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A SOCKETED AXE FROM CENTRAL MONMOUTHSHIRE AND ITS SIGNIFICANCE FOR THE BRONZE AGE IN WALES AND THE MARCHES

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Mr. Burgess took an Honours degree in archaeology at University College, Cardiff, specialising in Bronze Age metalwork. Since 1960 *he has been engaged in research in the Department of Archaeology of University College, Cardiff, into problems of the Bronze Age in Wales and the Marches. He here discusses an unusual socketed axe from Monmouthshire, and the light which it throws on a little known period of the Bronze Age in Britain in general, and in Wales, the Marches and Monmouthshire in particular.**

The bronze socketed axe described below was found in the course of ploughing in 1944 by the late Mr. Winsor Howells of Ty Freeman Farm, Gwehelog, near Usk, Monmouthshire. The exact find spot was in a field some 400 yards east of the farm house (National Grid reference SO 396033). The implement remains in the possession of Mrs. Howells, and is now published for the first time with her permission[1].

DESCRIPTION

The Ty Freeman axe (Pl. I and Fig. 1) has straight sides which diverge slightly to an unexpanded blade. The slightly curved cutting edge is uniformly blunt, and was probably never sharpened in antiquity; there are traces of its having been filed in modern times, however (Pl. 1). The collar is flat and deep, and has a flat-topped rim. The loop is light and slender, and proceeds from the collar just above its lower edge. The metal is in good condition, free from corrosion; the surfaces are rough, however, pitted and furrowed in such a way that, taken together with the apparently unsharpened blade and the fact that the casting seams at the sides have not been completely removed, suggests that this implement was never properly finished. The surface colour all over is green-black, with gold showing through where the wear has been greatest. On one face, at the level of the loop and just below the collar, is a small hole, probably

* ABBREVIATIONS USED IN THIS PAPER:—

Ant. J.—Antiquaries Journal; Arch.—Archaeologia; Arch. Ael.—Archaeologia Aeliana; Arch. Camb.—Archaeologia Cambrensis; B.B.C.S.—Bulletin of the Board of Celtic Studies; C.B.A.—Council for British Archaeology; Inv. Arch.—Inventaria Archaeologica; J.R.S.A.I.—Journal of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland; LBA—Late Bronze Age; MBA—Middle Bronze Age; Montgom. Coll.—Montgomeryshire Collections; P.P.S.—Proceedings of the Prehistoric Society; P.S.A.S.—Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland; U.J.A.—Ulster Journal of Archaeology.

a casting flaw. The upper part of the axe has been severely crushed, the pressure forcing out the sides and causing a half inch vertical crack in the collar on one side. This distortion has altered the appearance of the implement considerably; it would originally have had a more slender form

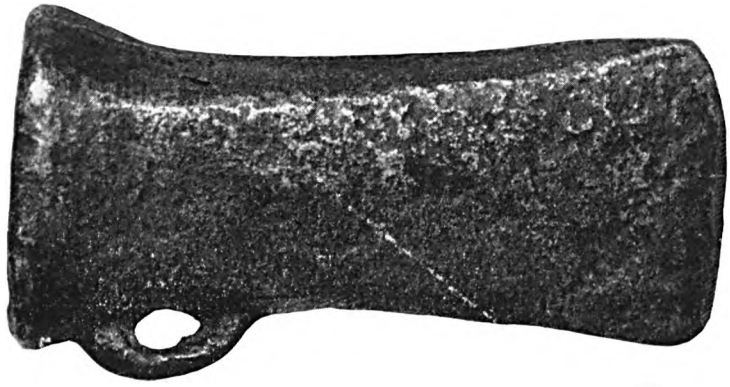


PLATE I THE TY FREEMAN AXE SCALE 1/1

than at present, and its collar would have been less flared; its socket plan, at present an irregular oval, would have been more square, likewise its body section. The length of the axe is 3.45 inches (88 mm.) and it measures 1.45 inches (37 mm.) across the cutting edge.

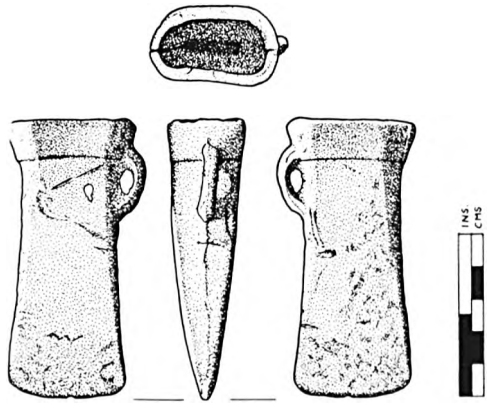


FIG. 1 SOCKETED AXE FROM TY FREEMAN FARM, NEAR USK, MON.

THE AFFINITIES AND BACKGROUND OF THE TY FREEMAN AXE

When considering the affinities of the Ty Freeman axe this distortion of its form must be taken into account. Socketed axes of this type, plain, slender and square-mouthed, with slender loop and flat collar, but without a separate moulding underneath the collar (hereafter referred to as a sub-collar moulding) have not hitherto been recorded among the many socketed axes found in Monmouthshire[2]. Indeed, such a combination of features is uncommon among the socketed axes of the British Isles as a whole. From Wales have come just two implements which accord fairly well with this description, an example from Trawsfynydd (Merion.), and one from the Penard hoard (Glam.)[3]. Both of these have been classed as Breton axes (see p. 21

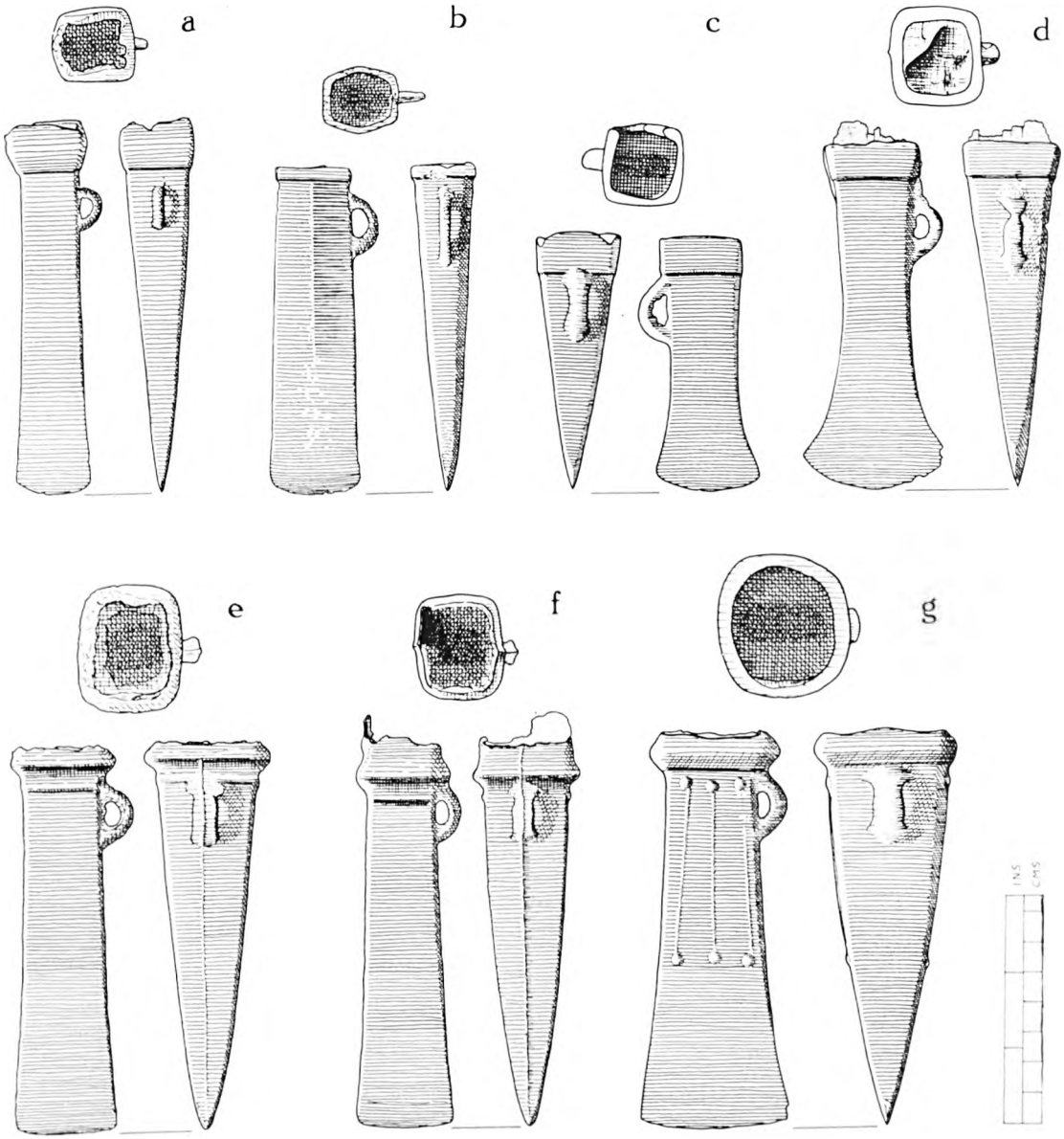


FIG. 2 Socketed axes from: a. Trawsfynydd, Merion. (National Mus. of Wales, Cardiff); b. Penard hoard, Glam. (National Mus. of Wales, Cardiff); c. 'Thames, 1836' (University Mus. of Arch. and Eth. Cambridge); d. Thames at Kingston, Surrey (Kingston-upon-Thames Mus.); e and f. Tintern hoard, Mon. (National Mus. of Wales, Cardiff); g. Near the Old Kent Road, Southwark, London (British Mus.).

