

I.

NOTES ON SCOTTISH BRONZE RAPIERS, ON AN INCENSE CUP FROM KIRKCUDBRIGHTSHIRE, AND A BRONZE CHISEL FROM DUMFRIESSHIRE. BY J. M. CORRIE, F.S.A.Scot.

One of the most important stages in human progress is marked by the discovery of metals which, by smelting, could be cast into definite forms for making more effective tools and weapons than man had previously been accustomed to handle. At the outset, the metals would be scarce and expensive, and we can well believe that the efforts of the artificer would be largely experimental, and that the articles manufactured would for the most part be reproductions, more or less modified, of the neolithic models with which he was already familiar. Whether the new knowledge was first applied to domestic implements or to weapons of war, is a question that need not to any extent engage our attention in this short notice. In the present state of our knowledge we are unable to solve that problem, and it is sufficient for our immediate purpose to say that, amongst Bronze Age products, axes and spear-heads in particular furnish a succession of types from which it has been found possible by the discovery of hoards of miscellaneous objects to establish, within limits, the contemporaneity at a given period of various artefacts of that era. It should be mentioned also, that though a large variety of implements are represented amongst the hoards and scattered relics of the Bronze Age of Scotland, only a very small proportion of types has ever been found either in direct or in intimate association with interments. The special forms, viz. rapier-daggers and rapier-swords, to which I desire to direct attention are, for example,

conspicuously absent from sepulchral deposits. These types are of rare occurrence in Scotland, and probably on that account the scattered references have escaped co-ordinated notice in the *Proceedings* of the Society. Such blades were cast in moulds, presumably of stone, although clay may also have been used, but no rapier moulds of either kind have yet been found in Scotland. In the National Museum, however, there are casts of the two moieties of a stone mould for casting these narrow sword blades which were found, along with a smaller pair of moulds for a shorter blade of the same description, at Chudleigh in Devonshire. The technical difficulties in producing castings of such length as the rapier-swords are considerable, and it is evident that the artificers who produced such weapons were masters of their craft. "In finishing the castings," Dr Anderson says, "the surface was rubbed smooth with a stone rubber, the edges drawn down with the hammer and planished with a whetstone,"¹ but certain examples, with central ridge and one or more flutings running parallel to the edges and extending from the base almost to the point where they meet, seem to suggest a more advanced treatment. The rapier-like blades that have been found in Scotland had no handle plates, the weapons being affixed to handles of bone, horn or wood,² at their broad, flattened extremities by metal rivets or pins of hard wood. The hafting arrangements, however, appear frequently to have been inadequate. In many cases the bases of the blades seem to have been notched or cut into, rather than perforated for the rivets or pins, and it is in this feature that the weapons show their greatest weakness. The longer castings would impose an undue strain upon the hilt, and although in such weapons the metal rivets used were usually of larger and heavier size, hammered flat at both ends, it will be found if we examine a series of such relics that in the majority of cases the rivets have been torn away. Some specimens are fairly long and slender, but others appear to be unnecessarily broad. There was ample room, of course, for the development of purely local types, and while I do not suggest that it is possible to point out individual peculiarities in our Scottish examples, as establishing any departure from the recognised type or types of southern Britain, it is reasonable to believe that some districts would absorb the new invention earlier than others, and this in itself would encourage change. In this connection it is interesting to note the geographical distribution of our Scottish finds. As far as present records are available, the northern half of Scotland is entirely unrepresented.

¹ *Scotland in Pagan Times: The Bronze and Stone Ages*, pp. 173-5.

² Bronze hilts for rapier blades are unknown in Scotland, and they are of rare occurrence in England and Ireland.

Among Scottish discoveries, a hoard of twelve blades from Drumcoltran, Kirkgunzeon, in the Stewartry of Kirkcudbright, is of peculiar importance, not only on account of the number and character of the relics, but also because of the position of the find. No instance of such a number of bronze rapier blades having been found together has ever been previously recorded in the British Isles.¹ It is apparent, also, that if we accept the location of the deposit—the ditch of a fort—as reliable, it suggests an attribution as to date for that construction that has not yet been found possible in regard to any other example of our Scottish defensive sites.

