NOTES

1.—A Radiocarbon Date for the Palisaded Settlement at Huckhoe

Although samples of the burnt timbers of oak were collected from the palisade trenches of this site some twelve years ago, the resources then available did not allow a radiocarbon assay to be obtained. In 1967 a new cutting was made immediately to the west of the gateway with the express purpose of collecting a fresh sample for dating.[1] The stratigraphy revealed in this cutting was similar to that found in the original excavations and demonstrated that the palisaded perimeter, after burning, had been replaced on the same lines, and with no appreciable interval in time, by the walled enclosure. The sample for radiocarbon assay was taken from a selected oak upright at a point below the top of the rock-cut trench which had supported the outer line of the inner, twin palisade. Here the diameter of the post was a constant 4·5 in. and, though somewhat slighter in girth than some of the other posts already recorded, appeared to represent the full width of the round timber. A calculation of radiocarbon age based on the Libby half life of C-14, 5570 years, is 510±40 B.C. (Gak—1388; 2460±40 B.P.) but some lowering of calendar date could be envisaged to allow for the difference in content between the inner and outer growth of timber. Based upon the proposed new half life the central date would be raised to *c.* 580 B.C. and it has been suggested that, owing to long term variations in the C-14 level, radiocarbon years for the period before 250 B.C. could be too young.[2]

In view of the two C-14 dates so far published for northern palisaded settlements, namely Staple Howe,[3] Yorks. (450± 150 B.C. but with material from the site of late seventh

[1] Original report *A.A.*[4], XXXVII (1959), 217 ff. At that time the cost of a C-14 assay was four times the expenditure on four seasons of excavation. The Society has generously defrayed the cost of the present test and members have given of their time and labour.

[2] e.g. Stuiver, M. & Suess H. E., *Radiocarbon* 8 (1966), 534 ff.

[3] Brewster, T. C. M., *The Excavation of Staple Howe* (1963), 140.

century) and Craigmarloch,[4] Renfrewshire (590±40 B.C.), this reading from Huckhoe is not unexpected. The difficulties involved in assigning northern timber framed houses and palisaded enclosures to a precise cultural setting in the absence of other definable material has already been discussed elsewhere, though the fact that some could be of Late Bronze Age context has been envisaged.[5] In this instance the material from the site does not allow us to place a firm cultural tag upon it, however much the radiocarbon age may tend to support the idea that the palisades could have started in the Late Bronze Age.

The life-span of the palisaded period at Huckhoe cannot be assessed with any certainty but, unlike the multiphased palisade trenches as for example at Hownam Rings,[6] Roxburgh., it appeared to consist of no more than a single phase before burning and replacement by the stone-built perimeter. The original excavations yielded evidence for a degree of rotting in the base of some timbers before burning but, even so, a century would seem to be a more than liberal estimate. The problem then arises of a phase II stone-built enclosure envisaged at a date appreciably earlier than that proposed on other evidence for univallate wall-forts of Tyne-Forth Second A.[7] There is indeed a small sample of C-14 dates just now available but yielding high readings from two timber-laced wall-forts in Scotland,[8] and Piggott has already indicated the possibility that *some* of the timber-laced fort walls in Scotland could prove eventually to be early owing to her contacts with North Germany, already shown to exist in the Late Bronze Age.[9] However, although the walled perimeter at Huckhoe was denuded and in part re-utilised during the Roman period, there is no evidence that it had been timber-laced in the first instance. With so few C-14

[4] *Discovery and Excavation in Scotland* (1966), 39.
[5] Piggott, S., in *The Iron Age in North Britain* ed. Rivet (1966), 8.
[6] Piggott, C. M., *P.S.A.S.*, LXXXII (1947-8), 193 ff.
[7] e.g. Piggott, S., *op. cit.*, 8-9.
[8] *Discovery and Excavation in Scotland* (1967), *esp.* various dates from Finavon vitrified fort, 590±70, 320±90, 410±80, (Libby ½ life).
[9] *Op. cit.*, 7 & 10.

readings and, more difficult to achieve, reasonable assemblages of artifacts, the matter is best left in abeyance in this instance.

