

## IV.

NOTICE OF A BRONZE SPEAR-HEAD FOUND NEAR DUDDO CASTLE,  
NORTHUMBERLAND, THE PROPERTY OF SIR JOHN MARJORIBANKS.  
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THE MUSEUM.

The spear-head (fig. 1) now submitted to the inspection of the Society was found recently by a drainer in Bowsden Moor, near Duddo Castle, Northumberland, on the property of Sir John Marjoribanks of Lees, to whose courtesy we are indebted, through the intervention of Mr D. Douglas, for its exhibition. It measures 17 inches in length, of which the socket is 4 inches, and the blade 13 inches. The greatest width of the blade is 3 inches, at about 10 inches from the point. The socket extends almost the whole length of the blade, or to within about an inch of the point, and it projects for 4 inches beyond the base of the blade. It is pierced by two rivet holes in the plane of the blade at the distance of 2 inches from its extremity. The special peculiarity of the specimen is that it presents two segmental openings, one on either side of the socket and close to it, in the widest part of the blade, which cause the socket to reappear in the centre of the blade. These openings have been formed in the casting, and differ in character from the narrow elongated openings often found at the base of the blade (as shown in fig. 2), which are analogous to the loops placed in the socket, as seen in figs. 5 and 6. The socket of this specimen, which is cylindrical in the part that projects beyond the blade, becomes hexagonal externally as it passes through the space between the openings, the curvatures of its circumference passing gradually into flattened surfaces, and so continuing to the point. A slightly raised moulding passes along either side of the socket from point to base of the blade where the mouldings from its opposite faces run together, and are continued to the rivet holes against which they are cut off abruptly. The segmental openings in the blade are also bordered by a slightly-raised moulding of similar character. The edges of

the blade have been thinned out by the hammer and probably planished

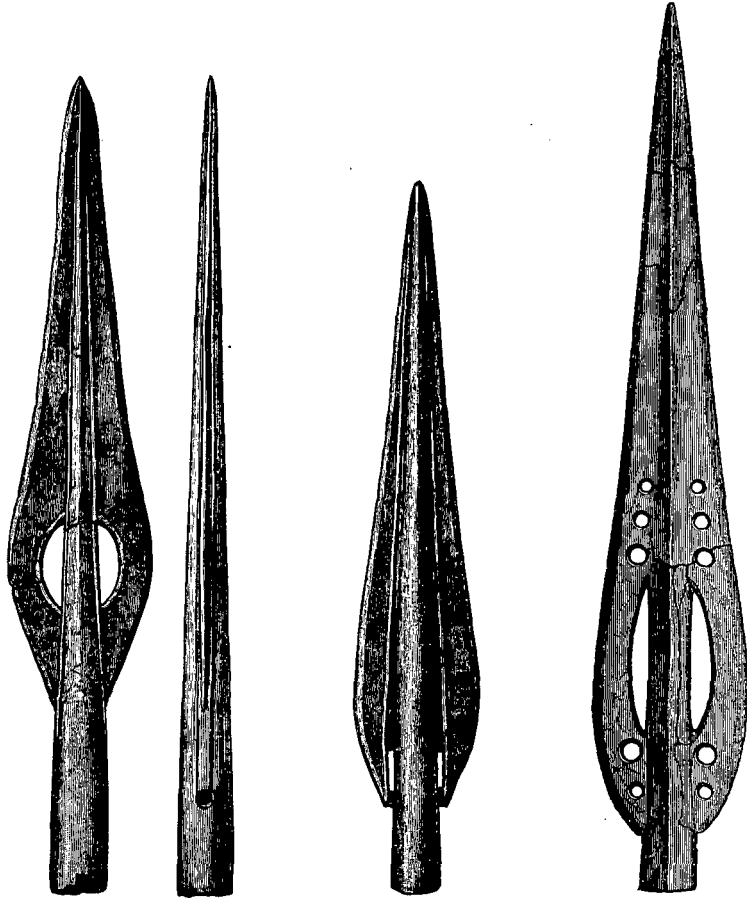


Fig. 1. Bronze Spear-head found near Duddo Castle (17 inches in length).

Fig. 2. Bronze Spear-head found near Bellhaven (15½ inches in length).

Fig. 3. Bronze Spear-head found near Denhead, Coupar-Angus (19 inches in length).

with a whetstone. The whole surface is now covered with the fine brown patina characteristic of bronzes that have come from marshy soil.

The special features of the specimen are—(1) its great size, 17 inches in length. There are very few larger, for although one specimen has been found in Ireland of more than twice the length, such instances are very uncommon. I only know two in Scotland that exceed this Northumberland specimen in length. One of these is the fine example in the national collection (fig. 3), found at Denhead, near Coupar Angus. It measures 19 inches in length, and is remarkable for its fineness of shape, and also in having the blade pierced both by segmental and circular openings. The other example is in the Elgin Museum. It belongs to the variety with the thin blade, with long straight edges and loops formed in the base of the blade.