Referring to the Drumcoltran Fort and the discovery of these blades, the Ancient Monuments Scotland Commission reports: "This fine circular fort is situated on the north-west slope of Drumcoltran Hill, sheltered and overlooked by higher ground towards the east, but commanding a fine prospect round from north-west to south. It has been formed by the excavation of a deep trench, now quite obliterated on the lower slope to the west, but well preserved on the upper side, where it measures 30 feet across the top and 9 feet in depth. It is recorded (*Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland*, vol. xxvii. p. 106) that in the trench *where deepest* there was found, in 1837, a hoard of bronze weapons, and in the same trench, in 1867, an '18-inch blade.' One of these blades, a sword of rapier form (fig. 1, No. 1), is now preserved in the National Museum of Antiquities, Edinburgh."² I have elsewhere³ examined the scattered and fragmentary references to the Drumcoltran relics, and demonstrated that the hoard was composed of twelve rapier swords, and that of these items six

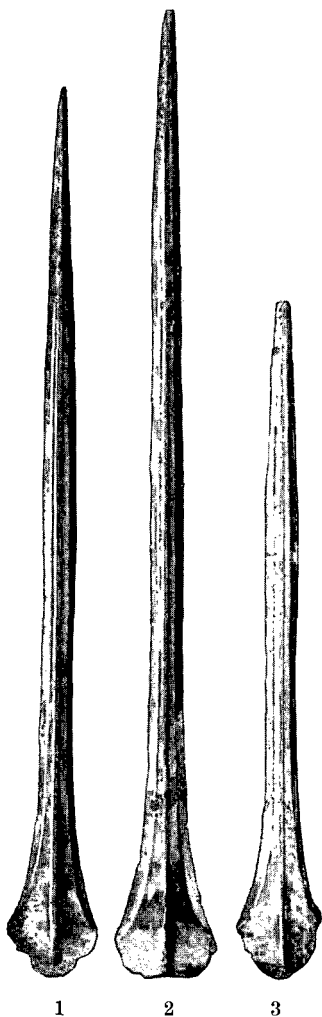


Fig. 1. Bronze Rapiers from Drumcoltran. ($\frac{1}{4}$)

specimens are known to be preserved. Of these, one, as already mentioned, is in the National Museum, three are in Dr Grierson's museum

¹ A hoard of six blades of rapier character, from 12 to 22 inches in length, was found at Talaton, Devonshire, in 1867.

² *Fifth Report and Inventory of Monuments, Stewartry of Kirkcudbright*, pp. 150-1, No. 280.

³ *Trans. Dumf. and Gall. Nat. Hist. and Antiq. Soc.*, 1926-7.

at Thornhill, Dumfriesshire (fig. 2), and two are in private possession (fig. 1, Nos. 2 and 3). Of the remainder, two were taken to America; one, believed to be the finest, passed into the hands of a workman;¹ two were formerly in the possession of a Dumfries gentleman, now deceased, and are meantime lost; and the remaining example has entirely disappeared. Examining the six survivors, which are fine castings, we find that, while varying in detail, all of them are slender and tapering, as is characteristic of the type, are covered with a fine green patina, and measure in length respectively: (1) 18·2 inches; (2) 20 inches; (3) 14 inches (fig. 1); (4) 8½ inches; (5) 15¼ inches; and (6) 14½ inches (fig. 2). In connection with No. 4, the shortest specimen, it should be explained that this example is imperfect. No. 1 is still nearly its original length, but Nos. 2, 3, 5, and 6 have lost their points. Each has a marked midrib and flutings along the sides, while the bases are irregular, and seem, with perhaps one exception, to have been notched rather than perforated for the handle rivets, none of which survives. It should be noted, also, that variations in detail indicate clearly that the blades had been cast in different moulds.