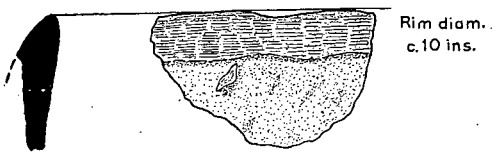

FIG. 1. RIM SHERD: HUCKHOE PALISADE TRENCH (½)

As it so happens, this recent cutting at Huckhoe produced ten sherds sealed by the phase II wall; far more than the numerous cuttings over this perimeter in the original excavations. Nine of these are wall-sherds of a single or, at most, two large hand-built vessels with buff somewhat sandy surfaces and dark grey cores. The clay contains large sandstone grits measuring up to 1·1 cm. and the wall fragments are a maximum 1·9 cm. in thickness. There are, however, no conjoining fragments. The one rim-sherd, from well down in the palisade trench from which the charcoal sample was taken, has peeled on the lower part of the outer surface but is ostensibly an old if not always helpful "friend", with a sharp but simple roll rim perhaps slightly incurving. Some years ago now, similar ceramic was said to suggest no other than local derivation from the Bronze Age.[10] Here it qualifies at least for consideration in the Late Bronze Age/Early Iron Age overlap if it is not to be assigned the unsatisfactory cloak of northern Flat Rimmed Ware in which, as has been noted, the "only dominant feature is the general absence of a flattened rim."[11] Possible regional groups of the latter ceramic and the arguments for indigenous development or exotic origins have already been summarized elsewhere.[12]

G. JOBEY

[10] e.g. *P.S.A.S.*, LXXXII (1947-8), 221.
[11] Coles, J. M., *Y.A.J.*, XLI (1964), 190.
[12] *Ibid.* & *P.S.A.S.*, XCLII (1959-60), 44. (It should perhaps be noted that none of the Huckhoe sherds exhibit any perforations or cordons as on the Flaxby, Yorks., vessel and quoted parallels, plus (?) Bonchester, Roxburgh. (*PSAS.*, LXXXIV (1949-50), 122)).

2.—Discovery of a Middle Bronze Age Spear-Head

On 4th April, 1967, a bronze socketed spear-head was brought to the Dorman Museum, Middlesbrough, having been discovered by the driver[13] of a mechanical shovel while clearing the soil from the underside of his machine at a building site at New Marske, Cleveland, Yorks.

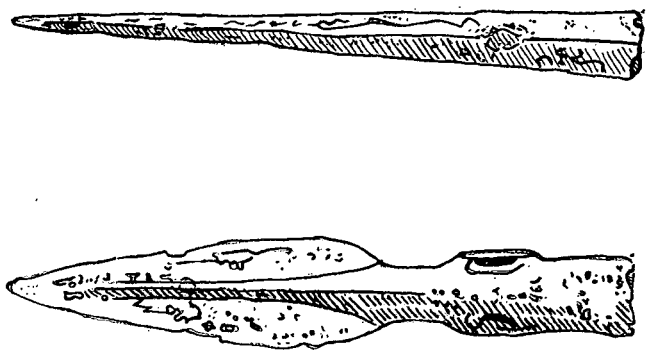

FIG. 2. MIDDLE BRONZE AGE SPEARHEAD (½)

The shovel had been engaged in moving some dolomitic limestone on the site, but was uncertain whether this had been transported from Redworth Quarry, Middridge, or Chilton Quarries, both in Co. Durham.

The spear-head could have come from either of these sites, but chemical analysis of a small sample of soil in the socket,[14] showed that it most probably had been brought from a subsoil deposit at Chilton Quarries (M.R. 85/308 328).

Typologically, the ogival spear-head, with its socket loops, can be dated to the first phase of the Middle Bronze Age (*c.* 1600-1400 B.C.). It is in quite good condition, suffering only from pitting and a slight roughness on the edges of the blades and socket, from acid attack. The Museum intends

[13] Mr. Garland, 28 Disraeli Street, Middlesbrough.