below), yet they differ completely from two Breton axes found only some eight miles from the Ty Freeman axe near Tintern (Mon.)[4]. These possess only two of the diagnostic features for which we are seeking; they are slender in form, and they are plain. Breton axes as a whole have a very standardised form, the Tintern axes conform very well with this, but the Trawsfynydd and Penard implements certainly do not. This poses the question whether the latter two really are Breton axes. Obviously their correct identification is a matter of great importance in view of their relationship with the Ty Freeman axe.

There is just one type of socketed axe which does possess the unusual characteristics of the Ty Freeman axe. This is the Taunton type, first recognised by Hodges[5], and since treated by Savory[6], Smith[7], Butler[8] and Eogan[9]. These writers have shown that Taunton axes can be equated with Sprockhoff's *schlichtes Viereckttullenbeil*—termed more conveniently the Hademarschen type by Butler[10]—at home in the lower Elbe—lower Oder region of north Germany in Montelius' periods III–IV[11]. Taunton axes are examples of this type introduced into the British Isles in the first place probably before the end of Montelius III, though some may be copies produced locally in these islands. They are found in ' Ornament Horizon ' and related hoards in Britain[12], and thus fall within the period Middle Bronze Age 2–3, *c.* 12th–10th centuries B.C.[13]. By way of contrast, Breton axes, while they may have started in the 7th century B.C., appear to have been typical of the 6th century[14], that is to say, Late Bronze Age 3 in Britain. In view of this alarming dichotomy in the chronological and geographical backgrounds of the two types in which the affinities of the Ty Freeman axe have been sought, it is imperative to examine in detail the diagnostic features of both.

Taunton axes are distinguished by a plain, slender, generally long body, square in section, and with a square socket plan. Especially characteristic is the collar, which is always flat, and there is never a sub-collar moulding. The loop is typically small and slender, and generally begins below the level of the collar. The sides of the body usually have a slightly concave curve and generally converge somewhat before flaring into a moderately expanded blade. This combination of features is restricted entirely to Taunton axes and, as we shall see, axes which must have been developed from them. The distinguishing characteristics of the Ty Freeman axe can all be found here, and the list includes nothing which would necessarily exclude it.

The two implements from Tintern may be regarded as wholly typical of the Breton axes (Fig. 2, e & f). These, like Taunton axes, are distinguished by a long, slender form, but there the similarity ends. Their sides are completely straight, and diverge slightly to an unexpanded blade with straight cutting edge. The loop tends to be heavy and broad. One of the most important single features helping to distinguish the Breton type from the Taunton type is the collar; the Breton collar is always pronounced and heavy, sometimes rounded, but more often angular in profile, very different from the flat, unobtrusive Taunton collar. Furthermore, Breton axes usually have a sub-collar moulding, which Taunton axes never have. Also they are sharply rectangular in body section and socket plan, and since they characteristically have narrow faces and broad sides, this rectangularity has, to quote Hodges ' the longer side at right angles to the cutting edge '[15], not parallel to it as in the case of most other rectangular-sectioned socketed axes. The only other socketed axes from the British Isles which regularly have this distinctive ' back to front ' section and socket plan (though never so sharply rectangular as with Breton

axes) are certain generally large implements, fairly straight in form, with limited, or no, blade expansion, and strong, heavy collars. They may be plain, decorated with vertical ribs, or with a variety of ornamental schemes involving the use of ribs, pellets, roundels and so on[16]. Such axes appear to be late in the Irish/British series; some are demonstrably as late as Breton axes[17], and the rest could very well be. Some are so reminiscent of Breton axes as to suggest the direct influence of the latter in their manufacture, and one such, from London, is illustrated here (Fig. 2, g). Breton axes sometimes bear the ornamental schemes referred to above, though few decorated examples have been found in the British Isles[18]. Taunton axes are always plain, however. Breton axes are more massive in appearance than the Taunton implements. The examples found in Britain at least are, almost invariably, patently unfinished, with unsharpened blades, untrimmed casting seams, sometimes even with part of the casting runner left on top of the socket, as in the case of the smaller Tintern axe. Usually a part of the clay core can be found inside the socket, sometimes completely filling it. At best they would have made very poor axes, and many could not have been used as such at all[19]. Taunton axes, on the other hand, are generally found in a finished condition, and certainly were intended to serve a utilitarian purpose.[20] Some show signs of definite use, such as the specimen illustrated here from the Thames at Kingston (Fig. 2, d), which retains a part of its wooden haft in its socket. It will be seen merely from the examples illustrated in Fig. 2 that Taunton axes may vary considerably in superficial appearance, unlike the very standardised Breton implements. One of the most significant differences between the two can only be detected in the laboratory, for whereas Breton axes are usually made from bronze with a high lead content, the result of deliberate adulteration of the alloy (some examples of pure lead being known)[21], analysed specimens of the Taunton type have proved to be made of non-leaded bronze, containing at the most a trace of lead as a natural impurity[22].

This list of the distinguishing features of the Breton type includes much which is totally alien to the Ty Freeman axe, and leaves it happily with its Taunton affinities. The way has now been paved for a detailed consideration of the Trawsfynydd and Penard axes, which we have seen to be in the anomalous position of being linked both to the Ty Freeman axe, and thus to the Taunton type, and to Breton axes. If both these implements could be shown to be related to Taunton axes, instead of being Breton axes, then the problem of their relationship to one another and to the Ty Freeman axe would be solved. Savory originally described the Trawsfynydd implement as a Breton axe[23], but in 1958 he confessed that this identification was wrong, and that it should be regarded as a Taunton axe[24]. Subsequently Butler has taken Savory mildly to task for this *volte-face*, and has reverted to the Breton label[25]. The key to the problem of this axe lies in its collar. Superficially this appears pronounced and slightly angular, which, taken with the straight, slender body, would point to a place in the Breton series. Closer examination reveals that the socket has been damaged, however, distorting the collar to its present misleading shape. There can be no doubt that here was a flat collar originally; this, taken with the absence of a sub-collar moulding, the very small loop and square socket allies the Trawsfynydd axe firmly to the Taunton series. The straight, slightly diverging sides and unexpanded blade suggest that we are dealing not with an actual Taunton axe, but with a local copy for some reason not reproducing exactly the form of the originals.

The Penard axe was linked only vaguely with the Breton type when first published[26], but Wheeler later described it as a Breton axe[27], and Grimes further hinted at its Breton affinities[28].

While unique in many aspects of its form, it has a long, slender, straight-sided body and unexpanded blade reminiscent of the Breton form. This is illusory, however, for its flat collar, absence of a sub-collar moulding and slender loop relate it firmly to the Taunton type[29]. Seemingly it was the product of an inventive local smith, working under the influence of the latter. The faceting of the faces, producing a hexagonal body and socket plan, seems unparallelled, yet even a hexagonal socket is in keeping with the angular, rather than rounded, sockets characteristic of early socketed axes. It is not too far removed from the sub-rectangular socket of the axe in the Leopold Street (Oxford) hoard[30]. This, like the Penard axe, is individually unique, though strongly related to the Taunton type[31]. It could pass for a Taunton axe were it not for its massive size and the fact that it has multiple, slight, mouth mouldings instead of a flat collar. This too could be the work of an inventive local smith.

