

## NOTES.

## 1. A LATE BRONZE AGE SPEARHEAD MOULD FROM CAMPBELTOWN.

The mould which is the subject of this note was first published in the Society's *Proceedings* for 1864 (vol. VI), and again by Evans.<sup>1</sup> It was found with another mould while breaking up ground near Campbeltown, Argyll, and two stone axes were said to have been associated. When this find was first reported upon it was described as being a mould for two spearheads, one on each side of the two valves. This statement can, however, be modified in the light of more recent knowledge, and some information can be gathered concerning the approximate date and cultural affinities of the makers of the spearheads.

The mould is, of course, of two valves, and on one pair of faces are the matrices for casting a small leaf-shaped spearhead with loops on the socket; on the other pair are matrices for casting a small oval tanged blade which would be more accurately described as a knife or razor than as a spearhead. During the last few years both these types of bronze objects have been studied, and the information concerning them is briefly as follows.

The spearhead with side loops on the socket is a type which developed in Britain, but in the case of this example and some others the shape of the blade has been influenced by the intrusive Late Bronze Age spearheads with leaf-shaped blades, for the purely native blades have an angular base, recalling their derivation from Early Bronze Age daggers.<sup>2</sup> We can infer, therefore, that our Campbeltown mould was made soon after the leaf-shaped spears began to arrive, either by trade or invasion, and that it was probably the work of a native craftsman who still wished to retain the loops to strengthen the shaft in the socket rather than to imitate the intrusive metallurgists, who used wooden pegs for this purpose. One other point is worth mentioning here. We need not assume that our mould was made immediately after the foreign spearheads began to arrive, for they came first to the south and east of England,<sup>3</sup> and the earliest hybrid spearheads of our type are thought to have been used on the periphery of the area first occupied from overseas. Datable examples have been found in the south from three Late Bronze Age settlements, Thorny Down<sup>4</sup> and South Lodge<sup>5</sup> in Wiltshire, and New Barn Down in Sussex,<sup>6</sup> all belonging to the intrusive Late Bronze Age which Professor Hawkes would place at about 750 or 700 B.C.<sup>7</sup> In addition to these examples from settlement sites, Professor Hawkes mentions a few other associated Late Bronze Age examples, and to these may be added an example from Stump Bottom in Sussex.<sup>8</sup> This came from a small personal group of

<sup>1</sup> *Ancient Bronze Implements of Great Britain*, p. 437.

<sup>2</sup> See Hawkes in *Proc. Prehist. Soc.*, vol. vii. (1941), pp. 128-31.

<sup>3</sup> *Archæologia*, vol. lxxxiii. (1933), p. 197.

<sup>4</sup> *Proc. Prehist. Soc.*, vol. vii. (1941), pp. 114-33.

<sup>5</sup> Pitt-Rivers, *Excavations in Cranborne Chase*, vol. iv.

<sup>6</sup> *Sussex Arch. Coll.*, vol. lxxv. (1934), pp. 138-70.

<sup>7</sup> "The Pottery from Sites on Plumpton Plain" in *Proc. Prehist. Soc.*, vol. i. (1935), especially pp. 57-59. Hencken would prefer a rather later date and his argument may be found in *Arch. Journ.* vol. cii. (1945), pp. 7-9.

<sup>8</sup> *Ant. Journ.*, vol. vi. (1926), pp. 444-6.

belongings rather than a founder's hoard, and can be used to give a later date to the "Sussex loops" found with it than has previously been possible.

Supposing then that this kind of spearhead was being made for use against the invaders in the south and east of England in about 700 B.C., it can safely be assumed that at some date after that the fashion spread northwards as the invaders extended the initially occupied areas, and as more trade with the Continent developed. All this suggests a date in the seventh century or later for the Campbeltown mould.

We must now look at the other face of the mould—at the small oval blade which could be described as a razor or knife. Note that the jet is also shown, leading into the tang, in the illustration (Pl. XX, 1). In a recent study of the razors<sup>1</sup> it was possible to demonstrate two main classes of razor, of which the bifid type seems to be intrusive, while the oval type, like the one now under discussion, was native. There are three main concentrations of the native razors in the British Isles: in Scotland round the Firths of Tay and Forth and in Sutherland, in North-east and Western Ireland, and in the Wessex region of Southern England. Whether the type originated in the south or the north it is not yet possible to be certain, but in the north examples are frequently associated with cordoned urns, and this is also found to be the case in Ireland. In the south there is evidence to show that they were in use at the time of the Deverel-Rimbury sites such as South Lodge, for which, as we have already seen, a date in the late eighth or seventh century B.C. (on current dating) would be appropriate.

So it is clear that our mould is a most valuable aid to the synchronism of dates in the north and south of Britain, and since so few bronze implements are associated with pottery or other datable objects during the Late Bronze Age, the deductions we can draw here are especially significant. The vast majority of moulds of all types come from the north, and probably reflect the natural sources of the metal ores, and perhaps of stone suitable for making moulds. While in the Late Bronze Age, as throughout the duration of the British Bronze Age, the main centres of metallurgy were in the Highland Zone, yet the frequent presence of "jets" and unfinished castings in southern English hoards show that much casting must also have been carried out in the Lowland Zone, probably by itinerant metal-smiths.

To summarise our conclusions the following points emerge:—

1. The mould provides a partial synchronism in date between the south of England, where datable examples of the class of spear represented on it have been discovered, and the north of Britain.
2. The razors of simple oval outline are known to have been made by the users of cordoned urns in the north, and by *native* Late Bronze Age peoples in the south, at some date not much before the late eighth or early seventh century B.C. That we find the same people casting so-called "hybrid" spearheads strongly suggests that the cordoned urn people were the metallurgists responsible for these types also.

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<sup>1</sup> *Proc. Prehist. Soc.*, vol. xii. (1946), pp. 121-41.



1. "Razor" and spearhead cast from the Campbeltown mould.



2. Bronze razor from Orkney with fragments of its wooden case.



3. Window with panels, at South House, Liberton.