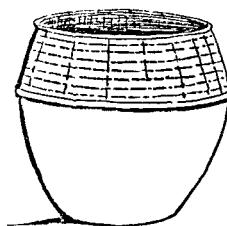


## VI.

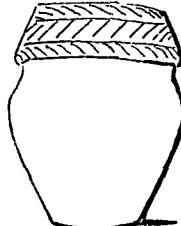
## NOTICE OF CINERARY URNS DISCOVERED AT NEWPORT, FIFE.

By A. H. MILLAR, F.S.A. SCOT.

Towards the end of August 1882, whilst some workmen were employed removing a tree on the estate of Tayfield, Newport, they came upon two cinerary urns containing partially calcined bones. The urns had been deposited side by side, without any protecting slab either above or below them ; and the tree, whose removal led to their discovery, had spread its roots around them. By the accidental disposition of these roots one of the urns was perfectly protected, and was found completely embedded

A  
A and B—Urns Found at Tayfield, Newport, in 1882.

B



Urn Found near Tay-field in 1865.

beneath the spreading fibres ; but the others had, unfortunately, been penetrated by some of the underground branches and seriously injured. They were both removed as carefully as possible to Tayfield House with their contents. The excavation was superintended by the Rev. J. M. Brown Murdoch, Riverhead Vicarage, Sevenoaks, who was residing at Tayfield House at the time, and who supplies the following information as to the mode of operation pursued :—

The urns lay in a line almost due east and west from the silver spruce fir (*Pinus picea*) which was being removed. The urn, with least decoration, was found first as it lay nearest the centre of the tree, and a chance

blow from a workman's spade partially destroyed it, exposing the calcined bones which it contained. The other urn, which lay side by side and in close contact with it, was next discovered, but as one of the roots of the tree had crushed it some difficulty was experienced in removing it. These roots were cut, canvas was placed around the injured urn, and the fragments of pottery and calcined bones were carefully removed.

The first urn was now partly exposed, and as it lay well under the arching roots of the spruce fir which thus protected it, the excavators confidently expected to remove it in a nearly perfect condition. But the workmen found, as they proceeded, that the root-fibres upon the eastmost side of this urn had destroyed it also, and it was at length removed in fragments. Mr Murdoch states—"I fancy that the men were not quite cautious enough in the work, and that the perfect (west) side of the urn became detached from the injured side, and falling over towards the west, came to pieces." This experience may be useful to future excavators.

Through the courtesy of Mrs Berry and Mr Wm. Berry of Tayfield, I was permitted to examine the relics, and after careful inspection find that the following is their condition :—The urns are both composed of dark-coloured clay, slightly mixed with sand, and only partially fired. They are very perfectly formed, both inner and outer surfaces having been finished with care. The ornamentation, though simple, exhibits some attempt at design, and has apparently been executed with a bone pin or other blunted instrument whilst the clay was wet. The firing to which the vessels have been subjected has only been sufficient to harden them to a slight depth below the outer surface, leaving the remainder of the urn in the condition of a dried but unfired brick.

The shapes of the urns vary considerably. The smaller one (A) is narrower at the top than at the centre, and is furnished with a flange raised about half an inch above the highest bead-moulding, as if it had been intended to be fitted with an inner lid.<sup>1</sup> The base has been truncated

<sup>1</sup> The blocks of the outline figures of the urns which illustrate this paper are contributed by the author.

so that it might rest with its aperture upwards. I have not been able to ascertain the exact diameter of this urn, but from the descriptions of the discoverers, corrected by an ideal circle drawn from the remaining fragments, I find that it has measured about 12 inches outside, with an inner radius of about 5 inches. Its depth was probably 12 inches inside.

The larger urn (B) is different from the one described both in shape and ornamentation. It has been narrower at the mouth than in the body of the vessel, and the lip, instead of having a flange to receive a lid, has been bevelled to the outer surface, probably for that purpose. The decoration is much simpler than that of the other, though evidently executed in the same fashion, and with similar tools. The fragments are not sufficiently large to admit of its exact dimensions being discovered, but it has likely been about 14 inches in diameter at the lip, extending to 16 inches (outside measurement) at the centre of the vessel, and contracting to perhaps 7 inches across the flattened bottom. A very neat bead had been formed near the centre of each urn, serving to divide the decorated portion from the plain base.

