that the gift to the Society was specifically a transfer of the excavation material, made on the occasion of the presentation of the excavation report within a few weeks after digging had ceased; and that there was a period of two months at most—from some time in October to the end of November 1883—in which the confusion could have taken place.¹⁸ This view, therefore, which was clearly Dr. Trechmann's, may do less than justice to Middleton's competence as "a collector of the old type".

The last alternative is open to none of the above objections, nor to any other peculiar to itself. It is the explanation which best fits all the facts, and it is that which I myself believe to be the most probable.

Wherever the truth may lie, in the presence of possibilities of error so formidable the association of our sherds from the Passage-Graves of Denmark with a coastal site in Co. Durham is too insecurely founded to be any longer acceptable.

¹⁷ I have myself seen a piece of a reindeer's antler that proved to have come from an old ballast-hill on the Tyne.

¹⁸ Middleton was excavating on the site between August and October 1883. He presented his excavation material to the Society, and read the paper on his work, on 28th November 1883. (*PSAN* 2, I (1884), 98).

3. *Two Amber Beads from Simonside*

Some time before 1899 two large amber beads, or buttons, were found by workmen cutting drains on Simonside (Pl. XV, 1-2). Though they were certainly found together, nothing else is known of the circumstances of the discovery. The find was recorded by D. D. Dixon in his *Upper Coquetdale*,¹⁹ and they have been mentioned elsewhere two or three times since, though there has been little enough to say about them.²⁰ On account of the material of which they are made, and their rather rough finish, they have always been assigned in a general way to the prehistoric period, or more specifically to the Bronze Age; but to the best of my knowledge nothing else quite like them is known from the British Isles.²¹ They are now in the Society's collection, to which they came in 1932 with the remainder of the Dixon collection deposited by Dr. Wilfred Hall.

It is the purpose of this note to draw attention to an analogous group of objects deriving from a clearly defined archaeological context in Denmark. But first it will be well more accurately to describe our own pieces. Both are what may be called bun-shaped objects of a dark red amber, apparently opaque, but translucent when held to the light. Allowing for irregularities of outline, both have a diameter of almost exactly 2 inches (or a trifle less), and both are perforated through the centre with a neatly drilled straight-sided hole about 0.15 inches in diameter.

The first²² is 0.75 inches thick, slightly domed on the upper surface and approximately flat below. It is the more neatly executed (that is, the more carefully polished and the

¹⁹ Published 1903; p. 132, fig. 8.

²⁰ *PSAN* 4, V (1932), 233-4; *NCH* XV (1940), 24, pl. I, 8 & 9.

²¹ Since writing the above I have noticed a comparable amber bead, or button, in the Pitt-Rivers Museum at Farnham, Dorset. It is a little smaller than ours, and of a slightly neater finish; in particular it has a well developed radial groove. But except for the vague provenance "Ireland" it has no history.

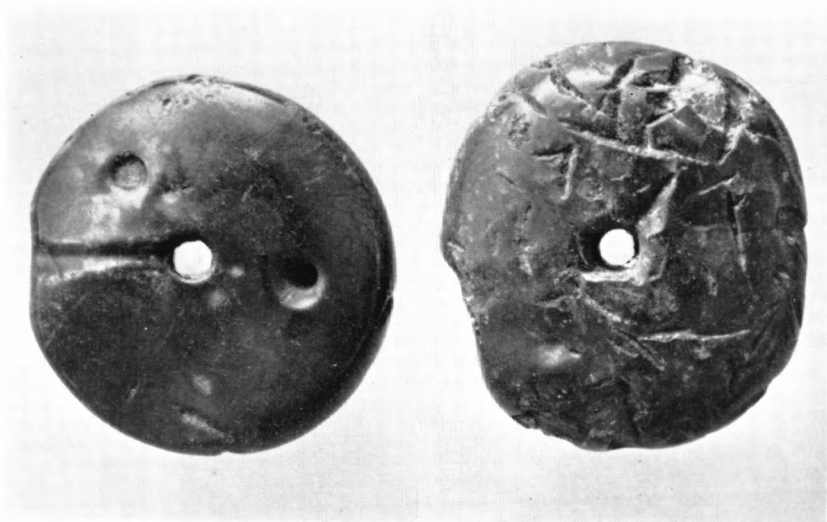
²² No. 1932. 14/1a.

more nearly circular) of the two, and on both upper and lower faces and at the perimeter it shows a clearly defined radial groove made for, or worn by, the cord which must have been fastened tightly round it. The edge shows some signs of having been ground and polished to its present comparatively regular outline; and all the under surface (except for depressions) shows a high degree of polish.

The second²³ is altogether coarser. It is 0.9 inches thick and its circumference nowhere near so regular as in No. 1. It too is domed on top; but in this case the under surface also is slightly convex. Here again there is a faint cord-groove, as in No. 1, which can however only be detected on the under surface, and not on the upper. It is not clear whether a finish has been given to the edge by grinding; though rounded and smooth to the touch, it appears rather to be the natural shape of the raw material. As in the first the under surface carries quite a high degree of polish.