We thus have three implements which suggest an initial experimental period in the development of socketed axe production in the British Isles. No doubt others could be placed in the same category, but it is not the task of this paper to conduct a search for such implements. Practical and typological considerations suggest that these experiments would have followed immediately after the arrival of the ' pure ' Taunton axes on the scene, i.e. in MBA 3, and this can be confirmed by the associations of two of our axes. First the Leopold Street hoard; the low-flanged palstaves, all from the same mould, found here with the socketed axe, cannot be given more than a general Middle Bronze Age date[32]. The find ought to be broadly contemporary with the hoard found nearby at Burgesses' Meadow (Oxford)[33], since this included a palstave from the same mould as the Leopold Street series. Most of the other bronzes here were undistinguished Middle Bronze Age types, like the palstave, but more significant was a socketed hammer of a type not normally with Middle Bronze Age associations, but more at home in the Late Bronze Age. Furthermore this hammer was made of leaded bronze. The date for the introduction of this practice of deliberately adulterating bronze with lead should come at the MBA 3 – LBA 1 transition, probably in the 10th century B.C., since the types of implements definitely current just before and at about 1000—intrusive swords of Erbenheim and Hemigkofen types[34], Ballintober swords[35], Taunton axes and ' transitional ' palstaves[36] in particular—when analysed have proved to be of non-leaded bronze, whereas the implements of LBA 1, typified by the bronzes of the Wilburton Complex[37]—such as Wilburton swords, tongued chapes, long ferrules, and various spearhead types, including those with lozenge-sectioned, hollow blades and stepped blades—have so far proved to be of leaded bronze[38]. The latest consideration of the chronology of the Wilburton Complex suggests that it began as early as the 10th century B.C.[39], so that its emergence and the appearance of the leaded bronze practice may well have been related developments. It is to this period that the Burgesses' Meadow and Leopold Street hoards, with their still overwhelmingly Middle Bronze Age character, must belong.

The Penard hoard has always been treated rather circumspectly[40]. Of the implements which it contains, the fragmentary peg-hole spearhead with leaf-shaped blade is of a simple type which lasted throughout the Late Bronze Age, and cannot therefore be closely dated. The tanged bronze arrowhead is more helpful. These are extremely rare in Britain[41], and precise parallels are not common on the Continent. Exactly similar arrowheads do occur in early Urnfield contexts, including, most significantly, the same range of Hallstatt A2[42] graves in southern Germany which have yielded Erbenheim and Hemigkofen swords[43]. This is important,

since it was swords of these types reaching Britain rather before 1000 B.C.[44] which largely inspired the development of the Ballintober sword—and there are fragmentary examples of this type in the Penard hoard. The fact that the Ballintober sword has such a restricted distribution,[45] and that there is no trace of it in LBA 1 contexts, suggests it may well have been short-lived. Bearing in mind its ancestry and the fact that examples analysed so far have been of non-leaded bronze, a 10th century currency seems reasonable.[46] The evidence of the Penard hoard as a whole thus supports the typological evidence which places the Penard axe in MBA 3. Admittedly most of the Penard bronzes are scrap fragments, so that survival to a later date is possible, but the hoard as a whole has such a uniformly early character that this seems unlikely.

Frequent mention has been made of Ballintober swords in dealing with these socketed axes. If the latter represent an initial period of experiment in socketed axe development, so Ballintober swords reflect a similar, contemporary era of experiment at the beginning of Irish/British sword development. At least two other bronze types were possibly being evolved at this time, and may reflect this same spirit of progress; the socketed sickle[47] and the shield[48]. Furthermore this was the prelude to the introduction of leaded bronze. As yet it is not known whether this technique was introduced into Britain from the Continent, or whether it was developed here. Certainly there existed in southern Britain at this time just such an air of experiment in which some clever local smith could discover that it was possible to make his bronze go further by adding lead to it. And this notable technological discovery provides us with as valid a point as any at which to divide Late Bronze Age from Middle Bronze Age.

It is against this background that the Ty Freeman axe must be viewed. Like our three 'experimental' axes, it is not so much a 'pure' Taunton axe as a derived form. Some 'pure' Taunton axes are fairly short, and one such from the Thames (Fig. 2, d), no longer than the Ty Freeman implement, illustrates the latter's Taunton affinities very well. Yet it will be seen that even allowing for distortion, it was less slender than the Thames example, its sides lack the inwards taper typical of this and so many other Taunton axes, and it was less square in section. At the same time it is typologically more developed than the MBA 3 Taunton-derived axes of Wales and the Marches—as represented by the Trawsfynydd and Penard implements—yet more primitive than anything found among the many socketed axe types of LBA 2–3. This hints that it should come in between, in LBA 1. Like so many early axes, it appears to have no precise parallels whether in Wales or beyond. The plain axes found in the LBA 1 Wilburton hoards of southern Britain and those in the LBA 1 Wallington group of hoards in the north[49] are obviously descended from the Taunton–Leopold Street tradition, possessing either a flat or flattish collar or multiple, slight, mouth mouldings[50], and seem, typologically at least, related to the Ty Freeman axe. These flat collar axes, for example some of those in the Wallington hoard itself, seem as close parallels as we shall find.

The only other socketed axes from Wales and the Marches which have any claim to a LBA 1 date are the three in the Guilsfield hoard (Mont.)[51]. At first glance the mass of Wilburton material in this find would suggest a date well within LBA 1. Also included, however, are socketed gouges which, being wholly typical of the period LBA 2–3 in the British Isles[52], sound a note of warning. The writer is aware of no definite pre-LBA 2 association of a socketed gouge in these islands. Of the two other associations with Wilburton material, the Blackmoor (Hants.)[53] hoard

is dated to the end of the Wilburton era, to the LBA 1–2 transition, by virtue of the Ewart sword which it contains[54], while the Isleham (Cambs.) hoard[55] includes, in addition to a vast mass of Wilburton material, cauldron handles and other pieces which place the whole find within LBA 2. The Guilsfield hoard should be broadly contemporary with these, but perhaps not quite as late as the 'end of the eighth century' as proposed by Savory[56]. This date may account for the presence here of a faceted axe and a bag-shaped axe, both more at home in LBA 2–3 contexts. The third axe is more significant for our purpose, since it is typologically more advanced than the Ty Freeman axe, having the squat form so foreign to socketed axes before LBA 2, but so typical in LBA 2–3, yet it possesses mouth mouldings and a square section and socket reminiscent of the Leopold Street tradition. A date at the transition from LBA 1 – LBA 2 for this axe can but support a rather earlier date in LBA 1 for the Ty Freeman axe.

As yet it is possible to demonstrate a full LBA 1, represented by use of the leaded bronze technique and a complete range of Late Bronze Age metal types (as in the Wilburton Complex for example) only for southern and eastern England. Everywhere else such material is rare to varying degrees, and the position with regard to leaded bronze is uncertain because there has as yet been little or no spectrographic analysis of relevant implements. What in fact was a full LBA 1 in the south and east appears to have been a continuation of the Middle Bronze Age in other regions, or at most a transition period. The Wilburton Complex only penetrated to the eastern fringes of Wales and the Marches[57], probably at a late date on the evidence of the Guilsfield hoard. Everywhere Middle Bronze Age types and traditions must have continued, as Savory has suggested[58], though in the south in particular the old range of metal equipment was occasionally augmented by ideas and bronzes from outside. Thus one notes the median-winged axe from Sketty (Glam.)[59], the swords, spearhead and arrowhead in the Penard hoard, and the ferrules and curved knife in the hoard from Ffynhonnau (Brecs.)[60]. There are, too, the Trawsfynydd, Penard and Ty Freeman axes, which in turn imply that Taunton axes were known[61]. Occasionally the continuing use of Middle Bronze Age types is illustrated by associations with these rare, but often dateable, intrusive bronzes. There is, for example, a dirk in the Ffynhonnau hoard; simple tanged chisels of the common Early Bronze Age–Middle Bronze Age form[62] in the hoards from Monkton (Pembs.)[63] and Buttington Hall (Mont.)[64]; and a spearhead with a blade furrowed in the old Middle Bronze Age tradition (but with peg holes instead of loops, and presumably yet another local experiment) found with a normal leaf-shaped, peg-hole spearhead like the one in the Penard hoard, at Eglwyseg Rocks (Denbs.)[65]. From peat at Dolwyddelan (Caerns.) have come a dirk and a sword of Ewart type, but unfortunately there is no definite evidence that these two were actually found together[66]. That such an association was quite possible is revealed by a very similar find, but this time a valid association, of a dirk and a fragmentary Ewart sword from Fair Oaks, Hereford[67].