The bones which these urns have contained are partially calcined, but not pulverised. Sometimes the white appearance of bones, long buried but preserved from actual contact with the soil, deceives the casual observer, who expects to find traces of calcination ; but a careful examination of these relics will show distinctly the action of fire upon them. Several of the fragments showed signs of having been split with some instrument *after the outer surface had been calcined*, probably to admit of their being placed within the cavity of the urn. The bones are too imperfect to form a correct index to the age and condition of the skeletons to which they belonged, and only very vague conjectures may be founded upon them. From the appearance presented by a portion of one of the cranial bones (*os parietale*), in which the processes of the coronal suture are very wide and laminated, whilst the plate itself is thin, it is likely that the smaller urn had contained the skeleton of a child ; and the presence of two portions of knee-joint bones and well-developed (*metatarsal*) toe-bones leads to the notion that more than one

skeleton was enclosed in this urn. The bones in the other receptacle have been too much destroyed to admit of accurate identification, though several of the lumbar vertebrae of an adult were visible amongst the débris.

Though the formation of the urns seems to indicate that they were intended to have covering lids, no traces of the latter were found. The vessels have apparently been reversed, with their contents, upon the bare ground, and the decayed state of those parts which have been nearest the soil is thus accounted for. The places where the tree-roots had broken through the pottery would be similarly affected; and the calcined bones thus brought into immediate contact with the earth present a different appearance from those preserved from its influence. Though the urns were found at a depth of only 18 inches from the present surface of the soil, it is not improbable that at some time a knoll had risen over their site which had been partially cleared away. The tree which grew over them is certainly not more than eighty years of age, and the flatness of the plateau on which it grew rather favours the notion that the ground has been artificially levelled.

There have been remains similarly situated found upon the estate of Tayfield before this time. About the year 1835, whilst the father of the late proprietor was bringing a portion of ground on the farm of Northfield under cultivation, he came upon traces of a "circular work," which was supposed at that period to be a Roman camp. Further investigation disclosed that this erection was composed of earth, while a cairn in the centre enclosed a stone coffin of considerable size, containing a great quantity of bones. One of the slabs which formed this coffin was about 6 feet long, 4 feet broad, and 6 inches thick, and was made of roughly polished yellow sandstone. In 1855 some workmen were employed boling trees near Westwood—at a short distance from the site of the urns now discovered, when they came upon a sarcophagus or stone coffin, composed of rude, undressed flags of whinstone, which was also full of bones. Neither of these coffins contained urns such as are usually found in such sarcophagi, but their absence was counterbalanced by a

discovery which took place in the neighbourhood a few years afterwards.

In October 1865, while some workmen were employed trenching at Westwood, near Tayfield, they came upon several cinerary urns disposed in a manner not hitherto noted by any Scottish antiquary. They were nine in number, and placed in a circle around a central urn, and at a radius of 7 feet. The depth at which they were buried varied from 8 to 20 inches, and though they had no slabs placed under them—as is frequently the case—some preparation had been made to preserve their contents from decay by the depositing of charcoal and ashes beneath each inverted urn. The vessels do not seem to have been at all equal in size to the two now discovered, as the largest of them was only  $14\frac{1}{2}$  inches high,  $9\frac{3}{4}$  inches across the mouth, and  $3\frac{3}{4}$  inches at the base; whilst the smallest merely measured 5 inches in height,  $4\frac{3}{4}$  inches across the mouth, and 3 inches at the base. The ornamentation of these urns was almost identical with that upon the more elaborate of the Tayfield urns. A notice of the Westwood urns from the pen of the late Mr Jervise, appeared in the Society's *Proceedings* for 1865, and they are now deposited in the Museum.

As Mr Murdoch was aware of the circumstances under which the urns were found at Westwood, he examined the ground carefully. The urns had been deposited closely together at the same time, without any measures being taken to exclude the earth from immediate contact with their contents. These interesting relics are now in the possession of Mrs Berry of Tayfield.

MONDAY, 12th March 1883.

ARTHUR MITCHELL, M.D., LL.D., Vice-President,  
in the Chair.

A Ballot having been taken, the following Gentlemen were duly elected  
Fellows :—

JAMES CURRIE BAXTER, S.S.C., 45 Heriot Row.

SAMUEL COWAN, Publisher, Perth.

W. E. LOCKHART, R.S.A., 9 Chamberlain Road.

GEORGE MILLER, C.A., Acre Valley, Torrance of Campsie.