[14] For this analysis we are indebted to Mr. Kenneth Atkinson, Department of Geography, University of Durham.

to determine the source of the metal by spectrographical analysis.

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3.—TWO PREHISTORIC DUGOUT CANOES FROM THE RIVER WEAR AT HYLTON, NEAR SUNDERLAND, COUNTY DURHAM

A dug-out canoe (fig. 3) was presented to Sunderland Museum in 1910 by the River Wear Commissioners. A note in the Library Circular for Sunderland Public Library, No. 45, Volume 4, for 1910, states that the canoe "was found in the bed of the river Wear at Hylton, near Sunderland, about 25 years ago." The O.S. map gives the date as 1888 and the spot as NZ 344567.[15] The note continues, "It was first seen by Mr. Harry Watts, the well-known Sunderland diver and life-saver, when employed by the Commissioners to remove the "Brixons", large stones forming the remains of a bridge which spanned the river at Hylton. The canoe lay at the river bottom, covered with alluvial mud and shingle, and contained human bones, which, unfortunately were not secured . . . Stone implements like chisels were also found on the bed of the stream near the same spot, together with deer-horns . . ." A photograph (Plate XVII, 1) with the note confirms that this is the canoe which has been in Sunderland Museum since 1910.[16]

There is, however, in Sunderland Museum a photograph (Plate XVII, 2) of a second canoe, similar to the first but in a more fragmentary state. It is placed in front of a large tree-trunk. Written on the back of the photograph is the follow-

[15] The date and place, Offerton Haugh, are confirmed by a note in 1910 in the River Wear Commissioners' Minute Book; but the Brigg Stones, probably "Brixons", are marked about a mile further down the Wear (O.S. 352572) on the 1737 plan of the River Wear by Burleigh and Thompson.

[16] In 1967 the canoe was thoroughly cleaned and treated with Calaton before being placed in a glass case to provide a constant environment and to prevent damage by the public. The surface of the wood was cracking and small pieces were becoming detached but the main structure is remarkably strong.

