

II.

NOTES (1) ON THE DISCOVERY OF A GRAVE AT BALNEIL, NEW LUCE, WIGTOWNSHIRE, CONTAINING A PARTIALLY BURNT INTERMENT, A CINERARY URN, A BRONZE CHISEL, A BONE PIN, AND A BEAD OF VITREOUS PASTE. (2) ON A SOCKETED AXE OF BRONZE FOUND AT CAMBUSMORE, THE MOUND, SUTHERLANDSHIRE. BY A. O. CURLE, F.S.A.Scot., Director of the Museum.

I. GRAVE AT BALNEIL.

While ploughing operations were in progress early in January of this year, in a field to the north-east of the steading of Balneil Farm, in the parish of New Luce, Wigtownshire, a Bronze Age burial was brought to light by the edge of a low rocky knowe, situated some 336 yards to the north-east of the byre of the farm. The burial was very near the surface, for its discovery was due to the plough, or the horse's foot, striking the bottom of a large inverted cinerary urn and revealing the cavity inside. The urn (fig. 1), which has now been restored, measures 15 inches in height, 11 inches in diameter at the mouth, and $5\frac{1}{2}$ inches at the base. It is encircled by two cordons, the one $3\frac{3}{8}$ inches below the rim, and the other $3\frac{1}{4}$ inches lower down the vessel. The type is not an uncommon one, and is placed by Mr Abercromby in Period Four of the Bronze Age, a conclusion as to period borne out by the associated relics. The urn had been placed in an inverted position over a heap of human bones only partially incinerated. These represent two individuals, and are dealt with by Professor Bryce in the subjoined report.

Associated with the interment was found a remarkably fine chisel of bronze (fig. 2, No. 1), measuring $4\frac{3}{8}$ inches in extreme length, furnished with a heavy tang, square in section, which accounts for 2 inches of the

whole length of the tool. The blade beyond the tang expands to form a shoulder on either side, and thereafter diminishing slightly for the greater part of its length again spreads to a fan shape at the cutting edge. The tool is unusually heavy, and has a thickness at most of $\frac{7}{16}$ inch. In part it is coated with a bright green patina, but where this has not formed the bronze is for the most part red, and in places has a bright golden hue. Its general aspect is that of a tool which has been cast but never completed for use. All over the surface are marks left by a file which was unfortunately employed when the relic first came to light. Viewed in profile, the blade appears beautifully tapered to the cutting edge. The nearest analogy I have been able to find to this species of chisel is one found at Yattendon, in Berkshire, illustrated by Sir John Evans;¹ but the latter differs in having projecting stops at the base of the tang in place of the definitely formed shoulders of the Balneil example. The tanged chisel from the Adabrock hoard, added to the National Museum in 1910,² which has a collar or stop ridge below the tang, is of the more usual type, and resembles examples from the Continent illustrated by Déchelette,³ and assigned by him



Fig. 1. Cinerary Urn from Balneil.

to the fourth and final period of the Bronze Age. When the bones were being treated previous to examination, Professor Bryce was fortunate in discovering two additional relics both of which had apparently been subjected to fire. These were a bead of vitreous paste (fig. 2, No. 2) and a bone pin (fig. 2, No. 3). The bead is $\frac{3}{4}$ inch in diameter, and is of the quoit-shaped variety, the ring being triangular in section. It has been formed of an opaque vitreous paste, now, owing to the action of fire,

¹ *Ancient Bronze Implements of Great Britain*, p. 169, fig. 196.

² *Proc.*, xlv. p. 31, fig. 6.

³ *Manuel d'Archéologie*, "Archéologie Celtique ou Protohistorique," ii. p. 272, fig. 100.

rather vesicular in texture and of a bluish-grey tint. This type of bead has been found in England associated with a Bronze Age inter-