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

(1.) By Mrs RAMSAY, Kildalton, Islay.

Cast in Portland Cement of the Cross at Kildalton, Islay, 9 feet in  
height. [It is hoped that engravings with detailed descriptions of this  
fine cross may be given in the next volume of the *Proceedings*.]

Cast in Portland Cement of an unshaped Slab, 26 inches in length,  
with an incised Latin cross on one side, found under the pedestal of the  
Kildalton Cross.

Cast in Portland Cement of an erect Slab, unshaped, and sculptured  
on one side only, the other side and the edges being left in their natural  
condition. On the sculptured side is a Celtic cross in relief, very rudely  
executed, with a circle connecting the arms with the shaft and summit, the  
sun and moon over the arms, and the spaces underneath filled with rudely  
executed interlacements, with scroll-like terminations. The slab is  
interesting, as being the second known in Scotland which has the conven-  
tional representation of the sun and moon over the arms of the cross.  
The other specimen, which was found at Craignarget, Gillespie, Glenluce,  
is also in the Museum, and is figured in the *Proceedings*, vol. iii. (New  
Series), p. 251. This one is from Doid Mhairi, near Port-Ellen, Islay.

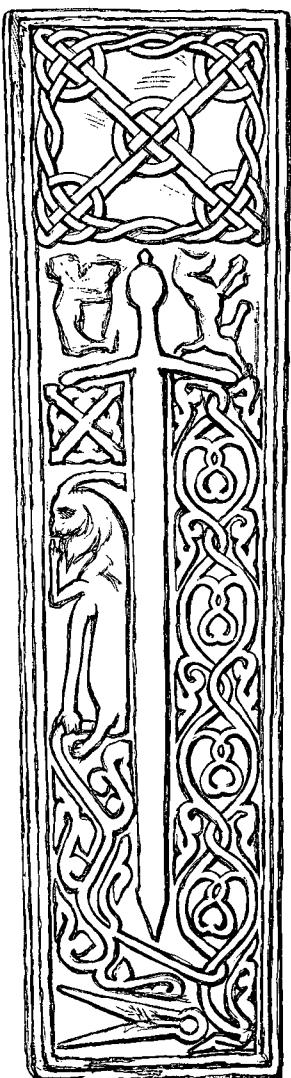


Fig. 1. Recumbent Slab in Kildalton Burying-Ground (6 feet 2 inches in length). ]

Cast in Portland Cement of the upper portion of a shaped Slab with rounded head, bearing an equal-armed cross within a circle. The slab is broken in the lower part, and now only measures 2 feet 3 inches in length. It was originally found at Kilbride, parish of Kildalton, Islay.

Cast in Portland Cement of a recumbent Slab (fig. 1) in the Kildalton burying-ground, 6 feet 2 inches in length, 20 inches wide at the head, and 16 inches at the bottom. It bears in the centre a sword with guard reversed, and scroll-work of the usual foliageous kind proceeding from the tail of a nondescript animal. Below the sword are a pair of shears; the spaces on either side of the hilt are filled up with animal figures, and a pattern of interlaced work fills the space between the sword and the top of the slab.

Casts in Plaster of two Inscriptions on recumbent Slabs from the island of Texa, Islay.

Mrs Ramsay has kindly sent the following notes regarding the monuments from which these casts were taken:—

**THE KILDALTON CROSS**—(*Cast No. 1*).—The old parish church of Kildalton is situated in the graveyard on the farm of Ardmore, about nine miles north-east of Port Ellen, and the ancient cross stands a few yards north of the church, within the wall which surrounds the burying-ground.

Previous to August 1882, when the cast

of the cross was made, it had long stood in a roughly-dressed stone which had no sufficient foundation, and the cross had consequently fallen to a slanting position. To allow a proper foundation to be made for the cross, the stone in which it had stood was lifted, and immediately under the south-west corner of it the unshaped slab (Cast No. 2) was found, lying face downwards. (See fig. 2.)

A number of water-worn stones, such as are to be got in the bays near, were also found, and amongst them a rough stone, nearly round, and about  $6\frac{1}{2}$  inches in diameter, one side of which had the appearance of having been worn smooth artificially. Below these water-worn stones, human remains, apparently of more than one body, were come upon.

Dr Mitchell was present when the basement was removed and the slab, &c., discovered.

The cross of Kildalton now stands erect on the spot it formerly occupied, with the same stone as basement, though part of it is hidden by the new steps and built into the foundation, in the hope of making it more secure.

