

## IV.

A VIKING CIST-GRAVE, AT BALLINABY, ISLAY. BY ARTHUR J. H. EDWARDS, F.S.A. SCOT., ASSISTANT KEEPER OF THE MUSEUM. WITH A NOTE ON THE SKELETAL REMAINS BY PROFESSOR THOMAS H. BRYCE, M.D., F.R.S., F.S.A. SCOT.

On the 24th June 1932 a Viking grave was found at Ballinaby by Mr Neill McLellan, shepherd, when effecting the release of a lamb which had squeezed through an opening between two of the stones on the north side of the structure. As he was freeing the lamb the shepherd saw an iron axe and some human bones lying inside on the surface of the sand, and suspecting a burial of some kind he had information of his find conveyed to the police authorities. Sergeant Duncan MacNair of the Argyll Constabulary visited the site and took temporary possession of the relics, making at the same time adequate arrangements for the protection of the grave until it could be examined by a representative from the Museum. I was not able to go there, however, until 10th July, when Sergeant MacNair gave me every assistance in making this record. It is to him that I am indebted for information as to the position of the skeletal remains and relics in the grave.

The burial was situated on a natural shelf near the top of a rocky knoll now covered with sand and overgrown with grass, about half a mile west of Ballinaby House, and about 400 yards west of the graves of a Viking man and woman of tenth-century date, discovered by the father of Mr Neill McLellan in 1878.<sup>1</sup> These burials had been made side by side, each surrounded by a line of stones set on edge, but the structure of the present find was that of a cist-grave, the long axis of which lay 65° east of north magnetic or nearly north-east and south-west. The grave was formed of four slabs set on edge on the north side (fig. 1), four on the south side, and four cover stones supported by those on the sides. There were no end slabs, but as a number of loose and broken stones, of a nature and appearance similar to those of which the grave was made, were lying about on the slope on the north side, it is very probable that end slabs had existed originally. Below the sand which partially filled the interior was the floor of natural rock. The slabs were of chloritic schist and varied from 3 inches to 6 inches in thickness. As can be seen in the illustration there are spaces between the slabs, but these vacancies were in all likelihood filled at one time by

<sup>1</sup> *Proceedings*, vol. xiv. p. 51.

other stones. The grave lay about 1 foot 6 inches below the surface and measured internally about 7 feet in length, 2 feet in breadth at the west end, 2 feet 6 inches near the centre, and 1 foot 10 inches at the east end, the depth being 1 foot 9 inches. Although many of the bones of the skeleton were missing, it was possible to ascertain from what remained that the body had been laid fully extended with the head at the south-west end.

The relics consisted of an axe which was found on the left side of

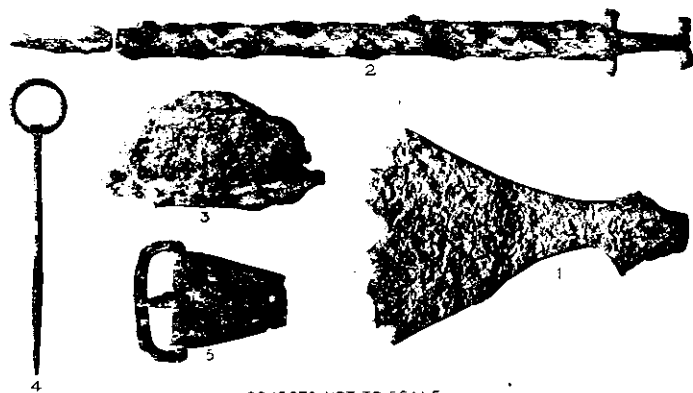


Fig. 1. Viking Cist-grave at Ballinaby, Islay.

the skeleton just about the position of where the right elbow would have been, a sword found on the right side with the hilt near the waist, the boss of a shield also on the right side and opposite the breast, and fragments of a sickle or knife which were so disintegrated as to make their exact identification uncertain. All these objects were of iron. In addition, a buckle and a free ring-headed pin of bronze were found near the centre of the body. The axe (fig. 2, No. 1), which has suffered a good deal from corrosion, measures 8 inches in length and 5½ inches across the cutting edge. It is similar in type<sup>1</sup> to those we already have in the Museum from Reay, in Caithness and Kiloran Bay, Colonsay. The sword (fig. 2, No. 2) is now in four pieces through decay, and a small portion near the point is wanting.

