

#### 4. A BRONZE SWORD FROM DOUGLAS, LANARKSHIRE.

The sword was found in December, 1957, by Mr N. McCartney of Douglas, in the course of road-improvement operations on the Glasgow-Carlisle trunk route, conducted by Messers Farrans Ltd., on behalf of Lanarkshire County Council. The discovery was reported to the County authorities, who arranged for the find-spot to be recorded (fig. 1) and who sent the sword to the Hunterian Museum for examination. Circumstances did not permit any further investigation of the site, but it is probable that the sword was not associated with any other implements.

The Douglas sword belongs to the native British family of leaf-shaped swords, commonly called the Ewart Park type,<sup>1</sup> which appears throughout the Highland Zone of the British Isles in associations datable to the later phases of the Bronze Age, from the 7th century B.C. onwards. In Scotland, the Ewart Park sword underwent considerable devolution and several sub-types can be distinguished; the Douglas sword belongs to the most prominent of these Late Ewart types. This is characterised by a slackening of the sharp outlines seen on the butts of earlier examples and (in many cases) by the partial or complete disappearance of the ricasso. Late Ewart swords are generally shorter than the earlier type, although in this respect the Douglas sword is exceptional.

Associations of Late Ewart swords recorded from Scotland include leaf-bladed spearheads with pin-holes (Class V) at Cauldhame (Angus), Point of Sleat (Skye) and Heathery Haugh (Kincardineshire); these swords also occur in association with spearheads with lunate openings in the blade at Ballimore (Argyllshire) and Glen Clova (Angus). The latter type of spearhead is connected chronologically with the carp's tongue sword complex of Southern England, dated from the 7th century, through the hoard from Huelva (Spain);<sup>2</sup> however, the lunate spearhead in the Wilburton Fen hoard shows that these originated in an earlier period.<sup>3</sup> The hoard from Guilsfield (Montgomeryshire)<sup>4</sup> associates these spearheads with socketed gouges of Miss Burley's type 2,<sup>5</sup> identical with those ribbed gouges from Wester Ord (Ross and Cromarty) and from Achnahanaid (Skye);<sup>6</sup> at Guilsfield these types are also linked with hollow-headed spearheads which occur, somewhat later, in the Irish-influenced Sleat hoard along with a typical Late Ewart sword.

Other late variants of the Ewart sword occur in Scotland, but their associations

<sup>1</sup> J. D. Cowen, *Arch. Ael.* (4th ser.), x (1933), 185-98.

<sup>2</sup> Almagro, *Ampurias*, II (1940), 85-143.

<sup>3</sup> Fox, *Archæology of the Cambridge Region* (1923), pl. x, No. 9.

<sup>4</sup> Grimes, *The Prehistory of Wales* (1951), 258.

<sup>5</sup> E. Burley, *P.S.A.S.*, LXXXIX (1955-6), 148.

<sup>6</sup> Cambridge Museum of Archæology and Ethnology.