In some parts of Wales and the Marches it is possible to single out nothing of Late Bronze Age character which can be placed in this extended Middle Bronze Age. For Monmouthshire there is only the Ty Freeman axe. Unfortunately implements belonging to the later phases of the conventional Middle Bronze Age are rare in the county[68], so that any comments made as to the state of affairs prevailing here in MBA 3 and LBA 1 must rest largely on inference. It is possible to point to only three implements, 'transitional' palstaves from Ty Bryn, Abertillery,[69] Bassaleg[70] and Penrhos[71] which ought to belong to this period and be broadly con-

temporary with the Ty Freeman axe. Notwithstanding the paucity of relevant material, the fact that palstaves show a clear superiority in numbers over the socketed axe is surely evocative of continuing Middle Bronze Age traditions and a prolonged adherence, discernible everywhere in Britain, to the palstave at the expense of the socketed axe in the period before LBA 2. The Ty Freeman axe may be unique in Monmouthshire; it may have no exact parallels in the precise details of its form; but when viewed in a broader light it falls into place with other evidence to help illuminate what is in some respects the least known era of the Bronze Age, not only in Wales and the Marches, but in the rest of the British Isles.

NOTES

[1] In August, 1962, Mrs. Howells kindly loaned the implement to the Museum and Art Gallery, Newport, to permit its being properly recorded. I am grateful to Mr. Cefni Barnett and Mr. D. Webley for their good offices in this connection, and to Mr. Barnett for information concerning the circumstances of the discovery and the find spot.

[2] A representative selection of which are included in the collections of the National Museum of Wales, Cardiff: see Grimes, W. F., *The Prehistory of Wales*, 2nd ed. (1951), 170–91, Figs. 61, 67–9 *passim*.

[3] For detailed references to these two axes see notes 23-29 below, with appropriate footnotes.

[4] Savory, H. N., 'A hoard of Breton socketed axes from Tintern, Monmouthshire,' *Arch. Camb.*, XCIX (1946–7), 114–15. For the most recent consideration of Breton axes see Dunning, G. C., 'The distribution of socketed axes of Breton type,' *U.J.A.*, XXII (1959), 53–5.

[5] *U.J.A.*, XIX (1956), 33, with distribution map, Fig. 2.

[6] *Arch. Camb.*, CVII (1958), 16–17.

[7] *P.P.S.*, XXV (1959), 150.

[8] *Palaeohistoria*, VIII (1961), 121.

[9] *J.R.S.A.I.*, XCII (1962), 57.

[10] loc. cit. n[8].

[11] For the most recent statement of the comparative chronology for the Bronze Age in north western, northern and central Europe see Butler, op. cit. n.[8], Pl.XIX. For the purposes of this paper, Montelius' period III in northern Germany may be regarded as extending from c.1250/1200 – 1100 B.C., roughly equating with MBA 2 in Britain (see n.[13] below), and Montelius IV from c.1100 – 900 B.C., roughly equating with our MBA 3.

[12] For a general statement of the 'Ornament Horizon' see Smith, op.cit.n.[7], 144–64, esp. 150 for Taunton axes in hoards.

[13] Throughout this paper use is made of the scheme for the British Bronze Age proposed by Professor C. F. C. Hawkes to the C.B.A. Bronze Age Conference, London, December, 1960, though with a chronology slightly modified by more recent work. The divisions with which we shall be concerned are:—

MBA 2	*c.* 1200	–	1050/1000 B.C.
MBA 3	*c.* 1050/1000	–	950/900 B.C.
LBA 1	*c.* 950/900	–	750 B.C.
LBA 2	*c.* 750	–	650 B.C.
LBA 3	*c.* 650	–	500 B.C.

[14] Dunning, op.cit.n.[4], 53, quoting Hawkes in *Antiquity*, XXXIII (1959), 177.

[15] loc.cit., n.[5].

[16] A typical selection of these axes, both plain and decorated, was included in the hoard from Sompting, Sussex: see *Ant. J.*, XXVIII (1948), Pl. XX – XXIa.

[17] They consistently have Hallstatt C associations, as in the hoards from Cardiff, Llynfawr (Glam.) and Sompting, and these examples at least must be as late as LBA 3.

[18] A good example, with rib and pellet ornament, is included in the hoard of Breton axes from Nether Wallop (Hants.) in the British Museum.

[19] See Dunning, op.cit. n.[4], 54 and Tylecote, R.F., *Metallurgy in Archaeology* (1962), 127–8, where possible functions of Breton axes are discussed.

[20] Though not necessarily as axes as such. As with most other types of axes found throughout the Bronze Age in Britain, there are small, slight members of the class which must have served some other purpose; cp. a small Taunton axe from the Thames at Thames Ditton, Surrey, in the British Museum (no. 67, 12–13, 16). Such examples may have served as fine wood-working tools.

[21] Tylecote, loc.cit. n.[19], Dunning, op.cit. n.[4], 54 and note 8 p.55.

[22] For the general principles involved here see Brown, M. A., and Blin-Stoyle, A. E., ' A sample analysis of British Middle and Late Bronze Age material . . . . ,' *P.P.S.*, XXV (1959), 188–208. Analysed examples of Taunton axes are no. 83, p.202; no. 166, p.203 and no. 434, p.207.

[23] In Grimes op.cit. n.[2], 182, no. 497.

[24] op.cit. n.[16], 17.

[25] op.cit. n[8], 126, note 8.

[26] *Arch.*, LXXI (1920–1), 138.

[27] Wheeler, R. E. M., *Prehistoric and Roman Wales* (1925), 152.

[28] op.cit. n.[2], 68, 74.

[29] The Trawsfynydd and Penard axes are included as Breton axes on Dunning's distribution map of the type, op.cit. n.[4], 53, but should now be removed from there. At the same time, the Tintern axes have been omitted from the map and should now be added, similarly the Tintern hoard should be added to the list of hoards of Breton axes from Britain cited by Dunning.

[30] *Inv. Arch.*, GB I (1955), 5.

[31] Miss M. A. Smith actually regarded it as a Taunton axe, op.cit. n.[7], 171. But see also Butler, op. cit. n.[8], 126, note 8.

[32] For low-flanged palstaves see M. A. Smith, op.cit. n.[7], 167–70.

[33] *Inv. Arch.*, GB I (1955), 6.

[34] Cowen, J. D., ' The earliest bronze swords in Britain and their origins on the Continent of Europe,' *P.P.S.* XVII (1951), 195–213.

[35] *U.J.A.*, XIX (1956), 37 with distribution map, Fig. 3, p.32.

[36] op.cit. n.[7], 184.

[37] op.cit. n.[6], 29–32, and *Antiquity*, XXXIV (1960), 280.

[38] op.cit. n.[22], *passim*.

[39] op.cit. n.[8], 110, 113, 120–1.

[40] e.g. Hodges, op.cit. n.[5], 37, and Savory op.cit. n.[6], 32.

[41] *Ant. J.*, VI (1926), 182.

[42] Hallstatt A2 in southern Germany can be equated with early Montelius IV in the north, and with late MBA 2 – early MBA 3 in Britain; see Smith, op.cit. n.[7], 181–2.

[43] e.g. with an Erbenheim sword at Wollmesheim, Cowen, op.cit. n.[34], Pl.X. Socketed and tanged bronze arrowheads of many different types have a wide range in time and space in the Bronze Age on the Continent, but the best parallels for our Penard example seem to come entirely from late Tumulus culture and early Urnfield contexts in France and Germany. See, *inter. alia*, Sandars, N. K., *Bronze Age Cultures in France* (1957), 93–5, 101. Later examples are rare, generally socketed, and, for various other reasons, not good parallels. The problem is too involved to consider in great detail here.

[44] Hawkes in his scheme for the British Bronze Age, quoted in n.[13] above.

[45] Distribution map in Hodges, loc.cit. n.[35].

[46] Other than the Penard hoard there seems to be only one other possible association of a Ballintober sword, with a ' transitional ' palstave at Southchurch (Essex), discussed by Smith, op.cit. n.[7], 184. The ' transitional ' palstave seems as much a part of MBA 3 as the Ballintober sword.

[47] *P.P.S.*, V (1939), 227.

[48] Associations of shields are not helpful for their dating, but the metallurgical evidence is more helpful, see Brown and Blin-Stoyle, op.cit. n.[22], 199.

[49] e.g. Wallington, Haydon Bridge, Farnley and Corbridge hoards, all from Northumberland, plus others from that county and from Yorkshire, scarcely any of which have been published at all, let alone adequately. The Wallington group has often been mentioned e.g. *Arch.*, LXI (1909), 463; LXXIII (1922–3), Pl. XXXVII, 13; LXXXIII (1933), 196–7. The most convenient source of information is the British Association card catalogue of bronze implements at Oxford. While this northern Complex no doubt goes back into MBA 3, the socketed axes in hoards such as those from Wallington and Haydon Bridge could hardly be earlier than LBA 1, and some at least of the other hoards must go with these.

