

## V.

NOTICE OF THE DISCOVERY OF AN URN OF STEATITE IN ONE OF FIVE TUMULI EXCAVATED AT CORQUOY, IN THE ISLAND OF ROUSAY, ORKNEY. BY MR GEORGE M. M'CRIE, CORQUOY.

The cluster of mounds explored is situated a few yards to the north west of the farm house of Corquoy, and are locally known as "Manzie's" (or Magnus's) mounds. They have always been considered as burial-places. The measurement of the largest mound (in which the urn was found) was about 50 feet in circumference, and the top  $5\frac{1}{2}$  feet above the surrounding level, but there is no doubt it stood much higher within living memory. The others are smaller. A trench was dug from the north into the centre of the largest mound.

A cist was found almost in the centre of this mound, and at about the level of the surrounding ground. It consisted of a top and bottom stone (flat slabs partly naturally plane at the edges, and partly chipped into form), with four side stones, the whole neatly pieced and cemented with tempered red clay, probably from the Sourin burn some little distance off.



Urn of Steatite (7 inches high).

The stone is of a hard blue nature, unlike any in the *immediate* neighbourhood, but like some to be found on the shores of the island. The cist was oblong in form, placed lengthways to N. and S., and measured inside about  $2\frac{1}{2}$  feet by 2 feet by  $1\frac{1}{2}$  depth. It was almost wholly filled with clay, ashes, and very minute fragments of bones, which crumbled

to the touch. Marks of fire were visible on the stones, and fragments of what seemed to have been peat were among the contents. In the centre

of the cavity of the cist was the urn. It stood mouth upwards, and was completely filled with clay, bone fragments, &c., of the same kind as outside. The material of the vessel is steatite, heavy and hard, but full of cracks, and rather brittle in parts. It measures  $9\frac{3}{4}$  and 8 inches across the mouth, and stands 7 inches high; the thickness irregular, but averaging  $\frac{1}{4}$  inch; weight about 3 lbs. About one-third of the base was wanting when found, and a small portion of one of the sides has given way, but the piece can be accurately fitted in, being preserved.

The remaining mounds contained stone cists similar to the foregoing. Two of them were almost square in shape, and the smallest of all measured only 12 inches by 6 inches, and was without the clay cement. No urns were found or remains of any kind, except comminuted bones, and the smallness of the fragments of bone prevented anything being ascertained regarding their character. One small piece of what is apparently a frontal bone has been preserved.

It may be mentioned that in several of the mounds the side stones were buttressed by irregular blocks, more firmly to support the weight of the earth above.

[Mr Anderson stated that this appeared to have been a small cemetery of those peculiarly interesting interments which in his paper on the "Relics of the Viking Period in Scotland" he had correlated with a special class of interments in Norway of the later Iron Age. They are interments after cremation, and they differ from Celtic interments in having the burnt bones deposited in an urn of stone instead of the large ornate vessel of baked clay which is the invariable rule in Scotland. These stone urns, both in Norway and in this country, are usually of steatite. Some are of large size, one now in the museum being 20 inches high and  $22\frac{1}{2}$  in diameter. They often bear the marks of the chisel or knife with which they have been scooped out, but occasionally, as in the case of this one from Rousay, they have been smoothed and polished. The isles of Orkney and Shetland (which, as is well known, were colonised by the Norwegians in the later period of their Paganism) are the only

localities on this side of the North Sea in which this class of burial has yet been found. They are therefore but little known, and up to this time no relics of distinctive character have been found with them except the urns. It is unfortunate that we have no detailed accounts of the phenomena of the burials, most of which have been investigated more with reference to the objects they have contained than to the phenomena they may have presented. In all probability the examination of these mounds during their excavation by some one who knew the differences between the phenomena of Celtic and Scandinavian burials might have detected evidence not obvious to the unskilled eye, and thus settled the question].

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MONDAY, 10th January 1881.

PROFESSOR DUNS, D.D., Vice-President, in the Chair.

A Ballot having been taken, the following Gentleman was duly elected a Fellow of the Society :—

DAVID EDWARD OUTRAM, 16 Grosvenor Terrace, Glasgow.

The following Donations to the Museum and Library were laid on the table, and thanks voted to the Donors :—

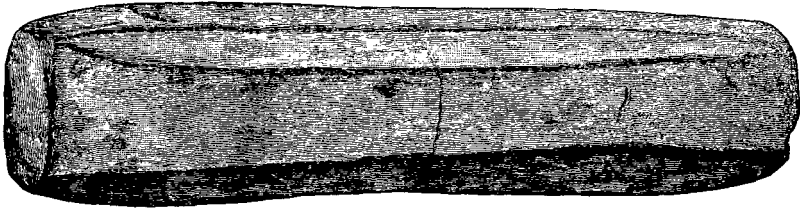
(1.) By Mr ROBERT GLEN, 2 North Bank Street.

