

II.

NOTES ON (1) A BRONZE AGE GRAVE AT CRAIGSCORRY, BEAULY, INVERNESS-SHIRE, AND (2) TWO URNS FROM ABERDEENSHIRE.

By J. GRAHAM CALLANDER, F.S.A.Scot., DIRECTOR OF THE NATIONAL MUSEUM.

About the middle of January of this year there appeared in certain newspapers an account of the opening of a grave on the farm of Craigsorry, about two miles south-west of Beaulay, which, if correct, would have constituted a remarkable record of discoveries made in a Scottish prehistoric burial deposit. It was stated that the grave was hewn out of the rock, and that there were found in it the remains of a human skeleton—the skull and the larger limb bones being in good condition though soft and crumbling when handled—a bronze sword broken in two, a particularly fine spear-head of flint, and a specially good arrow-head of the same material, with its shaft complete. The report that the sepulchral chamber was cut in the rock was surprising enough, as this is quite contrary to past experience of Scottish Bronze Age burials; but the statements that a bronze sword and a flint arrow-head in its shaft had been recovered were even more surprising, as there is no authentic record of either of these classes of weapons having been found in a grave in Scotland.¹ Certainly flint arrow-heads have not infrequently been found in our Bronze Age and Stone Age interments; but there is only one record of a flint arrow-head in its wooden shaft having been found in the country, and it was found in a moss at Blackhillock, Fyvie, Aberdeenshire,² under 8 to 10 feet of peat.

As it was desirable that these relics should be secured for the nation, the King's Remembrancer took action to recover them, and they are now in the National Museum, the finder being suitably rewarded.

¹ In the first reports it was also stated that there was a "Druidical temple" near the grave, but this turned out to be a rectangular structure of slabs erected last century.

² *Proceedings*, vol. xi. p. 508.

When the relics were received at the Museum they were found to consist of fragments of what seemed to be a small, pointed bronze blade, certainly not parts of a sword, two other small pieces of bronze, a barbed and stemmed arrow-head without its shaft, and a knife, not a spear-head, of flint, the last two objects being calcined.

The four largest fragments of bronze seem originally to have fitted together, and, as arranged in the illustration (fig. 1, No. 1), form part of a pointed implement with a stout rounded midrib of flattish section, the total length of these parts being $4\frac{1}{8}$ inches. Measuring from the centre of the midrib near the broader end to the greatest projecting part of the edge one sees that the blade has been more than $1\frac{1}{2}$ inch broad. The edges are broken, and the butt end, which would have indicated the true character of the implement, is wanting. While the weapon bears a slight resemblance to an imperfect dagger blade found with cinerary urns and other objects, including several flints, in a cairn at Gilchorn, Forfarshire,¹ it approximates more to the shape of the pointed end of some of our more massive halbert blades. Still, this identification is doubtful, as there are faint traces of a hollow moulding near the edge of one of the pieces running obliquely to the centre of the midrib, and this might be considered as indicating a dagger.

The two other pieces of bronze (fig. 1, No. 2), measuring $1\frac{1}{4}$ inch and $\frac{1}{2}$ inch in length respectively by $\frac{5}{8}$ inch in greatest breadth, are flat, and show a distinct shallow groove, nearly $\frac{1}{8}$ inch broad, running down the centre of each on both sides. It is doubtful whether they are the remains of a second implement or whether they have been broken off the edge near the butt of the one just described.

As for the flints, the arrow-head (fig. 1, No. 3) is a fair specimen of the barbed and stemmed variety, but part of the point and of one of the barbs is broken off. It now measures $1\frac{1}{8}$ inch in length and $\frac{1\frac{5}{8}}{8}$ inch in breadth. The knife (fig. 1, No. 4) has convex edges, a rounded blunt point, and a flat base; it is of crescentic section, the flaking being confined to the curved face. It measures $2\frac{1}{2}$ inches in length, $1\frac{1}{8}$ inch in greatest breadth, and $\frac{1}{2}$ inch in greatest thickness.

