

II.

A COLLECTION OF PREHISTORIC RELICS FROM THE STEVENSTON SANDS, AYRSHIRE, AND OTHER OBJECTS IN THE NATIONAL MUSEUM. BY J. GRAHAM CALLANDER, LL.D., F.S.A.Scot., DIRECTOR OF THE NATIONAL MUSEUM OF ANTIQUITIES.

RELICS FROM STEVENSTON SANDS, AYRSHIRE.

On the Ayrshire coast, between the lower reaches of the River Garnock and the Firth of Clyde, is a strip of country covered with sand, known as the Stevenston or Ardeer Sands. These stretch in a south-easterly direction from near the town of Stevenston to the mouth of the River Irvine, a distance of more than two miles, their width varying from about one mile to a quarter of that distance. For many years this area had been the happy hunting-ground of collectors of antiquities, as relics became exposed by the blowing away of the sand, but now a large part of the sands is occupied by factories.

Amongst the collections of prehistoric relics formed by the late John Smith, Dykes, Dalry, and presented to the National Museum,³ is a good selection of objects found on the Stevenston Sands. The greater part of the collection consists of flint implements which amount to nearly three hundred specimens, and there are some fifty more objects.

The list of relics consists of:—

Fifty-four arrow-heads chiefly of flint, forty-eight being barbed and stemmed, five leaf-shaped, and one lop-sided.

Ninety small scrapers of flint, measuring from $\frac{11}{8}$ inch by $\frac{3}{8}$ inch to $\frac{1}{4}$ inch by $\frac{13}{8}$ inch; and seventy-seven of larger size, measuring up to $1\frac{11}{8}$ inch by $1\frac{1}{4}$ inch.

¹ Brøgger, *Den Norske Bosetningen På Shetland-Orknøylene*, pp. 56 and 274.

² *Archaeologica Scotica*, vol. v. p. 76, fig. 4.

³ *Proc. Soc. Ant. Scot.*, vol. lxxv. p. 298.

Thirteen knives worked on both edges, one being slug-shaped, and ten worked on one edge only; twelve borers or pointed tools; nine hollow scrapers; one so-called fabricator; and three small tools with battered backs—all of flint.

A bronze gouge, slightly imperfect at the cutting edge and the socket, measuring $1\frac{7}{8}$ inch in total length and $\frac{1}{2}$ inch in diameter at the mouth of the socket.

Part (rather more than a third) of a quoit-shaped bead of greenish vitreous paste, the ring being of triangular section and flat on the inside. It has measured about 1 inch in external diameter, is $\frac{3}{16}$ inch in thickness, and $\frac{1}{2}$ inch across the perforation.

A flat bead of dark blue glass, with five notches round the circumference, measuring $\frac{5}{8}$ inch in diameter and $\frac{3}{16}$ inch in thickness.

A large, roughly formed, flat ring of shale, measuring $4\frac{3}{16}$ inches in diameter and $\frac{3}{4}$ inch thick, the hole being $1\frac{1}{16}$ inch in diameter.

Fragments of eleven armlets and of three finger-rings of shale.

Fragments of three large rings of shale in the course of manufacture.

Fragments of three objects of shale, in the form of a ring, wide at the top and narrower below, the sides contracting in a concave curve.

A small plate of shale, measuring $2\frac{1}{4}$ inches in greatest diameter, with scooped-out indentations showing the beginning of the perforation on both sides.

A thin stone whorl, measuring $1\frac{1}{2}$ inch and $1\frac{1}{4}$ inch in cross diameters.

A perforated stone, measuring $1\frac{7}{8}$ inch in diameter.

Part of a stone axe.

A stone polisher, measuring $3\frac{1}{2}$ inches by $2\frac{1}{2}$ inches by 1 inch, and four imperfect polishers or whet-stones.

Two small pieces of keel (ruddle), one much rubbed down.

