III.

REPORT ON THE EXCAVATION OF AN EARTH-HOUSE AT GALSON, BORVE, LEWIS.

By ARTHUR J. H. EDWARDS, F.S.A.Scot., Assistant Keeper of the National Museum of Antiquities.

Obtained under the Gunning Fellowship.

The year before last, Mr John Morrison, tenant of the farm of Galson, and Mr Norman Mackay, his cousin, sent to the Museum as a donation a ring-headed pin of bronze, several shards of pottery, and a number of implements of bone and horn, which had been picked up at various times near the beach to the north of the steading. No record of any previous discovery of relics had been made from this locality, but from the nature of the finds and a description of the site given by Mr Mackay to Mr Callander, Director of the Museum, the latter, who had seen the kitchen-midden in 1914, was hopeful that excavation might reveal the existence of an earth-house. I therefore visited the site in May of last year, and learned, by making a few preliminary excavations at various points, that sufficient evidence of structural formation remained to justify my return in September in order to make a more exhaustive examination.

The farm of Galson is situated on the west side of the Island of Lewis, in the parish of Barvas, being a little more than $2\frac{1}{4}$ miles north-east of the village of Borve, 20 miles from Stornoway and 7 miles from the Butt of Lewis.

The site on which the various objects were found is a sandbank near the beach, situated on the seaward side of a wall at the bottom of a field known as the "Sand Park," somewhat less than a quarter of a mile north of Galson Farmhouse (fig. 1). The margin of the bank extended from the western corner of the wall in an easterly direction for a distance of 600 feet, where it turned to the south-south-east and followed the line of the wall inland for another 300 feet on a parallel with the South Galson River.

From the beach the bank rose at an angle of 40°, and at its highest point was about 25 feet above sea-level, but as the bottom of the slope is only 60 feet from high-water mark, it is exposed to the wearing action of the winds and waves during high seas in wintry gales. Further, owing to progressive subsidence, it appeared to be slightly terraced in parts, more especially towards the east-north-east, where its height was greatly diminished. The face of the slope was

strewn with boulders of various sizes, intermingled with bones, shells, and shards of pottery, while nearer the top of the slope could be seen a compact black layer of kitchen-midden refuse, masses of which had dropped off and fallen down as the loose sand underneath had given way. From its west-south-west termination the bank rose gradually at a gradient of 1-30, and the continuity of the kitchen-

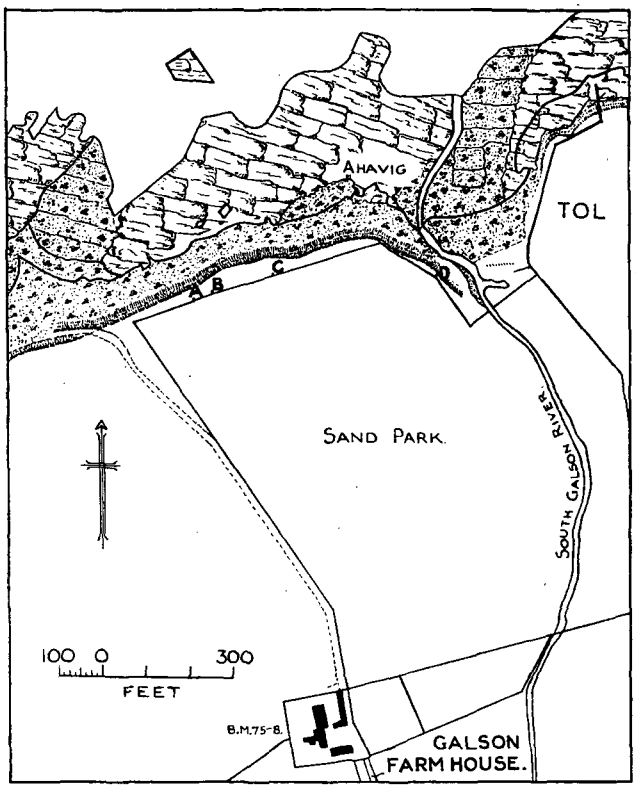

Fig. 1. Map showing relative positions of Structures excavated at Galson.

midden was uninterrupted, until at about a distance of 317 feet, at the highest point above sea-level, a break of 50 feet occurred, either due to the removal of sand for some utilitarian purpose or the effects of a severe storm. Further towards the east-north-east, although the line of the kitchen-midden remained unbroken, it was irregular and terraced owing to subsidence.

A vertical section of the bank at the highest point presented the following measurements :—

	Feet.	Inches.
Soil, grass grown, dark in colour . . .	1	6
Kitchen-midden layer, a compact stratum of black soil, shells (mostly limpet), shards of pottery, bones of mammals and fishes, charcoal, etc. .	1	2
Sand	2	0
Wall head of occupation level in chamber No. 1 of earth-house . . .	4 feet 8 inches from surface-level.	
Floor-level of chamber No. 1 .	11 feet 2 inches	„ „
Sand	12–14 feet.	

Inland, the kitchen-midden did not extend further than the line of the wall, but for a distance of 40 feet from its landward side, shards of pottery, mostly unornamented, could be obtained, and limpet-shells were numerous. As previously mentioned, the face of the slope was strewn with boulders of various sizes, many lying loose, and ready at a touch to roll to the bottom and mingle with the accumulated talus of stones, bones, shells, etc., but at several places the boulders were firmly embedded, parts only showing through the sand.

Four of these points were selected for excavation, A, B, C, and D on fig. 1. At A, about 142 feet from the west-south-west corner of the wall, there was found a good example of an open hearth, the floor of which was 5 feet below the present surface-level (figs. 2 and 6, A). The hearth, which was orientated nearly north-west and south-east, measured internally 3 feet 3 inches in length, and 1 foot 4 inches in breadth at one end, expanding to 2 feet 2 inches at the other. On three of its sides was a well-formed kerb of rectangularly shaped stones, which on an average measured 4 inches in height by about 4 inches in breadth, the longest, although split across, measuring 2 feet in length. The floor of the hearth was formed by a single oval-shaped boulder, nearly 9 inches thick, on the top of which was a layer of hard burnt clay intermixed with soot and charcoal, and as the oval-shaped hearth-stone did not fit into the corners, these had been packed with clay, as also were the joints between the rectangular stones which formed the kerb. In the immediate vicinity a few boulders remained *in situ*, those directly in line with the south-western side of the hearth being embedded in clay and the spaces between them filled with the same material. The area between the hearth and the boulders was covered with clay some inches thick, in which there remained bones, shells, mostly limpet, a few shards of pottery, and pieces of charcoal.