Only in two other Scottish Bronze Age Hoards, one from Glentool, Kirkcudbrightshire² and the other from Duddingston Loch, Midlothian,³ do we find the rapier blade represented. The last named hoard provided a mere fragment of a point 5¾ inches in length, but the Glentool specimen, although corroded in a peculiar fashion, was almost complete. "The Glentool rapier," says Mr Callander,⁴ "has an expanded spud-shaped base in which there have been two rivet holes for attaching it to the hilt, but the extreme end is imperfect, being broken across the rivet holes. It now measures 15 inches in length, though originally it has

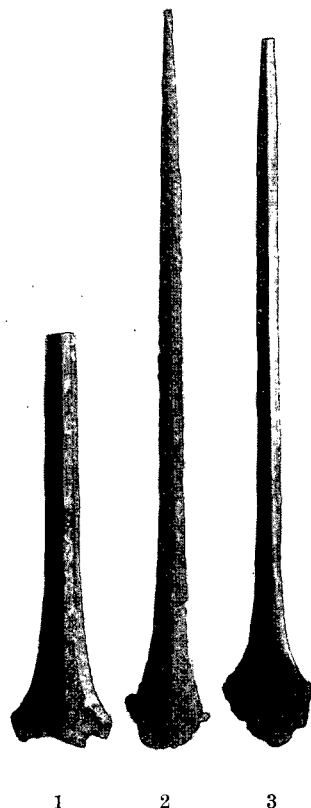


Fig. 2. Bronze Rapiers from Drumcoltran. (½.)

¹ *Proceedings*, vol. xlviii. p. 333.

² *Ibid.*, vol. lvi. p. 360.

³ *Ibid.*, vol. lv. p. 29.

⁴ *Ibid.*, vol. lv. p. 29.

been at least 1 inch longer; about the middle of the blade it measures $\frac{1}{8}$ inch in width. Though detached, the two rivets have been recovered—one complete in the matter of length and the other wanting one-third of its length. The former measures $1\frac{7}{32}$ inch in length and $\frac{7}{16}$ inch in diameter. Both sides of the blade are ornamented with three slight ribs or mouldings running parallel to the edges and extending from the base to within $1\frac{1}{4}$ inch of the point, where they meet. . . .”

It may be mentioned that this form of ornamentation is seen on many Irish rapiers, though it is seldom carried so near the point of the blade. The length of the complete rivet shows that the weapon had been provided with a stout hilt, probably made of wood, bone, or deer-horn. The blade was associated, in this instance, with such a variety of types of objects that the Glentool group is regarded as one of special importance.

Other examples of rapier-like blades have been found in Scotland, but the notices refer to the discovery of single items only. The following are the details of the several specimens and of the circumstances in which they were found, so far as known:—

Ayrshire.—A single specimen has been recorded for the county (fig. 3). It was discovered many years ago in a peat moss in the parish of Kirkoswald, Ayrshire, and was in 1884 in the possession of Colonel M'Lachlan of Blair. Its length was 15 inches, and its breadth across the flattened base, which was provided with two notches for handle rivets, $2\frac{1}{4}$ inches.¹

Berwickshire.—The county of Berwick has yielded a single example, which is now preserved in the National Museum of Antiquities. It was found at Milne-Graden, in the parish of Coldstream, and measures $11\frac{1}{2}$ inches in length by 1 inch in greatest breadth at the base of the blade.² The base is

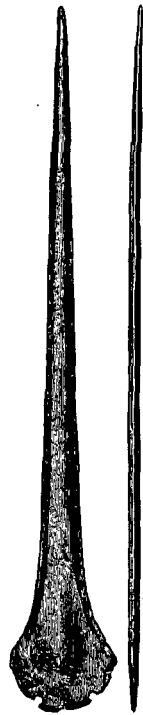


Fig. 3.

imperfect, with no traces of notches or rivet holes, and the blade slightly approaches a leaf-shaped form.

Dumfriesshire.—From the county of Dumfries two specimens have been noted: one from Fairholme, Lockerbie, and the other from Macquiston, in the parish of Tynron. Both are fine castings, but they provide a distinct contrast in type. The Fairholme blade of bright yellow bronze was presented to the Museum in 1865. A piece, about $\frac{3}{4}$ inch in

¹ *Scotland in Pagan Times: The Bronze and Stone Ages*, p. 175; *Arch. and Hist. Collections of Ayr and Wigton*, vol. iv. p. 52; and *Proc. Soc. Ant. Scot.*, vol. xiv. p. 96.

² *Proceedings*, vol. xx. p. 320.

length, is missing from the point, but the relic which now measures $10\frac{3}{4}$ inches is otherwise in a remarkably fine state of preservation. It is a somewhat broad dagger blade of rapier type, with the base, which measures $2\frac{1}{4}$ inches across the widest part, pierced for two rivets. The specimen is very similar to one found at Coveney, near Downham Hithe, Cambridgeshire, figured on p. 249 of Sir John Evans's *Ancient Bronze Implements of Great Britain*.