<sup>1</sup> *Proceedings*, vol. lxi. p. 204.

It is double-edged and measures 39 inches in length approximately. The blade is  $2\frac{1}{4}$  inches in width immediately below the guard, tapering to  $2\frac{1}{4}$  inches in the middle and  $1\frac{3}{8}$  inch at a distance of 6 inches from the point. The slightly upwardly curved crosspiece of the pommel measures  $3\frac{1}{4}$  inches in length, and the guard, which is curved downwards a little,  $3\frac{1}{2}$  inches. There is no pommel stud now, but this may well have got detached and become completely disintegrated. The grip



OBJECTS NOT TO SCALE.

Fig. 2. Objects from Viking Grave at Ballinaby, Islay.

is  $3\frac{1}{2}$  inches in length, and traces of wood still adhere to its surface. The exact type of the sword is difficult to determine, but it probably dates to about A.D. 950 or 1000. The shield boss (fig. 2, No. 3) is of hemispherical form, and measures  $2\frac{1}{2}$  inches in height and 6 inches in diameter including the flange which is  $\frac{1}{8}$  inch in breadth. Remains of the four rivets by means of which it was fixed to a wooden shield can still be seen, and portions of the wood itself are still attached to the underside. It is analogous to one from Reay and two from Orkney now in the Museum.<sup>1</sup> The pin (fig. 2, No. 4) is of the free ring-headed type, the ring-head measuring 1 inch in diameter and the stem  $\frac{1}{4}$  inches in length, the lower part being flattened for  $1\frac{1}{4}$  inch from the point.

<sup>1</sup> *Proceedings*, vol. lxi. p. 204.

The buckle (fig. 2, No. 5) consists of a bow and tongue with a doubled plate for attachment to the strap, the latter measuring  $1\frac{1}{2}$  inch in length,  $1\frac{1}{8}$  inch in breadth at the wide end, and tapering to  $\frac{1}{2}$  inch at the narrow end. The bow measures 2 inches in breadth by  $\frac{1}{4}$  inch in depth, and is decorated on its upper surface by a pellet decoration in relief. This is divided into two panels by a space on which the tongue rests; the whole has been gilded. The tongue is zoomorphic in character and has been silvered.

Although the relics are in no way remarkable they date the burial to somewhere between A.D. 950 and 1000. This form of grave, however, is unusual. It has been recorded that Viking graves have been found within roughly made enclosures or settings of stones, but in Scotland the Viking cist-grave is uncommon, and according to Brøgger the people who favoured this particular style of interment were probably immigrants from the coasts of Møre-Trondelag and Nordland in Norway, where quite a number of such graves have been found, and where the tradition of the Early Iron Age was preserved into Viking times.

The Society is much indebted to Mr Angus M'Lachlan of Loch Gorm House, Brnichladdich, Islay, who has kindly presented the relics to the National Museum of Antiquities.

REPORT ON THE BONES. By Professor THOMAS H. BRYCE,  
M.D., F.R.S., F.S.A.Scot.

The skeleton from Ballinaby is unfortunately very fragmentary, all the bones having suffered seriously from post-mortem decay. The trunk is represented by the axis vertebra and various small fragments from other parts of the vertebral column. The ribs are all absent. There are only one or two small pieces of the pelvis, and no portions of either clavicles or scapulae. The long bones of the limbs present have all lost their extremities and parts of their shafts; they are therefore not measurable with exactitude. The left femur, however, when compared with a series of complete bones, was found to correspond closely with one measuring 474 mm. This figure indicates a stature of about 5 feet 7 inches. There is no special flattening of the femoral shafts below the trochanters, nor is there any lateral compression of the tibiae. Some fragments of metatarsal bones alone represent the skeleton of hands and feet. One of the metatarsals still has its proximal articular surface intact. The epiphysis is fully united.