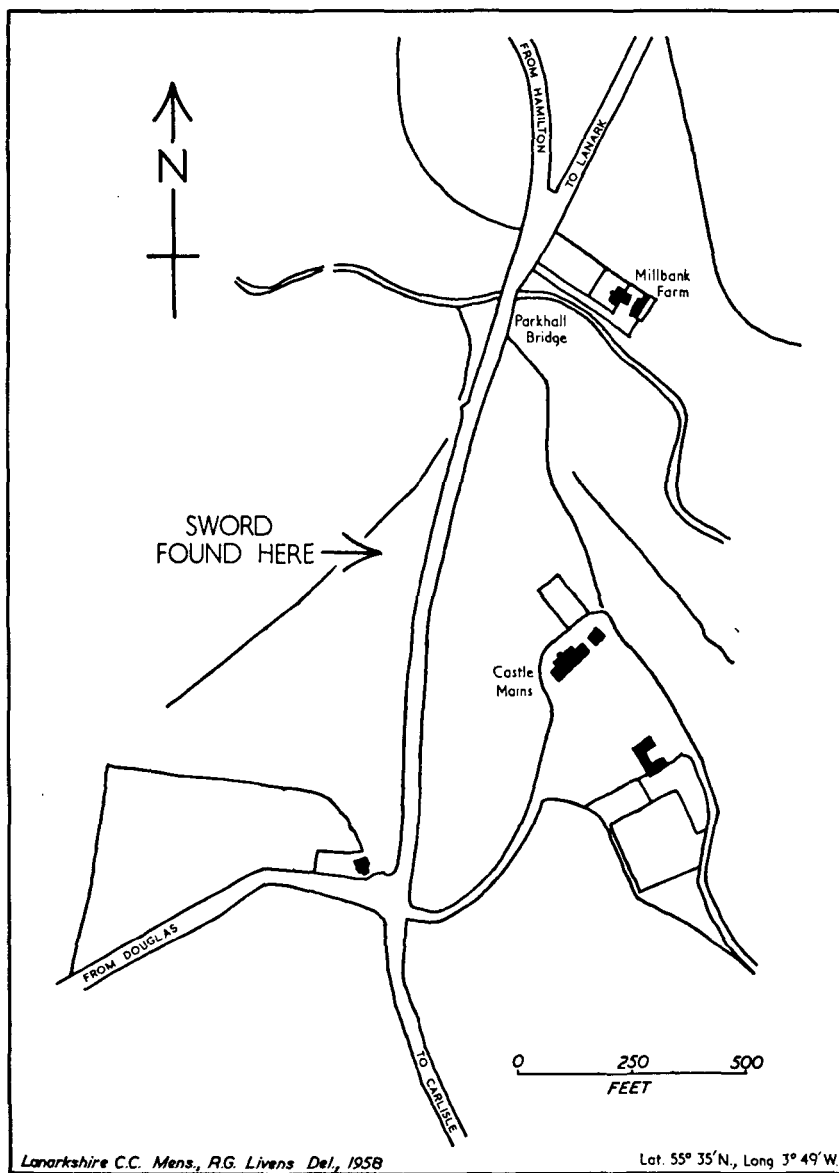


Fig. 2.

will not be so valuable in the determination of a chronological position for the Douglas sword. A short Late Ewart sword, a common Irish type, was found at Denhead (Angus) with a large lunate spearhead<sup>7</sup> and the parallels listed above may again be invoked. A slightly different style of Late Ewart sword, from

<sup>1</sup> National Museum of Antiquities, Edinburgh.

Duddingston Loch (Edinburgh), was associated with a bucket-staple and lunate spearheads; the former of these has been recently discussed by Hawkes and Smith and its date of manufacture assigned to the mid-7th century B.C.<sup>1</sup> The hoard from Meldreth (Cambridgeshire) also links Late Ewart swords with Irish-British buckets.<sup>2</sup>

Swords similar to some from the Duddingston hoard occur in the Grosvenor Crescent (Edinburgh) and Tarves (Aberdeenshire) finds and their associations include swan's-neck sunflower pins, which can be reliably dated to c.500 B.C. These pins are distinct from the normal Irish and Scandinavian sunflower pins, and have their origin in the joining of a curved stem, seen in the Wessenstedt Early Iron Age, to a late style of sunflower head, seen in Northern Bronze Period VI. The concentric decoration on the Grosvenor Crescent pin recalls the art of this period, and confirms the dating of the Scottish pins to the late 6th or 5th century B.C., as in north-central Germany.<sup>3</sup>

These associations for Late Ewart swords suggest that their date is not far removed from that of the first Iron Age of north Britain. The hoard from Welby (Leicestershire) provides another link;<sup>4</sup> a Late Ewart sword was found here with a cross-handled beaten bronze bowl of probable Late Urnfield date<sup>5</sup> and a cast bronze bowl which recalls western Urnfield pottery. Its cast nature can be matched by only two Scottish examples, one of which can reliably be assigned to the Late Urnfield period. The cast bowl from Ardoe (Aberdeenshire) is not now believed to be connected with Cordoned Urns,<sup>6</sup> but its parallel from Balmashanner (Angus) is associated with objects of Northern Bronze Period V and of Late Urnfield date, including sherds of coarse pottery comparable in fabric with Covesea ware.<sup>7</sup> The Welby sword has a cast-on repair, like that on the Douglas sword; this technique appears on eight other Scottish examples and on more than twenty specimens from Ireland; by contrast, only four examples with cast-on repairs are recorded from England and Wales.<sup>8</sup>