[50] Butler is surely wrong when he groups together these LBA 1 axes with mouth mouldings and axes with heavy, rounded collars and one or more sub-collar mouldings, into his ' south eastern ' form (op.cit. n.[8], 113, 122, with Fig. 54). The mouldings of the LBA 1 axes, slight in the Leopold Street tradition, are something quite apart from the heavy collar and sub-collar moulding. The latter features, while typical in LBA 2–3, cannot be shown to occur earlier. The present writer would prefer to see the term ' south eastern ' restricted to axes with these later features.

[51] *Montgom. Coll.*, XLI (1930), 1–32.

[52] *P.S.A.S.*, LXXXIX (1955–6), 147–8.

[53] In the British Museum.

[54] *Arch. Ael.*, 4th ser., X (1933), 185–98.

[55] Britton, D., 'The Isleham hoard, Cambridgeshire,' *Antiquity*, XXXIV (1960), 279–82.

[56] op.cit. n.[6], 34.

[57] Where it is represented by a few stray finds and hoards confined almost entirely to Montgomeryshire and Shropshire.

[58] op.cit. n.[6], 34.

[59] *Arch. Camb.*, XCII (1937), 333.

[60] op.cit. n.6, 27–8, with Fig. 3, p.45.

[61] Actual Taunton axes have been found quite close to our area, one just across the Bristol Channel in the hoard from Taunton Workhouse (Somerset, *Inv. Arch.*, GB. VII (1959), 43(1)), and another on the edge of the Marches at Weston-sub-Edge (Glouces., op.cit. n.[5], 50).

[62] Of the type which occurs in Early Bronze Age grave groups such as those from Llanddyfnan (Ang., *B.B.C.S.*, XVII (1957), 211, Fig. 2) and from a barrow on Arreton Down (I.O.W., *P.P.S.*, XXVI (1960), 275, Fig. 6: 4); and in Middle Bronze Age hoards, such as that from Sparkford (Somerset, *Inv. Arch.*, GB. VII (1959), 46).

[63] Grimes, op.cit. n.2, 252, Fig. 64.

[64] *Montgom. Coll.*, XLIII (1934), 139, Pl. XIII c, d and XVIIb.

[65] Davies, E., *The Prehistoric and Roman remains of Denbighshire* (1929), 273.

[66] Griffiths' comments are misleading (*P.P.S.*, XXVI (1960), 323) in this respect. He assumes an association for which there is no definite evidence. For these two implements see *R.C.A.M. Caerns.*, I, (1956), lxvii, no. 51, Fig. 16: 2–3.

[67] In the Hereford Museum.

[68] e.g. there are no low-flanged palstaves.

[69] In the offices of the Urban District Council, Abertillery; op.cit. n.6, Fig. 1: 8, p. 29.

[70] *B.B.C.S.*, XVI (1955), 210.

[71] National Museum of Wales no. 31.78.107.; op.cit. n.2, 178, no. 454; Fig. 60: 1, p. 248.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

My grateful thanks are due to Mr. D. Webley for first drawing my attention to the Ty Freeman axe; to Miss C. M. Johns, Professor R. J. C. Atkinson, Mr. D. Britton and Dr. J. J. Butler for much helpful advice and criticism; to Dr. H. N. Savory of the National Museum of Wales, Cardiff, and the authorities of the British Museum, the University Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology, Cambridge and the Museum and Art Gallery, Kingston-upon-Thames, who willingly granted access to material in their collections, and gave permission for the publication here of my drawings of some of their implements; to many other museums and institutions who at various times have allowed me to work on their collections; and to Mr. Cefni Barnett for unfailing help and forbearance.

REMARKS ON ROMAN USK

By GEORGE C. BOON, F.S.A.

Roman remains came to light in quantity at Usk in 1842, and since the erection of the Gaol (now the Borstal Institution) in that year, all finds have combined to show that *BURRIUM* lay on the southern side of the modern town. In recent years, much has been recorded by Mr. E. I. P. Bowen, F.S.A., whose discoveries on building-sites and in road-works suggest that Roman occupation extends on the west as far as the Market-place, and on the north as far as the junction of Maryport-st. and Church-st., as well as some distance south of the old Gaol[1]. The only archaeological digging to have taken place is still that of A. D. Berrington, who in 1878 followed up chance finds made during the construction of the Court-house in 1876: his work revealed Roman occupation throughout the grounds of this building[2]. Half a mile to the north, traces of Roman cremation-graves suggest that an early cemetery flanked the Usk–Abergavenny road[3], which is on the line of its Roman predecessor at this spot.

The situation of *BURRIUM* is interesting. It lies on the tongue of land between the Usk and its tributary the Olway; northward, the land rises to the hill which gives Usk its Welsh name of Brynbuga. The Roman site lies within the 50 ft. contour but, since its earliest levels lie on river-gravel as much as 10 ft. below the modern surface[4], this statement is misleading. In Roman times, it must have lain barely above river-level, and Berrington records a deposit of between 3 and 5 ft. of river-sand on top of the earliest remains. On his showing, there were at least two periods of devastating inundation, the more recent succeeded by a Roman occupation which probably belongs to the 3rd century[5]. There seems to be no reason why a site within the 100 ft. contour, beyond the danger of flood, should not have been chosen, as was done in the case of Usk Castle, unless we conclude that *BURRIUM* was established in the course of a penetration of the region by river, perhaps only as a temporary expedient. An intimate concern with river-communication appears to have governed subsequent occupation of the selected spot.

It is generally assumed that *BURRIUM* was an auxiliary fort, and the situation resembles that of Caersws, where again a more elevated position was readily to be found—and was indeed found for a temporary camp[6]. But a fort involves defences, and nothing of this sort is certainly known. Nevertheless, in reading between the lines of Watkin's account of Berrington's work, it is possible to claim certain discoveries as parts of an early defensive *enceinte*: the area concerned lies at the eastern end of the Court-house grounds[7]. From point K on the plan[8] ' . . . . Proceeding southwards, an old pit was come upon, abounding in broken pottery, which was followed eastwards, and a handsome straight sided " Samian " jar, more than half perfect . . . was found. Proceeding westwards in this pit, more broken pottery was found . . . ' Dr. Grace Simpson has pointed out to me that this ' pit ' seems, from the wording used, to have been extraordinarily large, and she has suggested that it was in reality the filled ditch of an early fort. Secondly, westwards from point K, a gravel bank 35 ft. wide and 2 ft. high was discovered; there was a denarius of Vespasian on its surface (which was 5½ ft. below the ground), but nothing in it; it lay upon two or three inches of river-sand, charcoal-flecked, on top of the gravel. The direction of this bank would seem to be parallel with the supposed ditch, and it was obvious fairly closely to it. A rough profile of the bank is given by Watkin: there were two distinct elements, a 12 ft.

bank on the right, and a 19 ft. bank on the left; and it seems just possible that we have here a destroyed gravel rampart, with a roadway inside its line. But until these structures can be found again, there can be no certainty whatsoever.

There is, however, certainty on the subject of the samian bowl, which has survived, and is illustrated here (Fig. 1) for the first time since its discovery. It bears the stamp of the potter Martialis of south Gaul, dated by Knorr to *c.* A.D. 50–60[9]; it is the earliest sizeable piece of decorated samian (Form Dragendorff 30) yet found in Wales: it would look much out-of-place, for example, in an assemblage from the Caerleon legionary fortress, founded only in 74–5. It also happens that this vessel adds considerably to our knowledge of this potter's work[10].