The skull is represented by the vault, the base and face being absent. Even the vault is very defective, as most of the left side has

<sup>1</sup> Brøgger, *Ancient Emigrants*, pp. 121 and 122.

been destroyed. The glabella is flat and the supraciliary ridges are slightly developed; the superior orbital ridges are thin. All these are features pointing to the skull having been that of a woman, but the frontal bone is so much inclined backwards that it would rather appear that we have to do with the skull of a man. The condition of the sutures indicates, however, that the individual was far advanced in life, and it is just possible that the backward inclination of the frontal bone is due to old age changes in the skull bones.

No accurate measurements of the skull could be obtained save the maximum length. This is 194 mm., a figure which brings the specimen into the category of long skulls. From the characters of the vault there is no doubt that the transverse diameter was relatively small in relation to the maximum length, and that the skull, if whole, would have fallen into the dolicho-cranial class, or possibly into the lower range of the mesati-cranial category.

The jaw fragment indicates a moderately stout mandible with a well-marked chin. It might just as well have been that of a woman as of a man.

Three teeth have been preserved, a lower molar and two premolars. The crowns of the latter are worn quite flat, and the crown of the molar is worn down almost to the root. It is occupied by a large cavity possibly due to caries, an unusual feature in teeth of prehistoric times.

These dental characters, of course, support the conclusion drawn from the condition of the skull, that the individual was advanced in years.

Les Delices de la Grande Bretagne (L'Ecosse), being the Plates of Slezer's *Theatrum Scotiae*, engraved in reduced size, and printed at Leyden, 1707.

(3) By WILLIAM STEELE, F.S.A. Scot., Melrose.

Button of Jet, found at New Cunnock, Ayrshire. It is of the usual broad, flat, conical form characteristic of these objects of the Bronze Age, called buttons of jet, and has the perforations made from the back in the usual way, slanting upwards from both sides to meet under the raised centre of the button.

The following Communications were read :—

I.

NOTICE OF THE DISCOVERY OF A VIKING INTERMENT, IN THE ISLAND OF COLONSAY. By MALCOLM M'NEILL, F.S.A. Scot.

Early in August 1891, Sir John M'Neill became aware of the probability of the existence of a Viking burial-mound on one of his farms, and accordingly examined it by means of a trench opened on the long diameter from south to north. The mound was a rough oval, of about 30' by 20', with an apex 7' above the level of the surrounding turf, and proved to be composed throughout of shell sand, with occasional slabs of schist, which, from their position both here and elsewhere, are conjectured to have been used to prevent blowing of the sand during the earlier years succeeding the interment.

At the southern extremity, where the trench was begun, some previous explorer had probably broken the skin of green turf, with the result that the wind had scooped a considerable slice away, leaving a nearly circular depression, in which, within a few minutes, were discovered an iron pot with handle entire, a fairly perfect iron axe-head, and portions of a sword of the usual Viking type. Continuing the trench northwards, the

sand was found to be freely sprinkled with boat-rivets of the characteristic shape, and in the bottom lay a mass of material like mortar or cement, softened by the percolation of rain-water from the surface. This material was familiar to the explorers from former experience, and undoubtedly formed the boat's cooking hearth—portions being found adhering to many of the rivets.

Within the boat lay the skeleton of a horse; but the only recognisable part of the horse-furniture recovered was the bridle-bit—a plain snaffle without cheeks—which had been doubled together by the centre hinge, and had rusted in that position. Portions of shield bosses, the broken socket of a lance-head still containing some of the wooden shaft, one amber bead, a penannular brooch of bronze, and a bronze pin were also found in sifting the sand; but the whole mound had been disturbed either by treasure-seekers in former times, or, perhaps more probably, by the burrowing of many generations of rabbits.

