

V.

NOTICE OF THE DISCOVERY OF AN ANCIENT BOAT, OF SINGULAR CONSTRUCTION, ON THE BANKS OF THE CLYDE. BY JOHN BUCHANAN, Esq., GLASGOW, COR. MEMB. S.A. SCOT. (Communicated in a Letter to the Secretary.)

I have to communicate the discovery of *another* Clyde canoe. This took place about a fortnight ago, on the property of Bankton, immediately adjoining Clydehaugh, where it may be remembered the last group of canoes was found. Bankton is about 100 yards further down the river, and on the same side, the south. The discovery was made, as in the former instances, during the extensive operations by the Clyde Trustees for widening and improving the river. This new boat counts the *sixteenth* found at Glasgow within little more than the last half-century. It was lying in the same deep bed of finely laminated sand as at Clydehaugh; and at the depth of about 16 feet from the old surface, and 250 feet back from the ancient river margin, as laid down on the oldest river maps we have in the Clyde Trustees' office.

Immediately on receiving information from the river engineer (whom I have

enlisted in the good old cause), I went down to the spot, and carefully examined this addition to the canoe fleet, and it was well I did so, for when lifted from her ancient bed she went all to pieces.

Strange, this canoe is *entirely different* from all the rest found at Glasgow. These, as you know, were all hollowed out of simple oak trees, either by fire or sharp tools, but the present one was what is technically called "*clinker-built*." A huge oak had been cut longitudinally into a mere strip, as the backbone of the boat, from which a long *keel* had been formed underneath, by being simply *left out*, while the back bone was pared away, so that the keel appeared a mere longitudinal projection from the lower plane of the sawn strip. Strong transverse ribs were inserted for the skeleton of the boat. These were clothed outside with thinly-sawn deals about eight inches broad, indicating the presence of very sharp tools, and these deals *overlapped* each other precisely as in modern yawls. The *stern*, which in the other specimens had the peculiarity of being only a thin board inserted vertically in grooves at the end of the boat, and padded with stiff clay at the seams, is in the present case, a thick triangular-shaped piece of oak (something in the shape of a heart), and fitted in precisely similar to those of our own time. Again, the prow had a neat cut-water, and rose a foot above the gunwale, giving it rather an imposing effect, not unlike (on a very small scale) the beak of an antique galley. No attempt had been made to ornament this prow, which projected diagonally. Probably it was intended merely to enable the natives to get a better grip of the head of the boat in hauling her into or out of the stream. In fact, I thought I could trace light marks of abrasion on it, as if left by the *horny hands* of these rude aboriginal canoe-builders.

The length of this curious boat was eighteen feet ; width at the waist five feet, and at the stern three-and-a-half feet. There were only four or five rows of sheathing outside the ribs. I could perceive no marks of rollocks, or of a step for a mast ; and neither fragment of paddles nor outriggers, the last of which I saw only *once* among the whole specimens, ten in number, which have come under my observation. The deals or sheathing have been fastened to the ribs of the boat, partly by oaken pins, and partly by what I think must have been nails of some kind of metal. The perforation where the nails have been are uniformly square, and the marks of their broad heads, driven home by smart blows deeply into the wood, are very perceptible. None of the nails themselves have, however, been found ; but several of the oaken pins are left, one of which is in my possession. They are round, thicker than a man's thumb, and ingeniously formed. The pin, after being rounded, has been sliced in two, and a triangular-shaped tongue inserted ; the base of the triangle ranging with the

top of the pin, so that when driven smartly home, the pin would hold firmly, as I noticed to be the case.

When found, this boat was lying *keel uppermost*. She had been capsized, probably in a storm. Her prow was pointing right *up* the river, and I had an excellent opportunity of deliberately overhauling her, which I did, I assure you, with no small interest. But I regret to add, that when the workmen lifted her from her long concealment, the ancient fastenings gave way, and she fell to pieces in their hands. The backbone, ribs, and most of the sheathing, though now lying loose, are, however, quite fresh. The description I have given was noted down before she lost her form. The wreck lies in the courtyard of the River Trustees, but is of course of no use, and could not be reconstructed.

I observed the same set of circular holes at irregular distances through the uppermost sheathing, which I have noted before on the other canoe specimens. I cannot conceive what these perforations could be for. Very evidently they were not occasioned by the falling out or extraction of mere knots in the wood, but have been cut carefully and deliberately. Can you help me to a conjecture? Generally there were more of them on one side of the boat than the other, and invariably near the stern.

I am glad to tell you that I have prevailed on the Chairman of the Glasgow Underwriters to set up in their new hall, shortly, the very fine specimen of single-tree canoe found at Clydehaugh; and alongside of it a beautiful model of a ship, full rigged, which has hitherto graced their hall, as a striking contrast of marine architecture on the banks of the same Clyde, at vastly distant epochs.