

IV.

NOTICE OF THE EXCAVATION OF A ROCK SHELTER AT DUNOLLIE,
OBAN. BY CAPT. A. J. MACDOUGALL, OF DUNOLLIE.

This rock shelter, which is situated about $\frac{3}{4}$ mile to the N.E. of Dunollie Castle in Lorn, Argyleshire, was excavated on 19th November 1906. It is situated under an overhanging cliff of conglomerate, on the south side of the new road from Oban to Ganavan Sands, and is directly opposite and nearly south of Ganavan House. It is roughly 20 feet above present highest tide-level, and above 200 yards from high-water mark. The level above the sea is similar to that of several other caves near here.

The shelter has been used in recent years as a place for storing ploughs, etc., by sheep as a shelter, and by persons to cook shell-fish which they gather on the adjacent shore. Part of the floor is formed by rock; but the most sheltered part is fine black soil, and was, when excavated after wet weather, remarkably dry.

My attention was called to the site as actually a rock shelter (though I had suspected it as such before) by a Miss Layard of Ipswich. This lady, who had taken shelter from the rain, dug up with a stick, shells and bones, and thus had somewhat disturbed the surface.

The plan adopted for its excavation was to dig trenches through the black soil in various directions, till the solid rock was reached; the excavated material was then put through a $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch riddle. The retained material was then carefully examined, and all pieces of bone, and any stone which appeared to be foreign to the site or had the slightest appearance of having been worked, were retained. Specimens of the different kinds of shells and of masses of ash were also retained. In the superficial soil were shells obviously recent (in some cases the valves being joined), a clay pipe-bowl, bits of fencing wire, iron nuts and bits of zinc sheeting. The depth of the black earth where it was deepest, at its centre, was about 2 feet.

Shells were plentiful throughout the deposit, but were most numerous about the centre, and about 10 inches from the present surface. There were several strata of ash, white, yellow, red, and black. The ash was distinctly greasy to the touch, but when burned in a spirit flame became incandescent without any smoke.

Bones and teeth of animals—the bones broken and split, the refuse of the food of the occupants—were also found throughout the deposit, the larger pieces towards the surface, the smaller towards the bottom; this was the general rule, but was not invariable. Two chips of flint, showing



Fig. 1. Bone Needle found in the Rock Shelter.

no secondary working, were also found. A well-made needle of bone, 3 inches in length (fig. 1), was found towards the back part of the shelter, and somewhat deeply imbedded. The bones of an infant were found near the edge of the deposit, the black soil being only about 9 inches deep here, and the bones nearer the rock than the surface.

All stones that appeared to be foreign to the locality, or suggested any artificial shaping, have been forwarded, but none of them show traces of fabrication as implements. In the black soil were several stones, obviously pieces of the adjacent rock, none of which suggested shaping either by water or by artificial means.

The shells, the commonest of which were periwinkles and limpets, were estimated to form about one-fifth of the excavated material.

[The Bone Needle has been presented by Capt. A. J. MacDougall to the National Museum.]