

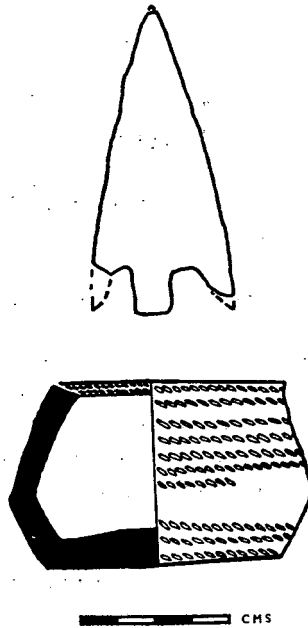
## NOTES

### 1. AN "IRISH" PROJECTILE POINT AND MINIATURE VESSEL FROM DODDINGTON, NORTHUMBERLAND (figs. 1 and 2)

The purpose of this note is to draw attention to an important discovery, made, most probably, in the nineteenth century, of an Irish-type projectile point found in association with a miniature vessel at Doddington, Northumberland (NU:0032). The finds are in the British Museum. As the circumstances of the find are now obscure, it is worthwhile repeating the relevant entry in the British Museum Accessions Register:

"1937. 12-13. 1. Pottery cup of biconical 'pygmy-vessel' form, flat base, internally bevelled rim; ornament of spirally twisted cord impression, above and below carination; dull brown ware. Old acquisition reached museum by way of the Christy Colln. where it was 'left about 1876 by a Mr. Newham, who came from R.H.S. Smith' (old label in handwriting of Sir C. H. Read). Preserved till 1937 in work-room. Old labels read as follows:— 1. 'found in Doddington, close under surface, Mr. Newham.' (in handwriting of Sir C. H. Read) 'Flint Arrowhead found at Doddington with small incense cup, Mr. Newham.' A further note in his handwriting shows 'Arrowhead and British Incense Cup' were *found together* and gives sketch of the latter identifying it with no. 1. here. Evidently from Doddington, Northumberland, grave-group probably from under destroyed barrow."

The miniature vessel most probably dates from the



Doddington  
Northumberland

FIG. 1 FLINT PROJECTILE POINT AND MINIATURE VESSEL FROM DODDINGTON, NORTHUMBERLAND

Early Bronze Age: it lacks, however, any close parallel. Burgess has recently pointed out (Burgess, 1969) that no miniature vessels may be dated later than the Early Bronze Age which, on conventional dating (Hawkes, 1960), runs from 1650 to 1400 B.C. The projectile point (fig. 1) weighs 20 grams; its dimensions are 8.5 cms. long, 3.7 cms. wide and 0.85 cms. thick; it is bifacially flaked over almost the whole of both surfaces and is made of flint varying in colour from translucent grey to ochreous red. Its weight precludes it from being an arrowhead: Rausing (1967, 164) points out that the normal maximum acceptable weight is 13 grams

(including binding). Points of this type and size occur frequently in Ireland (Collins, 1963) but are rare throughout Britain and when they occur should be regarded as either actual imports or as local copies of Irish types. Irish barbed and tanged projectile points readily divide into two categories

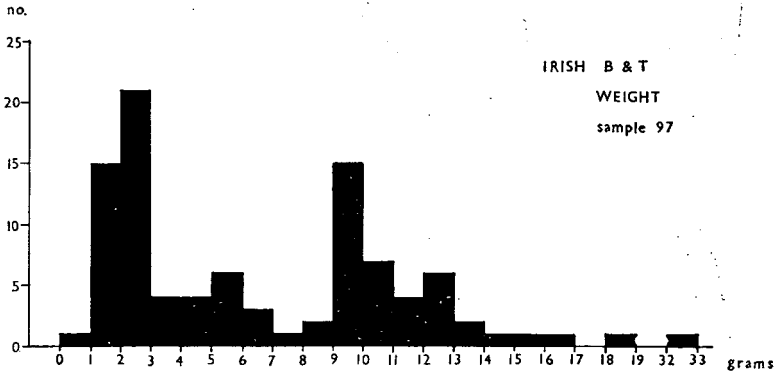


FIG. 2 HISTOGRAM SHOWING THE WEIGHT DISTRIBUTION OF A SAMPLE OF 97 IRISH BARBED AND TANGED PROJECTILE POINTS

(which might be called “arrowheads” and “spearheads”) on the basis of weight (fig. 2).<sup>1</sup> Collins lists two associations of similar large projectile points in Ireland: the first is of a point “stemmed and barbed, over three and a half inches in length” found with a “bronze blade, five and a half inches long and two inches broad at the base where there are five rivet holes for attachment to the handle” (Buick, 1895, 59-60); the second association is of three points found inside a collared urn; these finds are from Carrymurphy Mountain, near Garron Tower, Co. Antrim, and from Calleybackey, Co. Antrim, respectively. These associations suggest an Early Bronze Age date for large tanged projectile points: this is in agreement with the probable dating of the associated miniature vessel.