Amongst the magnificent display of prehistoric amber in the Copenhagen Museum there is a distinctive series of large disc-shaped buttons, which though differing from ours in some particulars yet in general are so strikingly similar as to call for comment. These objects are found, almost always *in pairs*, in the group of burials known as "Under-graves"—the earliest graves of the Battle-axe Folk immediately after their arrival in Jutland. They come from the burials of men, not of women; and from the position in which they are most frequently found in the graves are with good reason supposed to be ornamental belt-ends, designed to hang down in front of the body below the belt knot. Their position at other times shows, however, that they were on occasion also attached to a garment simply as buttons. In form they are discoidal, sometimes nearly as much as four inches in diameter, with a slightly convex upper surface, a flat under surface, and a perforation in the centre just like ours. A pair is well illustrated (Pl. XV, figs. 3-4) in

²³ No. 1932. 14/1b.



1, 2. Amber Beads: Simonside, under (1:1)



3, 4. Amber Beads: Denmark, under ($\frac{2}{3}$)

Brøndsted's *Danmarks Oldtid*,²⁴ the neighbouring plates showing other elements in the culture, including early corded beakers.

As seen in the illustration referred to, the Danish amber buttons look indistinguishable from ours, but a closer examination shows some differences.²⁵ In the first place, the Danish pieces are in general larger than ours. Secondly, they all have one convex and one definitely flat face. Finally, none of the Danish pieces has the radial cord-grooves seen on both the Simonside examples.

These particulars prevent us claiming identity between our local find and the Danish material. It may be that they did not even serve the same purpose. But the similarity remains so great, and not least the fact that ours, too, were found as a pair, that the idea of some relationship seems difficult to dismiss.

Assuming for the moment that some connection exists, what implications can the Danish material give us in point of dating? Under-graves appear during the second half of the Early Passage-grave period in Denmark, which is today generally accepted as falling within the time-span covered by the earlier part of the Bronze Age in Britain. We may, therefore, pending the appearance of further evidence, provisionally assign the Simonside amber buttons to our own Early Bronze Age.

4. The Gold Ear-ring from Kirkhaugh, near Alston, and its Associated Pottery

In 1936 Mr. Herbert Maryon published an account of his excavations in two barrows of the Bronze Age at Kirkhaugh, near Alston, just inside the county boundary of

²⁴ Vol. I, *Stenalderen*, ed. 2 (1957), fig. on p. 258.

²⁵ I am greatly indebted to Dr. H. Norling-Christensen of the Copenhagen Museum, who not only examined the Simonside buttons at my request, but on his return to Copenhagen compared their characteristics with the material preserved in the Museum there.

Northumberland.²⁶ The first barrow proved to be undisturbed, and the contents almost certainly all came from a single primary burial, probably an inhumation. The most interesting of the objects recovered was a gold ear-ring of the "basket" or "trug" type (fig. 1),²⁷ to which the excavator did full justice in his report.²⁸ Among other pieces of worked flint and stone, of no chronological significance, the tumulus contained a good barbed-and-tanged flint arrowhead of normal "beaker" type, though one would not care to press the dating value of that. It is to the associated pottery that it is wished here to draw attention.



FIG. 1. KIRKHAUGH, BARROW NO. 1: GOLD EAR-RING (1:1)

Apart from a single sherd of coarse ware of indeterminate character the fragments of pottery all came from one vessel. This vessel "had been crushed, probably by the large flat stone, weighing about $\frac{3}{4}$ cwt., which was found above it. The fabric was sodden with water and very soft, so it was not possible to recover every fragment".²⁹ In consequence the pieces recovered by Mr. Maryon were without exception very small—hardly bigger than one's thumbnail—and he found it impossible to offer a reconstruction of their original form, though for what they may be worth he deduced the following measurements: height 6 inches, diameter at the rim 8 inches, and at the base $3\frac{1}{2}$ inches.

Maryon identified these pieces as fragments of a food vessel. As a parallel he quoted BAP No. 69,³⁰ but that Yorkshire food vessel is not really in the least like our frag-

²⁶ *AA* 4, XIII (1936), 207-217.

²⁷ No. 1936.13.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 211-214, fig. 3b.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 211. The pottery fragments are not illustrated.

³⁰ Abercromby, *Bronze Age Pottery*, vol. 1 (1912), pl. XXXII.