The second special feature of the Northumberland specimen is the presence of these segmental openings in the blade. This is not a common



Fig. 4. Bronze Spear-head found near Forfar ( $6\frac{1}{4}$  inches in length).



Fig. 5. Bronze Spear-head found in Lanarkshire ( $5\frac{1}{2}$  inches in length).

feature. It is exhibited by very few examples in the Scottish collection—I cannot say how many, because of the five examples which we possess in our national collection two have no localities—but in the collection of the

Royal Irish Academy, Dublin, out of 180 specimens, only 16 present segmental openings in the blade. This, however, was the character of a number of the fragments of spear-heads that were dredged out of the bottom of Duddingston Loch in 1780, and among the remains of that remarkable hoard that are preserved in our Museum, there are five or six that show the segmental openings distinctly.

Sometimes these openings in the blade were not symmetrical, and at

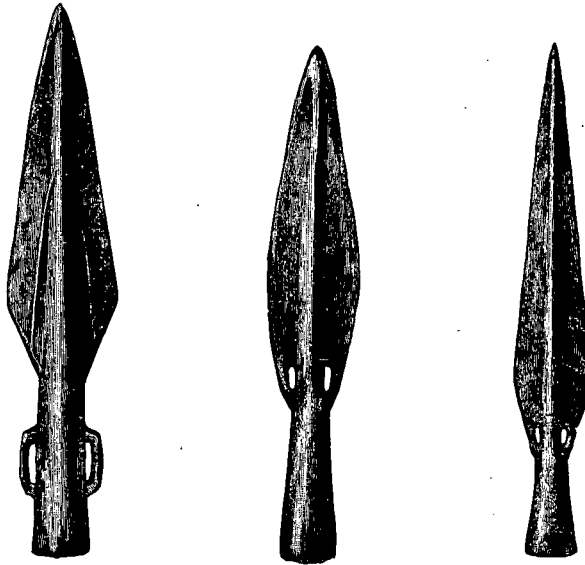


Fig. 6. Bronze Spear-head, locality unknown (9 inches in length).

Fig. 7. Bronze Spear-head found at Crawford, Lanarkshire ( $8\frac{1}{2}$  inches in length).

Fig. 8. Bronze Spear-head found at Linton, Roxburghshire (8 inches in length).

other times they were not placed exactly opposite to each other. Most if not all of these pierced blades have rivet holes in the sockets, while the unpierced are divided into two varieties, one of which (see fig. 4) has rivet holes in the socket, and the other (see fig. 5) has loops instead of

rivet holes. The looped form is again divided into two varieties, one of which has the loops standing free on the socket (as in fig. 6), the other having the loops (as in figs. 7 and 8) formed in the base of the blade itself. All specimens that want the loops are leaf-shaped. Those that have loops exhibit a great variety of forms, the larger examples being often long, thin straight-edged blades, and the smaller triangular in outline, fluted in the blade, and occasionally ornamented like the specimen (fig. 9) here shown from the Dean Water, Forfarshire.

These looped varieties, and those with segmental openings in the blade, are distinctively British forms, but very few examples with these special features being known on the Continent. They belong to the close of the bronze period; and it is worthy of remark that no well authenticated instance of a bronze spear-head of any kind having been ever found in connection with an

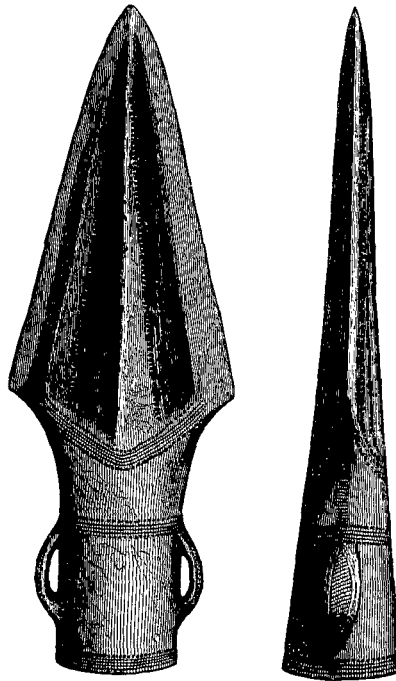


Fig. 9. Bronze Spear-head found at Dean Water, Forfarshire ( $5\frac{1}{4}$  inches in length).

interment has occurred in Scotland. Speaking of Great Britain and Ireland, Mr Evans remarks "that bronze spear-heads are not only almost if not quite absent from our barrows, but the skill involved in producing implements so thin and so truly cored could only have been acquired after long practice in casting."<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *The Ancient Bronze Implements, Weapons, and Ornaments of Great Britain and Ireland.* By John Evans, D.C.L., page 342.

They are indeed singularly graceful and skilfully formed weapons. Spear-heads of bronze are found all over Europe, but not even in Italy and Greece do they exhibit finer forms or better workmanship than is exhibited by many of the British examples.