In North Uist, an oval hearth, with a border of thin slabs, found in the centre of a circular earth-house with radial walls, had a clay floor

inside the hearth itself and extending for some distance round about it.[1] From the second level at Traprain Law, a level which may be attributed to the fourth century, records of the existence of rectangular hearths have been obtained every year during the period the excavations have been carried on, and in some, where the stone used as a floor was thick, it was covered with a layer of clay to prevent it from being splintered by the heat.[2] Other hearths also were enclosed within a clay area,[3]

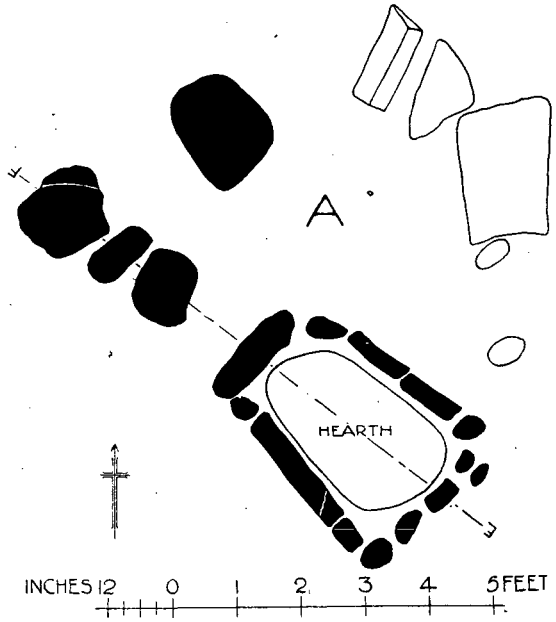

Fig. 2. Plan of Hearth at A on Map.

and in one instance the clay surrounding the hearth was so smooth and hard, that there was no doubt but that it had been a floor.[4]

At B, a distance of 186 feet from the west-south-west corner of the "Sand Park" wall and about 30 feet from the hearth, further structural remains were uncovered (fig. 3). These consisted of a small paved area, 3 feet 3 inches in length by about the same in breadth, and 9 inches in thickness, at one end of which was a small rectangular compartment with an internal measurement of about 3 feet 6 inches by about 1 foot 3 inches. The upright stones (fig. 6, B) which formed the sides of this compartment measured from 1 foot 6 inches in height to 1 foot 10 inches;

[1] Erskine Beveridge, *North Uist, its Archæology and Topography*, p. 126.
[2] *Proceedings*, vol. l. p. 75. [3] *Ibid.*, vol. lvi. p. 194. [4] *Ibid.*, vol. l. p. 78.

one of these, that on the north side, had fallen outwards, and is therefore not shown black on the plan. The floor in the interior of the compartment was lined with clay nearly 3 inches in thickness, but there were no bones, nor shards of pottery intermixed with the clay, neither was there any trace of charcoal; only a very few small limpet-shells remained, and these mostly on the surface.

During the process of removing the sand from the structure, part of

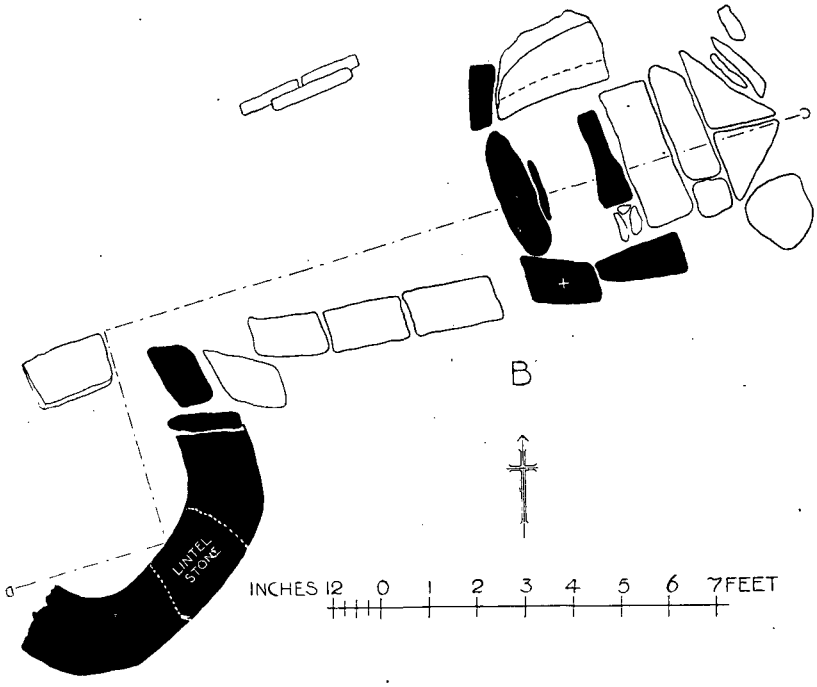

Fig. 3. Plan of Paved Area, Stone Compartment, and remains of Chamber at B on Map.

an antler of a deer, which had been sawn through in places, was found lying on the top of the heavy block of stone which formed the south-west corner of the compartment. From one side of this block, a single row of rectangularly shaped stones extended for 6 feet in a westerly direction, where the structure was terminated by a roughly built wall, 2 feet 6 inches in height and 1 foot 6 inches in thickness, which in shape formed the arc of a circle with an internal diameter of about 5 feet. At a point midway along the wall and lying exposed on the top was a large stone, rectangular in shape, which measured 2 feet in length, 1 foot 6 inches in breadth, and several inches in thickness. At the time

of excavation the particular significance of this stone was not understood, but, as after results showed, it was probably the lintel of a doorway, the entrance to a compartment of which the segment of wall remaining had formed a part.