The Macqueston blade, on the other hand, is unusually slender, and, besides having lost a small portion of the tip, has unfortunately been broken into two pieces. The faces are flat, and the edges have been drawn down to a keen sharpness for $\frac{1}{8}$ inch on either side. The length of the blade is $8\frac{7}{8}$ inches, the width $\frac{5}{8}$ inch, and the thickness $\frac{1}{8}$ inch. The base has been notched rather than perforated for two rivets. The specimen was turned up by the plough about the year 1911 or 1912, and is now in the possession of the Dumfriesshire and Galloway Natural History and Antiquarian Society.¹

Fifeshire.—The county of Fife is represented by a short rapier-shaped dagger blade, $8\frac{1}{4}$ inches long, which was acquired for the National Museum of Antiquities in 1874. The indications are very indefinite, but the base, which is now imperfect, was apparently notched for two rivets. Otherwise the relic is in excellent preservation, and has a fine slender blade with good point. The specimen was found at Dunshelt, near Auchtermuchty.

Galloway.—In addition to the examples from Kirkgunzeon and Glen-trool, already mentioned, Galloway is represented by another specimen found many years ago in the bed of the River Cree. This example, a short rapier blade or long dagger blade, measuring $13\frac{5}{8}$ inches in length and 2 inches across the widest portion of the base, is provided with two deep notches, one at either side of the butt end, a peculiar device for the attachment of the haft that has been adopted also on another Scottish rapier blade found in Midlothian, and is well known in English and Irish examples.² The River Cree specimen is now preserved in the National Museum.³

Midlothian.—Two of the finest specimens in the National Museum of Antiquities were found in Midlothian, and, with the exception of the Duddingston point, they are the only examples of the type known so far to have been recovered in the county. As in the case of the Dumfriesshire blades, they show a marked contrast in design. The longer blade, which measures $18\frac{3}{4}$ inches in length, has an unusually broad base measuring $2\frac{1}{4}$ inches at the widest part, perforated for two

¹ *Trans. Dumf. and Gall. Nat. Hist. and Antiq. Soc.*, 1926-7.

² *Proceedings*, vol. lvii. p. 138.

³ *Ibid.*, vol. xlviii. p. 16.

strong rivets, one of which survives. The blade has a fine point, and is $\frac{7}{8}$ inch in width across almost any section of its length. The faces are flat, and the edges have been drawn down for a width of $\frac{1}{4}$ inch on either side. The surviving rivet is $\frac{1}{2}$ inch in length and $\frac{3}{8}$ inch in section, with the ends hammered almost flat.

The second specimen, a fine casting 15 inches in length, of unusually slender form and in an excellent state of preservation, is one of the finest rapier castings that has so far been recovered in Scotland. It is of unique importance also, because the base of the blade, which measures $1\frac{3}{4}$ inch across the widest part, furnishes conclusive evidence that the two side notches for rivets—a feature less apparent but already noted on the River Cree specimen—were intentionally designed and effected in the process of casting. The blade tapers nicely from the base to a fine point. Both of these examples were acquired from the Duns Collection in 1903.¹

Perthshire.—Two specimens, both of them daggers, have been recorded from Perthshire. One of these, a fine slender casting $12\frac{1}{2}$ inches in length, with an unusually broad base measuring 2 inches across and perforated for two rivets, was added to the National Collection in 1860. It was found at Buttergask, near Ardoch.

The other, a bronze dagger blade, of similar character, from Blair Drummond Moss, has been recorded by Sir John Evans. "It was," he says, "exhibited in the Museum at Edinburgh and preserved at Blair Drummond House."²

Roxburghshire.—Roxburghshire is represented by three specimens, two of which, one from the farm of Otterburn in Morebattle parish, and the other from Kilham, Bowmont Water, in the Cheviots, are in the National Collection.³ The Otterburn relic is slightly corroded and imperfect at the base, and it shows also a peculiar twist in the blade as if, by some fortuitous and accidental circumstance, it had been damaged in the process of being cast in a mould of clay while the metal was still hot. It measures $15\frac{3}{4}$ inches in length and $1\frac{1}{2}$ inch across the base.