*Cast No. 2.*—The cast of the unshaped slab mentioned above, bearing the incised Latin cross, found in the foundation of Kildalton cross, August 1882 (fig. 2). The stone is 26 inches in length, and sculptured on one side only.

*Cast No. 3.*—The original of this cast, bearing a Celtic cross (fig. 3), is a rude irregular slab. Its length from base to summit is 2 feet 9 inches; width at summit, 14 inches; width at base, 10 inches;

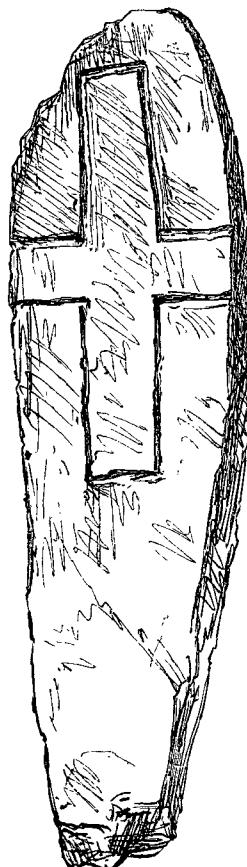


Fig. 2. Stone with Incised Cross, found under the Kildalton Cross (26 inches in length).

average thickness,  $7\frac{1}{2}$  inches. On the 30th January 1883, Donald M'Nab, who has been in Mr Ramsay's employment for nearly fifty years, took me to the spot where he found the slab about forty-five years before, and which was called "Doid Mhairi." It is situated in a large park about 300 yards west of Port Ellen distillery, and north of the limekiln which is on the side of the public road leading to Kintraw. I believe in a direct line it is nearly midway between the ruin and burying-ground of Kilnaughton and Tigheargaman, where another cross once stood, the site of which is still to be seen.

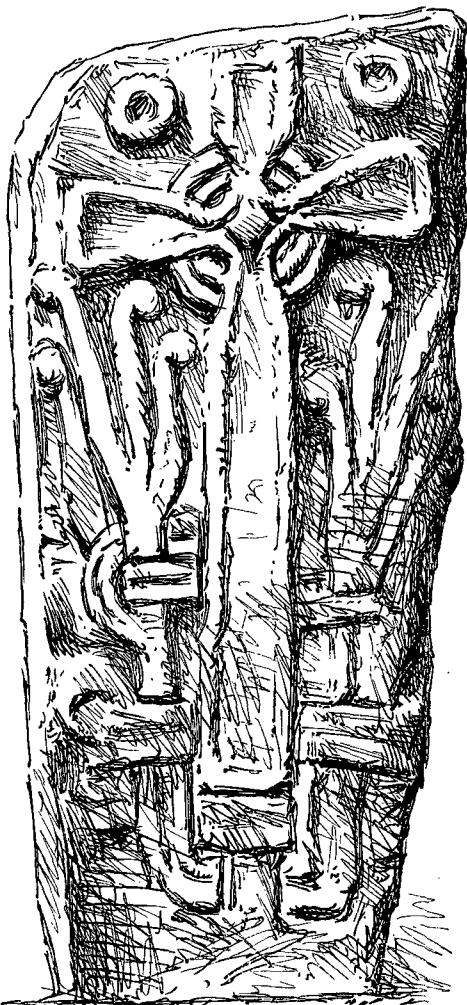


Fig. 3. Erect Slab with Cross, in relief, from "Doid Mhairi" (2 feet 9 inches in length).

Donald M'Nab describes "Doid Mhairi" (previous to the date of finding the slab) as an uncultivated spot in the field about the size of a small potato plot or garden, on which a considerable quantity of stones lay, and there was some appearance of an enclosure or building having

existed. The other parts of the field had been cultivated, but "Doid Mhairi" had not, owing to a belief, as Donald M'Nab stated, that it might once have been a place of burial, from its resemblance to other places of burial in the district. It was, however, resolved to clear the spot, and while Donald M'Nab was removing the stones he found amongst them the slab now under notice. It was set up in the old distillery garden, where it remained till a few years ago, when the garden was covered with buildings, and the cross brought to Kildalton House, where it now is. "Doid Mhairi" signifies in English "Mary's Croft," meaning a small piece of ground such as a potato plot or small garden. No other object of interest, nor bones of any kind, were found at "Doid Mhairi," or in any other part of the field when it was trenched or ploughed.

