

## III.

NOTE ON A SINGLE-PIECE WOODEN VESSEL FOUND IN A PEAT MOSS ON TORR RIGH HILL, SHISKIN, ARRAN. BY PATRICK MURRAY, STRABANE, BRODICK.

A canoe-like wooden vessel (fig. 1) was recently found by Mr Matthew M'Allister, senior, Torbeg, while cutting peats on Torr Righ Hill, Shiskin, about half a mile N.E. of the King's Caves, and about 350 feet

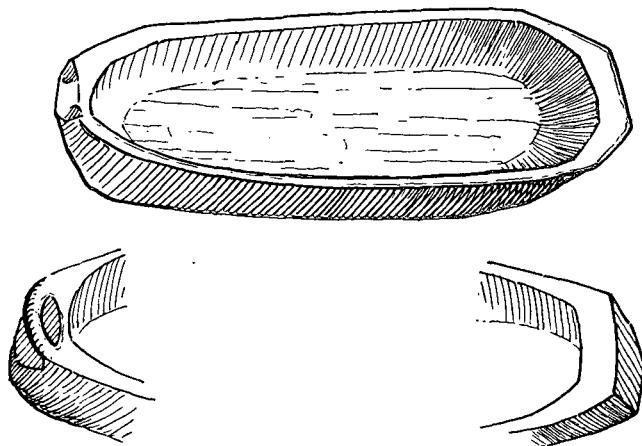


Fig. 1. Canoe like Wooden Vessel from a peat moss near Shiskin, Arran. ( $\frac{1}{16}$ .)

above sea-level. The bottom of the vessel was about 4 feet below the surface of the present peat bank, but this is the second cutting of peats in this place, and it must therefore have been about  $11\frac{1}{2}$  feet below the original surface of the ground. A covering of vegetable fibre enveloped the canoe-like vessel, which was set in its natural position with the bow pointing south. The handle at the front of the bow protruded through last year's face of the bank, and Mr M'Allister, thinking it was a root, made to pull it out, but having been exposed so long to the weather it went to pieces in his hand, and is now wanting.

On being entirely dug out of the moss the vessel was found to be split from stem to stern. It has been rudely hewn out of a solid piece of wood, the marks of the tool being still quite apparent. The extreme length (over the handle) is about 4 feet 5 inches, and the width 20 inches. The inside measurements at top are 3 feet 6 inches long by 17 inches broad. The bottom is from  $2\frac{1}{2}$  to  $3\frac{1}{2}$  inches thick, and the sides taper to about 1 inch at top. It is in a good state of preservation, but the wood has lost its natural qualities with lying in the moss, and it has not been possible on that account to tell what kind of wood it is.

Mr M'Allister has presented the vessel to Lady Mary Hamilton, who has directed it to be preserved at Dougarie Lodge, Shiskin.

[Single-piece wooden troughs of such size as this (which seems large for any domestic purpose and yet too small for a canoe), are not often found. Oval single-piece dishes of wood up to half the size of this one have been occasionally met with in bogs. Sir W. Wilde, in his Catalogue of the Museum of the Royal Irish Academy, speaking of single-piece canoes found in Ireland, states that the small variety is trough-shaped, square at the ends, from 8 to 12 feet long, round at the bottom, and having projecting handles at either extremity, apparently for the purpose of more conveniently carrying them from place to place to be used in fishing, or as a means of transport on inland lakes or rivers. Such a trough-like vessel of oak, 12 feet in length by 3 feet in breadth, found in a bog at Ardagh, is figured in Shirley's *Dominion of Farney*, p. 209. Numerous instances of coffins made of hollowed-out portions of tree-trunks being found in Bronze Age Barrows are cited by Greenwell (*British Barrows*, p. 377), and other examples in Scotland are cited by Dr Daniel Wilson (*Prehistoric Annals*, vol. ii. p. 161), but no record of any other trough of this description occurring either in Scotland or in England has been met with.]