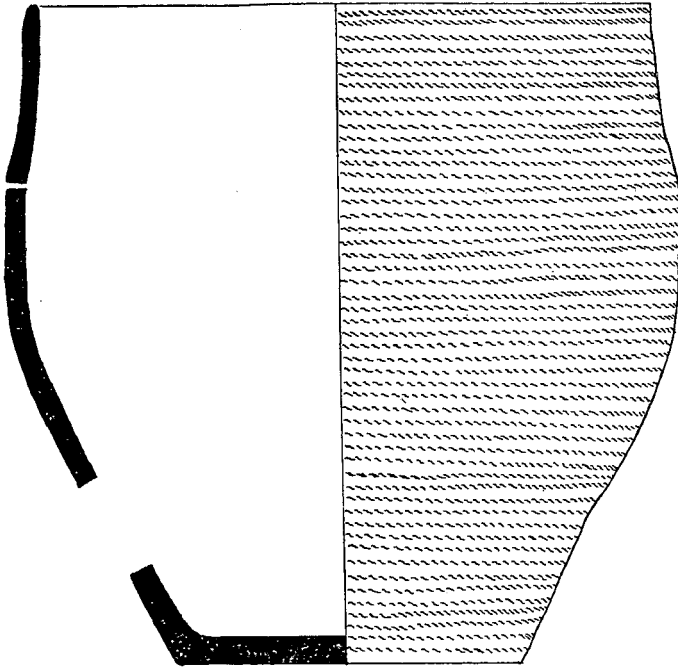


FIG. 2. KIRKHAUGH, BARROW NO. 1: CONJECTURAL RESTORATION OF BEAKER ($\frac{1}{2}$)

ments, and the only point of resemblance is that both are cord-ornamented. In fact it cannot be maintained that the pieces from Kirkhaugh are fragments of a food vessel at all. On the contrary there can be no doubt that the pot from Kirkhaugh barrow No. 1 was a B-beaker (fig. 2.). The thin, comparatively hard, reddish-brown ware, and above all the distinctive closely wound cord-impressions covering the whole body, put the matter beyond dispute. It does not seem possible to say whether the cord was wound spirally round the vessel, or whether each turn was separate and complete. It may well be that Maryon was right in suggesting the former. In either case, this close and continuous cord-ornament is characteristic of that group of B-beakers which

Childe has designated as type B3.³¹ This is a conclusion we are fortunately justified in reaching without any need to rely on the profile. It follows that Maryon's subsequent deductions as to date must be abandoned.³² The burial is categorically of the Beaker Period, and not of the "late or middle-late" Bronze Age.

5. *A Food Vessel from Crag Hall, Jesmond*

On 27th March 1844 there were discovered in the garden at Crag Hall, Jesmond, two bronze age cist-graves containing four "urns". The find is sufficiently recorded by Dendy in his *Account of Jesmond*, and by Parker Brewis in the *Northumberland County History*.³³ It is with the fate of the contents, and of one "urn" in particular, that we are here concerned.

On 2nd April 1844 the ever-meritorious John Bell presented to the Society "Drawings of two Ancient British Urns, which were discovered on Wednesday, the 27th March last, at Cragg Hall, near Jesmond, the residence of Mr. Charles Adamson". And on 4th June of the same year the owner of the land, Dr. Headlam, gave to the Society "Sundry fragments of two Ancient British Urns or Vases, found in his property at Cragg Hall, near Jesmond, on the 27th March last".³⁴

Bell's drawings are still preserved in the Black Gate Library, in that folio album of his which has already proved useful on a previous occasion³⁵, and with them is a MS account of the discovery. This material, with the notices in

³¹ Childe, *Prehistoric Communities*, ed. 2 (1947), 93, Pl. VII, 1.

³² This correction was made available to, and adopted by, Prof. Gordon Childe in 1946 (*Homenaje a J. L. Santa-Olalla*, I (1946), 199ff; and *Cuadernos de Historia Primitiva*, II (1947), 18, note 30). It seems, however, desirable to put it more formally on record in those transactions in which the discovery was first published.

³³ *AA* 3, I (1904), 15-16, figs; *NCH* XIII (1930), 11, fig.

³⁴ *AA* 1, IV (1855), Donations pp. 2 & 3.

³⁵ *AA* 4, XXVI (1948), 128.

the Donations List, constitutes indeed the whole of our knowledge of the find. From this it appears that only one vessel was got out undamaged. Besides a sketch-plan of the cists Bell made a couple of water-colour drawings in a bold, somewhat schematic, style showing two food vessels, one complete, the other rather more than half preserved. Of these only the second has been reproduced.³⁶

Let us first follow the simple history of the complete example. On 1st October 1852 Sir Walter C. Trevelyan, Bart., of Wallington, presented to the British Museum (*inter alia*) a complete food vessel described as from "Jesmond with bones in the garden of Mr. Chas. Adamson".³⁷ Many years later, in his classic *Bronze Age Pottery*, Abercromby published a small photograph of the same vessel³⁸ with no information beyond the bare title "Jesmond, Northumberland, British Museum". A comparison of the original with Bell's first drawing and with Abercromby's plate shows that it is certainly the same piece with which we are dealing throughout. Brewis made the identification along these lines without difficulty, and in the Jesmond volume of the County History he illustrated the vessel again in a photograph which for the first time gave an adequate notion of its appearance.³⁹

He then went on to refer to the "sundry fragments" given to this Society by Dr. Headlam, adding "a careful search at the Black Gate Museum has failed to find these fragments". In so far as Brewis may have been looking for the remains of Bell's second vessel (the broken one) he was bound to fail, for (as we shall see) the second vessel was not, and never had been, in the Black Gate.