A lozenge-shaped brooch of bronze inlaid with brown enamel in the obtuse angles, and with light blue enamel in the acute angles (fig. 1); in the centre is a circular cloison from which the enamel has disappeared. The pin is wanting, as is the turned-up part of the catch-plate, but the hinge-plate still shows the perforation. The brooch measures $1\frac{5}{8}$ inch by $\frac{5}{8}$ inch.



Fig. 1. Enamelled Brooch from Stevenston Sands. (†.)



Fig. 2. Unfinished Bronze Brooch from Stevenston Sands. (†.)

A crescent-shaped brooch of bronze, the horns terminating in flattened knobs, evidently in the course of manufacture (fig. 2). The large crescent in front is divided into two smaller crescentic cloisons, ready to

receive the enamel. The hinge- and catch-plates behind have not been finished, as the former is not perforated and the latter has not been turned up at the point to form the catch. The brooch measures 1 inch across and $\frac{3}{4}$ inch in depth.



Fig. 3. Head of Bronze Pin from Stevenston Sands. (†.)

A bronze pin with a faceted head, measuring $3\frac{1}{2}$ inches in length, and another bent and wanting the head, measuring $2\frac{9}{16}$ inches in length.

The head of a pin of bronze in the form of a bird perched on the highest part of a crescent. On the front of the crescent there have been seven circular indentations and on the remaining part of the stem there are two, (fig. 3). It measures $\frac{1\frac{3}{8}}$ inch in breadth and $\frac{5}{8}$ inch in height.

A strap-tag of bronze, measuring $1\frac{1}{2}$ inch in length and $\frac{1}{2}$ inch in breadth; it has two rivet-holes on the broad end, and its convex sides attenuate to a zoomorphic point (fig. 5, No. 1). It is decorated on the front with the incised figure of a beast.

A small ring brooch of bronze wire, measuring $\frac{1\frac{3}{8}}$ inch in diameter, one half of the ring being of circular section and the other of square section but twisted.

Three bronze buckles and parts of three bronze hinges.

Two small rings of lead, measuring $\frac{1\frac{1}{8}}$ inch and $\frac{1}{2}$ inch in diameter respectively.

An arrow-head of iron with long barbs and a socket, measuring $3\frac{3}{8}$ inches in length.

In colour the Stevenston flints resemble those found on the Glenluce Sands, in Wigtownshire, being generally light varieties of grey and yellow. Evidently the source of the flint supply of these two south-west of Scotland districts was the same, some of it probably coming from Ireland. There are practically none of the fine reds, deep yellows, and browns which are so characteristic of the flint implements from Aberdeenshire or the Culbin Sands, and the dark greys and blacks as seen in Berwickshire are comparatively rare.

Containing as it does over three hundred objects of flint, this collection would in ordinary circumstances be large enough to indicate the relative proportions of the different classes of tools made of this material which were in use by the inhabitants of this area. Presumably, apart from arrow-heads, the collection does give a fair idea of this. But it will be noted that out of fifty-four of these objects, forty-eight are of the barbed and stemmed variety, which is quite an abnormal percentage. It would seem that there must have been more leaf-shaped arrow-heads which have disappeared, especially when we realise

that in the collections from the Glenluce Sands, in the National Museum, the leaf-shaped arrow-heads outnumber the barbed variety by about two to one. Strange to say, in the collections from the Culbin Sands the proportion is about reversed. The relative proportion of arrow-heads to scrapers is also much greater than usual.

It should be noted that amongst the barbed and stemmed arrow-heads two are formed of grey chert, one of green chert, one of white chalcedony, and one of felstone. In the National Museum there are many arrow-heads of grey chert from the neighbourhood of Golspie, Sutherland, and from Caithness, but these are nearly all leaf-shaped. Arrow-heads of green chert, both barbed and leaf-shaped, have been found in several districts of southern Scotland. In the Museum we have a barbed example of felstone from the Culbin Sands as well as a leaf-shaped one from the Glenluce Sands, and a very fine barbed and stemmed example from the latter district is in Mr Ludovic M'L. Mann's collection.

Of typically Bronze Age relics there are the gouge and the fragment of a quoit bead.