The Kilham specimen is $10\frac{3}{4}$ inches in length and $1\frac{3}{4}$ inch across the base, which is imperfect, but shows traces of three rivet holes or notches. The blade shows a central midrib, and has a fine point.⁴

The third example, found at Southdean, is imperfect, and has been described as a "Blade, $4\frac{5}{8}$ inches long by $\frac{3}{4}$ inch broad at widest part, with small hole $\frac{3}{16}$ inch in diameter at a distance $\frac{5}{8}$ inch from the butt end, apparently the portion of a narrow rapier blade." The relic is preserved in the Museum at Jedburgh.⁵

¹ *Proceedings*, vol. xxxvii. p. 348.

³ *Proceedings*, vol. xxxvii. p. 348.

² *Ancient Bronze Implements of Great Britain*, p. 248.

⁴ *Ibid.*, vol. xxiv. p. 16.

⁵ *Ibid.*, vol. xxii. p. 381.

Localities Unknown.—A number of examples without any definite locality should also be noted. Of these the most noteworthy is a remarkably long specimen of $27\frac{1}{4}$ inches which Sir John Evans records as having been in the possession of Canon Greenwell. "It was," he says, "bought in Scotland, and probably found in that country."¹ Three other blades were exhibited in the Prehistoric Gallery at Glasgow (1911) Exhibition. They are detailed in the Catalogue as follows:—²

No. 31. 10 inches. Lent by W. Moir Bryce.

No. 34. 18 inches. Lent by the Hunterian Museum, University of Glasgow.

No. 35. $12\frac{1}{2}$ inches. Lent by Rev. Mr Fraser.

The results of these investigations naturally lead to the question of the origin and development of the particular forms that we have been discussing. We have already noted that at the beginning of the new era metals would be scarce and expensive, and that, in all likelihood, the first products in the fresh materials would be more or less copies of the corresponding implements in stone, bone, horn, or wood. This feature, indeed, is clearly exemplified in the first or flat type of metal axe and in the thin, flat knives of bronze, both of which, from the associations in which they have been found, are recognised as being amongst the earliest of our Bronze Age tools. Unlike these, however, the rapier blade in its fully developed form has no proper analogy among Stone Age tools or weapons. At best its prototype of that period could have been little more than a pointed stick. It was not until after the introduction of metals, as we shall see presently, and then only when considerable skill had been acquired in working the new materials, that, following upon a sequence of interesting changes, the rapier blade made its appearance as a development from the early thin, flat knife of a purely domestic nature. It will be our purpose briefly to indicate the progressive stages.

These thin knife-like blades of bronze, which we have represented as being the precursor of the rapier, are rare in Scotland. They have almost invariably been found in association with interments of the early Bronze Age, and they were usually accompanied in these deposits by urns of the beaker type. There have, in certain instances, also been slight indications that the burials were those of women. In Scotland thin knife-like blades have been recorded from sepulchral deposits at Bishopmill, near Elgin; Cairn Greg at Linlathen, Angus; Callachally, Glenforsa, Island of Mull; Carlochan, in the parish of Crossmichael,

¹ *Ancient Bronze Implements of Great Britain*, p. 252.

² *Glasgow Exhibition (1911) Catalogue*, p. 882.