The formation of the structure was unusual, but that the various parts were connected was apparent. The paved area, although now small in extent, may have been at one time much larger, and an analogy might be drawn from the numerous paved areas found at Traprain Law near hearths of rectangular form, and settings of stones of oval or circular formation indicative of ruined dwellings. To what use the box-like compartment adjoining the pavement may have been put, unless as a small store chamber for food or fragile articles of pottery, cannot be ascertained, but at Traprain Law, on the second level and adjoining a hearth, a small oblong compartment, 8 inches in height and about 12 inches in width, was found to contain clay in a plastic condition,[1] and, although the compartment in the structure at Galson was somewhat larger, it may have been used for the same purpose, *i.e.* as a receptacle for raw clay.

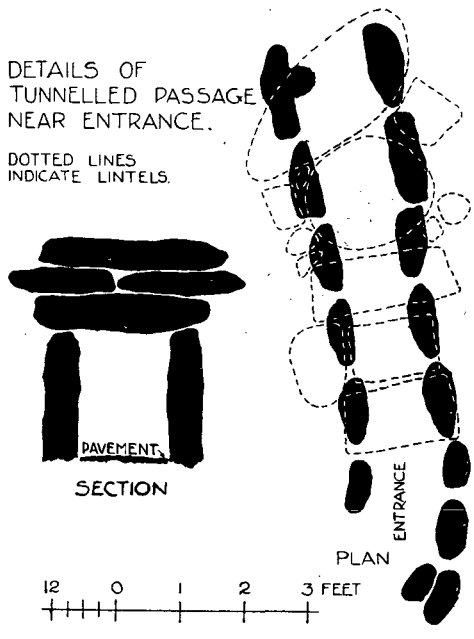

Fig. 4. Plan and Section of Subterranean Passage at C on Map.

Some time previous to my first visit in May, a drain-like entrance or passage-way had been discovered by Mr Mackay at C on fig. 1, about 337 feet from the west-south-west corner of the "Sand Park" wall and 157 feet distant from the structure at B. The stones which formed the entrance or mouth of the passage were clear of sand, and showed on the face of the slope about 6 feet below present ground level. During my visit in May, part of the structure was laid bare for a length of 9 feet, and the lintel stones of a subterranean passage exposed (fig. 4); the interior was cleared of its accumulated sand for the same distance and the floor found to be paved. At the entrance the passage measured 1 foot 6 inches in height and 1 foot 3 inches in width. As time did not then permit of a more exhaustive examination, I delayed further

[1] *Proceedings*, vol. xlix. p. 147.

excavation until my return in September, when I exposed the whole of the passage and found that it curved in a south-easterly direction for a distance of 22 feet (fig. 5). Here it ended, and only a few isolated boulders remained to prove that it had continued further; but more excavation in this direction was impossible owing to the danger of undermining the wall of the "Sand Park," which at this point was only a few feet away. The passage, which was paved throughout its entire length, varied from 11 inches to 1 foot 8 inches in width, with an

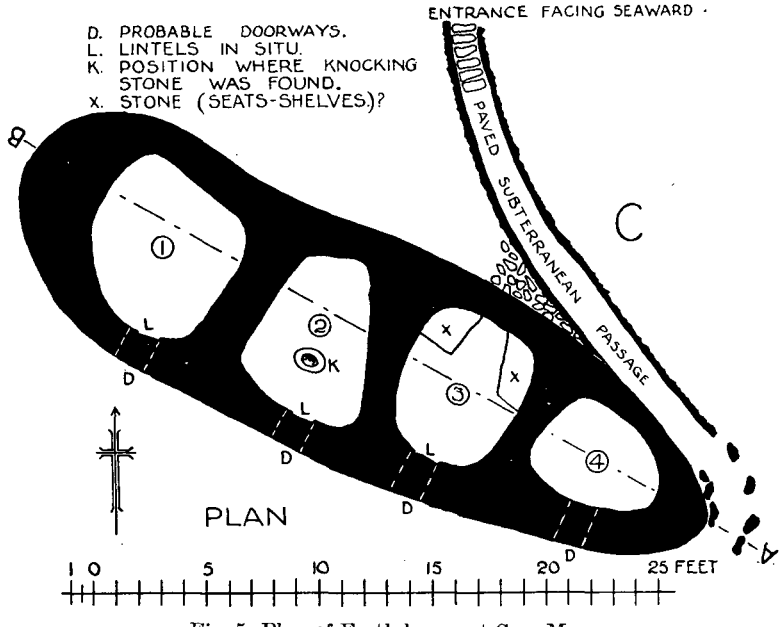

Fig. 5. Plan of Earth-house at C on Map.

average height of 2 feet. A section is shown (fig. 4) taken at a little over 11 feet from the entrance.

When clearing the last 7 or 8 feet of the south-eastern end of the passage (fig. 5), it was found that the western side for this distance abutted against the wall of another structure, and in clearing away the sand to expose this fully, an area of about 30 feet by 30 feet had to be dealt with. This new structure, when uncovered, was shown to be elongated in shape, with rounded ends. It measured 34 feet in length and about 10 feet 6 inches in breadth at its widest part, and lay with its long axis west-north-west and east-south-east. It consisted of four roofless, nearly oval or pear-shaped cells contained within an upright exterior wall of dry stone masonry, the average thickness of which was 1 foot

6 inches, except at either end and at the junctions of the partition walls with those on the exterior, where the thickness was increased.

The partition walls were also upright, and the dry stone masonry of which they were composed was well built; the thickness of each at a point taken near the centre varied from 1 foot 3 inches to 2 feet.