Now Bell's second food vessel is of an uncommon type. His drawing (Pl. XVI, 1) shows a plain undecorated surface with no less than three low ridges or mouldings, besides the rim, running round the upper part of the body (BAP type

³⁶ By Dendy, *loc. cit.*, note 33.

³⁷ B.M.: 1852-10-1/2.

³⁸ BAP, F.V. No. 159.

³⁹ *NCH* XIII, p. 11, fig. 3.

2a). With the memory of this vessel in mind, a review of a set of notes of local material in the British Museum drew attention to some broken fragments of pottery, the type of which I had not been able to distinguish at the time of taking the notes (1930), but which seemed very possibly to be of type 2a. These fragments were stated in the register to have been found "in a cairn near Black Heddon"; but they had been presented by Sir W. C. Trevelyan at the same time as the unbroken Jesmond food vessel, and bore the next consecutive press number.⁴⁰ Further examination showed that the next number again (still in the same gift) was a vessel "from Black Heddon, in a cairn"⁴¹, and the picture began to take shape. If the fragments that seemed to be of the right type were in fact the missing vessel from Jesmond, their transference to "Black Heddon" could very easily be accounted for. Confusion could have arisen either with the donor in whose hands were other vessels both from Black Heddon and from Jesmond; or even (just possibly) in entering up the register at the British Museum.

It remained only to compare Bell's second drawing with the "Black Heddon" fragments. Since 1930 the staff of the British Museum had happily restored the fragments to form a complete food vessel again (Pl. XVI, 2). This it was possible to compare directly with a photograph of the drawing; and if due allowance be made for Bell's stylistic mannerisms, the resemblance is unmistakable and the identification established.⁴²

It is easy now to see what happened. The two cists contained four "urns", in whole or in part. The two good pieces passed, directly or indirectly, to a well known local patron of learning, who in due course passed them on, with other accumulations of the kind, to the national collection.

⁴⁰ B.M.: 1852-10-1/3.

⁴¹ B.M.: 1852-10-1/4.

⁴² The drawing shows the vessel too tall in relation to its width, as Bell's own neat figures alongside prove. I am much indebted to Mr. J. W. Brailsford of the British Museum for his ready assistance; and to the authorities of the Museum for permission to publish. The Museum Register has been amended to conform with the conclusions reached in this note.

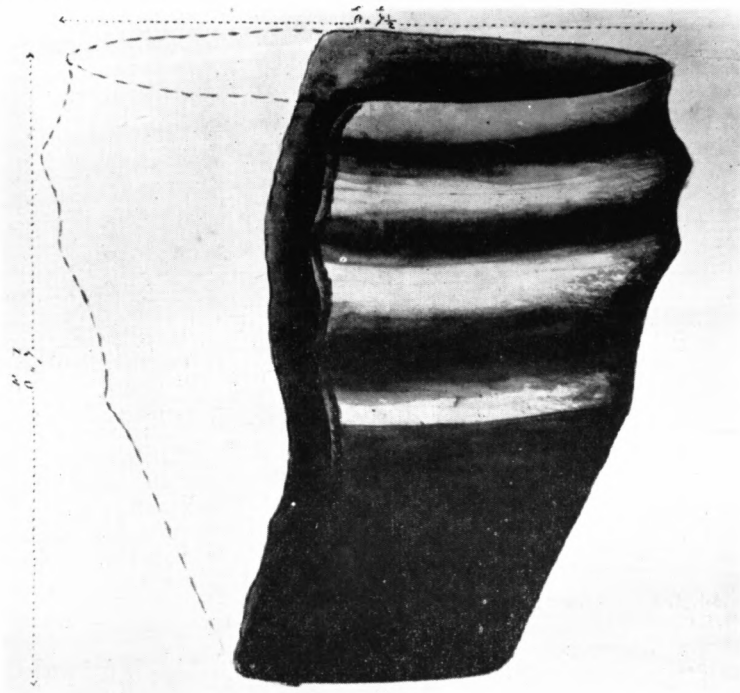


Fig. 1. John Bell's drawing of a Food Vessel from Crag Hall, Jesmond



Fig. 2. The same restored, in the British Museum. Both under ($\frac{1}{2}$)

The broken fragments of the other two were simply handed to the local Society of Antiquaries.