**KILBRIDE CROSS**—(*Cast No. 4*).—The slab, of which this is a cast, measures 27 inches long by  $9\frac{1}{2}$  broad, and is 3 inches thick. It is rounded at the top, and on one side bears a Latin cross within a circle, in low relief. This cross was known as *Crois-an-t-sagairt*, the Priest's Cross.

A son of the Rev. A. M'Tavish, late minister of the parish, carried the slab from Kilbride to the old manse garden, where it remained till August 1882, when it was taken to Kildalton House.

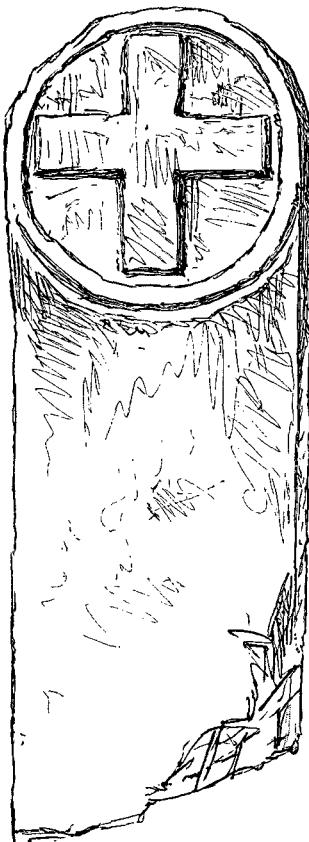


Fig. 4. Slab with Cross from Kilbride, Islay (27 inches high).

The farm of Kilbride is situated about a mile and a half north-east of Port Ellen. On this farm is the ruin of the church of Cille Bhride. The burying-ground surrounding the old church has long been disused, but the present tenant of the farm says he has known of children being buried there. He pointed out the site of the cross, about 11 feet east of the ruin, where part of the foundation is still to be seen. There is a well, about 13 feet south-east of the ruin, which is called Tobar-an-t-sagairt, the Priest's Well.

(*Extract of a Letter from Rev. John M'Tavish, dated Inverness, 2nd February 1883.*)

"You may inform Mrs Ramsay that I remember having fallen in (when once on my way home from Kilbride) with, I suppose, the very stone which she inquires about, though my impression is that it was not quite so long as she says. I think it was lying on the ground in a small, neglected, and long-disused graveyard; at all events I thought it a pity, plain as it was, that it should lie there uncared for, so I shouldered it, and conveyed it, I cannot say whether with or without any assistance, to the old manse. It is so long since this happened—I suppose not less, possibly more, than forty-five years ago—that the only wonder to me in connection with it is that so much has been remembered about it, and that my exploit should now come to light and be a matter of history!"

(*Extract of a Letter from Miss M'Tavish.*)

"If my brother's memory serves him right, he can tell you that he carried the cross you ask about on his shoulder from Killbride, and set it up on one of the pillars of a small gateway that led to the road to the office houses. I fear no one of us is in a position to throw any light on the antiquity of the stone, but the rude carving may be a guide to those who are versed in such matters. There may be other remains where it was found, as of course the name of the farm tells that it was the resting-place of one of the saints of old.

"At the time John brought the cross to the manse, there were threatened disturbances in Ireland, and Donald Carmichael (mason), said, 'If the Papists come over, they will not harm the minister, as the cross is set up here.'"

In the hurriedly written description of the slab which was sent to Mr M'Tavish, I gave its length as "about 3 feet." Its length, however, is only 2 feet 3 inches. Mr M'Tavish therefore correctly remarks that, so far as he could remember, the stone was not quite so long as I said. I sent a rough sketch of the slab to Mr M'Tavish to make sure that we referred to the same stone.

*Cast No. 5* is that of the sculptured sepulchral slab, showing a sword, shears, &c., in the Kildalton burying-ground, which has been already noticed as fig. 1 on page 278.

(2.) By the Right Hon. the EARL OF STAIR, F.S.A. Scot.

Bronze Javelin Head, 3 inches in length, found in Balgown Moss, Kirkecolm, Wigtownshire.

(3.) By K. H. MACDONALD, M.D., Marathon House, Cupar, through J. M. DICK PEDDIE, F.S.A. Scot.

Enamelled Crucifix of Bronze, found in the Churchyard of Ceres, Fife. (See the previous paper by Mr Peddie.)