There was remarkable evidence of the care with which the arms had been destroyed before being placed in the grave; for example, the grasp of the sword—a solid iron bar nearly an inch in diameter—was broken in two in the middle; the sword itself was found in numerous fragments, all about the same size, and fitting accurately together; the lance-blade was missing, but the slender neck had been deliberately broken across, the socket had been dashed to pieces, and the shaft apparently *cut* with some sharp instrument. On the other hand, the pot was nearly perfect, as also the axe-head (perhaps because it was too solid a mass of metal to be easily reduced to fragments), though the edge showed signs of intentional damage.

Museum by a generous member of the Society, the Right Hon. Lord Strathcona and Mount Royal, G.C.M.G., D.C.L., etc., through the good offices of a member of the Council, Mr William Garson, W.S.

I take this opportunity of putting on record some other discoveries in Colonsay of considerable archaeological importance which have not been described in the *Proceedings* of the Society. I am enabled to do so from notes by the late Mr William Galloway, copies of which were given me by Miss J. M. Galloway in 1899, with liberty to use them for this purpose. In bringing together from these notes the details relating to the different subjects, I have confined my abstract to the essential facts.

#### VIKING GRAVE-MOUND AT KILORAN BAY.

This grave-mound was first discovered and partly explored in 1882 by Sir Malcolm McNeill, and the exploration was subsequently completed by Mr William Galloway in 1883. In the first exploration the interment, with its accompanying grave-goods, was found; in the second, the skeleton of the horse and two cross-marked slabs; and subsequently three Anglo-Saxon stycas of the ninth century were discovered.

The leading features of the interment may be described as follows. Within an enclosure of irregularly rectangular shape, 15 feet in length by 10 feet in breadth, formed by rough schist slabs, there were found towards one angle the remains of the skeleton of a man of powerful build but no great stature, and with a long narrow dolicho-cephalic skull. The skeleton lay on its left side in a crouched-up position, and around it were distributed, through the sand of which the mound was composed, a number of weapons, implements, and other objects, including a quantity of clinker nails and rivets of iron, such as were used by the Norsemen in constructing their ships and boats. These rivets, which had a round head on one end and a lozenge-shaped or rhomboidal plate on the other extremity, permeated the whole of the sand within the enclosure, and lay among and around the human and other remains

within it in such a way as to suggest that the boat, from the planks of which they came, had been inverted over the whole deposit and covered by a tumulus of sand. The rivets were of various sizes, and most of them still retained more or less of the thickness of the wood originally enclosed between their heads. In addition to these there were clinker nails up to 3 inches in length with broad round heads, most of them also having wood adherent. From these circumstances it is to be

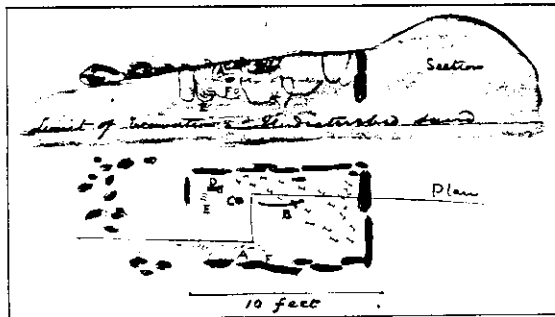


Fig. 8. Plan and Section of Viking Grave-mound at Kiloran Bay. A, Human remains; B, Sword; C, Umbo of Shield; D, Axe; E, Broken pieces of Iron Pot; F, Bronze Balance, and Scales and Weights.

concluded that the rivets and nails settled down in the sand among the other deposits as the timbers of the inverted boat decayed. The most interesting of the objects deposited with the interment were a pair of scales, with their balance-beam and weights, which were found lying together in the space between the knees and the cranium of the crouched-up skeleton. The scales, which are circular and slightly concave in contour, are about 3 inches in diameter. The balance-beam to which they were hung is about 9½ inches in length, and has an eye

at each end in which there is a ring for the suspending cords of the scales. In the middle of the beam there is a standard nearly 3 inches in length, with an ornamental trefoil at the top. The beam is hung from a central pivot working in holes in the free ends of a loop made of a flat strip of bronze a little longer than the standard. The scales and balance-beam are of bronze. The weights are apparently of bronze and lead, approximately cubical in form, with the upper surfaces ornamented by inlaid or applied designs.