Bronze gouges are not common in Scotland. We have only other seven in the Museum. One was contained in each of the late Bronze Age hoards from Monmore, Perthshire; Torran, Argyll; Adabrock, Lewis; and Wester Ord, Ross-shire, and there are single examples from the River Tay, from Tynehead, Midlothian, and from Traprain Law.¹

Only one other quoit bead of this greenish vitreous paste seems to have been recorded from Scotland; it was found within a cinerary urn, at Balneil, Wigtownshire.² This class of bead belongs to the same period as the star-shaped and segmented beads formed of green or blue vitreous paste, which have been found in different parts of Scotland, sometimes with cinerary urns but more often as single finds unassociated with other relics.³

The two small brooches belonging to Romano-British times are of more than passing interest. The lozenge-shaped specimen is the first of this form to have been noted from Scotland, as is the crescentic brooch. The latter, however, is of special value as it is not a finished article. The enamelling process had not been begun, and although the hinge- and catch-plates are complete, the former has not been perforated to receive the pin, and the latter has not had the point of the plate turned up to form the catch. From this discovery we may reasonably claim that enamelled ornaments, including brooches, were being manufactured locally during the early centuries of the Christian era. That the inhabitants of north Ayrshire at this period were perfectly familiar

¹ *Proc. Soc. Ant. Scot.*, vol. liv. p. 129; vol. lvii. p. 144.

² *Ibid.*, vol. l. p. 303.

³ *Ibid.*, vol. xl. p. 38; vol. lx. p. 257.

with the working of glass and enamel was demonstrated by John Smith's discoveries of opaque yellow beads of vitreous paste in the course of manufacture, in the fort on Castlehill, Dalry, which lies within eight miles of Stevenston Sands.¹ During the same period, on the east side of the country, in the fort on Traprain Law, East Lothian, the manufacture of trinkets of bronze and glass was being energetically carried on.

Although this crescentic brooch is the first to be reported from Scotland, the type and its variants are known elsewhere. One of similar shape to ours was found in St Clement's Lane, London, and is preserved in the London Museum, Lancaster House. Other varieties with a ring for suspension, which seems to be superfluous as it has a pin, and with a pendant piece between the horns in addition to the ring, also found in London, are to be seen in the same Museum.²

Considering the size of the collection, the number of shale armlets and rings represented by the surviving fragments seems unusually large, but I have seen considerable numbers which were found on the Shewalton Sands about two miles to the south, and on the rough ground to the east of that area. Many have also been found on other Scottish sandy areas from which the sand has been blown away, such as the Glenluce Sands in the south and the Culbin Sands in the north. Many of these rings and armlets belong to the same period as the two brooches just described.

We have seen that among the rings of shale there were fragments of three which differed in form from those just discussed. They were of greater diameter at the top than at the lower part, and the sides were concave, so that they resembled the mouth of a glass decanter broken off at the neck (fig. 4). Fragments of fifteen such rings are in the National Museum, from the Glenluce Sands, but although there are many fragments of shale rings and armlets from the Culbin Sands, none is of this peculiar form. There are six others from different parts of the country which are practically complete. The largest and the smallest, measuring $2\frac{1}{8}$ inches and $1\frac{1}{8}$ inch in widest diameter, and the perforations 1 inch and $\frac{3}{4}$ inch in diameter, have no localities, but as they came from the Sim Collection they were probably found in the south-west or central south of Scotland. One measuring $1\frac{1}{8}$ inch in diameter across the top, $1\frac{1}{2}$ inch across the underside, $\frac{3}{4}$ inch across the perforation, and $\frac{1}{16}$ inch in height, was found

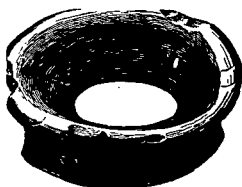


Fig. 4. Ring of Shale from Yarrow Kirk. ($\frac{3}{8}$.)

¹ *Proc. Soc. Ant. Scot.*, vol. liii, p. 127, fig. 3.