<sup>1</sup>A different sample of 181 Irish b & t points produced an identical distribution with a clear break also at 7 to 8 grams. Length histograms also show the break (although less clearly) at around 5 cms.

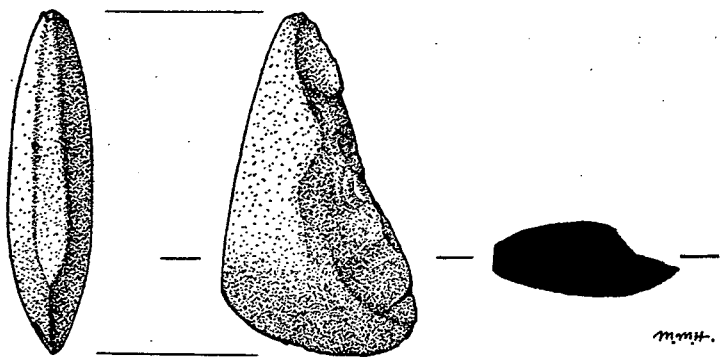


FIG. 3. ( $\frac{1}{2}$ )

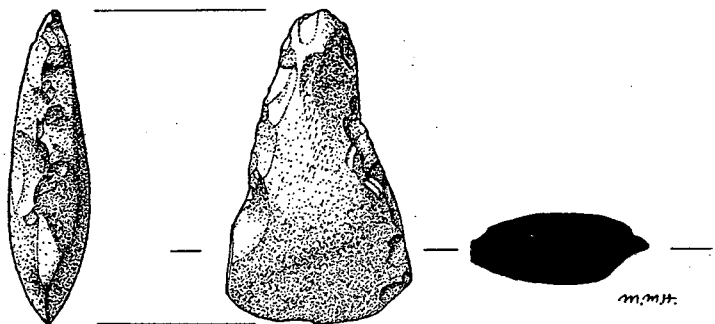


FIG. 4. ( $\frac{1}{2}$ )

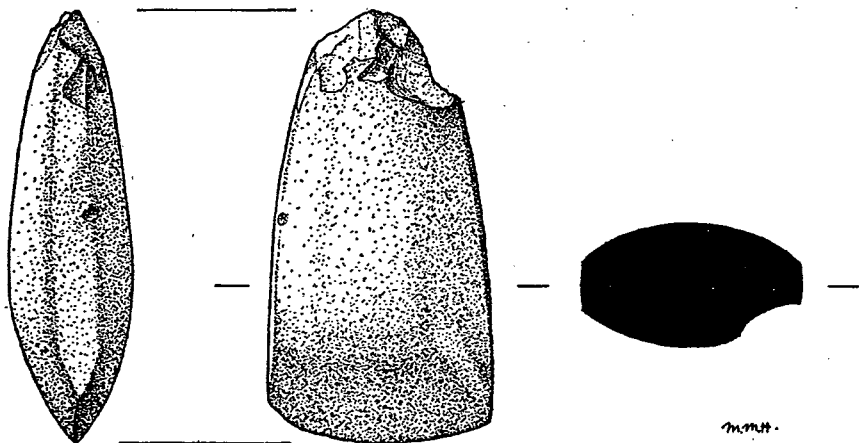


FIG. 5. ( $\frac{1}{2}$ )

I wish to make acknowledgement to the British Museum for permission to publish the miniature vessel and "spear-head". I wish to thank Dr. Ian Longworth and Mr. Nicholas Thomas for their help and advice in the preparation of this note.

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H. S. GREEN

#### 2. STONE AXES FROM HEDDON ON THE WALL (figs. 3 to 8)

As already reported in *Archaeological Newsbulletin* No. 3. September, 1968, three stone axes were found by Mr. C. Munro of 44 Antonine Walk, Heddon on the Wall in the backgarden of his house on the new Vallum Estate on the East Side of the village of Heddon on the Wall (Map Ref. 78/135 668) and about 200 yards south of the well-known stretch of Hadrian's Wall.