A single pot of anomalous date might turn up on any site, but at Usk there are other pieces of evidence to reinforce the dating-value of this specimen. One of Mr. Isca Bowen's finds

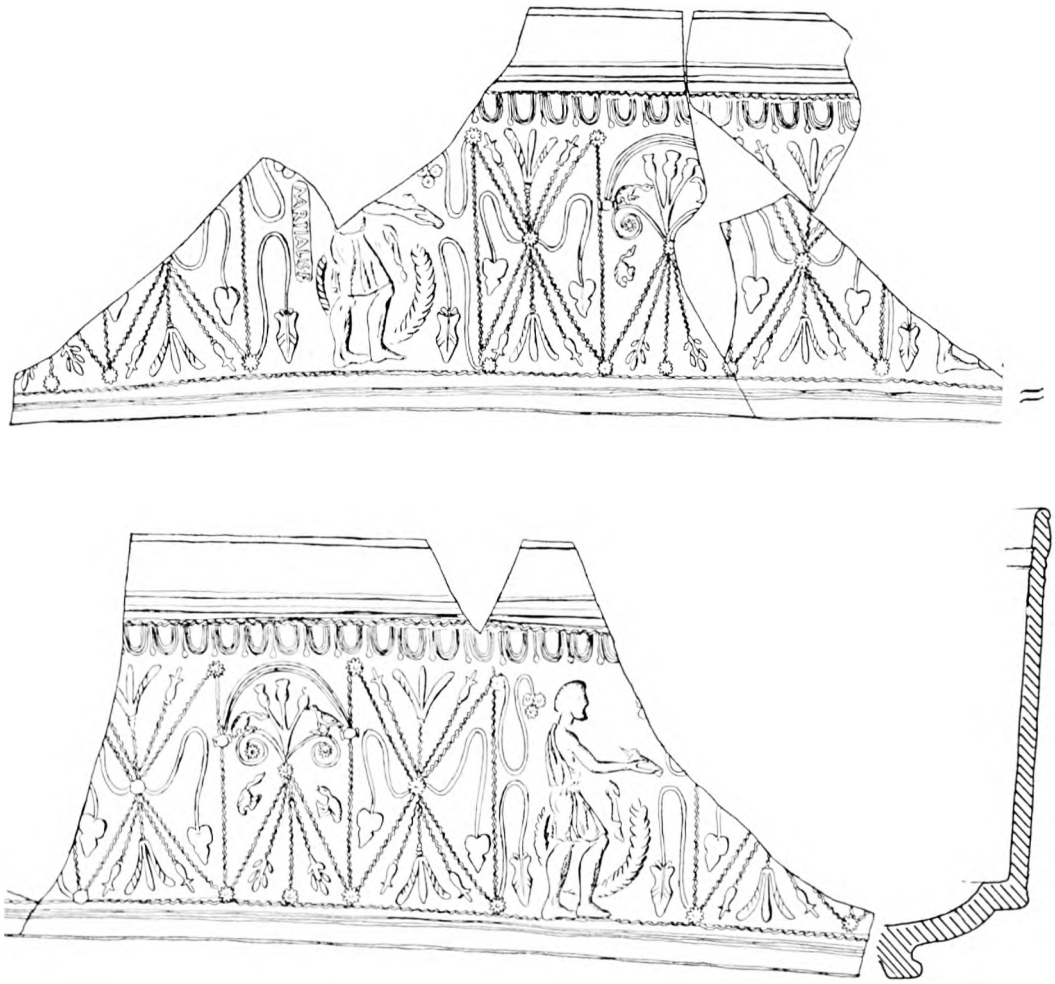


FIG. 1. *Drawn by Miss C. M. Johns.* SCALE $\frac{1}{4}$

(Fig. 2—a Dragendorff Form 29 bowl) is of a similar date, and it too is interesting intrinsically, for the decoration is not easily matched, and the fringed gadroons of the upper decorative zone are, I think, an unrecorded design: I have been unable to find them in Knorr's books or in Hermet's *La Graufesenque*. Other pottery includes two plain samian bowls, of Ritterling's

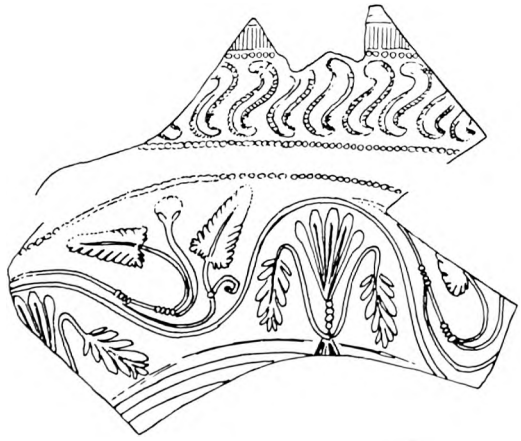


FIG. 2. SCALE $\frac{1}{2}$

Form 12 and Dragendorff's Form 24; these, like the vessels stamped by the potters Niger, Primus, and Felix mentioned by Watkin[11], could well belong to an early phase of occupation. From the Gaol excavations of 1842 comes a fragment of glass of an exceedingly rare type, paralleled by two scraps from Camulodunum, one of them from a Claudian level[12]. The vessel concerned was a thin, blown flask of a deep royal blue glass containing many small bubbles; the decoration consists of a scatter of small, opaque white blobs (two are of colourless glass) which have fused with the surface but have not been marvered (i.e. rolled on a slab) flat with the surface (Fig. 3).

FIG. 3. SCALE 1/1

But much more important for dating-purposes are the coins. The National Museum of Wales has the following, mainly from Berrington's excavations:

1.	Augustus	–	*denarius*, worn
2.	Agrippa	–	*as*, copy
3.		–	do.?
4–5.	Claudius	–	*CERES AVGVSTA dupondii*
6–10.		–	*Minerva asses*, copies
11–13.		–	do.?
14.		–	do.? ?
15.	Nero	–	*as*
16–17.	Domitian?	–	*asses*
18–19.	Trajan	–	*sestertii*
20.		–	*dupondius*
21.	Hadrian	–	*sestertius*
22.	Pius	–	*sestertius*
23–24.	Gallienus	–	*antoniniani* (probably from a hoard)
25.	Claudius II	–	*antoninianus*
26.	Tetricus II	–	imitation (small).

The great interest of the series lies in the remarkable number of 'Claudian copies.' At the time of the invasion of Britain in A.D. 43, the only mint at work is thought to have been Rome, and it could not supply enough small change for use in the new province. 'Claudian copies' are therefore principally found on sites which were occupied before the great Flavian coinage made recourse to imitation unnecessary[13]. The Usk series is so far unique in Wales, where most excavated sites are clearly of a later date, and yield only occasional 'Claudian copies' in consequence.

On the basis of the evidence cited, it seems permissible to regard Usk as the site of one of the forts established by Ostorius in the course of his campaign against Caratacus, and left to guard strategic positions among the Silures when Caratacus had retreated to the Ordovices of north Wales[14].

It is not my present intention to deal with the subsequent Roman occupation in any detail; the pottery-evidence for the second century will, in any case, be handled much more ably by Dr. Simpson in her forthcoming paper in the *Archaeologia Cambrensis* for 1962. It will suffice to say that large quantities of Flavian and later pottery are preserved or are recorded, and a fair number of coins; but I have seen and read of nothing that would suggest an occupation of the site beyond *c.* A.D. 300. Three more general points may, however, be made.

The first point relates to the structures which Berrington found. The only building examined[15] produced welcome evidence of a thorough reconstruction after flooding, and need not further concern us. The roads which were identified demand, however, a brief comment. They were of two types, a gravel road 3 ft. deep, parallel with Maryport-st., and pitched roads with footpaths about 6½ ft. deep. The first type is unexceptionable, and samian was found on its surface[16]; the second type is described as consisting of a 9 ft. central roadway, made of limestone blocks hammer-dressed to 5 by 2 in. at the surface, and extending 15 in. into the ground; there

was a 3½ ft. footpath on either side, paved with small, rough stone cubes; this was lined on the outside by dwarf walls and maintained at a height of 18 in. above the roadway by stone kerbs[17]. Watkin compares these structures with Pompeian roads, but the correspondence does not hold in detail, and it may be doubted whether these were Roman roads at all. The plan looks odd, and the absence of the expected structure in two or three places is explained by robbing. It is not specifically stated that the roads were overlaid by sand from the river[18]. An opportunity of investigating a section afresh is desirable.

Secondly, the find-spots known suggest an area of occupation extending 300 yds. from east to west and 500 yds. from north to south. This is not an impossibly large area for an auxiliary fort and its civil settlement—Segontium, Caersws, and perhaps Brecon could equal it. The cluster of find-spots in the Gaol vicinity certainly suggests a nucleus, or core, in this region, but medieval and later building further north may have sealed or destroyed a great deal, much as at Abergavenny or Monmouth. It is worth remarking that if the dimensions given delimited a rectangular area, it would be as large as that enclosed by the walls of Caerwent. Unlikely as this may be, we have no proof that we are dealing merely with an auxiliary fort and its straggling *vicus*. We do not in fact know whether Usk was the site of an auxiliary fort at all; Berrington's single Second Legion tile[19] and the legionary tombstone[20] do not tell us this, and the early occupation identified from the finds cited above may equally well have been legionary. The probability is that the dense Flavian occupation, at least, does denote an auxiliary fort, but as we mount through the Roman period, that probability becomes more and more remote in the absence of any decisive find. Thus, this paragraph is a plea for the careful preservation and record of every scrap from Usk.

The final point is allied to this plea. Enormous quantities of material were found in 1876–8; 70–80 coins were found at the Court-house site, a total which Berrington's own finds bring to over a hundred; and he took 'forty large boxes' of mixed pottery away with him[21]. Now, among this material, which has largely disappeared[22], there were 'one or two of the little conical bits of clay, used for separating things in a kiln'[23], which suggested to him that pottery or tiles were made on the spot. Tiles were uncommon in the 1878 area[24] if not elsewhere[25], and buildings appear to have been often of timber, thatched[26]. But—the same plea—it is not impossible that this suggestion might turn out to be correct, and if so, there are important implications.