DUG-OUT CANOE FROM THE RIVER WEAR AT HYLTON

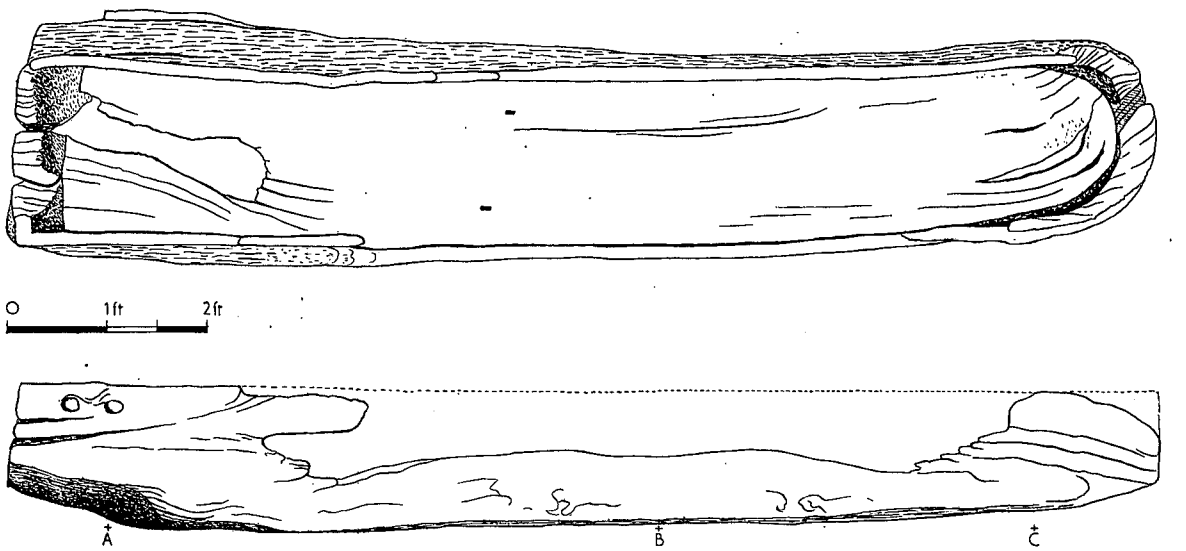


FIG. 3

ing: "Tree and Dug-out canoe Removed from the River Wear 1880. Tree diam. [sic] 32′×5′ in diam. English oak had been felled by burning roots and trunk, dredged at [sic] between Hylton Dene and Southwick. Canoe found in river near Hylton". This information suggests that the tree and the canoe were not found in association but in different parts of the river. This canoe is no longer in existence[17] and its find spot is not more precise than Hylton.

A scale beside it shows that it was a little less than 12 feet long and in size and type very like the canoe that has been preserved. Both are monoxylons with rounded bows, square sections and square sterns slightly chamfered off. Neither has ribs on the floor; both have holes in their gunwhales near the stern. They belong to Sir Cyril Fox's Group IIB and are small unsophisticated examples like those from West Molesley and Wisley, Surrey.[18]

The existing canoe is made of oak, kindly identified by Mr. Arnold Potter. The bows and stern are not preserved to their full height, but from the appearance of the end wood it seems that between half and two-thirds of a tree has been used. The timber has warped and cracked so that the whole canoe has curved towards the port side. It measures 11′ 6″ in length and 2′ 1″ at the widest point across the stern, which is squared off. The dug-out tapers slightly towards the rounded bows. Its sides are about 1′ 6″ high. The bottom rises a little towards the bows and stern, which is deliberately shaped. Hollows on its outside, though worn and smooth, are possibly the result of tooling. A small step in the starboard corner of the stern looks like a cut, possibly made with an adze, that stopped short of the bottom. Two small oblong holes in the floor may be original and appear to have been made with a chisel. They do not pierce the wood completely

[17] There is some confusion about the canoes in the Museum Notes, 1964, in *A.A.*4, Vol. XLII (1964) 287-288. The information about the existing canoe has been used twice and the date 1835 is an error.

[18] Sir Cyril Fox, A "Dug-out" Canoe from South Wales. *Antiquaries Journal*, Vol. VI, 1926.

and their use is unknown. Two round holes, 2″ in diameter and about 3″ apart, in the starboard gunwhale match a similar pair in the port gunwhale. A third, more oblong hole has been drilled in the port side about 3″ from the other two and roughly in line with them. One explanation for these holes may be that the matching pairs held pegs for securing a wooden seat in the stern,[19] and the fifth hole was for the painter so the canoe could be tied up. The second canoe, known only from the photograph, has three holes, one partly broken away, in its starboard not its port gunwhale. Most of the port side of this canoe is missing.

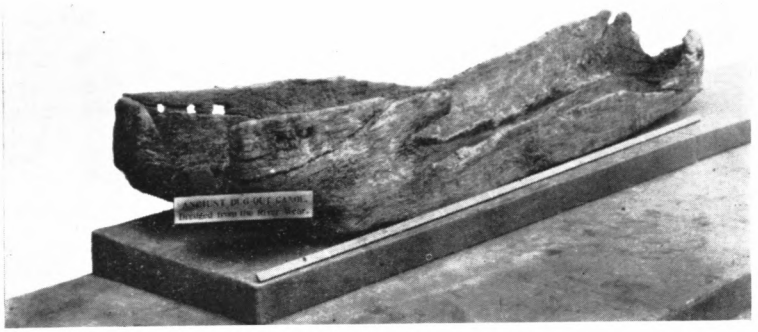
The two canoes are so alike that it would seem reasonable to consider them contemporary or even a pair. They may even have been intended to be fastened together to make a catamaran. Cords through the matching holes in the gunwhales with additional lashing at the bows would have transformed the two canoes into a single more stable craft for taking across the river bulky material or livestock such as sheep. The resemblance between the two canoes may, however, be the result of their having been made about the same time in the same tradition. The human bones, said to have been found in the existing canoe, were not recovered, so their identification and hence their presence is not certain. The derelict state of the canoes when they were dredged up would be sufficient to account for their being abandoned by their owners.