The site is on the North Bank of the Tyne, on possibly the highest terrace above the river, though the point is debatable since the builders used a bulldozer to level out the ground, which is now stepped down from West to East. Hence the floor of the neighbouring garage is three feet higher than Mr. Munro's patio—an area paved with concrete

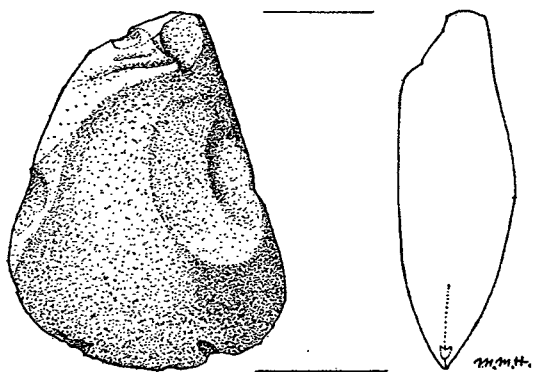


FIG. 6. ( $\frac{1}{2}$ )

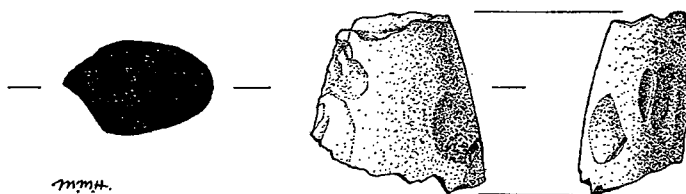


FIG. 7. ( $\frac{1}{2}$ )

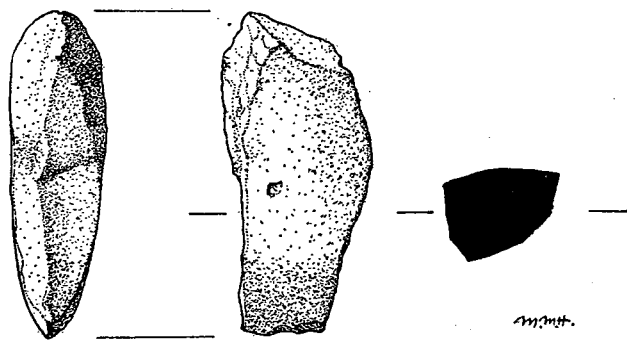


FIG. 8. ( $\frac{1}{2}$ )

slabs, the laying of which led to the discovery of the axes.

Mr. C. B. Burgess and I decided to remove the slabs and explore the site beneath, primarily to see if the area should be more fully excavated at a later period. This trial examination led to the discovery of one more axe, parts of two more and a possible "rough out" of a fourth. The material is a fine grained, light green igneous rock, whose likely origin is the Lake District. It has not been possible to ascertain this for certain since it is understood that an advertisement in the *Observer* may have led to the sale of these axes. Hence, this matter is recorded now with the hope that the present owner will come forward and allow one of these axes to be examined petrologically, and so that future archaeologists may not be misled, if these axes should reappear in a "foreign" context.

*The original three axes* (figs. 3, 4 and 5)

As can be seen from Miss Hurrell's drawings, the first of these had a faulted side. Its maximum height was  $3\frac{1}{2}$  ins; its cutting edge 2 ins: its maximum width  $\frac{3}{4}$  in. The cutting edge was in-curved.

The second axe had suffered more damage on all its edges and was cruder in workmanship than the previous axe. Its vertical sides form an isosceles triangle and its maximum height was  $3\frac{1}{4}$  ins, whilst its cutting edge, again in-curved, but to a slighter degree than the previous one, is  $1\frac{7}{8}$  ins.

The third axe was more robust than either of the other two. Its in-curved cutting edge was  $2\frac{1}{2}$  ins, its maximum height (though damaged) was  $4\frac{1}{2}$  ins, and its maximum thickness is  $1\frac{1}{8}$  ins.

*The New Finds* (figs. 6, 7 and 8)

It is regretted that the drawings of these are incomplete

since they were removed from Miss Hurrell's custody unexpectedly early. The following details must suffice. The material was the same fine grained, light green igneous rock.

The first axe was more curvilinear in shape than the others. Its maximum height was 3.7 ins; its maximum width at the apex was  $1\frac{1}{2}$  ins increasing to 2.9 ins along the cutting edge. Its maximum thickness was  $1\frac{1}{4}$  ins.

The second piece was probably an axe fragment, but another kind of tool ought not to be excluded. It was fractured top and bottom and had a minimum width of  $1\frac{1}{2}$  ins increasing to 1.9 ins. The height of the fragment was 2 ins and its maximum thickness about an inch.