Kirkeudbrightshire; Cleigh, Loch Nell, Argyll; Collessie, Fife;¹ Drumlanrick, near Callander, Perthshire; Glenluce sand-hills, Wigtownshire; and at Newbridge, Kirkliston, in Midlothian. In one of the few instances in which they have been found in Scotland under other circumstances, in the hoard from Auchnacree, Angus, which included two blades, they were again associated with contemporary relics—three flat axes and an armlet—of the same early part of the bronze period. The Auchnacree blades will suffice to indicate the first progressive step towards the development of the rapier. The larger of the two specimens has a thin, flat, almost straight-edged blade with a broad, rounded point, and no midrib or thickening of the metal in the centre. It now measures $6\frac{1}{2}$ inches in length, 2 inches in width at the butt, tapering to $1\frac{1}{2}$ inch in width about an inch from the point, and $\frac{1}{16}$ inch in thickness, but it may originally have been a little longer and broader. The base is slightly imperfect, but it appears to have been provided with no fewer than nine rivet holes for fixing the haft of bone, horn, or wood, but of these rivet holes one only remains complete. The marks of the handle can be detected on the blade near its base. The smaller blade measures $3\frac{7}{8}$ inches in length, $1\frac{3}{4}$ inch in width at the butt, and $\frac{1}{16}$ inch in thickness. It is almost complete, but it shows clear evidence of the continual wear resulting from frequent re-sharpening; the sides being concave from butt to point. The butt is triangular and perforated for five rivets. Both of these blades are essentially domestic implements for whittling or cutting, in contra-distinction to weapons for stabbing or thrusting. Not only are the points—if such, indeed, they can be called—too blunt for daggers, but the blades themselves are unsuited for that purpose, owing to their thinness and lack of rigidity. The stab or thrust, however, was bound to come, and in this connection it seems not unlikely that it was some such features as those shown by the much worn knife, represented by the smaller Auchnacree specimen, that first suggested to the worker in metal a suitable model for the production of a series of new and more effective weapons, such as the spear, the halberd, and the dagger. At any rate, the resemblance is striking, and leaves little doubt in our minds that we have here a connecting link that marks a stage towards the development of these three types. For the purposes of our present inquiry we are mainly concerned with the dagger, but attention may be directed to the fact that the three forms mentioned have, in their initial stages, so much in common that it is frequently extremely difficult to distinguish one type from another. Practically the only distinctions that can be drawn between the earliest daggers and the much worn thin knives are the increased length of the dagger, the more

¹ In this instance the blade was accompanied by a gold mounting for the hilt.

acute sharpening of the point, and the provision of a more or less definite thickening or midrib to give strength and rigidity to the blade. Even the knife itself, as shown by examples recovered from burials at Law of Mauldslic, near Carluke, Lanarkshire, and in the parish of Tough, Aberdeenshire, were improved in much the same way by the addition of a wide, flat midrib tapering from butt to point, and very slightly raised above the surface of the blade, so that in many instances the distinctions are, to a large extent, arbitrary. The arrangements for hafting remain in principle the same, but some little distinction is possible. In the dagger the number of rivets is reduced. Whereas the early knife had a varying number of rivets—from one to as many as nine having been noted—the dagger usually had a standard of two, and, as we have already seen, these were frequently placed so near the fringe of the butt that, in many cases, they were torn out. It is noteworthy, also, that the same peculiar provision of side notches, instead of complete rivet holes which we have noted on certain of the rapier-like blades, finds an affinity in a small knife blade with central midrib found with cinerary urns at Gilchorn, Angus, and now preserved in the National Collection. The transition from the broad dagger blade to that of the rapier-like form was an inevitable development keeping step with the ever-increasing command of metal and the ability to make the finer castings. The narrowing of the blade did not materially affect the strength, and, while it gave better penetrating capabilities to a purely stabbing or thrusting weapon, it at the same time effected considerable economy in the use of the rare and expensive metal from which the blades were made. What may be described as an intermediate form may be identified in the unusually broad rapier blades from Fairholme, Lockerbie, and the River Cree, Kirkcudbrightshire. When still greater experience and skill had been acquired in the working of bronze, the rapier-like daggers were made of such length as to acquire the name of true rapiers or rapier-swords, but no hard and fast dividing line can be drawn between the two. Here, then, we have a sequence of forms indicating the evolution of the rapier from the thin, flat knife to true dagger, elongated dagger, and thence to rapier-sword, all with handles riveted on to them.

The rapier blade was our first sword, and, as we might expect, it in turn gave birth in the later bronze period to another form, that of the leaf-shaped sword blade with handle-plate cast in a single piece; a form which combined both thrust and cut. We have noted the slight suggestion of this change on one of the rapier blades—that from Milne-Graden, Berwickshire—which we have already described. In date, bronze rapiers as a class come between the dagger and the leaf-shaped sword

which survived into the Iron Age, and, as we have learned from the evidence provided by the important hoard of associated relics from Glentool, Kirkcudbrightshire, they were contemporary in Scotland with an early form of palstave and spear-heads with small loops at the bases of the blades. They may therefore be assigned to the middle of the Bronze Age.