Cast in Plaster of the Harp called the Harp of Brian Borumha, preserved in Trinity College, Dublin. (See the preceding communication by Mr Charles D. Bell, F.S.A. Scot).

(2.) By Major CAMPBELL RENTON, of Mordington, through Captain D. MILNE-HOME, Royal Horse Guards.

Polygonal Grinding Stone of quartzite, 13½ inches in length, 3 inches

in breadth, and  $2\frac{3}{4}$  inches in thickness, found in excavating a drain on Lamberton Moor, Berwickshire. It bears on one of its broader sides three grinding faces which have been worn to concave surfaces, and highly polished by use. The concavities of these surfaces are greatest towards the centre of the stone where the pressure of friction has been greatest;



Polygonal Grinding Stone of quartzite.

and towards the ends the unworn surface of the stone is convex instead of concave. On one of its narrower sides two similar grinding faces are found. On the opposite side there is but one grinding face, broader and deeper in the centre than the others. The broader side opposite to that first described has scarcely been used, and the surface is convex. The form and appearance of the implement will be more readily understood from the accompanying engraving. It is the only specimen of the kind in the collection. These polygonal grinding stones are rare, probably because their characteristics are not so obvious and striking as those of the implements they were employed to sharpen and polish. Hone-stones and whetstones are much more common than these large and massive *polissoirs*, which are of such size and solidity that they may have been used for giving the necessary grinding finish to the larger as well as to the smaller varieties of polished stone celts.

Mr John Evans, in his work on "The Ancient Stone Implements, Weapons, and Ornaments of Great Britain" (London, 1872), after mentioning the fact that the grindstones on which stone celts were polished and sharpened were not like those of the present day, revolving discs against the periphery of which the implements to be polished or

sharpened were rubbed, presents a summary of the evidence regarding them as follows :—

“Considering the numbers of polished implements that have been discovered in this country, it appears not a little remarkable that such slabs have not been more frequently noticed, though not improbably they have, from their simple character, for the most part escaped observation ; and even if found, there is usually little, unless the circumstances of the discovery are peculiar, to connect them with any particular stage of civilisation or period of antiquity. In Denmark and Sweden, however, these grinding stones, both of the flat and polygonal forms, are of comparatively frequent occurrence. Specimens are figured by Worsaae (*‘Nordiske Oldsager’* Nos. 35 and 36) and were also given by Thomsen so long ago as 1832 (*‘Tidskrift for Oldkyndighed,’* vol. i. pl. ii. p. 423). He states that they have been found in Scandinavia in barrows and elsewhere in the ground with half finished stone celts lying with them, so that there can be no doubt as to the purpose for which they were intended.” Mr Evans then states that several of the grinding stones found in this country resemble those of polygonal form found in Denmark, being symmetrically shaped, and showing marks of use on all their faces. He figures one from Dorchester, now in the Christy collection,  $9\frac{1}{4}$  inches long, which has both the faces and sides worn slightly concave as if from grinding convex surfaces such as the edges of celts, “though it is impossible to say with any degree of certainty that this was really the purpose to which it was applied.”

(3.) By Mr GEORGE HARRIS, Glenballoch, through J. ROMILLY ALLEN, C.E., F.S.A. Scot.

Large Urn, finely ornamented, found near Glenballoch Farm, New Rattray, Perthshire. (See the subsequent paper by Mr Romilly Allen.)

(4.) By JOHN H. J. STEWART, Slodahill, F.S.A. Scot.

Roughly Chipped Implement of Flint of Palæolithic type,  $5\frac{1}{2}$  inches long,  $3\frac{3}{4}$  inches broad, and  $1\frac{1}{2}$  inches in greatest thickness, tapering to

a point, rounded at the butt, and thinned to the edges all round from the middle, found in Cambridgeshire.

(5.) By Mrs ANDREW, Portsoy.

Brass Highland Brooch, 2 inches diameter, with rudely engraved ornament, from Banffshire.

(6.) By ROBERT CRAIG MACLAGAN, M.D., F.S.A. Scot.

Mould in Plaster of the Footmark cut in the Rock on the top of Dunadd, Argyleshire, and a Cast in Plaster from the Mould. (See the paper on Dunadd, with a figure of the footmark by Capt. F. W. L. Thomas, R.N., in the "Proceedings" (new series), vol. i. p. 31).