Of these we have no representation to guide us, and they came too late to receive the careful labelling of the earliest days. There is only one possibility of ever identifying them, and that a slender one. Among the Society's papers is preserved a note which reads as follows: "from Dr. Headlam a Vase found on his Estate at Crag Hall Jesmond in front of the House occupied by Mr. Charles M. Adamson." Though it refers to the fragments of two urns or vases⁴³ simply as "a Vase", the note clearly applies to Dr. Headlam's gift of June 1844, and probably accompanied it. It adds nothing to our information, but on the back is boldly pencilled the figure "38". This must refer to one of the early series (though not the earliest) of numbered labels still to be found on many of the older acquisitions in the Society's collection. If ever any pieces labelled with this number were to turn up among the nameless fragments of prehistoric pottery in the reserves of the present Museum of Antiquities, it would surely be safe to identify them with the missing fragments from Crag Hall.

6. *A Bronze Age Burial near Angerton*

The large accumulation of papers relating to the history of Northumberland collected by the Rev. John Hodgson, and now housed in the Society's library, contains remarkably little relating to prehistoric matters.⁴⁴ The same appears to be true of the Journal he kept from 1832 practically till his death.⁴⁵ It does, however, contain an account of at least one prehistoric burial, and that of such interest that the record deserves attention; it seems, moreover, to have remained unnoticed.

⁴³ Donations List, *supra* note 34.

⁴⁴ PSAN 4, XI (1948), 193-5.

⁴⁵ Rev. J. Raine, *Memoir of the Rev. John Hodgson*, Vol. II (1858), p. 290 & note.

Under the date 23rd May 1842 he wrote: "Mr. Tone told me that an ancient grave had been found in the Broomhouse sandpit to-day, and I went there in the afternoon." Broom House lies about $1\frac{1}{4}$ miles south-east of Hodgson's home at Hartburn, and $\frac{3}{4}$ mile due east of Angerton Hall; but the precise site of the sandpit is unknown to me. The detailed account which follows in the journal was written by Hodgson within three years of his death, yet it displays all the old eagerness and accuracy of observation of the days before his collapse from overwork in 1839. It was printed in full by Raine in his *Memoir of Hodgson*,⁴⁶ and for the greater part a summary will here suffice.

He gives first an elaborate description of a normal cist-grave made of stone slabs, of the type so common in the county, illustrated (notes Raine) with two pen-and-ink sketches recording the dimensions. No tool-marks were to be observed on the stones; and the crevices of the cist were sealed with a distinctive soft dark-blue clay, as if to keep out sand and silt. "It was still soft, and fit to cover or plaster upon, as on the day it was first made." Four to five inches of sandy silt nevertheless covered the bottom, and in this all the surviving contents of the grave were found. Most of the more substantial bones (except the skull) of a single body remained, mostly in a damaged state. On June 19th Hodgson added a note that Mr. Hawdon (his doctor) confirmed his own identification of the several pieces, and had said the bones were those of a woman.

Six artifacts were recovered, "of which (notes Raine) there are neat sketches in Indian ink". Hodgson's account of these is so much to the point that it is worth quoting in full:

"1. Is a knife of bronze, the blade much oxidated by time, and, when I saw it, broken into four parts, but the handle end and its three copper rivets or nails are covered with an only very thin film of rust;

"2 & 3, an ear-drop and seven flat beads made of slaty coal,

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 431-2.

of which there is abundance on each side of the Hart and among its gravel. Eight beads were found; but one was broken, which I readily split, to find of what mineral substance it was made;

"4, 5, 6, two sharp knives and a light hammer of flint, probably fixed in wooden handles.

"The bones preserved were imbedded with sandy earth, and all the implements found among them are now in my possession. But the man who first opened the grave put into his pocket three teeth, which he gave me afterwards, and took with him a small piece of flint, which he threw away as useless and incurious". There is no mention of any pottery.

The burial, then, was an inhumation in a normal cist-grave. The grave-goods, however, are of unusual interest. Both bronze knives⁴⁷ and jet plate-beads occur (if sparsely) in Northumberland, but this is the only occasion on which they have been recorded together. None of the material has survived, and one could wish that Hodgson's "neat sketches in Indian Ink" were available. Nevertheless it is clear that the knife was of the simple, flat type with three rivets, here buried with a woman and therefore a tool rather than a weapon. And it is a fair inference that the seven flat beads were spacer-beads of the usual trapezoidal form, while the "ear-drop" was an end-bead of triangular form. Or it may have been a toggle or fastening-bead. In any event all would come from a single necklace of the well known crescentic form best represented in our area by the fine example from Kyloe.⁴⁸ The material of which the beads were made seems to have been a variety of shale rather than the more normal jet, which Hodgson would surely have recognised. Without a drawing the "two sharp knives and a light hammer of flint" tell us nothing.

The necklace, however, suffices to determine the dating of the burial. The type is securely associated with the Food

⁴⁷ AA 4, XXIV (1946), 226.

⁴⁸ AA 4, V (1928), 26.

Vessel culture, and the grave therefore belongs (in terms of the most recent views on the chronology of the period) to a secondary phase of the Early Bronze Age.