1 These three finds are respectively National Museum of Wales accessions 62.283, 51.395, and 52.367.

2 W. Thompson Watkin, *Archaeol. Journ.* XXXV (1878), 20–37, cited as 'Watkin.'

3 *Archaeol. Cambrens.* 1933, 119, with N.M.W. 35.116.

4 Watkin, 24.

5 Watkin, 24–5, 26–7. There is apparent reference to Castor or Rhenish ware.

6 *Journ. Rom. Stud.* 1958, 97.

7 Watkin, 30–1.

8 Watkin, opp. p.25.

9 *Topfer und Fabriken verzierter Terra-Sigillata des ersten Jahrhunderts* (1919), 7; Martialis is dated Flavian by Oswald, *Index of Potters' Stamps* (1931), 189.

[10] Cf. the unattributed bowls, Taf. 67 A–B of Knorr, *Terra-Sigillata-Gefässe d. erst. Jahrh. mit Topfernamen* (1952).

[11] Watkin, 37; where the Martialis stamp, and also some Antonine stamps are mentioned.

[12] C. F. C. Hawkes & M. R. Hull, *Camulodunum* (Res. rept. Soc. Antiq. Lond. XIV, 1947), 296–7.

[13] C. H. V. Sutherland, *Romano-British Imitations of Bronze Coins of Claudius I* (Amer. Numism. Soc. Notes & Monographs, 65, 1935); *Coinage and Currency in Roman Britain* (1937), 10–13.

[14] Tacitus, *Annales*, XII, 38.

[15] Watkin, 26–7.

[16] Watkin, 27–8.

[17] Watkin, 22, 28–9.

[18] Watkin, 34–5.

[19] Watkin, 25. This sort of find could be paralleled at Caerwent, e.g. *Archaeologia* LXXX (1930), pl. 84, fig. 3.

[20] Watkin, 23, 68–9; *Ephem. Epigr.* IV, 671, IX, p.350.

[21] Watkin, 37.

[22] The boxes were taken to Pantygoitre, where they remained in the gunroom (as Dr. Simpson has discovered from Major J. D. Berrington) until 1893–5, when they were sent to Caerleon Museum. In the 1931 accession of material from the Caerleon Museum, the National Museum obtained (a) the tombstone; (b) the Martialis bowl; (c) many small finds of bronze (none of note), glass, etc. and (d) one ' large box ' of mixed pottery, or its equivalent. There were already finds from the Gaol excavations of 1842, described in Lee's *Isca Silurum*. The *Caerleon Museum Catalogue* (1909) reflects more or less what is listed above. In 1908, Haverfield noted that ' some ' pottery was at Caerleon Museum (*Military Aspects of Roman Wales* (1910), 77–8, note). Where the other 39 ' large boxes ' went is a complete mystery; I should guess that they were stored, not at the Museum, but elsewhere, since there would probably not have been room for them. Usk material in the Caerleon Museum is now numbered 31.78/119 and 120.

[23] Watkin, 34.

[24] *Ibid.*

[25] In 1961, Mr. Bowen, Mr. Barnett and I inspected some house-foundations opposite the Borstal; there were traces of gravel ' roads,' rubble, and part of a clay bank or ramp containing much Roman brick or tile, in the 3 ft. section exposed. Mr. Bowen also recovered much tile in 1955.

[26] Watkin, 25 (a burnt level in the sand), 34 and note.

THE GOLDCLIFF STONE — A RECONSIDERATION

By J. K. KNIGHT

The interpretation by Octavius Morgan of the discovery in 1878 of the Roman inscribed stone at Goldcliff was initially responsible for the myth that the sea wall was constructed by the Romans, a myth which gained strength over the years through frequent and unquestioning repetition, even, as our contributor points out, in authoritative works, until it has become accepted almost as historical fact. This reappraisal of the problem by a young Monmouthshire archaeologist does much to dispel this fallacious idea, but the question as to when the sea defences were constructed must be left open until further—historical—evidence is forthcoming.

Jeremy Knight, a native of Caerleon, is a product of the Department of Archaeology of the University College, Cardiff, and is now an Inspecting Officer in the Ancient Monuments Branch of the Ministry of Works.

The Roman inscribed slab picked up on the shore at Goldcliff in November 1878 has often been cited as evidence for the sea bank running along the Monmouthshire shore of the Severn Estuary being of Roman origin. It is usually claimed that the stone was found directly associated with the bank. As this has been repeated in a number of authoritative works[1], it seems worthwhile to reconsider the evidence on which it is based, and indeed the whole question of the interpretation of this find.

The stone[2] (*Pl. 1*), a trapezoid shaped slab of water-worn lias limestone, 21 in. in length and narrowing in breadth from 14 in. at the top to 8 in. at the bottom, bears an inscription recording the building of 33½ paces of some structure by a century of the first cohort (of the second Augustan Legion), commanded by one Statorius Maximus. It reads:—

COH I
Ↄ STATORI
M(A)XIMI
PX(X)XIIIS

The structure concerned appears to have been of earth rather than of masonry, for the stone is not, as are almost all other centurial stones from the area, a block designed to be built into a wall, but a flat slab with the inscription cut across its top half, intended to be placed upright in the earth with the blank lower part buried, in the manner of a milestone. In addition, the crudeness of the lettering and the similarity of the stone to that of the nearby cliff imply that the inscription was produced on the spot, probably by someone not used to this type of work. In short, the Goldcliff stone records the building of an earthwork structure, near the place of its finding, by a detachment of the Second Legion. R. P. Wright's study[3] suggests that this working party was a minimum of three centuries strong, and the earthwork a minimum of a hundred paces in length. The round figures imply that the true figure was in excess of this.

All modern accounts of the finding appear to be derived from Octavius Morgan's account of 1882[4]. There is however an earlier record, which seems to have been ignored by later writers[5]. It would hardly be worth drawing attention to this fact were it not that Morgan's report is slightly ambiguous and has distorted later accounts.

The 1880 report says that the stone was found " projecting from the wharf (or grassy land outside the sea wall) . . . . at a spot where several feet had been carried away by the tide." i.e. in a similar position to the pottery found in recent years at Redwick and Goldcliff. Morgan says simply that the stone was " washed out from the lower part of a bank "[6] (i.e. from the eroded edge of the flat). Although he later talks at length of the sea wall, he nowhere claims that the stone was found in association with it.* As his main thesis is that the find proved the Roman date of the sea bank, he would hardly have ignored such a convincing piece of evidence. Later writers have equated Morgan's ' bank ' with the sea wall and have distorted accordingly the find spot of the stone.

This does not of course disprove the idea that the sea bank is of Roman origin, but it does at least show that one of the main props of the theory is a little unsound. It must also be realised that after the erosions and repairs of nearly two thousand years, little could be expected to survive of the original Roman bank, if such existed. Britton and Brayley expressly state that the bank was fronted with a stone wall (in the closing years of the eighteenth century) to obviate the need for constant repairs[7]. The sea bank as we see it today is almost certainly the work of medieval and later times, for if we say that the present bank represents a Roman sea defence, we are implying that it was kept in constant repair during the centuries between the collapse of Rome and the establishment of medieval settlement in the area.

PLATE I. THE GOLDCLIFF INSCRIBED STONE
By courtesy of The National Museum of Wales.

It appears therefore that the equation of the earthwork structure implied in the Goldcliff stone with the existing sea defence is open to grave doubt. Attention has recently been drawn to the various finds of pottery of Roman date made along this coast in recent years,[8] but these present a number of puzzling features, and until they have been satisfactorily explained they are of little use to us in solving the problems presented by the inscription. The close correspondence in date of the various groups make their interpretation as native agricultural settlements difficult, whilst the theory that they

represent the refuse of legionary work gangs engaged in building the sea wall, although it solves this difficulty, raises others. Why, for example, did the work gangs of the same legion helping, about the same time, to build Hadrian's Wall apparently not leave a similar trail of debris? Neither indeed is it certain that the stone is contemporary with the pottery.

We are still in doubt, then, over the nature of the earthwork on which Statorius Maximus and his century were engaged. It may have been a sea defence, and if so the fact is an important clue to the relationship between army and native in the area. We shall be extremely lucky however if we are ever able to prove this archaeologically. The most plausible alternative would perhaps be a small fort or signal station watching the mouth of the Usk for hostile vessels and perhaps communicating with Caerleon via the newly discovered military site at Coed-y-Caerau[9] or another on the same ridge. This, of course, is equally hypothetical, but it at least shows that the sea defence theory is by no means the only possible explanation. Until further evidence is forthcoming the matter must be left open.

