

II.

NOTICE OF SOME ANTIQUITIES RECENTLY DISCOVERED IN NORTH AYRSHIRE. BY R. W. COCHRANE PATRICK OF LADYLAND, ESQ., B.A., LL.B., F.S.A. SCOT. (PLATE XXII.)

The following articles are noticed in this account and now exhibited to the meeting, viz. :—Nos. 1 and 2, Lion-shaped Ewer and three-legged Pot of bronze, found in an old canoe in the Loch of Kilbirnie ; No. 3, Stone Hammer, found on the farm of Chapelton, near West Kilbride ; No. 4, Stone Hammer, found on the farm of Montfode, near Ardrossan.

Nos. 1 and 2.—These extremely curious relics—for the opportunity of exhibiting which I am indebted to Mr W. J. Armstrong, factor to the Right Hon. the Earl of Glasgow—were found in Kilbirnie Loch in 1868 or 1869, under the following circumstances :—

The Glengarnock Iron Company have been, for some years, depositing the refuse from their works along the south-western margin of the loch. The enormous weight of this mass of slag has had the effect of pushing up the mud from the margin of the water and forcing it inwards to the loch. Amongst the mud, thus pressed up, the remains of several ancient canoes have been at various times discovered, and in one of the most perfect of these the bronze articles now exhibited were found.

It is much to be regretted that accurate measurements and drawings of this canoe had not been taken at the time. Exposure to the air, and the unrestrained curiosity of sightseers, soon demolished it entirely ; and at the present moment no part of it exists beyond a few fragments in the possession of different individuals. The following description of it is taken from the information obligingly given to me by Mr Thos. Hislop, who first noticed it in the mud, and who was present during the whole time it was being excavated, and saw the articles found in it.

The canoe was discovered lying about 20 feet north of a small artificial island—itself an object of great interest, but now unfortunately overwhelmed by the advance of the iron-stone rubbish—at the south-western end of the loch. It was hollowed out of a single tree, and was about 18 feet in length, 3 feet in breadth, and close on 2 feet in depth. It was broadest at the stern, which was square, and tapered towards the bow ;

and was entire with the exception of about 2 feet broken off the narrowest end.

There were indications that a hole in the bottom had been mended, and some wooden pins were in it which may have been used for this purpose, or for fixing at the side what is described to me as a sort of bracket. In the mud which filled the hollow of the canoe the bronze articles were found; and also a thin plate or piece of metal which cannot now be recovered.

The "lion" stands $8\frac{1}{2}$ inches from the ground at the highest part; is 8 inches in length and $8\frac{1}{2}$ in girth round the body, and weighs 4 lbs. It is made of a yellowish bronze, and seems to have been used for holding liquid. It bears a striking resemblance, though smaller and less ornamented, to one figured and described at p. 556 of Wilson's "Prehistoric Annals of Scotland" (edition 1851). It will be observed that the one now shown wants the curious ornament projecting from the breast, though the place where it has been inserted is quite apparent.

The bronze pot is 11 inches across the mouth, stands 14 inches high, and weighs 28 lbs. It resembles what are often called Roman camp kettles. There are indications of its having been very ingeniously mended.

It is difficult to account for these articles, which apparently belong to a comparatively late period, being found in a canoe which was evidently of a much earlier age. It is possible that the connection was merely accidental, and that the articles, which are of considerable weight, when they sank, buried themselves in the canoe already resting at the bottom. Or, on the other hand, it may be, that the canoe, though made and belonging originally to a very primitive period, continued in use down to the later one, and was lost with the articles in it; a theory which, I am somewhat inclined to think, is the more probable.

No. 3. *Stone Hammer*.—This very fine specimen was found on the farm of Chapleton (occupied by Mr David Cunninghame), in the spring of 1865. From the intelligent description given me by Mr Cunninghame, jun., who was present at the discovery, I am enabled to furnish the following particulars. It was found under a small inverted urn, immediately beside a larger urn containing remains of bones, &c. The plough broke the top of the larger urn, and in trying to get the remains of it out by loosening the ground around about it, the smaller one was unluckily broken, but the hammer was noticed and preserved. (See Plate XXII. fig. 1.)

No. 4.—The other stone hammer (Plate XXII. fig. 2) is also a very fine specimen. It was found the year before, not a very great distance from where the first was discovered, and like it, is in a high state of preservation. Dr Brown, M.D., of Saltcoats, to whom the hammer belongs, informs me that it was turned up by the plough in a field on the top of Montfode Braes, a little to the north of Ardrossan, and near the remains of several ancient forts. The whole of this district is rich in archæological remains, and deserves to be better explored than it has hitherto been.

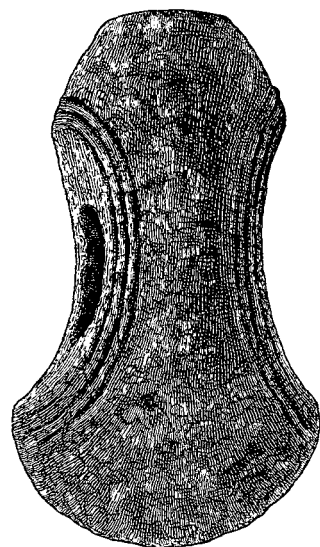


Fig. 1.

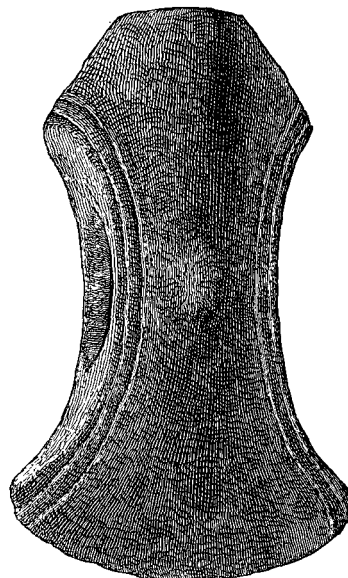


Fig. 2.

STONE AXE-HAMMERS FOUND IN AYRSHIRE.

Fig. 1. Exhibited by Mr D. Cunningham, Chapelton. Ardrossan.

Fig. 2. Exhibited by Dr Brown, Saltcoats, Ardrossan.