7. *A Derivative Aldbourne Cup from Northumberland*

On a visit to the Black Gate shortly before the war Mr. G. F. Willmot drew attention to the incense cup from Low Morralee Farm, near Haydon Bridge, presented to the Society by the late Parker Brewis in 1923 (fig. 3).⁴⁹ He observed that it was a derivative of the so-called "Aldbourne" series of incense cups characteristic of the Wessex Culture of the Early Bronze Age. Surprising as this statement might seem, there can be no doubt that Mr. Willmot was right.

The Aldbourne cups form a distinctive and easily recognisable type, long familiar to prehistorians and formerly known as "expanded brim cups"; only quite recently were they given their present name by Professor Stuart Piggott in his classic study of the Wessex Culture.⁵⁰ Piggott there showed that the type is exotic, with affinities both in form and decoration with the Chassey II wares of France; and he derived its presence in Wessex from Brittany. The characteristic ornament of the type consists of incised and *pointillé* patterns originally filled with a white inlay. In point of form there are hints of a derivation from the well known *vases-supports* of France, "one example in particular retaining in section an internal 'shelf' which appears to be a reminiscence of the original septum."⁵¹

The incense cup from Low Morralee lacks indeed the widely spreading mouth, and the dark lustrous brown ware of the true Aldbourne cups; it is, however, made of a very fine clay, skilfully handled, of a bright reddish brown colour

⁴⁹ No. 1923.5. *PSAN* 4, I (1923), 10 & plate.

⁵⁰ *PPS* 1938, 52-106; see especially pp. 71-77, & figs. 12-14.

⁵¹ *Loc. cit.*, p. 75, fig. 13C, from Beckhampton, Wilts.

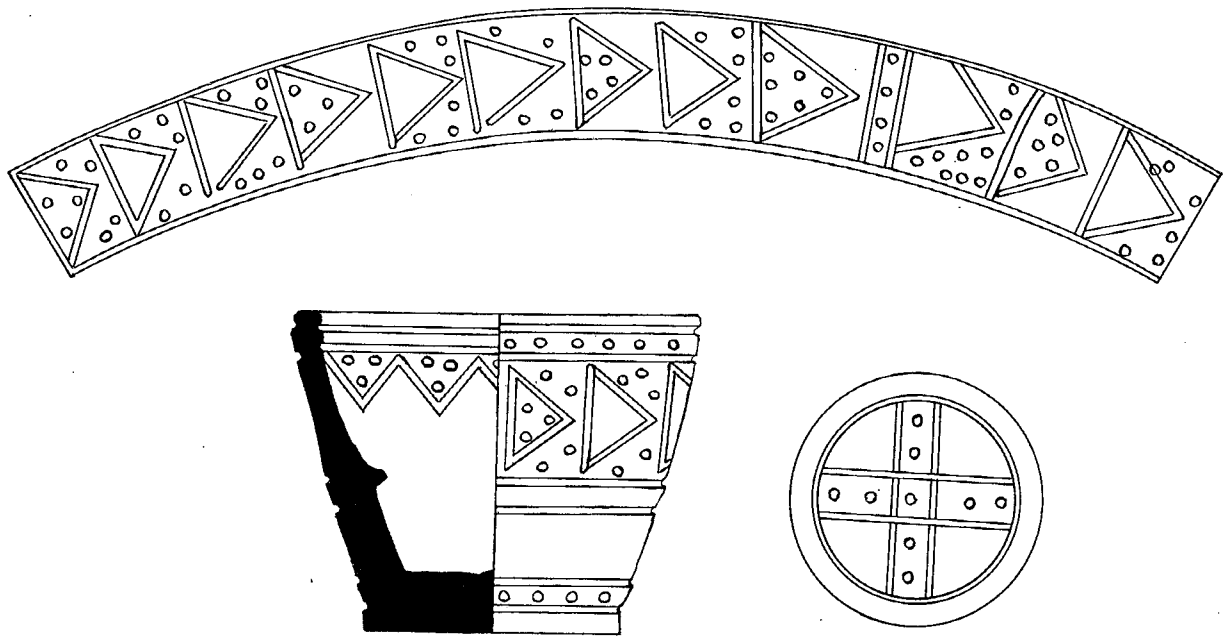


FIG. 3. DERIVATIVE ALDBOURNE CUP FROM LOW MORRALEE FARM, 1922 (3)

and a smooth matt surface, quite unlike any other ware from the county. The ornament is carried out in firmly drawn and deeply incised lines, and even the *pointillé* technique is imitated in a carefully schematic fashion. How close is the design itself to those on the Aldbourne cups may be seen by a comparison between our figure and figs. 12-14 in Piggott's paper. The closest analogy is with Piggott's fig. 13B, from Durrington Down (Wilts.), if only because of the single series of chevrons inside the lip; but it is also noticeable that on the outer surface the panelling seen on the lower half of three other cups shown in Piggott's figures has in the Low Morralee cup been superimposed on the usual lateral chevrons of the upper half in a manner which, if a little irregular, does not lack ingenuity. The cross on the bottom of our piece is not, it seems, found in the Aldbourne group, but is not uncommon on other classes of bronze age pottery from beakers onwards.