The third stone was more roughly hewn, perhaps unfinished or damaged, but it should be classified, *pro tem*, as an axe head. Its maximum height with 3.4 ins; its maximum width tapering from  $1\frac{3}{4}$  ins. to 0.9 in along the damaged cutting edge. In thickness it was not as homogeneous as the rest of the group.

The fourth stone is probably only a stone but could be classified as "raw material". It could even be incidental in the context but its proximity to the other stone axes should not be disregarded. In shape, it was inclined to be more curvilinear. Its maximum height was 3.2 ins and its width was 0.7 ins increasing to a maximum of 1.8 ins. Its thickness was not recorded.

#### *Further Comment*

The site is an important one which ought to be excavated at some future date. I am told by Mr. Burgess that this find is remarkable since it contained the greatest number of stone axes ever found together in this country.

E. W. SOCKETT



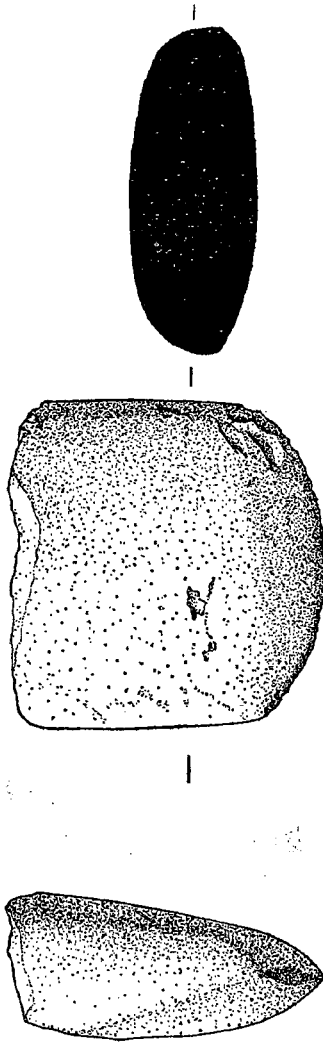


FIG. 9 ( $\frac{1}{2}$ )

### 3. STONE AXE FROM DEWLEY LAW (fig. 9)

A stone axe was found in the "tumulus" known as Dewley Law (78/160 680), on the farm of the same name, at Throckley, Newcastle upon Tyne. Only proper excavation could prove whether this mound is a tumulus, a base for a wind mill, pit workings, a glacial deposit, or any combination of these. Other "barrows" have been eroded away in this area, either by man or nature and much work needs doing in this area before the new road works begin.

The axe fragment is very heavy and is a fine grained limestone (or possibly millstone grit) which is well polished. Its height is 3 ins; its overall width  $3\frac{1}{2}$  ins and its maximum width  $1\frac{3}{8}$  ins. The axe fragment is very heavy compared with similar axes, but it is not, in my view, an adze. The socket end is broken, otherwise its cutting edge is intact. The axe is in my possession. I am grateful to Miss M. Hurrell for her drawing.

E. W. SOCKETT

### 4. A SET OF GRAVITY BEADS

In discussing in *Archaeologia Aeliana*<sup>1</sup> some years ago the distillation of spirits in the eighteenth century I was misled into applying the title of *the bead* to a method of testing spirits for proof which was described in the paper and which may be recalled by quoting George Smith of Kendal:

All your Spirits ... should be proof-goods; which you try, by having a small quantity put into a glass Phyal, and shaking it with your hand; if the blebs or proof of it continues a pretty while upon the top or surface of the goods, it is then what is called proof-goods.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *A.A.* 4 xxxvi 52.

<sup>2</sup> Smith, G., *A Compleat Body of Distilling*, Lintot 1738.



A set of gravity beads in the Stromness Museum, Orkney



On a recent visit to the Stromness Museum in Orkney an exhibit of gravity beads was observed. This consists of a set of beads of varying weights so calculated that the appropriate bead will just float in the mixture when that required proportion of alcohol and water is present. Presumably by trying a succession of beads on a sample of spirits its degree of proof might readily be ascertained. Clearly references in the literature to *the bead* relate to a test of proof by use of these gravity beads rather than by visual inspection of the duration of a chaplet of bubbles.

I am indebted to Mr. J. S. Pottinger, honorary curator of the Stromness Museum, for the opportunity of reproducing a photograph of their fine set of gravity beads as Plate XIX.

J. PHILIPSON