Chamber No. 1 (figs. 5 and 6) was situated at that part of the bank where it had its greatest height above sea-level, and where also the continuity of the kitchen-midden was broken. Below the surface, the

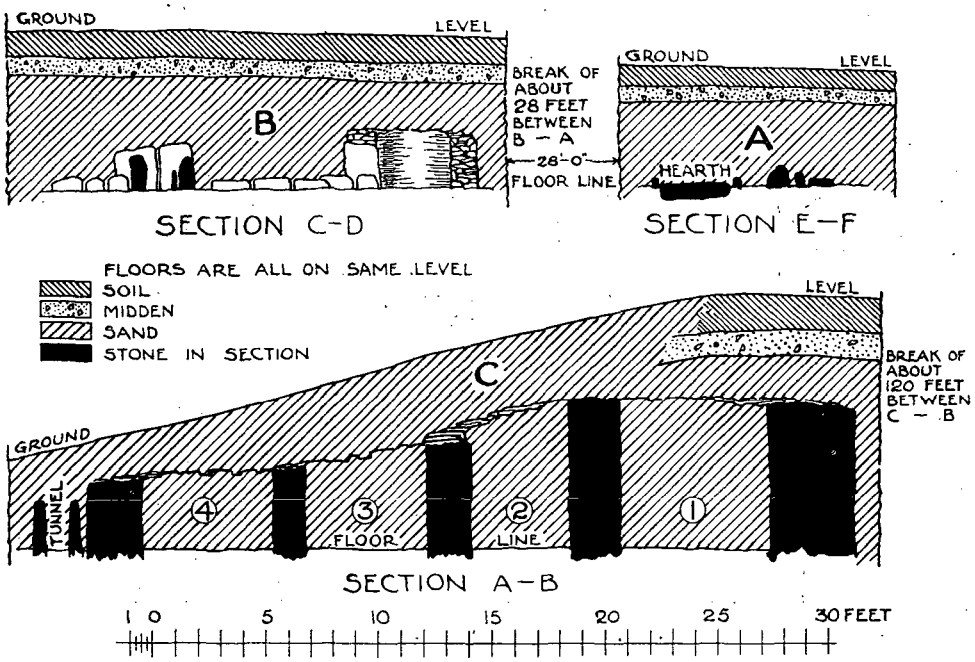

Fig. 6. Section of the various Structures at Galson.

wall head of the chamber was found at a depth of nearly 5 feet, and the floor-level at 6 feet 6 inches from the wall head. The chamber, which measured 6 feet 6 inches across at its widest part, had a floor of clay partly paved with flat stones, and in the south-west or landward exterior wall, about 3 feet from the top and set near to one corner, a lintel which measured 2 feet in length and 9 inches in thickness. A recess under the lintel, now filled with stones, seemed to have been a doorway or entrance. Near the floor-level there were found several pieces of iron slag, one fragment of which weighed nearly 10 lb., and a wedge-shaped piece of wood, while the floor itself contained numerous shells

(mostly limpet), a quantity of broken bones, shards of pottery, and charcoal.

Chamber No. 2, the greatest measurements of which were 7 feet 4 inches by 5 feet 8 inches, had a clay-lined floor with some paving, the depth of the floor from surface-level being 9 feet 6 inches, and the height of the partition walls on either side 6 feet 6 inches and 4 feet 6 inches respectively. A lintel, 2 feet 7 inches in length, 1 foot 6 inches in breadth, and 7 inches in thickness, was set near one corner of the landward exterior wall and a little over 2 feet below the present wall head. A slight recess below the lintel appeared to have been filled with small stones, but under each end of the lintel the bonded stones which had formed the jambs of a doorway could be seen (fig. 7). The clay of the floor was intermixed with shells (mostly limpet), broken bones, shards of pottery, and much charcoal.

Fig. 7. View of Chamber No. 2 from north-east, showing Lintel.

Near the centre of the chamber was found a large stone mortar or "knocking stone" made of hornblendite or hornblende gneiss, which measures 1 foot 6 inches in diameter externally and $7\frac{3}{8}$ inches in height; the hollow, which is nearly circular, measures 11 inches in diameter and $7\frac{3}{8}$ inches in depth, and tapers towards the bottom. The interior bears distinct markings where it had been struck with some hard implement which had been used as a pounder. The vessel was found embedded in the floor with only the lip showing above surface-level. Under it and round its sides, flat stones had been placed in order to prevent it from sinking into the loose sand below the clay floor. During the process of removing it from the chamber, part of the

lip fell away, and it appeared as if that part of the stone had been burnt. A number of rounded pebbles were also found, all of which had been subjected to the action of fire; these had most likely been used as pot boilers.

Although the "knocking stone" is a domestic utensil which has remained in use until recent times, that found in the Galson earth-house is one of the earliest to be recorded. From the broch of Cinn Trolla in Sutherland,[1] three of these objects were obtained and are now in the Museum; in one of them, the cavity—as in the Galson specimen—tapers towards the bottom. There is no record, however, of the level from which these specimens came, and it is within the bounds of possibility that they may have been placed and used in the broch long after its original inhabitants had departed. A stone mortar, the bottom of which is rounded, was recovered from the third level at Traprain Law last year, a photograph and description of which is given in the article describing the excavations. The position in the earth-house floor of the Galson specimen, the fact that the lip of the vessel seemed to have been burnt, and the quantity of charcoal in its immediate vicinity, together with numerous round stones which had been heated, suggest that, in addition to its use as a mortar, it may also have served the secondary purpose of a vessel for boiling water by the dropping in of red-hot stones.

Other relics from the same chamber consisted of a stone pounder of fine-textured quartzose, measuring $5\frac{7}{8}$ inches in length and $2\frac{3}{4}$ inches in breadth, one end of which was worn and abraded, having been much used, and a piece of hard clay partly circular in shape, which if complete would have a diameter of $5\frac{3}{4}$ inches, the inner side being smooth and the outer rough and irregular, the thickness varying from 1 inch to $1\frac{1}{4}$ inch.

Chamber No. 3, which measured 6 feet 6 inches by 5 feet 6 inches, had its floor-level at a depth of 4 feet from the surface, the partition walls measuring 4 feet 6 inches and 3 feet 6 inches in height respectively, but it differed from the other chambers in that it had two slabs of stone built into the rounded corners of its north-west side at a height of 1 foot 4 inches from the floor, which perhaps served as seats for the occupants, akin probably to the raised dais found in a hut-circle at Grimspound, Dartmoor.[2] The slabs measured respectively 2 feet by 1 foot 8 inches by 7 inches, and 2 feet 8 inches by 1 foot 5 inches by 3 inches. In the space between the slabs and close to the exterior wall

[1] *Proceedings*, vol. ix. p. 53.