In the outer profile our cup shows an unbroken straight line, so that it looks like a truncated flower-pot in miniature. In this it differs sharply from the Aldbourne type. It is therefore particularly interesting to find that halfway down on the inside it has a distinct and unmistakable ridge or shelf—inexplicable except as a derivation from the septum of the *vase-support*. This is a striking feature indeed to find in Northumberland. Even in Wessex only one of the Aldbourne cups shows its parentage so clearly in this respect.

The close relationship of the Low Morralee incense cup with the Aldbourne cups of Wessex is, therefore, fully borne out by an examination of details. But derivative though it be, it is in no sense debased; form, paste, firing, and ornament have all been handled with skill and precision. Its recognition opens up a new and unexpected field for speculation on what the future may yet hold for the prehistory of Northumberland.

The vessel was obtained by Parker Brewis from a workman, probably late in 1922, under circumstances which left no doubt in his mind that it had been found at the same time

as other material previously obtained by Col. Spain and himself from bronze age burials discovered in 1921 in making a railway siding at Low Morrilee Farm, on the Ridley Hall estate, about two miles west of Haydon Bridge.⁵² As there is no demonstrable association it has been treated in this note as an isolated find. Nevertheless it is desirable briefly to mention the other objects believed to have been recovered from the same site.

Two burials were recognised, both of the Bronze Age, but at first sight of somewhat different dates. One contained an inhumation accompanied by a small and much worn bronze knife, of the simplest flat form, with three rivets. The other was a cremation contained in a large cinerary urn estimated to have been rather less than two feet in height. It is probably a devolved form of overhanging-rim urn, with a zone below the lip decorated by cord-impressions in an open zigzag pattern of a common type; a low ridge defines the lower edge of this zone, and the remainder of the surface is plain. Besides some calcined bones it was said to have contained two further vessels, a miniature cinerary urn of the overhanging-rim type ($3\frac{5}{8}$ inches high) in a very decayed state, and an incense cup, complete and in good condition. This second incense cup (fig. 4)⁵³ is roughly biconical in form, $1\frac{3}{4}$ inches high, and is ornamented, to quote Brewis' careful description, "by a series of elliptical impressions (irregularly placed but forming an all-over pattern), about $\frac{1}{8}$ inch in diameter, probably made with the cut end of a quill, an ornamentation which I believe to be unique and which gives the impression of a distant and feeble attempt to imitate the grape-cups of Wiltshire". At the time this was a long shot indeed, but after what has been noted above the comment now appears less fanciful. For the grape-cups of Wiltshire are no less conspicuous a feature of the Wessex Culture than are the Aldbourne cups themselves.

If it was not an isolated find (which seems unlikely), nor

⁵² *PSAN* 3, X (1921), 29-31, figs. 1-3, pl. figs. 1 & 2; *supra*, note 49.

⁵³ No. 1921.4.

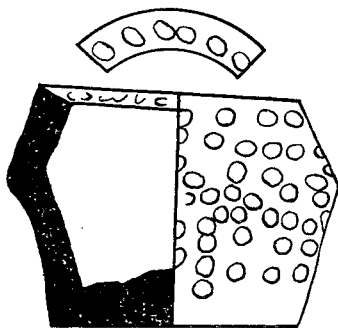


FIG. 4. QUILL-ORNAMENTED INCENSE CUP FROM LOW MORRALEE FARM, 1921 (3)

from a third (unrecorded) burial, the Aldbourne derivative recovered a year later would more naturally be supposed to have come—together with the miniature cinerary urn, and the quill-ornamented incense cup—from the cremation-burial attested by the large urn. Overhanging-rim urns, representative of a native element, have themselves more than once occurred in graves of the Wessex Culture. But small bronze knives of simple character, like that found on this site, are not uncommon in burials of the same culture, and grape-cups at least have occurred twice as often with inhumations as with cremations; so that here too an association would not be out of the question. Contrary therefore to first appearances, and despite the difference in burial rite, the whole group might after all be contemporary.

8. *A Looped Bronze Spear-head from Milbourne*

By the kindness of our member Mr. W. A. Cocks, of Ryton, we are able to include here a note of an unpublished addition to the Bronze Age spear-heads of Northumberland. It was found by Mr. W. N. Gilhespy on Low House Farm, Milbourne, Ponteland, in or about 1944, and is now in Mr. Cocks' collection.