As it was important that a correct report of the phenomena connected with the find should be drawn up, especially as the original account which was inaccurate in some of its details had received such wide currency, I got into communication with Mr Peter Stewart, the farmer at Craigsorry, and his son Mr James Stewart who had opened the grave, and later on was enabled, through their courtesy, to visit the site before the burial-place was filled in, and get a reliable account of the discovery.

¹ *Proceedings*, vol. xxv. p. 447.

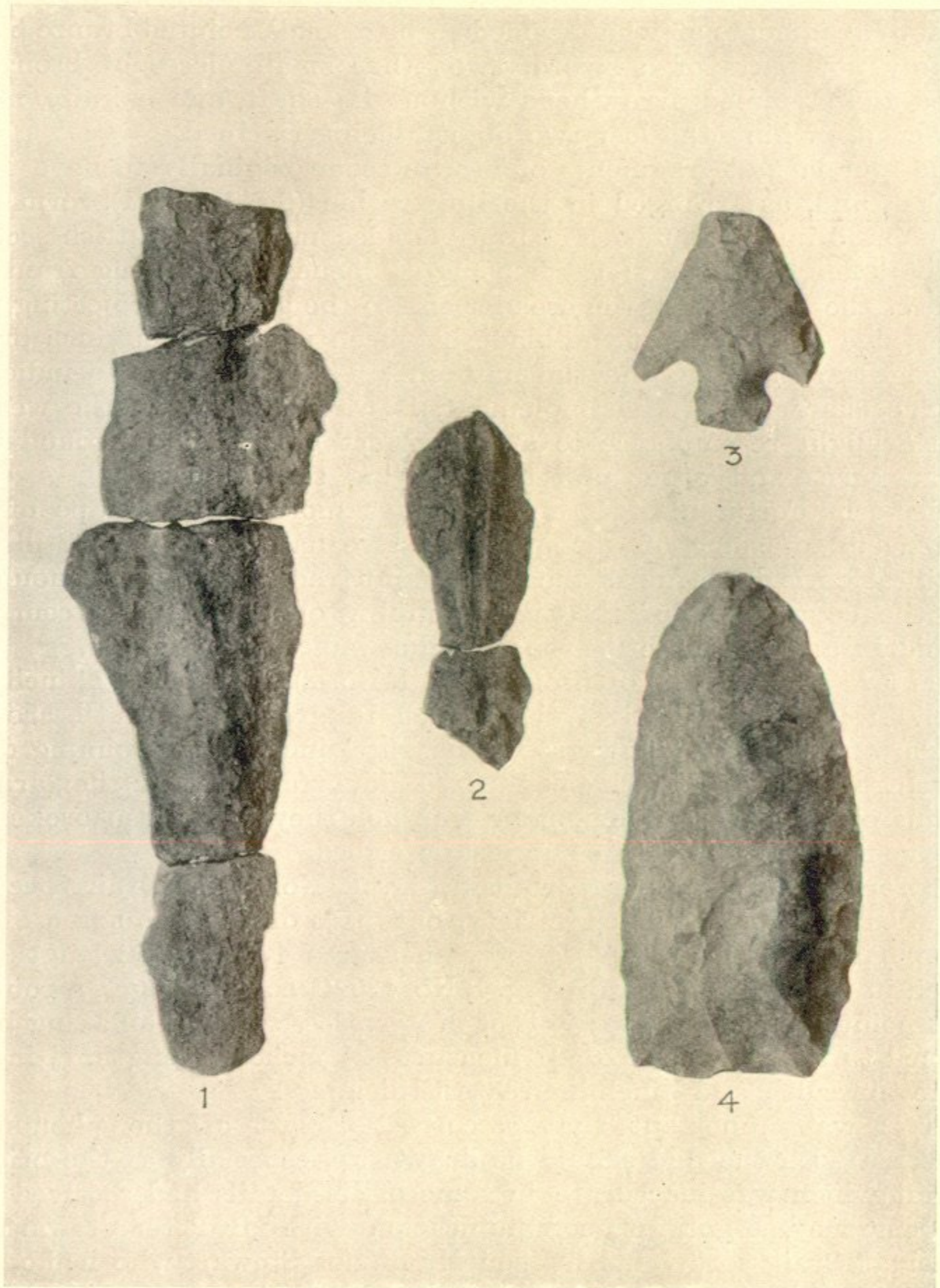


Fig. 1. Objects of Bronze and Flint from a Grave at Craigsorry,
Inverness-shire. ($\frac{1}{4}$.)

Craigscorry farm lies well up the rugged hill-side rising from the left bank of the river Beauly, and the position of the grave is near the eastern edge of a rocky, wooded knoll, on the summit of a slight ridge, about 150 yards south-east of the dwelling-house on the farm. The view from this spot, which lies within a few feet of the 300-foot contour line, is particularly fine, as the eastern side of the knoll drops steeply for some 50 feet before falling more gradually to the bank of the river, about half a mile distant. To the east and south is a magnificent stretch of mountainous country, while towards the north is seen the inner end of the Beauly Firth with the Black Isle beyond.

The existence of the grave was suspected from the presence of a rough slab of conglomerate, about 4 feet square and 1 foot 3 inches thick, which protruded about 3 inches above the surface of the ground. On being lifted, this proved to be the cover stone of a grave cut out of the conglomerate rock to an average depth of more than 2 feet. The cavity was oval in shape, the main axis running 50° east of north and west of south magnetic, about north-east by north and south-west by south. It measured 7 feet in length and 4 feet in breadth, the rock cutting being 3 feet deep on the west side, 2 feet 6 inches on the east side and at the south end, and 1 foot 9 inches at the north end. Between the rock and the cover stone the walls of the grave had been built up with boulders and blocks of stone, measuring from 6 inches in length upwards, the largest being about 1 foot 9 inches square and 1 foot thick. The largest stones were found at the ends, where there was more building than at the sides.