[2] *Trans. Devonshire Assoc. for the Advancement of Science, Literature, and Art*, 1894, vol. xxvi. pp. 101-21, Hut Circle, No. 16.

numerous bones of some large animal were found, nearly all of which had been broken in order to extract the marrow. About 1 foot from the present top of the landward exterior wall, a lintel, which measured 2 feet 6 inches in length, 1 foot 3 inches in breadth, and $4\frac{1}{2}$ inches in thickness, with a slight recess below now filled in with stones, formed, as in the other chambers, a possible means of entrance and egress.

The floor was of clay, with some paving, and there was much *débris* of bones and shells, with a heap of about eighty limpet and periwinkle shells gathered together in a small hollow at the base of the wall.

Among the relics found in the chamber were a chisel-shaped implement of bone (fig. 9, No. 3), which measured $4\frac{1}{8}$ inches in length; a sub-oval pebble of quartzite, $2\frac{5}{16}$ inches in length by 2 inches in breadth, slightly grooved on either flat face and with traces of discoloration made by the iron tool used to strike it to produce fire; three stone pounders, varying from $3\frac{7}{8}$ inches to $4\frac{5}{8}$ inches in length; and an object of hard-burnt clay which in appearance is like the handle of a vessel, measuring $2\frac{7}{16}$ inches in length and $\frac{9}{16}$ inch in thickness.

Chamber No. 4, which measured 5 feet 8 inches by 4 feet 4 inches, had no trace of a lintel in what remained of its exterior landward wall, which, however, was probably much reduced in height. The clay floor was found at a depth of 6 feet below surface-level, the height of one partition wall being 3 feet 6 inches and the other 3 feet. The interior contained quantities of broken bones, shells, shards of pottery, and charcoal, also two stone pounders measuring $5\frac{1}{8}$ and $4\frac{7}{8}$ inches in length respectively.

At D on the plan (fig. 1), 152 feet south-south-west of the east-north-east corner of the "Sand Park," part of the wall of a chamber of circular form was exposed at a depth of less than 1 foot below surface-level, but owing to its close proximity to the dyke further excavation could not be attempted. That part of the structure uncovered measured 1 foot 6 inches in thickness and 2 feet 6 inches in height.

Of the four structures excavated, that of the chambered earth-house was the most complete, but at present I am not aware of any similar structure from which one could draw an analogy.

It may be worthy of suggestion, perhaps, that to provide a means of intercommunication between the chambers the subterranean passage had formerly continued round the end of the structure at chamber No. 4, and, still hugging the exterior landward wall of the earth-house stretched as far as chamber No. 1. Openings in the side of the passage near the wall would correspond with the recesses under the lintels in the walls of the chambers, and enable the occupants to pass from one to another and in and out of the earth-house. There was no evidence

as to the manner in which the structure was roofed, and although in each chamber a quantity of stones was found, these were generally small, and certainly not pertaining to anything in the nature of slabs. It must be remembered, too, that the exterior wall and the partition walls were perfectly upright, the greatest height being 6 feet 6 inches, so that the idea of a beehive roof, such as covered the outbuildings at the broch of Jarlshof in Shetland,[1] seems to be precluded. On the other hand, the roof must have been made of a material sufficiently strong to bear the superincumbent weight of sand and earth. The interruption in the continuity of the upper layer of soil and the kitchen-midden above chamber No. 1, together with the fall of the bank at this point, suggest that the roof of the structure having been at some time uncovered during the process of the removal of sand, the roofing slabs and the stones of the walls laid bare were taken away, possibly for building purposes; and from the general appearance of the bank in the neighbourhood I am inclined to think this surmise correct.

Pottery.—In the vicinity of the various constructions excavated, and from the chambers of the earth-house, shards of hand-made pottery were recovered similar in texture and pattern to those found in the kitchen-midden. No complete vessel was recovered, but fragments were numerous, the majority of which were entirely plain, and varied in thickness from $\frac{3}{16}$ inch to $\frac{1}{2}$ inch; a sooty incrustation on many of the pieces pointed to their having been used as cooking vessels. In shape many of the unornamented fragments represented parts of globular vessels, with everted rims, flat bases, and bulging sides, a type found in many brochs, while other fragments were those of pots with straight sides, the lip being either flat, bevelled, or rounded, similar in section to the native pottery from Traprain Law.[2]

In comparison with the abundance of undecorated shards, the quantity of ornamented pottery recovered was small, and the variety of patterns few in number. Some of these are illustrated in fig. 8. The appliances that seem to have been used to effect the decoration were the finger-nail and finger-tip, as in fragments Nos. 2 and 15, a blunt-edged tool of rectangular shape, one side of which has been more deeply impressed in the soft clay than the other, as in No. 1, a pointed tool such as would produce incised lines, as in Nos. 3, 5, 8, 11, and a similar pointed tool or one which possessed both a point and a sharp edge, and which could be made to produce an indentation and a short dash, as in Nos. 6 and 7, while the small circular impressions were no doubt produced with a tube-like instrument, such as a hollow reed or bone, as in Nos. 12 and 13. Other types of ornamentation were the applied cable or zigzag shown in

[1] *Proceedings*, vol. xli. pp. 21–5.

[2] *Ibid.*, vol. xlix. p. 157, fig. 12.