(4.) By JOHN ALEXANDER SMITH, M.D., *Secretary*.

Eight rude Stone Implements and one Stone Pounder, from Kennaby, Fair Isle.

Two oblong Stone Pounders, found at Gillie, Fair Isle, Shetland.

Oval Boulder of Sandstone, perforated, from Setter, Fair Isle, Shetland.

Two "Collies" or Shetland Crusies, one of iron, another of copper. (See the subsequent paper by Dr Smith.)

(5.) By JOHN BRUCE, Jun., of Sumburgh, Shetland.

One Sinker, two broken perforated Stones, and portion of the side of a large Vessel of Steatite, from Kennaby, Fair Isle.

Portion of a Stone Cup, found at Gillie, Fair Isle.

Oblong Stone Vessel, found in Fair Isle.

Oblong water-worn Boulder, found at Boddam, Dunrossness, Shetland.  
 Two carved Discs of stone, found in a Broch on Scatness, Shetland.  
 Three Whorls of steatite, from the remains of buildings in Fair Isle, Shetland.

Two Corn Rubbers, found at Kennaby, Fair Isle.  
 Two "Collies" or Shetland Crusies of iron, one from Fair Isle.  
 Hand-loom for Garters, in use in Fair Isle.  
 Two large Stone Sinkers, as in use at Sandwick, Shetland.  
 Stone Window Frame, from Boddam, Dunrossness, Shetland. (See the subsequent paper by Dr Smith.)

(6.) By GEORGE BRUCE, Sand Lodge, Sandwick.

Two terminal Stone Sinkers, and one of the Middle Sinkers of a "long line," as presently in use, from Sandwick, Shetland. (See the subsequent paper by Dr Smith.)

(7.) By A. CUNNINGHAM HAY, Lerwick.

Iron Padlock, and Wooden Door-lock, from Norway.

(8.) By G. R. GRANT, Schoolmaster, Boddam, Shetland.

Penny of Edward II., Penny of Henry II., and Dutch Copper Coin.

(9.) By SYMINGTON GRIEVE, F.S.A. Scot., the Author.

Notice of the Discovery of Remains of the Great Auk in the Island of Oronsay. Reprint from the Linnean Society's *Journal*.

(10.) By the SENATUS OF THE UNIVERSITY.

Edinburgh University Calendar 1878-79 and 1879-80.

(11.) By Col. YULE, C.B., Hon. Mem. S.A. Scot.

Notes on the oldest Records of the Sea Route to China from Western Asia. Reprint from *Proceedings* of the Royal Geographical Society.

(12.) By the DEPUTY CLERK-REGISTER OF SCOTLAND.

Records of the Privy Council of Scotland. Vol. V.

(13.) By GEORGE HAY, F.S.A. Scot., the Editor.

Round about the Round O, with its Poets. Edited, with Notes by George Hay, F.S.A. Scot. The Drawings by John Adam, Edinburgh. 4to. Arbroath: Thomas Buncle. 1883.

(14.) By WILLIAM MACKAY, F.S.A. Scot., Inverness.

*Transactions* of the Gaelic Society of Inverness. Vols. II - IX. inclusive.

There were also exhibited:—

(1.) By CHARLES ELPHINSTONE DALRYMPLE.

A Portrait on Panel, formerly in Stirling Castle.  
(See the subsequent communication by Mr Dalrymple.)

(2.) By J. SANDS.

Bronze Sword, 22 inches in length, slightly broken at the hilt and point, having two rivet-holes in the wings and two in the handle-plate, with a slot between them.

Bronze Pin (fig. 5),  $2\frac{1}{2}$  inches in length, with swivel-head, the ring and the pin-head decorated with prickly ornamentation. The diagrams *a* and *b* show the ornament of the head and the reverse side of the pin.

Bronze Needle,  $1\frac{1}{2}$  inches in length, with oval eye.  
All found in the Island of Tiree.

The following Communications were read:—

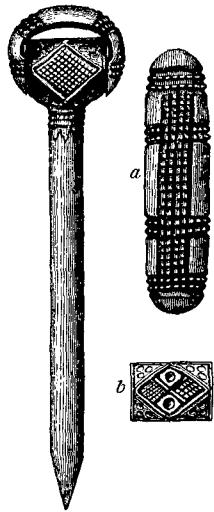


Fig. 5. Bronze Pin,  
found in Tiree ( $2\frac{1}{2}$   
inches in length).