Further affinities with Ireland are suggested by the hoard from Ballimore, in which Late Ewart swords were found with bag-shaped axes,<sup>9</sup> but the distribution of the swords lends little weight to the possibility of direct contacts. The main concentration of Late Ewart swords (fig. 2) is in the eastern coastal lowlands of Scotland and, while this is in itself not remarkable, the concentrations between the South Esk and the Dee contrast strongly with the scarcity of spearheads and socketed axes from the region. The western finds are scattered, but the occurrence of Late Ewart swords as far north as the Island of Lewis is noteworthy. The postulation of a trade-route from Ireland to Scandinavia in this regard does not seem to be valid, since native British swords are extremely rare in northern Europe.<sup>10</sup>

The distribution of Irish swords of Late Ewart type has not been mapped

<sup>1</sup> C. F. C. Hawkes and M. A. Smith, *Ant. J.*, xxxvii (1957), 159.

<sup>2</sup> *Inventaria Archaeologica*, Great Britain, G.B. 13.

<sup>3</sup> Petersen, *Die frühgermanische Kultur in Ostdeutschland und Polen*, (1929), 102 ff.

<sup>4</sup> T. G. E. Powell, *Arch. J.*, cv (1950), 27 ff.

<sup>5</sup> *Inventaria Archaeologica*, Great Britain, G.B. 24, No. 9-10; cf. von Merhart, *Festschrift R-GZ Mainz* (1952), 14.

<sup>6</sup> Abercromby, *Bronze Age Pottery* (1912), II, 21 and 124.

<sup>7</sup> *A.u.h.V.*, v (1911), 133, fig. p. 140 for continental bowl.

<sup>8</sup> H. W. M. Hodges, forthcoming *Ulster J. A.*

<sup>9</sup> *P.S.A.S.*, LXXVII (1942-3), 184 ff.

<sup>10</sup> Cowen, *P.P.S.*, xviii (1952), 137, pl. xv, 4; see MacWhite: *J. Cork Hist. A. S.*, XLIX (1944), 122 ff., and Hencken: *J.R.S.A.I.*, LXXXI (1951), 60 ff. for other connections.