(7.) By CHARLES D. BELL, F.S.A. Scot.

Wooden Stool carved out of one piece from Accra, Gold Coast, Western Africa. It is  $21\frac{1}{2}$  inches long, 12 inches broad, and 14 inches high. It consists of three parts, the bottom, the pillars, and the seat. The bottom is flat,  $21\frac{1}{2}$  inches long,  $9\frac{1}{2}$  inches wide, and about half an inch in thickness. In the middle there is a part 11 inches by 8 elevated fully an inch above the rest; from the corners and centre of this elevated part rise the five pillars which support the seat. The four pillars at the corners are rectangular,  $2\frac{1}{2}$  inches wide by  $1\frac{1}{2}$  inch thick, and each is ornamented with carving on the outer edge. The central pillar is oval,  $14\frac{1}{2}$  inches in circumference, hollow, and pierced with rows of holes about half an inch square. The height of the pillars is 8 inches. The seat is curved upwards at both ends, and pierced by two rows of eight square holes, with a semicircular hole between each four. The general appearance of the stool is somewhat like those figured by Schweinfurth and others from Central Africa and the Nile valley.

(8.) By WILLIAM JOHNSTON, M.D., Surgeon-Major.

Three Assegais (spears with iron heads), taken from Kaffirs in the Transkei, 5 feet 5 to 5 feet 7 inches in length.

Two Assegais, of Natives north of the Zambesi 5 feet 8 inches in length.  
Six Mashona Arrows, 25 inches in length, four being ornamented with triangular patterns at the butt.

"Memoir of James Young and Rachel Cruickshank, and their Descendants." By Alexander Johnston, W.S. 1860. 4to.

"Inverurie and the Earldom of the Garioch." By Rev. John Davidson, D.D. 1878. 4to.

(9.) By Miss MARY COOKE, The Green, Worcester.

"The Picards or Pychards of Stradewy (now Tretower) Castle and Scethrog, Brecknockshire, &c., &c., with some account of the family of Sapy of Upper Sapey, Herefordshire." Privately Printed. Imp. 8vo. 1879.

(10.) By CHARLES PLAYNE, Esq., Nailsworth, Stroud.

Lithograph of a Roman Pavement, discovered at Woodchester, Gloucestershire, with descriptive letterpress.

(11.) By LEWIS BILTON, F.S.A. Scot.

Old Treatise on Runic Inscriptions, consisting of 36 pages of woodcuts, title wanting.

(12.) By the SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTE, Washington, U.S.

Smithsonian Collections. Vols. XV. and XVI.

Smithsonian Contributions to Knowledge. Vol. XXII.

Smithsonian Report for the Year 1878.

(13.) By the ROYAL SOCIETY OF NORTHERN ANTIQUARIES, Copenhagen.

Aarboger for Nordisk Oldkyndyghed og Historie. Two Vols., 1878 and 1879. 8vo. Copenhagen, 1880.

(14.) By the MASTER OF THE ROLLS.

Calendar of State Papers. Domestic. 1640.

(15.) By the POWYS LAND CLUB.

Powys Land Club Collections. Vol. III., Part 2.

There were also exhibited :—

(1.) By LADY A. A. J. SCOTT of Spottiswoode, Lady Associate.

Urn found in a cairn on the farm of Haliburton, near the Blackadder water. Lady Scott has communicated the following notice of the discovery in a note addressed to Mr Anderson :—

“DEAR SIR—Yesterday we dug into a little mound (where I thought there had once been a cairn) and found the stones regularly laid in a circle. The stones were larger and larger as we came near the centre, and in the centre we found an urn terribly broken, and in it a quantity of small broken bones and burnt stuff, both red and black—the urn must have been filled with this to about two-thirds. It stood on a flat stone about 18 inches long. The cist round it had been broken down altogether and had smashed the urn.

