

ART. VI.—*The Gosforth Area in Pre-history. A co-ordination of recorded finds to 1942.* By MARY C. FAIR.

AN area of limited radius centred upon Gosforth has produced a series of finds which it seems desirable to co-ordinate in the interests of the pre-history of South-west Cumberland though serious work in archaeology is necessarily in abeyance for the duration of the war. I therefore venture to offer these brief notes. The foundations of this study were laid by the late Dr. Charles A. Parker of Gosforth, and my own work is a continuation of what he so ably began. I will deal with the finds in groups.

I. CINERARY BURIAL URNS. Dr. Parker records in his *Gosforth District* (ed. 1904), p. 35, the discovery of a "clay burial urn with small bones," probably the remains of a cremated burial of the usual mid-Bronze Age type of the district. The find was made at the south side of Seascale during the digging of foundations for Shingle Terrace, Herding Nab, about 1874. Unfortunately no proper examination of this find took place and it is not known what became of it.

BARNSCAR. West of Devoke Water. Excavation carried out by Lord Muncaster in 1885 of about 14 of the tumuli at this settlement site produced urns, fragments of pottery, and burnt bones. Unfortunately there was no oversight of the workmen who reburied most of the urns and bones they found without them being examined. Two of the urns are now in the Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology at Cambridge, and are of the mid-Bronze Age type with overhanging rims.

RAVENGLASS. Abercrombie records a cinerary mid-Bronze age burial urn as found at Ravenglass; exact find-spot is unknown. This is now at Tullie House.

HOLMROOK. A beautiful mid-Bronze Age cinerary urn was found on Ministry of Works property at Holmrook in 1942, just north of Holmrook Hall. It would appear to be latish on in the period, as the overhang of the collar is almost non-existent and it is nearly flush with the body. The decoration is most skilfully executed and the technique of the pottery is good. The urn is  $14\frac{1}{2}$  in. in height,  $10\frac{1}{2}$  in. in diameter at the base of the collar, and the base is 5 in. diameter. The decoration of the collar is the usual chevron pattern, the body criss-cross lattice design with a ring of large punctured dots at the bottom. The carination to the base is plain. The urn was found just beneath the sod in an extensive dry, sandy patch, inverted over bones and black matter, the latter unfortunately not being preserved for examination. The bones appear to represent two persons, a child, a young adult, and a number of animal remains. Proper examination of the bones in a laboratory with microscope was not possible and they need examination by an expert authority. The urn was exhibited in the shop window of Messrs. Mitchell of Holmrook with a tray of bones and thus enabled many interested observers to see this interesting local find, and I must express my grateful thanks to Mr. E. Mitchell and his busy staff for all the willing help they gave me in the examination of urn and bones and the trouble taken by them to assist in every possible way. I must pay the same tribute to Mr. Hinks, Chief Warden at Holmrook R.O.F. Hostel, who showed me the exact find-spot of the urn and will keep a keen watch for further possible finds. The urn, judging from Abercrombie's illustration of the Ravenglass urn appears to resemble it in form and decoration, but is larger.

BRONZE AXES. *Near Raynors, Gosforth.* Dr. Parker

records (*Gosforth District*, p. 101) that about 1820 a "copper battle-axe" was found at Bolton Wood. I have been told that the actual find-spot was near Raynors where for some time the axe was preserved. I cannot now trace its whereabouts.

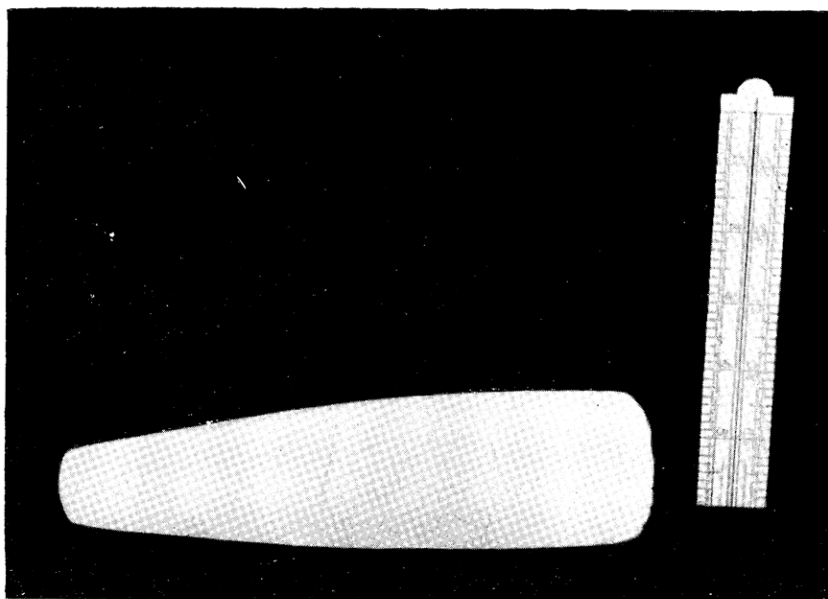
*Santon Bridge.* Dr. Parker (*Ibid.*, p. 101) records that in 1855 a bronze axe was found at Town End, Santon Bridge, during the uprooting of a pear tree. This passed from the Misses Ryder of Salford near Manchester to the Rev. S. Taylor, Vicar of Millom, who deposited it at Tullie House. It is  $5\frac{1}{2}$  inches long, of fine bronze, flanged, with stop, mid-Bronze Age type.

