

IV.

RECENT DISCOVERIES IN ARRAN. BY LUDOVIC M'LELLAN MANN,
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I. A ROUND CAIRN NEAR CARMAHOME.

I have to report the results of the exploration in Arran of a round cairn with passage, central chamber, and ring of stones. Mr James Craig had for some time become inquisitive regarding a heather-grown mound on high ground—moorland—above his farm of Carmahome, Kilpatrick, Shiskine, on the middle-west coast of the island. As the tops of some stones protruded through the heather, he dug to a depth of about 12 inches, and found that they were vertical slabs set circularly within the mound. The space outside these was filled with small rounded stones, evidently rubble, gathered in olden times from the adjoining surface of the ground.

On excavating the space within the circular setting he discovered a deposit of 2 feet of peat and earth, and a few loose stones filling a hollow. The peat growth was some 20 inches in depth on the south-west side but only 9 inches on the opposite side. Into the hollow the stones had apparently fallen during the growth of the peat. These were taken to be part of a rough and uneven pavement. He then stopped operations and invited my co-operation.

I went to Arran, and with Mr Craig, Mr John Woolley, Blackwaterfoot, and Mr Stewart of Glasgow, examined the cairn. It is round, about $20\frac{1}{2}$ feet in diameter, and of an unusual and interesting type (fig. 1).

A long heathery ridge, the top of which (453 feet above Ordnance datum) is called Cnocan à Chranuchuir, or "The Hillock of the Casting of the Lots," is $669\frac{1}{2}$ feet distant, and, looking from the cairn, the orientation is 335 degrees east of north magnetic.

We dug deeper into the cairn, and the supposed rough pavement turned out to be loose stones fallen into the central cavity and embedded in peat growth. These stones were lifted out, and at a depth of about 3 feet from the original heathery top we came upon a perfectly level flooring consisting of two large slabs and a small one, all neatly laid and fitting one into the other.

This pavement was the flooring of a well-constructed circular chamber, with walls formed of vertically set slabs. The floor was swept and the soil carefully sifted by riddle and hand, but no relics

were found. It is clear that the contents of the chamber had been subjected to some previous scrutiny, and that the chamber itself had originally been covered by a capstone, removed a considerable time ago for building or other purposes.

On the west side of the chamber there was an opening and a passage set radially from it, the axis lying slightly south-of-west. At

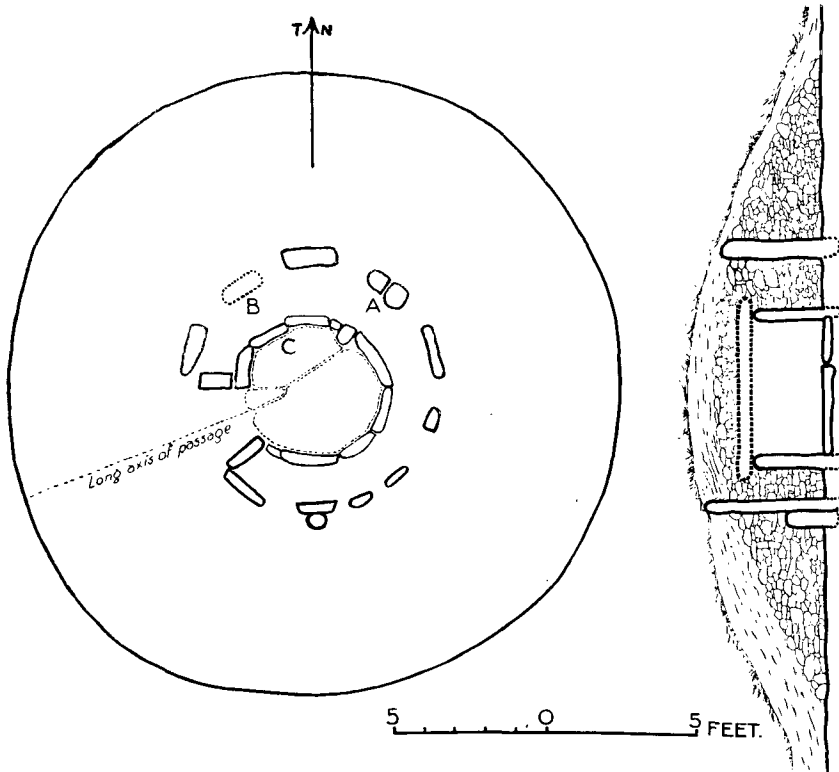


Fig. 1. Plan and Section of Cairn near Carmahome, Kilpatrick, Arran.

a little more than 4 feet radius from the centre was found a circular setting, originally of ten massive upright stones equi-distantly placed and about 3 feet apart. The peat was cleared from a large portion of the surface of the cairn so as to make sure of the exact position of the ring of uprights. One (A in fig. 1) was worn and fractured, and another (B) had almost disappeared, probably by decay. The margin of the cairn extended about 6 feet beyond this ring of upright stones.