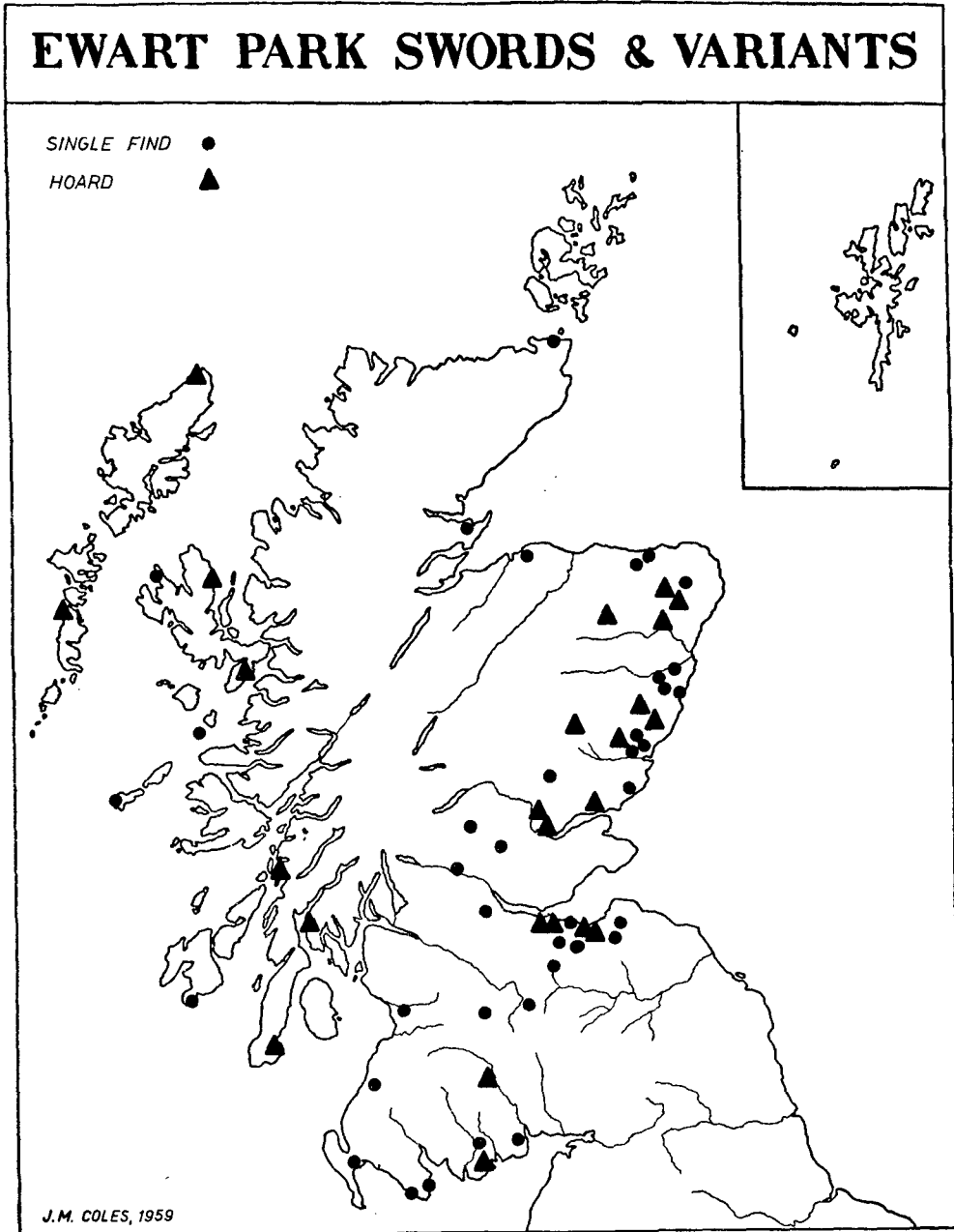


Fig. 3.

separately, although Raftery has shown the distribution of some native swords, including this type.<sup>1</sup> This map shows no particular concentration in north-east Ireland, such as we find of objects which clearly were exported to Scotland<sup>2</sup> and suggests that the Irish Late Ewart sword is not connected in a direct way with Scottish swords.<sup>3</sup> The concentrations in the north of England show that the Scottish swords may well have derived either their origin or their inspiration from this area.<sup>4</sup> However, the absence of Late Ewart swords from the Border area is rather puzzling and compares closely with the scarcity of late forms of spearheads known from the same region.

In its present form, the Douglas sword is 22½ ins. long; the tip of the leaf-shaped blade has been bent and broken off (Pl. Ia). At its broadest, the blade is 1.45 ins. wide and 0.23 in. thick, with a plain, pointed-oval cross-section. Both edges bear a shallow ricasso along about 1 in. of the butt end. There are two rivet-holes in the butt.

As it is preserved at present, the tang of the sword has been repaired at least twice, as is shown by an X-ray examination of it (Pl. Ib). The first repair was made after the sword had broken at the lower of the two surviving rivet-holes in the tang. The photograph makes it clear that a fresh piece of the tang was cast-on, presumably using the *cire-perdue* or alternative process<sup>5</sup>; the new piece of metal was remarkably compact and flawless in texture. In the cast-on repair were two rivet-holes, making the total number in the tang three; at some later date, however, the pommel of the sword evidently broke off and a fresh "fish-tail" end had to be cast onto the tang. This second repair filled up the bottom rivet-hole in the tang (it appears as a circle in the X-ray photograph) and was apparently a piece of inferior workmanship, for the metal itself contains numerous flaws and the "fish-tail" itself is asymmetrical. In the last phase of its use, then, the sword had two rivet-holes in the tang in addition to the original pair of holes in the butt or shoulder. The sword was finally abandoned as useless, beyond redemption, when it broke across the line of the shoulders.