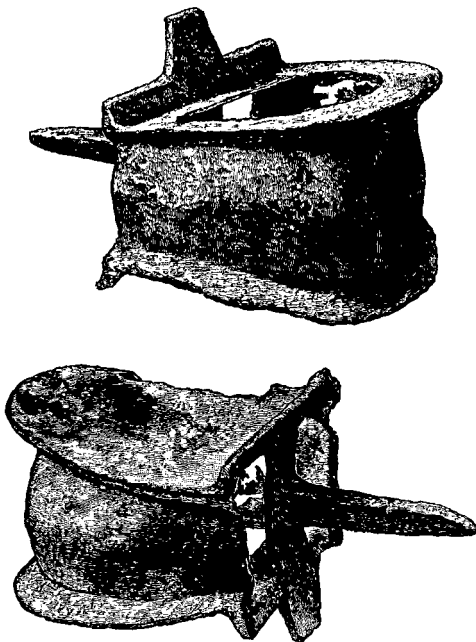
“The urn (which is now reconstructed) is  $7\frac{1}{2}$  inches high and 9 inches wide at the mouth, of elegant shape, swelling slightly below the rim and tapering to the bottom. The rim is slightly bevelled and ornamented inside the lip with four rows of double twisted thong pattern. The ornament on the outside of the rim is of similar character, consisting of horizontal bands of twisted thong pattern. Below the widest part the lines of ornament are placed vertically, extending to the bottom. This is most unusual, as in almost all urns of this size and shape the sloping part is generally plain.”

(2.) By Mr ARCHIBALD DOUGLAS, Hownam, Kelso.

A pair of massive Mountings of Cast Bronze, of unknown use, found



in a bank of clay on a spur of the Cheviots, at Henshole on Cheviot. These singular objects (of the form of which the engravings will supply a better idea than any amount of description) are quite unlike any thing



Mounting of Cast Bronze. (Front and back views.)  
(5 inches in length.)

else that is known, and it is consequently impossible to form any well-founded conjecture as to their use. They seem, however, to be allied by the characteristics of their form and outline to some of the harness or horse trappings of the "Late Celtic period."

(3.) By JOHN LORNE STEWART of Coll.

Penannular Brooch of Bronze, with settings of Glass, and Bronze Pin, with ornamental head, found in the Island of Coll. (See the subsequent

communication by Donald Ross, M.A., H.M. Inspector of Schools.) The brooch (fig. 1), which is covered with a fine green patina, is of the usual

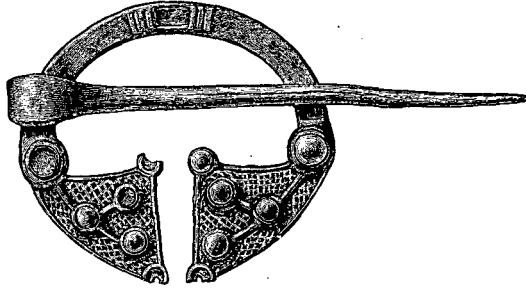


Fig. 1. Bronze Brooch found in Coll. (Actual size.)

form of a Celtic brooch of the late Christian period (9th to 12th century), viz., a flattened band of equal width, expanding at the ends, on which a

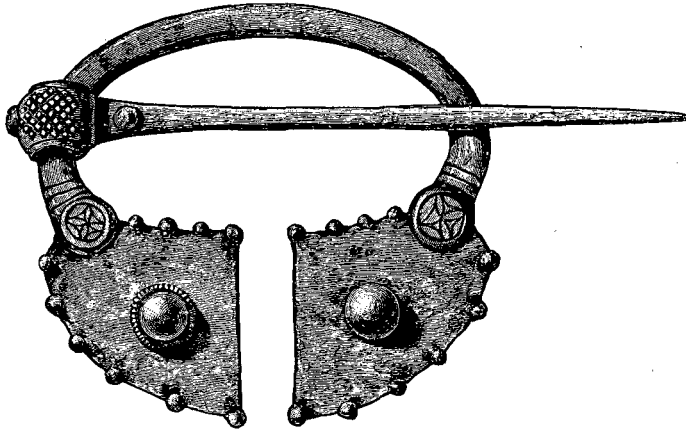


Fig. 2. Silver Brooch, Bell Collection. ( $7\frac{1}{4}$  inches in length.)

long pin moves loosely by a loop. There is a square socket for a setting (now gone) in the centre of the ring of the brooch, and two circular

settings of green glass (one of which is gone) are at the junctions of the ring with the expanded part of the brooch. On each of the flattened expansions there are five circular settings of green glass of smaller size. The whole surface of the expanded part is covered with a peculiar ornament, produced by cross-hatching the surface deeply with a graver, and



Fig. 3. Bronze Pin found in Coll. (Actual size.)

then gilding it. This ornament, as well as the compressed shape of the brooch, are characteristic of the later examples of this special form. One silver brooch (fig. 2) showing similar ornament on its pin is here figured from the Bell collection in the Museum. The pin of bronze (fig. 3), though of a rather unusual shape, presents the Celtic style of ornament of a slightly earlier type.

The following Communications were read :—