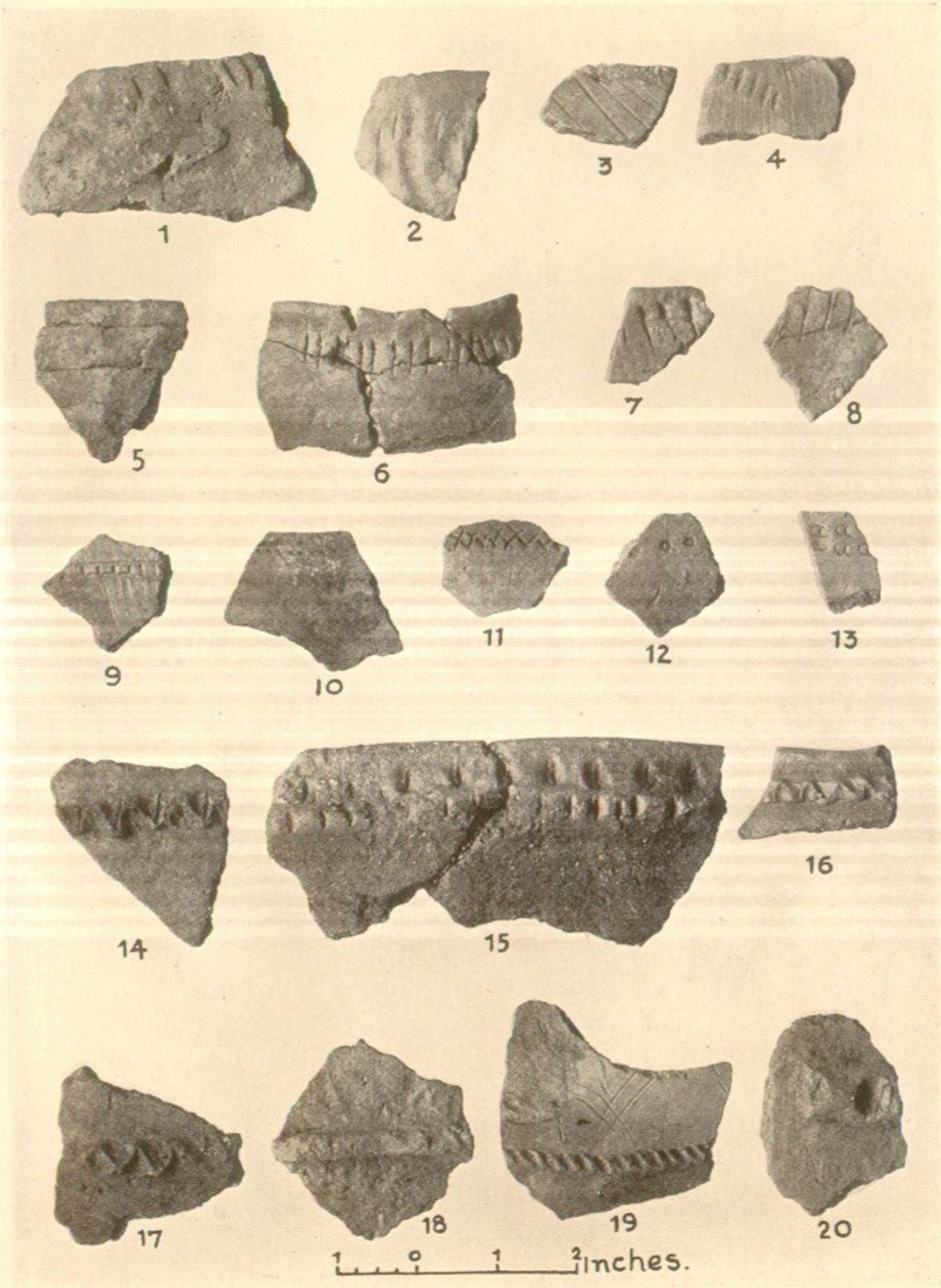

Fig. 8. Fragments of Pottery from the Earth-house and Kitchen-midden.

Nos. 14, 16, 17, 19, and a plain raised moulding, represented by a single fragment only, in No. 18. Pottery with similar ornamentation but showing a greater variety of patterns has been obtained from sites at Coll and Tiree [1] and North Uist,[2] and more recently from another kitchen-midden in Lewis, situated on the shore near the churchyard at Bragar. Fragments of clay vessels with the applied cable or zigzag ornamentation have been recovered from many sites in the outer islands, and appear to be common to those parts, but shards showing this particular kind of decoration have also been obtained from the broch of Dun an Iardhard [3] and the broch of Dunbeag in Skye,[4] the broch of Ayre in Orkney,[5] and the broch of Yarhouse and the Everley broch, Caithness, fragments from the two latter being in the Museum, although not previously recorded.

Relics from the Kitchen-Midden.

Objects of Stone.—Part of the upper stone of a circular quern which later may have been adapted for some other purpose, measuring 5 inches by $3\frac{3}{8}$ inches.

Small fragment of a cup of steatite, and several pieces of dark-coloured pumice with flattened surfaces made by rubbing.

Half of an oval-shaped stone measuring $2\frac{1}{4}$ inches by $1\frac{1}{2}$ inch, with a hole bored through the centre from either side.

Two halves of saddle querns were found in the talus at the foot of the slope.

Objects of Bronze.—A ring-headed pin of bronze, $5\frac{7}{8}$ inches in length, the head, which is free, being of lozenge section and grooved longitudinally. The top of the stem is of rectangular shape, the front and the back being decorated with a lozenge pattern and having a punctulation in the centre. The front and the back of the stem are ornamented with an incised key pattern, the edge bearing two longitudinal incised lines. The stem of the pin curves towards the point. The ring head is broken at one side.

Stem of a bronze pin with free ring head, $3\frac{3}{16}$ inches in length; it is much bent to one side. Similar ring-headed pins have been obtained from a Viking burial at Reay,[6] from the broch of Okstrow, Birsay, Orkney,[7] and also from a sandhill site in North Uist,[8] together with patterned pottery and a weaving comb of bone, etc.

[1] *Coll and Tiree*, cf. pp. 174 *et seq.*
[2] *North Uist, its Archæology and Topography.* Plates facing pp. 216, 238, etc.
[3] *Proceedings*, vol. xlix. p. 68, fig. 13.
[4] *Ibid.*, vol. lv. p. 129.
[5] *Ibid.*, vol. xlviii. p. 46, fig. 12.
[6] *Ibid.*, vol. xlviii. p. 297.
[7] *Ibid.*, vol. xi. p. 85.
[8] *North Uist, its Archæology and Topography.* Plate (*d*) facing p. 230.