When the cover stone was removed, the grave was found to be full of gravelly soil. At the bottom of the cavity were the remains of a human skeleton, the skull lying near the north end facing the east, and the rest of the bones extending towards the south end. The fragments of bronze and the two flint implements were found on the east side of the grave in front of the arms of the skeleton. Mr Stewart stated that the leg and arm bones, as well as the skull, were fairly complete when first exposed, but that they broke up and crumbled away on being handled. At the time of my visit I found a handful of fragments of bone, including a part of the skull, about 1 inch square, showing the sutures. These had certainly been burnt, although the incineration was not complete. From the condition of the remaining pieces of bone, and from the fact that the flints were calcined, it would appear that this had been an interment after cremation. Although the flint implements clearly showed that they had passed through the fire, the condition of the fragments of bronze did not indicate that they had been similarly treated. When found, the edges were complete, and

the objects do not show the twisting and contortion seen on a fragment of a small bronze blade, preserved in the Museum, which was found in a cinerary urn at Cambusbarron, Stirlingshire,¹ and which had evidently been submitted to the action of fire. The association of calcined flints with bronze implements which have not been burnt in the same grave, as at Craigsorry, is not the first record of such an occurrence in Scotland, because one of the flints in the Gilchorn find, already referred to, was burnt, while the bronze implements had not suffered in this way.

Dr W. Douglas Simpson, F.S.A.Scot., has brought to my notice, and supplied descriptions of, a beaker and a food-vessel found many years ago in Aberdeenshire. A photograph of the beaker is shown, and through the courtesy of Rear-Admiral Walter Lumsden of Pitcaple the food-vessel is exhibited.

BEAKER FOUND NEAR ELRICK HILL, ABERDEENSHIRE.