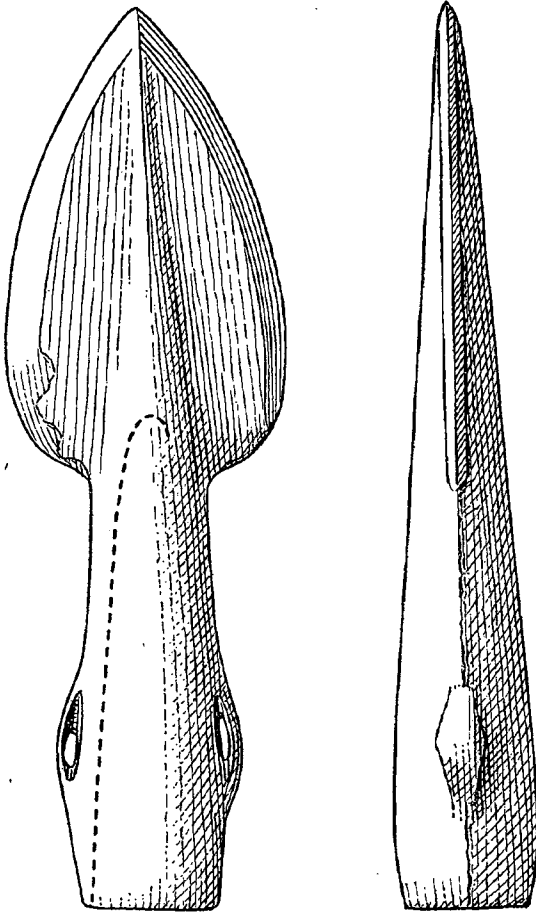


FIG. 5. BRONZE SPEAR-HEAD FROM MILBOURNE (1:1)

With plain ribless wings to the blade, and freestanding loops on the socket, it is formally an example of Greenwell and Brewis' class IV (Plate XVII, and fig. 5). It is 4.7 inches long, and in good sound condition, except where an attempt has been made (since discovery) to improve it by sharpening the edges. This interference extends nearly all round the

perimeter of the blade except at the extreme lower end on both sides, but has not materially altered the true outline.

In general appearance the spear-head closely resembles one from the Thames at Wandsworth,⁵⁴ but a very similar, though perhaps more elegant, piece in the Society's own collection comes from the Tyne at Blaydon.⁵⁵ The sole peculiarity of the Milbourn spear-head is that the socket does not extend, as is usual, the full length of the midrib towards the point, but terminates abruptly shortly after entering the base of the blade. Thereafter the midrib continues to the point in solid form—the whole design presenting a structure of exceptional strength. The same feature, though less marked, is also found in the piece from Blaydon.

Greenwell and Brewis' great monograph on the bronze spearhead in Britain is still unsurpassed as an essay in description, and for its splendid series of illustrations; but the authors' treatment of the material was too exclusively typological, and a number of their conclusions are today superseded. On their view our class IV spear-head, with its free-standing loops, would be assigned to the Middle Bronze Age. The premises, however, on which that view was based have been undermined by two events: first, the demonstration that one group at least of class IV spears must be assigned to the Late Bronze Age;⁵⁶ and secondly, the realisation that some of our basal-looped spears (class IVB, and probably IIIA too) must appear as early as the Middle Bronze Age.⁵⁷ But the implications of these two factors, and of other more general adjustments of opinion on the typology of the British Bronze Age, have not yet been worked out in detail over the whole body of the material, and a complete recension is overdue. In particular it will be necessary to sub-divide the broad category embraced in class IV. The light, narrow javelin-heads studied by Professor Hawkes in 1941⁵⁸ are

⁵⁴ Greenwell and Brewis, *Archæologia* LXI (1909), fig. 60.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, fig. 59.

⁵⁶ *PPS* 1941, 128-31.

⁵⁷ *PPS* 1948, 233-4; 1959, 144-87.

⁵⁸ *Supra*, note 56.



Bronze Spear-head from Milbourne (1 : 1)

quite unlike the broader, stockier pieces from Milbourne and Blaydon. In attempting even approximately, therefore, to date the latter variety we are, for the time being, obliged to fall back on criteria other than the position of the loops; and any conclusion must, in the circumstances, be provisional.

The short socket is reminiscent of that variety of "false tapering" noted by Greenwell and Brewis in a number of leaf-shaped spears (class V) with partially hollow heads, well illustrated by one from the Heathery Burn Cave hoard.⁵⁹ But these class V spears with semi-hollow heads belong in any event to the Late Bronze Age, and their presence at Heathery Burn demonstrates that they continued in use to a very late period indeed. If therefore the short socket on the present example is in any way related to the analogous feature in class V spears of that kind, then the Milbourne-Blaydon variety should be not earlier than the Late Bronze Age, and perhaps no earlier than the later half of the period. In that event we should be entitled to distinguish a second variety of the class IV spear-head, additional to Hawkes' javelin-heads, dating from the Late (and not from the Middle) Bronze Age. Before, however, such a conclusion could be adopted with any satisfactory degree of assurance, we should need much stronger evidence to support it than is at present available.

⁵⁹ *Loc. cit.*, p. 453, fig. 50.