² *London in Roman Times*, p. 96, fig. 29, Nos. 33-35.

in 1851 in one of a number of long, slab-lined graves lying east and west, a little to the west of Yarrow Kirk, Selkirkshire.¹ Preserved along with it is a small fragment of coarse hand-made pottery, evidently part of a cinerary urn, but the record does not state whether this piece of pottery was found in the same grave as the shale object. Another was found at Kilfedder, New Luce, Wigtownshire, and one more at West Calder, Midlothian. The best record, however, is that of the one found with a hoard of Anglo-Saxon objects at Talnotrie, Kirkcudbrightshire, which amongst other relics yielded coins of the late ninth and early tenth centuries. Although shale and jet ornaments were found in large numbers at Traprain Law none of this form was found. The Yarrow Kirk specimen

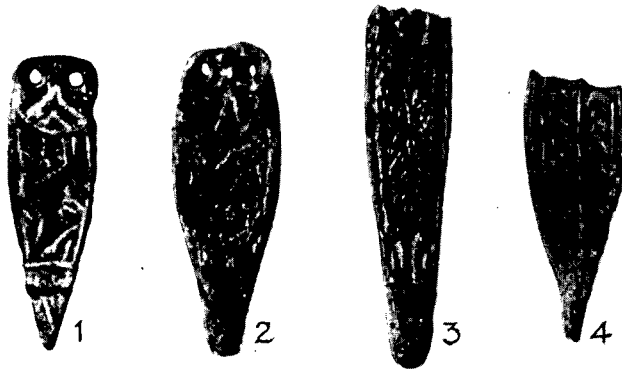


Fig. 5. Bronze Strap-tags: No. 1 from Stevenston Sands; Nos. 2 to 4 from Glenluce Sands. (3.)

has four small perforations in the sides, and so have some of the others, but a few have no holes. The purpose of these objects is not apparent. As for the period, the Yarrow example, although now associated with part of a cinerary urn, cannot with certainty be allotted to the Bronze Age. The graves were long and narrow and lay east and west, which is suggestive of Christian burial. Seeing that none was reported from Traprain, it seems likely that this class of object belongs to a later date than the first four centuries of our era during which the fort there was in full being. This would be quite in keeping with the date of the Talnotrie hoard, about the beginning of the tenth century.²

The bronze strap-tag with the engraved beast on the face (fig. 5, No. 1) belongs to the same period, as the Talnotrie hoard also contained a strap-tag of similar form (fig. 6) as well as the other objects mentioned. This tag, however, was of silver and nielloed, and bore on the face a beast

¹ *Proc. Soc. Ant. Scot.*, vol. ii. p. 484.

² *Ibid.*, vol. xlvii. p. 12.

with its head turned back over its shoulder; the blunt point was snout-shaped. The beast on the Stevenston brooch is more debased in form. In the Museum there are three others of bronze from the Glenluce Sands (fig. 5, Nos. 2 to 4); one has an engraved beast on the face and a rounded snout-like terminal, the second has incised herring-bone patterns and a similar terminal, and the third, which bears an engraved aborescent design, small curved lines springing from opposite sides of a straight stem, terminates in a sharp point. The two last are imperfect



Fig. 6. Strap-tag of Silver from Talnotrie. ($\frac{3}{4}$.)



Fig. 7. Strap-tag of Bronze from Reay Links. ($\frac{1}{2}$.)

at the broad end which clasped the extremity of the leather strap, the part which contained the rivet holes being amissing. Another example which is in private hands was found on Reay Links, Caithness (fig. 7).¹ It is of bronze and bears an incised swastika with short radial lines between the arms, within a circle, and a vesica adjoining the rivet holes, the terminal being zoomorphic.

The small ring brooch, wanting the pin, probably belongs to the fourteenth century, as one of the same type, but twice as large, was found at Middlebie, Dumfriesshire, with two other brooches of that period.²

THREE ENAMELLED FINGER-RINGS.