Along with these there were also found within the enclosure the various objects shown on fig. 9, which is a reduced copy of a drawing made when they were exhibited in the Fisheries Exhibition, London, in 1883.

An iron Sword, 3 feet 8 inches in total length, with the characteristic pommel and cross-guard of the Viking time. It is considerably bent and broken into several pieces.

An iron Spear-head, about 18 inches in length, with round socket, and the blade tapering evenly to the point from its greatest width close to the socket.

An iron Axe-head, with rounded socket for the helve.

The iron Umbo or central boss of a wooden shield, the upper part of the convexity rising in a conical form, the terminal part broken away. It bears on its oxidised surface traces of a strong textile fabric like coarse canvas, with which it had been lying in contact.

A triple Strap-mounting of bronze, and a Buckle of bronze with broken strap-attachment.

A bronze Pin, 1¼ inches in length, with small globular head.

Four ornamental Studs or Buttons of a coppery bronze.

All these were found in the first exploration. In the second exploration, towards the west end of the enclosure, Mr Galloway found the skeleton of a horse lying on its right side, with the limbs well drawn up, the neck stretched out, and the head set vertically, resting on the lower jaw in line with the neck. The bones lay all in their undisturbed natural positions, and occupied a space of 6 feet 10 inches from the point

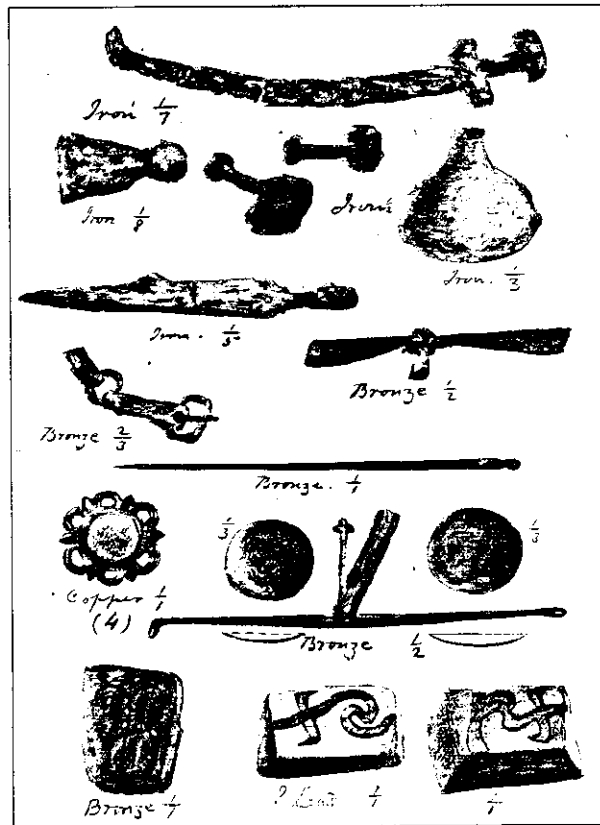


Fig. 9. Objects found in the Viking Grave-mound at Kiloran Bay. The sizes given on the drawing must here be read as reduced by about  $\frac{1}{2}$ .

of the nose to the extremity of the pelvis. The horse had evidently been a fine-bred animal of about 15 hands high, and apparently from 15 to 20 years of age. The metatarsal bone of the right hind-limb was partially severed by a clean sharp cut and the rest of the bone fractured. The right tibia also had a portion cut clean out of it. An iron girth buckle was found beneath the belly of the horse, but the other harnessings must have been removed previous to the deposit of the body in the grave-mound.

Among the rough schist slabs then lying at the west end of the enclosure, Mr Galloway found one 2 feet 3 inches in length by 1 foot 4 inches in breadth, unshaped and undressed, but with a roughly incised vertical line in the middle of the upper part on one face, crossed by a horizontal line of nearly equal length. At the east end he found another slab 2 feet 7 inches in length by 8 $\frac{1}{2}$  inches in breadth, showing similarly scratched or incised lines in the shape of a cross on the upper part of one face.