Some time previous to 1850 an urn of beaker type was found in a cist upon a farm near Elrick Hill, parish of Newhills, Aberdeenshire. It was for many years in the possession of Major Campbell of Cloghill, Countesswells, Aberdeenshire, and was thereafter acquired by Mr A. Rudolf Galloway, O.B.E., M.A., M.B., C.M., F.S.A.Scot., Aberdeen, by whose courtesy I am privileged to submit the following account of the vessel. Dr Galloway has now presented it to the Anthropological Museum, Marischal College, University of Aberdeen.

The beaker (fig. 2) is of a shape frequently found in Scotland, and measures $5\frac{1}{2}$ inches in height, $4\frac{7}{10}$ inches in greatest external diameter at the mouth, $4\frac{1}{3}$ inches in diameter at the bulging middle, and 3 inches in diameter at the base. The walls are about $\frac{1}{3}$ of an inch in thickness, of a well-levigated, buff-coloured clay full of glistening white mica flakes: the interior shows a darker and more earthy tint.

A zig-zag pattern appears on the rim, reaching a short way down the inside and the outside of the vessel. Immediately below this, on the exterior, a broad zone of ornament extends to just beneath the constricted neck. This zone is bounded on top by a double horizontal line, at bottom by a single horizontal line, and is divided into three bands by two double horizontal lines. Cross-hatching fills the upper and lower bands, and the central band contains a double-chevron or zig-zag pattern. Another zone of ornament commences just above the medial bulge of the vessel, and extends thence about half way down to its base. Above and below it is bounded by a single horizontal line, and is divided by two

¹ *Proceedings*, vol. v. p. 213.

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double horizontal lines into three compartments, containing (from above downwards) a zig-zag pattern, cross hatching, and a chevron pattern. At the base of the vessel appears a third zone of ornament, bounded above by a single horizontal line, and containing a zig-zag pattern. All the above enrichment has been made with a notched instrument, producing minute septal divisions in the strokes and lines. The setting out of the horizontal lines is somewhat irregular.



Fig. 2. Beaker found near Elrick Hill, Aberdeenshire.

The urn is slightly cracked on the side and base, but has been repaired and is otherwise in excellent condition. The description "cinerary urn" has been wrongly painted on the plain band between the two upper zones of enrichment.

FOOD-VESSEL FROM PITCAPLE.

This vessel was found more than fifty years ago in digging for the foundations of an ice-house about 350 yards west of Pitcaple Castle, parish of Chapel of Garioch, Aberdeenshire. The urn (fig. 3) is of unusual

shape, as the relative height to the breadth is greater than generally seen in food-vessels, and its slightly projecting lip is uncommon. Also, it is of very stout make, the wall and base being thicker than usual. From the narrow base the sides expand upwards for about half its height. Here a slight ridge surrounds the body, and over this a hollow



1 0 1 2 Inches.

Fig. 3. Food-vessel from Pitcaple, Aberdeenshire.

band which is terminated above by another ridge, from which the sides of the neck are slightly indrawn under a heavy projecting brim. The vessel measures $4\frac{1}{2}$ inches in height, $2\frac{5}{8}$ inches in diameter at the base, 5 inches at the lower ridge in the wall, and 5 inches across the mouth. The upper surface of the brim is flat, measures $\frac{5}{8}$ inch broad, and is ornamented by five rows of impressions of a twisted cord. A similar pattern of eighteen rows, rather irregularly spaced, covers the body of the vessel as far down as the lower edge of the lower ridge. The material of the urn is a dark brown clay with minute flakes of mica mixed in it.

Preserved at Pitcaple Castle is also a small socketed bronze axe, the loop and part of the socket as

well as the cutting edge having wasted away. It was found in a so-called Roman Camp which lies about 450 yards west-north-west of the Castle. It measures $2\frac{1}{4}$ inches long, $1\frac{1}{4}$ inch in breadth below the mouth of the socket, and $1\frac{3}{8}$ inch across the cutting edge. There is a slight moulding round the socket and a smaller one below, while there are faint indications of a vertical rib in the middle of each lateral face.