# An early metalworker's mould from Corsegight, New Deer, Grampian

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A mould for the casting of flat axes, possibly of Early Bronze Age date was recently discovered on the Mains of Corsegight, New Deer, Grampian. It was taken to the Marischal College Museum for identification, and subsequently generously gifted by the Coutts family who made the discovery on their land.

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The location of the find was on a low flank on the S of 'Redhill', the flank itself gently sloping to the E (NGR NJ 845 499). Mr Coutts also has in his possession a collection of worked stone recovered from the same general area as the mould. On the adjacent (W) promonotory are the remains of a ditch which cuts off its southern end and may enclose an early settlement. Also, only some 50 m or so NE from where the mould was found, what may have been another early earthwork was cut through when a drain was laid.

The mould is fashioned from a small boulder (c 163 mm by 122 mm) of Old Red Sandstone, and has one face worked in order to leave a flat surface into which the matrix is cut (fig 1). Large

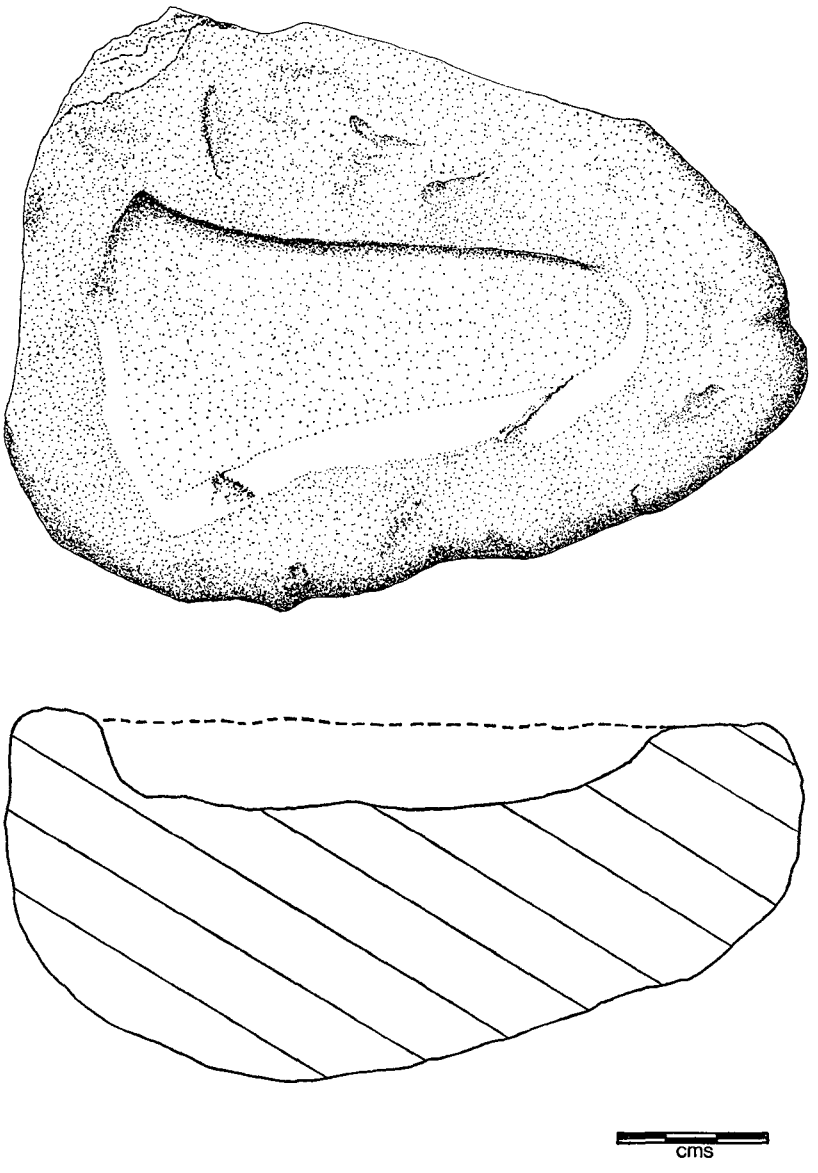


FIG 1 Flat axe mould, Corsegight, New Deer

deposits of Old Red Sandstone are to be found 2 km to the W of Corsegight; despite the predominant surface stone being quartz and quartzite, some sandstone is also present. The choice of sandstone is, however, in keeping with the general trend for this type of artefact (Schmidt & Burgess 1981). Sandstone, despite the obvious ease with which it can be worked, has the advantage that it is virtually unaffected by the sudden addition of molten bronze to its surface, thus giving a long life to the matrix, and a reasonably even finish to the casting.

This particular specimen is unusual in that it only carries a single matrix, that being for an axe of Coles's type Bb (1969), or Burgess's Migdale group (Schmidt & Burgess 1981). The matrix itself measures 112 mm (max) long, 69·5 mm (max) wide, the depth is slightly variable but averages 15·5 mm. At the blade there is a noticeable overcut, presumably to give a measured mass of metal for the final finishing of the blade. At four points around the matrix edge there are what appear to be gouge marks (fig 1), these possibly evidence for the smith's efforts to remove his products from the mould. Evidence for the use of the mould is indicated by various splashes of bronze still adhering to the surface inside, as well as outside, the matrix.

The Corsegight mould brings the total number of such artefacts found to date in Scotland to 13. It is the second from the New Deer area, a district not noted for an abundance of Early Bronze Age metalwork. The predominance of the north-east in the general distribution of such early metalworkers' moulds is again reinforced by the addition of this example to the corpus.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We wish to thank Mr and Mrs C Coutts and family, Douglas Coutts, Ian Shepherd, and Trevor Cowie for their help in the preparation of the note. Also, Dr Wilma Aitken kindly provided identification of the stone and surface deposits.

## REFERENCES

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