The evidence for dating the canoes is scanty, but what little there is points to the late Bronze Age or the Iron Age. The Wear at Hylton has been fordable from the Middle Ages onwards and may have been so earlier. The name Ford for the district on the south bank of the Wear, where the ford was, is recorded in 1361[20] and has been kept to the present day. A bronze socketed axe[21] from the Wear at Hylton and

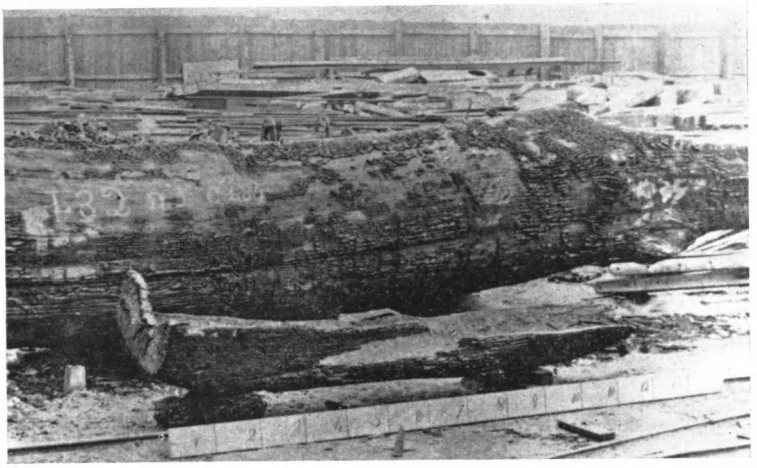
[19] Fox, *op. cit.* pp. 148, 151 for examples from Woolwich, Kent, Warrington, Lancs. and Llangorse, Brecon., which have seats in the stern.

[20] A. Mawer. *The Place-names of Northumberland and Durham*, 1920, p. 88.

[21] Victoria County History of *Durham*, Vol. I, p. 207.



1. Dug-out canoe from the River Wear at Hylton, found in 1888. In Sunderland Museum. Photographed in 1910



2. Dug-out canoe from the River Wear at Hylton, found in 1880. Not preserved

two late Bronze Age swords[22] from the Wear at Ford are the only other recorded finds of any date from this particular stretch of the river. The axe and the two swords (the latter are of Park Ewart type) are considered to be *c.* 900-700 B.C. They may have been accidentally lost or deposited as votive offerings; and they indicate that this part of the river was visited during the late Bronze Age, perhaps because it could be forded at that point. The canoes themselves are of rather primitive type, earlier in format though not necessarily in date, than the Type II dug-outs from the Trent[23] which are believed to belong to the end of the Middle Bronze Age or the early part of the late Bronze Age. The canoes from Hylton could have been made with Late Bronze Age tools. The one cut in the stern is not sufficient evidence to prove that the implement used was an iron adze.

An Iron Age date is another possibility. A slightly smaller canoe from the Tyne at Ryton,[24] Fox Type V with pointed bow and square stern, has been ascribed to the Iron Age because an Iron Age wheel was found at the same level.[25] This canoe has sloping bows and stern and is a more advanced craft than the two dug-outs from the Wear at Hylton. Nevertheless they could belong to an earlier part of the Iron Age, but in the writer's opinion they are more likely to be Bronze Age.

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[22] In Sunderland Museum.

[23] C. W. Phillips, Some Recent Finds from the Trent, near Nottingham. *Antiquaries Journal*, Vol. XXI, 1941. The Trent canoes are Fox's Type IIC with stern boards.

[24] Mr. W. Dodds, The Ryton dug-out canoe. *A.A.* Fourth Series, Vol. XLII, 1964, pp. 285-288.

[25] Stuart Piggott, A Wheel of Iron Age type from Co. Durham. *P.P.S.*, Vol. XV, 1949, p. 191.