Some time after the exploration was completed, as the sand within the enclosure dried and was blown away, there were found within its limits three Anglo-Saxon Stycas—the smallest denomination of the Northumbrian coinage. Owing to the diminutive size of these coins and their lightness of weight, there was little chance of their discovery during the operations when the sand was more or less moist, but they were not difficult to discover on the surface of the dry sand after it had been blown over for some time. Of the three coins, one was illegible: the second was of the reign of Eanred, A.D. 808-840; and the third was issued by Vigmund, Archbishop of York, A.D. 831-834. If these may be taken as part of the original deposit, they make the interment not earlier than the close of the first half of the ninth century, a date with which all the other indications completely harmonise.

The objects found in this grave-mound are exhibited in the Royal Scottish Museum.

Since the foregoing was read to the Society there has appeared in the Saga Book of the Viking Club (vol. v. pt. 1, April 1907) a short paper



by Haakon Schetelig, of the Bergen Museum, on this ship-burial, from which I take the liberty of quoting the following paragraph:—

"In most respects this find has the characteristics of a regular Norwegian grave from the Viking Age. The ship, the horse, the weapons, and other objects correspond exactly to the requirements for a man's grave in Norway at the same period, and do not need any further explanation. But there are some points where we meet with differences, and in this respect I would mention especially the fact that the grave before us was laid out under the plain surface of the soil, and provided with an enclosure of slabs set edgewise, while in Norway the graves from the Viking Age are almost without exception covered by a tumulus of rather considerable dimensions. Moreover, two of the slabs forming the enclosure were marked with a cross, which, though executed in a very primitive manner, must be supposed to have some religious significance in connection with the grave. It seems to me most likely that upon these points we may trace an influence from the contemporary customs in Christian Scotland. On the other hand, the antiquities found in the grave are all of forms which also appear in Norway, and they thus indicate as clearly as possible the nationality of the man buried here. It is true, all the objects are not properly Norwegian—*e.g.* the scales and the balance were probably not made in Norway, nor the weights, whose upper surface is covered with bits cut off some richly decorated and enamelled ornaments of Irish origin. But similar bits are frequently met with in Norway also, and they do not indicate that the Norwegian colonists in Scotland were less Norwegian than their compatriots at home; they prove that the whole Norwegian population was subject to the same influences from the art and industry of Ireland. A most precious document for determining the date of the grave is afforded by the two coins found. As regards the Viking Age in Norway, instances of such finds are not frequent, and consequently all additions to the material are of great importance. At the moment of writing I have not the means for discussing the question of the grave before us ready to hand, but, with all reserve, I venture to pronounce as my

personal opinion that the grave is most likely to date from the beginning of the tenth century."

## THREE STONE CISTS AT URAGAIG, COLONSAY.

These cists were opened by Mr Galloway in 1882. They were situated on the western slope of an elevated knoll at the western extremity of Kiloran Bay, and within a short distance of each other.

Cist No. 1 was covered by a massive slab 6 feet 10 inches in length, 4 feet 8 inches in breadth, and from 2 to 3 inches in thickness. The sides were each formed of a single slab, and the ends of shorter slabs set in between the side slabs. The interior measured 3 feet 10 inches in length on one side and 3 feet 6 inches on the other; the breadth at one end was 1 foot 10 inches and at the other 1 foot 11½ inches. The cist had a bottom slab, and the total depth was roughly about 2 feet. The body had been laid on its right side in the usual contracted position, with the head towards the east end of the cist, and facing about N. to N.E. The bones were those of a young person of low stature and slight build, probably a female. Immediately in front of the face lay the fragments of a crumbled food-vessel urn, ornamented with a diagonal pattern of roughly impressed markings, as if with the teeth of a comb.