Objects of Iron.—Small iron knife with tang, total length 3½ inches, with the remains of a wooden sheath still adhering to the blade.

Objects of Clay.—About half of an object of baked clay, probably a loom weight, measuring $3\frac{5}{16}$ inches in diameter and 2 inches in thickness, with an irregularly shaped hole through the centre, at the point of fracture; the hole is worn at either end as if by the friction of a cord. When complete, the object may have weighed about 1 lb. Part of a pyramidal or pear-shaped loom weight of clay, with part of the circular hole for suspension showing near the apex on the left side. This loom weight, when complete, probably resembled the two loom weights from Ravensby, Barry, Forfarshire,[1] each of which weighs respectively 1 lb. 10¼ oz. and 1 lb. 7¼ oz. When complete, the Galson specimen may have weighed about 1 lb., but as only about a third remains it is difficult to estimate its weight.

Fragment of hard-burnt clay, 1¾ inch in length by 1½ inch in thickness; on one side there is a smooth hollow as if it had been a mould, on the other side it is covered with a semi-fused vesicular substance which has been subjected to great heat.

Nodule of clay showing grass and thumb marks.

Objects of Bone. — Portion of a single-edged small-toothed comb (fig. 9, No. 9), measuring 1⅝ inch by ⅞ inch, formed of plates of bone clasped between two transverse plates with numerous small copper or bronze rivets on either side of the back; the end plates of the comb as well as the transverse plates are decorated with a series of small dot and circle ornaments, the same design appearing along the centre of the back.

Portion of a single-edged small-toothed comb of bone (fig. 9, No. 10), 1 inch in breadth. The edge of the back is concave and has a slot cut in the centre, following the curve of the edge.

Portion of another single-edged small-toothed comb, with a rivet hole (fig. 9, No. 11).

Eleven pins of bone (fig. 9, Nos. 13–23), measuring from 1½ inch to $3\frac{29}{32}$ inches in length; in one of these, No. 18, which has a slightly expanding head, the upper part of the stem is encircled with a band of punctulations half an inch wide, placed irregularly, and in another, No. 17, round the cylindrical head are three large notches at irregular distances apart.

The pointed ends of three polished pins or needles of bone, measuring from $\frac{11}{16}$ inch to 1¾ inch in length.

Bone needle (fig. 9, No. 12), $2\frac{3}{16}$ inches in length, and the head of another, measuring 1¾ inch in length.

[1] *Proceedings*, vol. ix. p. 154.

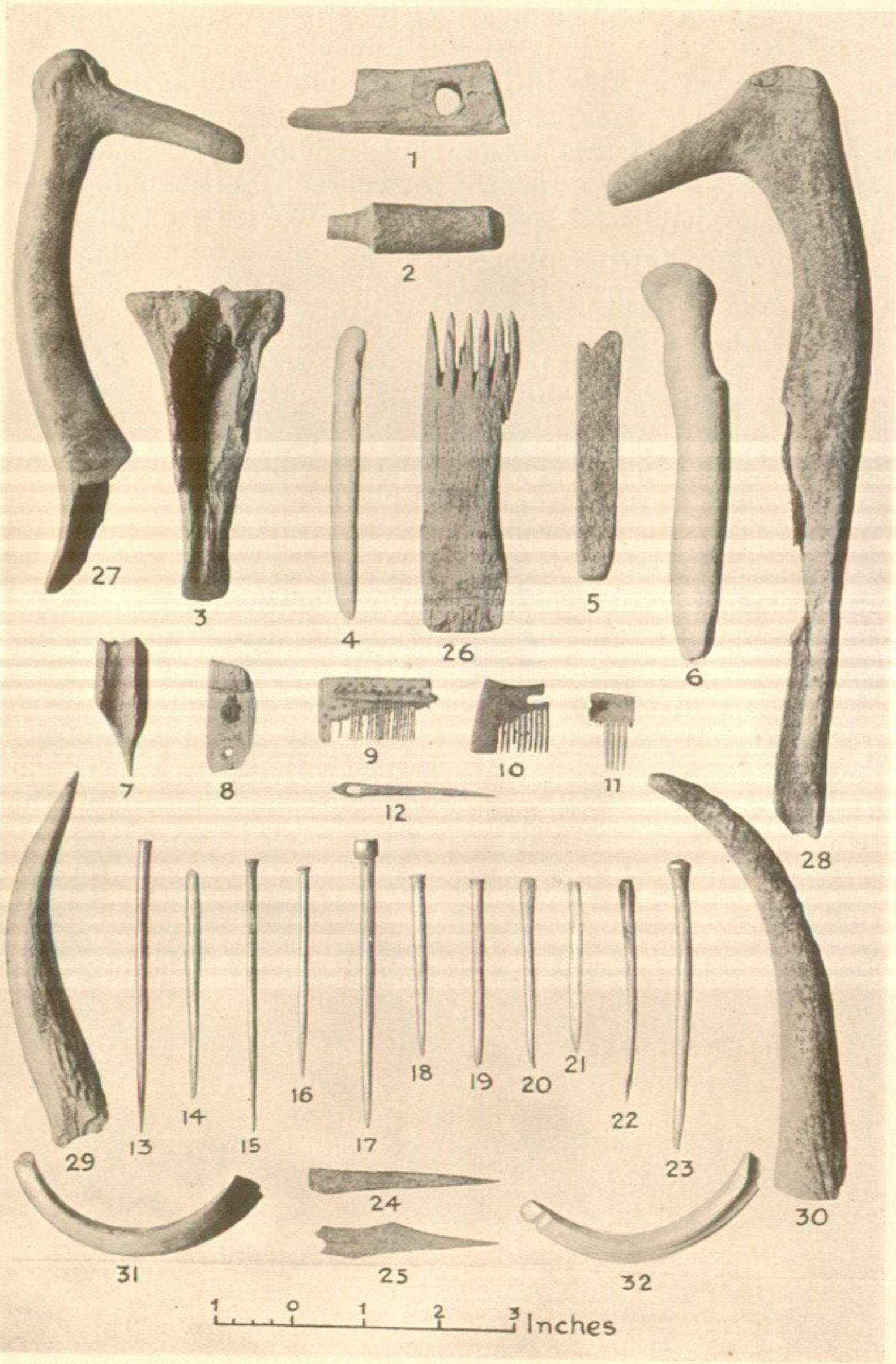

Fig. 9. Objects of Bone and Deer-horn from the Earth-house and Kitchen-midden.