While discussing the manufacture of enamels in Scotland about the beginning of the Christian era, attention may be directed to three bronze

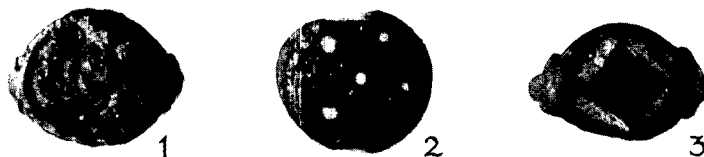


Fig. 8. Enamelled Bronze Finger-rings. ($\frac{1}{2}$.)

finger-rings in our Museum. Each has a large, almost circular bezel filled with enamel, but all have lost part of the hoop (fig. 8). The mounts

¹ *Proc. Soc. Ant. Scot.*, vol. lxii. p. 139.

² *Ibid.*, vol. lviii. pp. 168, 175, and 176.

measure $\frac{11}{16}$ inch, $\frac{3}{4}$ inch, and $\frac{5}{8}$ inch in diameter respectively. No. 1 in the illustration, found on the Culbin Sands, Morayshire, has a bezel of dark brown material, but it is contorted as if having passed through a fire, and its original character and colour may have altered. No. 2 from the second level in the fort on Traprain Law, East Lothian, and probably dating from the second century A.D., has a setting of bright blue enamel with five spots of white enamel, one in the centre and the others spaced round it at irregular intervals.¹ No. 3, like No. 1, was found, unassociated with any other object, on a sandy area, having been laid bare by the action of the wind; it was discovered on Tents Muir, Fife. In the centre of the bezel is a lozenge-shaped cloison with concave sides, the angles touching the edge of the mount. This is filled with yellow enamel. In the four vesica-shaped panels which surround the central one is greenish-white enamel.

A SWORD POMMEL OF VENDEL TIMES.

This beautiful little object (fig. 9) was found many years ago on the Culbin Sands. Made of bronze, it is curved on the top and flat below, widening from a flat, narrow ridge to a base of pointed oval form and edged with a narrow flange. Near each end of the underside is a pin for attaching it to the hilt of the sword. It is covered with a fine dark green patina. The pommel measures $2\frac{2}{16}$ inches in length, $\frac{13}{16}$ inch in height, and $\frac{5}{8}$ inch across the base at its widest part. The pins, which are of square section and are placed $\frac{7}{32}$ inch from each end, measure $\frac{3}{4}$ inch and $\frac{5}{8}$ inch in length.



Fig. 9. Sword Pommel of Bronze from Culbin Sands. (†.)

Along the top ridge is a long narrow socket, $\frac{1}{8}$ inch in width, with an oval perforation in the centre, $\frac{1}{4}$ inch in length, and a pointed oval socket at each end. On the face are seven sockets for settings. One in the centre is of lozenge form, measuring $\frac{3}{8}$ inch in length and $\frac{11}{32}$ inch in height, and is surrounded by four others of pointed oval form, one in each spandril, while at each end is another one of the same shape as the last four. The two spaces between the central and end sockets are occupied by an interlaced pattern. The back is devoid of ornamentation, with the exception of a rope moulding, which is seen also on the front on the inner side of the flange. There are no indications of what the settings consisted of, but the bottoms of the sockets are all scored.

Montelius has described and figured a considerable number of sword

¹ *Proc. Soc. Ant. Scot.*, vol. lvii. p. 210, fig. 20, No. 2.

hilts with pommels resembling our example, chiefly from Scandanavian countries, although he has mentioned odd specimens from England, Belgium, Alsace, and even Italy.¹ Some of them have been decorated with designs of inlaid glass (*verroterie cloisonnée*).

Dr Peter Paulsen, of Kiel University, when in the Museum last year, assigned this pommel to the seventh or eighth century A.D., and consequently it could only belong to the so-called Vendel time and not to the Viking Age. As for the settings with which it had been decorated, he considered that they had probably been of glass or almandine (garnet), as in some of the examples figured by Montelius.