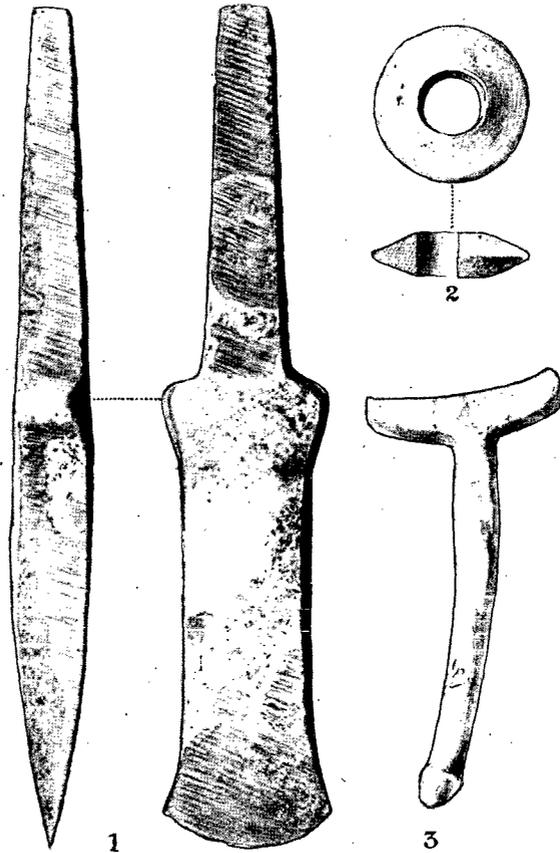


Fig. 2. Bronze Chisel, Vitreous Bead, and Bone Pin, from Balneil.

ment,¹ and a number of examples have been found in Ireland, but apparently without recorded associations.²

The bone pin measures $2\frac{1}{8}$ inches in length. It is, as far as I am aware, a unique object, in respect that the obtuse point with which

¹ *Arch.*, xxx. p. 330.

² A list of occurrences is supplied by Mr L. M'L. Mann in *Proc.*, xl. p. 400, f.n. 1.

it is furnished shows that it was not fashioned to pierce a fabric. The actual form of the pin, with curved cross-piece for a head 1 inch in length, giving the object the appearance of a crutch, finds an analogy in a pin from the lake dwelling of St Blaise in Switzerland.¹

On the pin itself, though not apparent in the illustration, there occurs at about half an inch below the top of the head a marked hollow which has evidently been produced by friction. This possibly affords an index to the use to which it has been put, and suggests employment as a dress-fastener in a manner quite familiar at the present day, in regard to the fastening down of lids of hampers where two loops are used, one being passed through the other and kept secure by a pin. The cross-head would have prevented the pin so employed from falling out; the friction of such a loop would have produced the hollow referred to.

We are much indebted to the Rev. R. S. G. Anderson, at New Luce, for having brought this interesting find to our notice, and for having taken much trouble to supply the necessary information; also to Mr James M'Quistin, the farmer of Balneil, who very kindly presented the relics to the National Museum.

REPORT ON BONES FROM INTERMENT AT BALNEIL.

By Professor T. H. BRUCE, F.S.A. Scot.

The deposit of bones from this burial shows all the characters of a burial after cremation. Incineration, however, has not been so complete as usual, and some of the vertebræ have been preserved almost entire and only partially burnt. A considerable number of phalanges of fingers and toes have remained entire, but all the long bones of the extremities, the ribs, and the skull bones are completely burnt, and reduced to small fragments. The deposit is a specially large one, and I made a careful search through the fragments to discover if they represented more than one body. I was able to identify identical fragments from two separate mandibles; and a scrutiny of the phalanges and portions of metacarpals and metatarsals proved that one of the individuals had been of slighter build than the other. Both individuals must have been of full adult age; but beyond the fact that some of the phalanges are thin and delicate, suggesting that they belonged to a female hand or foot, there is nothing to indicate sex.

¹ Munro, *Lake Dwellings of Europe*, p. 41, fig. 8.

II. SOCKETED AXE OF BRONZE FROM CAMBUSMORE,
THE MOUND, SUTHERLAND.

The axe here illustrated was recently found in quarrying at Cambusmore, and was sent to the Museum for inspection. On account of the herring-bone ornamentation which has been incised on it around the



Fig. 3. Socketed Axe from Sutherlandshire. ($\frac{2}{3}$ nat.)

socket, it is here illustrated. Though this type of ornament is not very uncommon on the sides of the flanged axes and palstaves, I do not know of another instance of its occurrence on a socketed example. This appears to have been an unassociated find.