Three bone borers, measuring from $1\frac{13}{16}$ inch in length to $2\frac{9}{16}$ inches; one of these, No. 7, measures $1\frac{13}{16}$ inch in length and $\frac{3}{4}$ inch in breadth, and may have been used as an awl.

Pointed implement of bone (fig. 9, No. 25), $2\frac{1}{2}$ inches in length, made from a splinter.

Bone implement, highly polished (fig. 9, No. 4), $3\frac{7}{8}$ inches in length, oval in section.

Bone object (fig. 9, No. 6), $5\frac{3}{4}$ inches in length, with a broad groove near one end worn by the friction of a cord.

Triangular plate of cetacean bone, $7\frac{1}{2}$ inches by $4\frac{1}{2}$ inches by 1 inch, flattened on one face.

Fragment of object of cetacean bone (fig. 9, No. 5), possibly the handle end of some implement, $3\frac{3}{8}$ inches in length.

End plate of an object of bone (fig. 9, No. 8), $1\frac{1}{2}$ inch by $\frac{5}{8}$ inch, with two rivet holes, one of which retains part of an iron rivet.

Also several pieces of bone showing evidence of having been sawn or cut.

Objects of Deer-Horn.—Weaving comb of deer-horn with six teeth (fig. 9, No. 26), measuring $4\frac{5}{16}$ inches in length.

Part of an object of deer-horn, with a broad groove caused by friction, broken across the narrow part of the groove (fig. 9, No. 2).

Pointed implement of deer-horn (fig. 9, No. 1), $2\frac{15}{16}$ inches in length, 1 inch in greatest breadth. The instrument has been hollowed longitudinally and the cancellous tissue removed. It is pierced transversely by large perforations near the broad end, possibly for securing a shaft. The point is now broken.

Deer-horn pick (fig. 9, No. 27), $7\frac{3}{16}$ inches in length. From the inside of the beam of the antler, which forms the handle, the cancellous tissue has been removed.

Deer-horn pick (fig. 9, No. 28), $10\frac{1}{2}$ inches in length, made from a shed antler. The tine, which forms the point, is worn smooth with use, and the cancellous tissue has been entirely removed from the beam which forms the handle. At about $3\frac{1}{2}$ inches from the base of the handle, a roughly cut hollow, now polished with use, has formed a convenient stop for the thumb when gripping the handle.

Two sections of deer-horn, $8\frac{3}{4}$ inches and $4\frac{5}{16}$ inches in length.

Numerous tines, and parts of antlers, showing cut marks and evidence of having been sawn; several pieces appear also to have been gnawed by some animal.

Four boar tusks; one (fig. 9, No. 32), measuring 4 inches in length along the curve, is split in half, and has a well-defined groove cut on the inner side near the pointed end, which has been broken.

Coin.—A silver coin of Eadgar (A.D. 957–75) was found in the kitchen-midden, near the ring-headed pin of bronze.

A consideration of the relics recovered must lead us to the conclusion that they differ but little from objects found in the brochs, and from numerous sites in Coll and Tiree and North Uist. From an earth-house at Kilpheder in North Uist,[1] patterned pottery, hammer-stones, iron slag, and the upper half of a quern cut down to a lozenge shape, were recovered; and from another earth-house at Machair Leathann,[2] also in North Uist, hammer-stones, iron slag, cetacean bones, a bronze pin, and the upper stone of a quern, all relics of a similar nature to those found at Galson. It is remarkable, however, that no spinning-whorls were found at Galson, although the presence of a deer-horn weaving comb and loom weights points to the manufacture and use of textile fabrics. The character of the building, the extent of the kitchen-midden, and the quantity of *débris* which remained were illustrative of the fact that the people who occupied the site were not temporary campers, but a people who had made a prolonged occupation, and who by force of circumstance were compelled to become hunters or fishermen as occasion demanded, and probably, when game was scarce, turned with equal relish to a diet of shell-fish or the doubtful delicacy of a stranded whale, the bones of which, moreover, would provide a large amount of material for the fashioning of various implements. They cultivated the land, and very likely used the deer-horn picks for stirring the soil. They had saddle querns for grinding the grain, and were well supplied with vessels of hand-made pottery for cooking purposes. A spark for lighting their fires would be obtained by striking the quartzite pebble with an iron implement, such oval-shaped pebbles with longitudinal grooves being well-recognised products of the Iron Age.

The discovery of a tenth-century coin need not be taken as indicative of the period of the earth-house; it was found in the kitchen-midden, away from the buildings, which are probably of earlier date.

The choice of site, too, is worthy of some comment. At Galson, the average distance between the moor proper and the beach is a little over half a mile, with grass-grown levels and undulating slopes, capable of cultivation in parts. The moor, broken by hags and nearly impassable in wet weather, would neither be suitable for habitation nor could it be cultivated, so that we find the people choosing a part of the coast-line on which to build their underground dwellings, perhaps necessarily underground, because the strip of land between the moor

[1] *North Uist, its Archæology and Topography*, p. 116.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 127.

and the beach would, without doubt, be the common highway at that period for enemies and friends, even as it is now, although modern usage demands a made road.

In conclusion, I have to thank Mr John Morrison for the generous hospitality and assistance he extended to me during the whole of my stay at Galson, and also to Mr Norman Mackay, whose keen interest and actual help in the arduous work of digging out the various structures during a period of most inclement weather, rendered the task easier and more pleasant than it might have been.

For the identification of the shells found in the earth-house and the kitchen-midden, I have to thank Mr E. Leonard Gill, M.Sc., of the Royal Scottish Museum, Edinburgh. These comprise:—

Patella vulgata (common limpet) found in large quantities.
Littorina littorea (common periwinkle) „ „ „
Mytilus edulis (mussel) very few found.
Pecten maximus (scallop) „ „