In conclusion, I desire to express my appreciation of the facilities afforded to me by Mr Callander, Director of the Museum, to examine the specimens under his charge, and I have also to acknowledge my indebtedness to Professor Bryce for replying to an inquiry regarding the specimen in the Hunterian Collection, University of Glasgow.

INCENSE-CUP FROM KIRKCUDBRIGHTSHIRE.

The incense-cup which is exhibited this evening was recovered last summer from a mound within the garden grounds at Cairngill,¹ a modern residence occupied by Mr Oliver H. Haslam, in the parish of Colvend and Southwick, in the Stewartry of Kirkcudbright. Cairngill occupies the site of an earlier dwelling called Craig Bittern, and it is the latter name that appears on the six-inch O.S. Map (Sheet LI., NW.). It lies on the left bank of the Cairngill Burn, close to the highway between Dalbeattie and Kirkbean, on its north side, at an elevation of 50 feet above sea-level, and only some 130 yards distant from the high-water mark at the north shore of Sandyhills Bay.

In laying out the garden paths, Mr Haslam decided to remove a portion of the mound, and it was during the course of these levelling operations that the workmen came upon the urn and some comminuted burnt bones. The true character of the site had not up till that time been suspected, and no great care had been taken in the excavation; but as soon as the find was reported to Mr Haslam, who unfortunately was from home on the date of the discovery, he gave instructions that the work of levelling was to be forthwith suspended. On his return home, Mr Haslam secured possession of the relics, and communicated information of the discovery to Mr G. W. Shirley, Honorary Secretary of the Dumfriesshire and Galloway Natural History and Antiquarian Society, who has since acquired the finds as a donation to that Society's collection. The discovery has added nothing fresh to our knowledge of these small cup-shaped pottery vessels, but, coming from a hitherto unnoted site, it is desirable that a short record of the find should be included in our *Proceedings*.

Mr Haslam tells me that the urn was found near the outer margin

¹ The place-name *Cairngill*=cairn of the narrow valley is significant.

of the mound at no great depth from the surface and almost on the natural level of the ground. There was no appearance of a cist or any protective covering; but the workman who found the vessel says that there seemed to be a number of small stones carefully set around the urn in a roughly rectangular formation. It would, therefore, appear that the relic was found in its original position within the structure, and we may fairly confidently assume that the interment was one of secondary character. Indeed, in the course of inquiries among old residents in the district, Mr Haslam has ascertained that what he



Fig. 4. Incense-cup from Cairngill, Kirkeudbrightshire.

imagines was a cist had been discovered in the mound some thirty-five years ago by workmen in search of building materials. He has been told, also, that it was the place where drowned sailors were buried in old days—a statement which suggests that other remains had previously been found at the site, and so gave rise to the story. He is anxious, I believe, to continue the excavation; but, having himself had no previous experience of such structures, he is very thoughtfully refraining in the meantime until someone who is acquainted with the proper procedure can be present to advise or superintend the work.

The urn (fig. 4) is a typical representative of its class. It is buff-coloured on the outside, slaty grey in the core, and it is composed of a very smooth and compact clay without grit, which gives it an unusually firm and hard texture—a characteristic to which we are no doubt indebted

for its almost complete preservation. A small portion is missing from the wall, but the fracture is certainly old. The urn measures $2\frac{1}{2}$ inches in height, $3\frac{1}{4}$ inches across the mouth, and $3\frac{7}{8}$ inches in greatest diameter towards the lower portion of the vessel; from this part it curves in rapidly downwards to a small, slightly concave, base, measuring $1\frac{3}{8}$ inch across. It is undecorated, and does not show the small side perforations that so frequently occur on vessels of this class. It is well known that these small cup-shaped urns are almost invariably found either inside or in close association with large cinerary urns in burials after cremation, and we have the evidence of three tiny fragments of a second urn, obviously of the usual cinerary type, and some pieces of burnt bones which were found at the same time and place, to indicate that in this respect the Cairngill burial was no exception to the general rule.

The purpose of these tiny pottery vessels has given rise to a variety of conjectures, but it is still as much a matter of speculation as it always has been. As Dr Anderson expressed it many years ago, "All these conjectures are equally probable, inasmuch as they are all equally unsupported by evidence."¹ The only other points that seem to be well established in regard to them are that they are peculiar to the British Isles and that they are occasionally found to contain the bones of an infant or young child.