STONE AXES. Dr. Parker collected three of these from find-spots round Gosforth, and they provide part of the evidence enabling a local stone axe factory to be postulated. These three axes are now in the C.E. school museum at Gosforth. They are all portions of finely made implements of distinctive fine-grained tuff (Borrowdale Volcanic) heavily patinated, this having taken place after the breaking of the implements, suggesting that they were discarded "workshop wasters" which had broken during polishing and finishing. There is an outcrop of this distinctive stone near Gosforth, but expert microscopic examination of stone and axes is necessary to establish the relation between them.

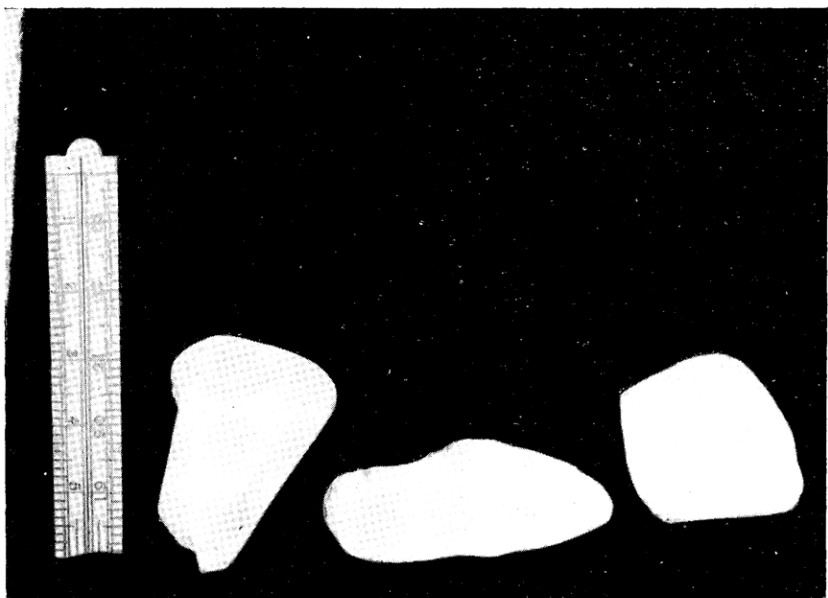
(a) and (b) *Raynors.* Two of the above were found here in 1885 and 1887.

(c) Part of a very large axe, was found in 1856 near *Hall Senna* between Seascale and Gosforth.

*Kell Bank, Gosforth.* During the excavation for a sewage chamber in 1937, below Kell Bank, Gosforth, a most beautiful and perfect stone axe was found under two feet six inches of peat in association with it three stones obviously rubbing-stones for grinding and polishing. The axe and rubbing-stones were brought for examination by the engineer in charge of the work for Ennerdale



GOSFORTH. KELL BANK SEWAGE WORKS.  
Thin butted polished stone axe, 1937.



GOSFORTH. KELL BANK SEWAGE WORKS.  
Rubbing or polishing stones found with axe, 1937.

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R.D.C. and were subsequently deposited in the Borough Museum, Whitehaven.

DRIGG. A polished axe of similar type to the foregoing was found at Drigg in 1927.

HOLMROOK. A most beautiful polished stone axe very similar to those of Kell Bank and Drigg was found by Mr. William Hodgson, C.C. road foreman, during widening operations at the corner where the Greenlands bye-road leaves the main north-south road just north of Holmrook Hall. The axe was lying by a very ancient road under two feet 6 inches of peat. About 250 yards north of this find is the find-spot of the Holmrook Cinerary Urn.

ESKDALE. Lord Rea preserves at Gatehouse, Eskdale, two axes of the same class. (A) Portion of polished axe, unpatinated and probably broken when find was made about 40 years ago during the laying out of the Gatehouse Rock Garden.

(B) Unfinished axe of the typical blue-grey fine volcanic tuff, in the faceted stage before smoothing and polishing as similar axes found at the factories at Portinscale and Stake Pass. The axe was found in a bog low down on the south slope of the Screes near the old road leading through Porterthwaite Wood, Miterdale, over the west end of the Screes into Wasdalé. A little higher up the slope a very interesting tumulus was located by Dr. J. E. Spence in 1942.

FLINT ARROWHEADS OF BRONZE AGE FORM. A Flint-chipping site has been located by Miss Markham of Eskmeals House in the sand-dunes at *Eskmeals* with arrow-tips of the barbed and flanged type and two petit tranchet form. The barbed arrow-tips are of the later form with the tang longer than the bottoms of barbs.

GOSFORTH. Near Parknook and Rainors. Barbed and tanged arrow-tip. Tang longer than barbs.

BOONWOOD. North of Gosforth. Flint arrow-tip, tangs longer than barbs. Now in Gosforth C.E. Museum.

These finds grouped so relatively near together suggest a considerable mid-Bronze Age occupation radiating round Gosforth, and when conditions make it possible to resume serious research work, it should be worth while to plan a concerted series of excavations of sites selected by Dr. Spence.

*Addendum.* FLINT KNIFE. *Seascale.* A fine flint knife of unpatinated dark coloured flint was found by Mr. George Richmond, of Seascale, in a bog near Seascale, during the rescue of a horse which had sunk into the bog, in 1937.