Cist No. 2 lay more towards the summit of the knoll. Its cover was 6 feet 10 inches in length by 4 feet 6 inches in breadth and 3 inches in thickness. The sides and ends were constructed in the same way as those of No. 1. The interior measured 3 feet 6 inches in length by 1 foot 8 inches in breadth and 1 foot 6 inches in depth. There was a bottom slab, on which the body lay on its right side in a contracted position, with the head towards the east end of the cist. It was considered to be that of a short-statured male about 50 years of age. The fragments of a very plain urn, decorated only by a little notching round the lip, lay in front of the face, and a flint knife or flake, somewhat delicately chipped round one edge, was found near the pelvic bones, among what seemed to be the remains of a very open textile fabric.

There were exhibited:—

- (1) By Mr JAMES ISLES, Blairgowrie, through Mr THOMAS ROSS,  
*Vice-President.*

A circular Cup of steatitic stone (fig. 1),  $2\frac{1}{2}$  inches in height and  $3\frac{1}{4}$  inches in diameter at the lip, which has a thickness of rather more than half an inch, and is broken away on one side; the hollow of the cup, which is approximately hemispherical, measures  $2\frac{1}{4}$  inches in diameter and  $1\frac{1}{2}$  inches in depth, the sides slightly bulging on the exterior, and

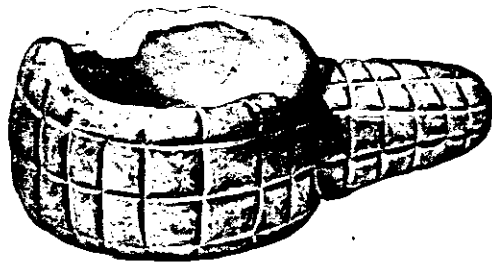


Fig. 1. Stone Cup found at Inchtuthil, Perthshire. (3).

the bottom flat. At one side is a conical projecting handle, 2 inches in length and about  $1\frac{1}{4}$  inches in diameter at its junction with the cup, tapering slightly to the further end. The exterior is marked by a series of deeply incised lines, three of which, running horizontally round the bowl of the cup about  $\frac{1}{4}$  inch apart, are continued along the handle, and are crossed at intervals varying from  $\frac{1}{4}$  to  $\frac{1}{2}$  inch by vertical lines, dividing the exterior surface into a series of panels rather irregular in size. It was found at Inchtuthil, where there is an ancient native promontory fort in close proximity to the Roman Camp the excavation of which is described in the *Proceedings*, vol. xxxvi. p. 230.

[The cup has since been acquired for the Museum.]

- (2) By Mr JOHN R. KER, through Mr J. G. ROBERTSON.

Stirrup of Bronze,  $5\frac{1}{4}$  inches in length, the opening at widest  $3\frac{1}{2}$  inches, ornamented with a trefoil 1 inch in length and  $\frac{1}{4}$  of an inch in breadth, turned over outwardly from the circular centre of the foot-plate, and on the sides with a series of dotted chevrons, found many years ago when draining a bog in the vicinity of Hawick, Roxburghshire.

The following communications were read:—

#### I.

##### NOTES ON A VIKING-GRAVE MOUND AT MILLHILL, LAMLASH, ARRAN. By J. A. BALFOUR, F.S.A. Scot.

In the year 1896, when the ground was being levelled for the erection of a house at Millhill, Lamlash, Arran, a small gravel mound had to be removed. This mound was situated about 170 feet above high-water mark. Some 3 to 4 feet from the surface of the mound some fragments of iron were obtained; these were happily preserved, and form the evidence of this Viking interment. The fragments found were handed to me for examination a few months ago, under the impression that they were but the parts of an old sword—perhaps, however, of interest. Of interest the fragments certainly are, and consist of two articles, an umbo and part of a sax. The umbo or shield-boss (fig. 1) is of iron, and had measured 205 mm. across the base; about half of the flange is wanting. The diameter of the cup is 105 mm. The height is 100 mm. A noticeable feature is that there is no sign on either side of the flange of rivets to attach the umbo to the shield. It would be a bold assertion to make that these had not been employed, and that the customary method of attachment had in this case been departed from, and we would hesitate so to assert. But equally it is difficult to account for the presence of a bolt-like

object on the under portion of the flange. This bolt, if for convenience we may so term it, its nature and purpose being equally obscure, has no appearance of an object accidentally having become rust-attached to the