The medium-sized paving stone (C) was lifted and fine soil was found underlying it. This was carefully sifted and a fine flint knife

discovered (fig. 2). It measures 2.78 inches in length and 1.54 inch in breadth, and is dressed only on one face. The largest flooring slab was not disturbed. To have done so would have injured the structure beyond repair.

On the second day of the digging photographs were taken by Mr James B. Jenkins of Shedog, and I plotted out the whole structure.



Fig. 2. Flint Knife from Cairn at Car-mahome, Kilpatrick, Arran. (†.)

It may be here noted that on Kilpatrick Moor, Arran, about 1910, an axe-head of felstone inserted in a piece of much decayed wood was found under 15 feet of peat. Mr Peter M'Kelvie, farmer at Kilpatrick, had it for some time, but it is now lost.

II. FLANGED BRONZE AXES FROM PIRNMILL.

In September last Mr James M'Millan, Woodside, Pirnmill, Arran, when cutting some soil to prepare for the building of a small water-

tank, came across three fragments of bronze axe-heads of the flanged or early palstave type.

These he sent to the *Daily Record* office, and Mr Anderson, the

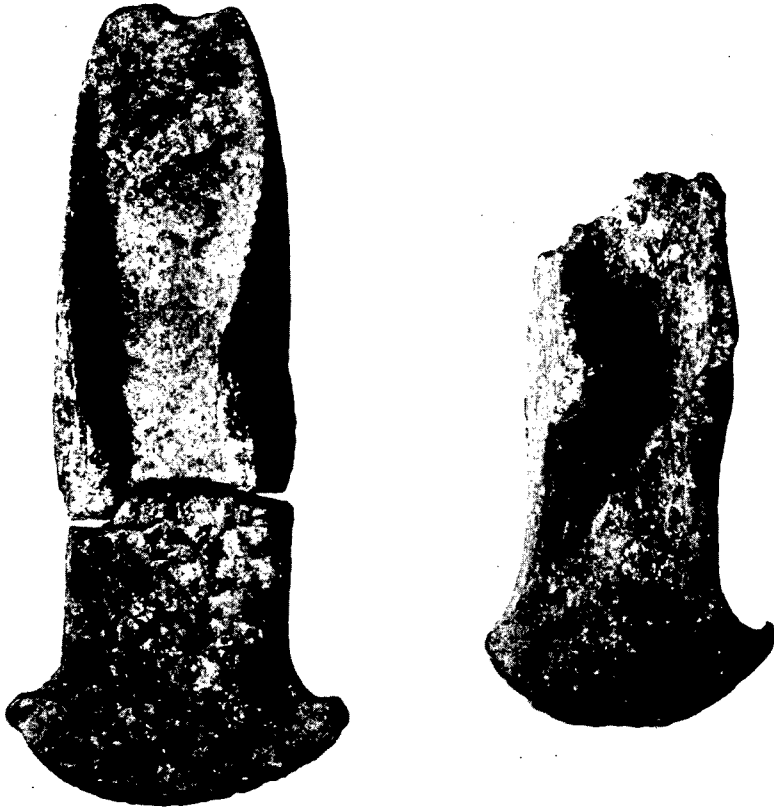


Fig. 3. Flanged Bronze Axes from Pirnmill, Arran. (1.)

editor, asked me to examine them. I then, with Mr Stewart of that office, went to Pirnmill to make further inquiry. The building of the tank had been proceeded with and the site of the discovery built upon before we arrived. However, with the assistance of several willing helpers, the whole place was dug over near the tank and the soil was carefully examined, without securing any further relics.

The place of the deposit is situated east from, and just behind, Mr M'Millan's house, and half-way up the steep hill-face, about 80 feet high, the base of which is the landward limit of the 25-foot raised beach. The cliff here forms a hollow crescentic front, and the deposit was placed exactly in the centre, as if the spot had been chosen because it could be readily found again.

The axe-heads (fig. 3) are slightly flanged, without loop or socket or even stop-ridges, and belong perhaps to the early part of the middle period of the Bronze Age, about 1400-1200 B.C. Two of the pieces fit together to form an axe 4 inches in length, 1·85 inch across the cutting face, and 1·23 inch across the flanges; and the other fragment, which consists of the front part of a similar but smaller axe, measures 1·68 inch across the cutting edge and 1·23 inch across the flanges. Both axes have the ends of the cutting edge well recurved backwards, and are smaller than the average of their type.

The axe-heads are very similar, yet were made in different moulds.

The little hoard was probably left by an itinerant founder; it was not a merchant's stock or a personal hoard. The axes were old before they were deposited in the ground, as they have anciently been broken up into convenient fragments, perhaps for the crucible.

Of seven contemporary previously recorded Scottish hoards of bronze objects, dating to the flanged axe period, four contained axes of this type, and this is a fifth. All come from the south-western district of Scotland, except a hoard from Farr, Sutherland, consisting of two looped specimens. The Farr specimens being fully developed palstaves are certainly not so old as those from Arran. The other three hoards were found respectively at Balcarry, Wigtownshire, Caldon's Hill, in the same county, and at Glentrool, in the Stewartry of Kirkcudbright.