The fact that the two fragments of the sword were found together seems to indicate that the sword was abandoned immediately after its breakage; less probably, the fragments may have been put aside with a view to using them as scrap-metal.

In conclusion, we must gratefully acknowledge the assistance we have received from the Earl of Home (in whose possession the sword now is), from the Lanarkshire County Council, from the Hunterian Museum, and particularly from Messrs G. & J. Weir Ltd., Cathcart, Glasgow, whose technical department carried out the X-ray examination.

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<sup>1</sup> *North Munster J.*, III (1942), 70, fig. 3, 2.

<sup>2</sup> e.g., Proudfoot, "The Downpatrick Gold Find." *Arch. Res. Pub. N. Ireland*, III (1955), 18, fig. 5b, to which several additions in south and west Scotland could be made.

<sup>3</sup> Hodges, *Ulster J. A.* (1956), 37, pl. iv, for local Irish developments. Some doubts are now expressed as to the authenticity of these lozenge-shaped swords.

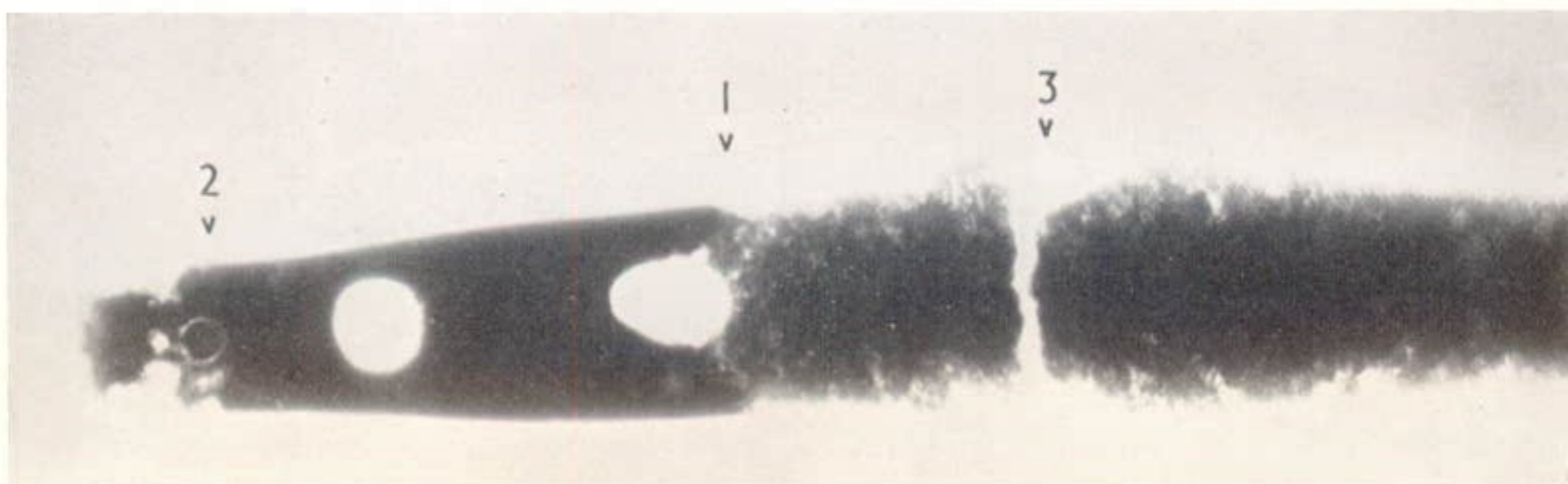
<sup>4</sup> Cowen, *Arch. Ael.* (4th ser.), X (1933), 192.

<sup>5</sup> Hodges, *Ulster J. A.* (1954), 73; J. G. D. Clark, *Prehistoric Europe* (1952), 196.



(a)

[Photo: Hunterian Museum.



(b)

[Photo: C. & J. Weir Ltd.

Bronze sword from Douglas, Lanarkshire.