Fig. 1. Umbo or Shield-boss of Iron from the Viking-grave Mound at Millhill, Lamlash.

umbo, as its long axis corresponds exactly with the edge of the cup and the outer side of the flange. Unfortunately the opposite side of the flange is wanting, and the help it would have afforded had a similar bolt

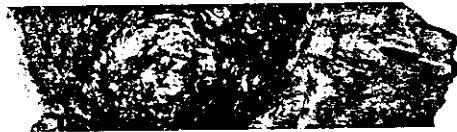


Fig. 2. Part of the under side of the Shield-boss, showing bolt-like attachment on the flange.

been found so attached is not available. I submitted a sketch of the flange (fig. 2) showing the attached bolt to Dr Haakon Schetelig, Bergen, and he replied that he had never seen anything like it; the Norse bosses hitherto found had all been attached to the shields with

rivets driven through. The fact cannot be overlooked that the under side of the flange is almost quite free from any adhering extraneous matter, all that is rust-attached being fragments of the wood of the shield. If the bolt were used for the purpose of fastening the umbo to the shield, then clearly it must have been driven lengthwise into the wood, not through, as in the case of rivets. But we prefer to leave it that the nature and the purpose of this object is an unsolved archaeological problem.

The sax, or single-edged sword (fig. 3), is of the longer variety. The existing remains of the blade have a straight length of 490 mm. until the portion is reached which shows that it has been doubled; of the



Fig. 3. Fragments of Single-edged Sword from the Viking Grave-mound at Millhill, Lamlash.

lower portion of the blade only a curved fragment measuring 95 mm. has been recovered. I have assumed that it is the lower portion that is amissing, on account of the fact that the hilt was obtained and no portion to suggest the point of the sax. The most perfect portion of the blade shows a width of 60 mm. The hilt, of which there remains only the upper portion, measures 115 mm.; a sax of this type had usually a grip sufficient for both hands; it is therefore clearly evident that a large portion has been lost, there being only 45 mm. remaining below the upper guard. One part of the hilt shows very clearly the characteristic flat tang or spit of these weapons when denuded of their wooden covering; the remaining portion is coated with a mixture of wooden fragments and sand. A very unusual

feature in these swords is possessed by this weapon through its having had iron guards. The base of the guards measures 25 mm., the existing length of the remaining one is 29 mm., but obviously it has been broken: on the opposite side only the base can now be seen. A portion of the wooden pommel still remains, having on the top a circular hole, probably made by a nail to attach some ornamental portion.

When given to me, a portion of a plate was adhering to the hilt. When this was detached it was found to fit the flange of the umbo; this seems to point to the fact that the shield had first been laid down and the sax upon it, and when the shield had decayed, this portion of the umbo had become so firmly attached to the hilt that it broke off when shield and sax fell apart.

There might have been considerable difference of opinion as to the date of these relics had the sax alone been found, but the umbo puts the question beyond doubt, as it is exactly of the type found in the grave-mounds of Norway of the period of the eighth or early ninth century. Thus these relics proclaim this to be one of the earliest, if not the earliest, of Viking grave mounds yet discovered in Scotland.

In conclusion, I desire to express my sincere appreciation of the very willing assistance rendered by Dr Haakon Schetelig in giving the benefit of his most valuable opinion regarding the date of the relics and on other points. To Mr Donald Mackelvie, Lamlash, I am indebted for collecting the local details of the find; and to Mr James Crawford, jun., the owner of the relics, for favouring me with them. I may add Mr Crawford has asked me to act as their guardian till they have been exhibited at the Scottish Historical Exhibition in Glasgow next year, and at the close of the exhibition handed over to the National Museum of Antiquities.