We are indebted to Mr Haslam for the interest and consideration he has shown in connection with the discovery and for the care he has taken to insure the preservation of the relics, and we are grateful to the Dumfriesshire and Galloway Society for allowing the urn to be exhibited at this meeting.

A BRONZE CHISEL FROM DUMFRIESSHIRE.

We are indebted, also, to the Dumfriesshire and Galloway Society for the opportunity of seeing the bronze chisel-like implement of unusual form that is the subject of the concluding section of my paper. I have not been able to obtain much information in regard to the circumstances under which the relic was discovered, beyond the rather general statement that it was found some time ago by a Mr Robert Sharp during draining operations, close to a portion of the Deil's or Picts' Dyke,² in the parish of Kirkconnel, Dumfriesshire. The relic was first brought to the notice of the Dumfriesshire and Galloway Society by Dr Semple, who had learned of it while making some investigations, with another member of the Society, into the supposed line of the Dyke. The finder

¹ *Proceedings*, vol. xiii. p. 122.

² An earthwork whereof the broken course can still be traced from Loch Ryan in Wigtownshire across Galloway to Southmains on the Nith, Dumfriesshire.

seems to think that the implement came from the middle of the Dyke itself, but he hesitates to commit himself definitely to that point; and Dr Semple, as the result of his inquiries, is inclined to believe that the relic was found immediately beneath the Dyke.

The implement, a flanged chisel, is specially interesting in having the cutting edge set transversely to the flanges and in being the second example of a flanged type, with a well-developed projecting cross limb or stop, that has so far been found in Scotland (fig. 5, No. 1). Exactly the same form has been noted by Sir John Evans in a somewhat larger specimen from Ireland, which has been classified by one authority as a flanged axe with a transverse cutting edge and by another authority as a chisel. The provision of the unusually set flanges and the cross-stop supports the latter classification. We do not find the cross-stop as a feature on any undoubted flat bronze axes, but it is occasionally met with on early trunnion chisels found in England and Ireland, and it occurs also on an elongated example, from an unknown location in Scotland, which is preserved in the National Museum.¹ We are familiar also with tanged chisels having a circular collar in place of the cross-stop. The Kirkconnel implement measures $5\frac{1}{8}$ inches in length by $\frac{1}{8}$ inch across the cutting edge, and $\frac{5}{8}$ inch in greatest thickness at the butt. It was originally covered with a thick green patina, but since its discovery it has unfortunately been dressed up with a file, to make it shine. The only Scottish flanged relic that presents any features at all akin to it is a specimen from Perthshire, which was acquired by purchase for the

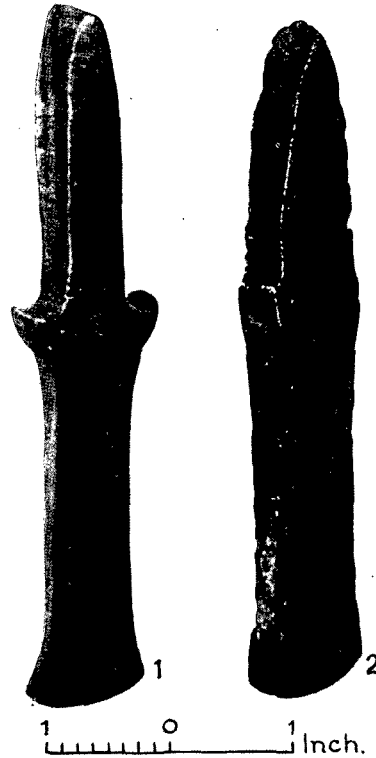


Fig. 5. Flanged Bronze Chisels from Dumfriesshire and Perthshire.

¹ Another example is recorded and figured by Dr Daniel Wilson, who describes it as having been found with other bronze relics at Strachur, Argyllshire. *Prehistoric Annals of Scotland* vol. i. p. 381.

National Museum in 1890. It is shown in the illustration (fig. 5, No. 2) alongside the Kirkconnel specimen, and has been described¹ as a "Bronze Palstave or Flanged Axe, $5\frac{1}{8}$ inches in length by $1\frac{1}{8}$ inch across the cutting edge, which is placed not in a plane parallel to the wings but transversely to them."