*It might be helpful to those unfamiliar with the area and the circumstances of the find to reproduce here Octavius Morgan's description of the find-spot: " The stone-faced sea-wall (at Goldcliff) is continued from the cliff, and extends on the west along the shore for about three-quarters of a mile, when it terminates; the earthen vallum or embankment having been sufficiently protected from the action of the tidal waters by a wide expanse of green grassy land outside it called " The Wharf." The vallum continues on for a short distance towards the mouth of a small creek or watercourse called Goldcliff Pill, which receives the waters of Monk's Ditch, and is the outlet for the drainage of this portion of the Level. The tidal waters, however, have so encroached on the wharf land that the bank at the extremity of the sea-wall has now (*in* 1882) to be protected with stakes, and it is very probable that the stone wall itself will ere long have to be continued. It is close to this spot where the stone was washed out of the bank of the wharf, which is under water at high tides. The wharf land is covered with a coat of fine grass, and is about seven feet in thickness above the muddy shore of the sea, the surface is not very much below the top of the embankment, and very considerably above the reclaimed land within it. It consists of two beds or layers, the upper one between five and six feet thick, being a compact mass formed by the deposit of the silt left in early times by the tide, whilst the lower bed is of a much looser and more porous substance, not so close, firm and consolidated, and particularly remarkable for being perforated by a great number of perpendicular holes, resembling at first sight the work of worms or insects, but on more careful examination proving to be the hollow stems of reeds which once grew there, and which may now be extracted. It was out of this lower bed that this stone was washed, and which being softer is more easily eaten away by the tidal action; and the upper and harder bed being thus undermined gives way, and a rapid encroachment is made, and many persons now living remember the existence of a large tract of wharf land which is now entirely washed away."

Octavius Morgan evidently received information regarding the circumstances of the find at secondhand and in fact admits on the next page to " not having seen the spot where (the stone) was found." He was rather aged and not particularly robust in health at the time—*Editor.*

1 *Wheeler, Prehistoric and Roman Wales* (1925) p. 228, n. 2; " the discovery of a centurial stone in the earthern sea wall near Goldcliff . . . may indicate a Roman origin for this work."
Nash-Williams, Catalogue of the Roman Inscribed and Sculptured Stones found at Caerleon (1935), p. 7; " it was washed out of the lower part of the sea bank . . . which suggests that the bank was originally constructed by the Second Augustan Legion."
Crawford, Archaeology In The Field (1953), p. 176, does not repeat the story that the stone was found in the sea bank, but nevertheless treats the Roman date of the earthwork as a proven fact and uses it to suggest that similar works elsewhere may also be Roman. He translates the inscription as stating that Statorius Maximus and his company built so many feet, " of this sea wall " (understood).
Journal of Roman Studies, 1957, p. 226: " The Boundary Stone Found in 1878 in the sea bank."

2 *Ephemeris Epigraphica VII*, 848: Nash Williams op.cit. n. 6, J.R.S. loc. cit.

3 *J.R.S.* loc. cit.

4 *Goldcliff and The Roman Inscribed Stone found there in* 1878. Caerleon and Monmouthshire Antiquarian Ass. 1882.

5 *Archaeological Journal* (1880), p. 137.

6 *Goldcliff and The Roman Inscribed Stone*, p. 1.

7 *Beauties of England and Wales*, vol. XI, p. 32. They considered the work to be monastic in origin (p. 168), which shows that at that date (1810) its origin had already been forgotten.

8 *Monmouthshire Antiquary*, vol. I, part 1 — pp. 12–13.

9 *Antiquity XXXV*, p. 270.

TWO STONE COFFINS

By CEFNI BARNETT

In the summer of 1950 two stone coffins, both containing skeletal remains, were discovered on the Monmouthshire " levels " within a few days and within four miles of each other. I visited the sites accompanied on each occasion by Dr. R. G. Absalom, Director of Newport Museum and Art Gallery, to whom I am indebted for expert advice on the type of stone used in the coffins and for his comments on the skeletal remains. I feel that a permanent record of the discoveries, based on notes I made at the time, should be preserved (although belatedly) in the pages of this newly-founded journal.

Coffin No. 1 came to light in a most unexpected place. It was unearthed by the blade of a bulldozer during extensions to the British Aluminium Company's works rejoicing in the name of " sloblands." The site, just outside the County Borough boundary of Newport, lies about a quarter of a mile due west of Burnt House Farm and about half a mile east of the river Usk at a point where it debouches into the Severn. The nearest church is that of Nash, some threequarters of a mile to the southeast, and beyond that, two and a half miles away, is the site of the medieval priory at Goldcliff.

The coffin was found firmly embedded in heavy wet clay at a depth of only 2½ feet, and orientated east-west. Like most stone coffins found in Britain, it had been hewn from a single block of standstone. The flat lid had been shattered by the bulldozer but a close examination of the fragments revealed no ornamentation or inscription. One of the walls of the coffin had unfortunately been squeezed inwards and fractured in places under the pressure of the bulldozer but we were able to establish that the overall length was 6½ feet and that it tapered very slightly from head to foot. The head-end was rounded, or 'apsed,' internally and externally, and higher than the sides, a common feature in medieval coffins suggesting that the head of the corpse had been raised on a pillow at the time of burial. The skull faced south though the body was fully extended on its back and it was thought that the head might have turned in that direction when the pillow perished and finally collapsed.

THE NASH COFFIN

Water and mud had seeped in to the coffin and as a result the skeletal remains

were extremely friable. Dr. Absalom was able, however, to pronounce the remains as those of a male. After being examined and photographed the coffin and its contents were re-interred on the spot.

The remarkable situation in which this burial was found prompted two immediate questions: 1. To what period did it belong?; 2. Why should the body of a man, apparently of superior class, be interred in this bleak and isolated place?

Stone coffins were first introduced into Britain in Roman times and there is some evidence that they were used during the early Christian period, but it was during the 11th, 12th and 13th centuries that they were used most. Thereafter their popularity declined until, by the 16th century, they were scarcely used[1]. Roman stone coffins can be classified into five main types[2], most of which are readily identifiable, but there is a greater variety of forms in medieval coffins. In normal circumstances there should be no great problem in ascribing a coffin to an approximate period: Roman coffins usually turn up on known cemeteries or in areas in close proximity to Roman sites, and are sometimes accompanied by datable objects, whilst coffins of medieval date are invariably found on sites of abbeys, priories and churches. These, too, might sometimes —if rarely—contain datable material, e.g., episcopal rings, pastoral staffs, chalices and patens in the case of ecclesiastical sites; weapons or jewellery in the case of a lay site. But the circumstances of the Nash burial were far from normal and one feature only gave a clue as to its period —the raised head-end, a medieval characteristic. That it was medieval, and probably of late 14th century date, was confirmed a few days later when we examined coffin No. 2 in Bishton churchyard and found that it was almost identical in form.

Who, then, was the person interred in the Nash coffin? One thing only can be certain: that he was either an ecclesiastic or person of rank or wealth who could afford the 'luxury' of a stone coffin. But why should his final resting place be so splendidly isolated, away from consecrated ground? It has been suggested that he may have been, and in all probability was, an excommunicant and in this connection it is tempting to associate this burial with the unhappy and turbulent history of the Benedictine priory at Goldcliff in the late 13th, 14th and 15th centuries. Several people are recorded as having been excommunicated, but most of them appear to have been subsequently released from their "sentences." For example, in 1320 one Roger de Walington was excommunicated for capturing the prior and keeping him in confinement for seven weeks, but he was on the authority of the Pope released from excommunication on 12th April 1320[3]. In 1445, during a very unhappy episode in the priory's history, Sir William ap Thomas of Raglan provided about a hundred men to assault the priory and to arrest the prior, Lawrence de Bonneville. He and his associates took prior Lawrence "like a thief" to Usk Castle where he was chained by one foot for five days, and then transferred to Abergavenny Castle where he was imprisoned for seven days after which he was released, so it was said, on the orders of the king. That is not the end of the melancholy story, but the upshot was that Sir William Thomas and others were ordered by the Pope to be excommunicated for their part in the affray. Bradney gives the impression that the order was carried out[4], but Dr. Rose Graham's statement "that nothing came of it"[5] finds confirmation in the fact that when Sir William died in the following year his body found a resting-place in the Herbert Chapel in Abergavenny Priory Church, where his tomb can be seen today. Others involved in the troubles at the priory

may not have possessed titles or power to evade the wrath of the Church and it is conceivable that this pathetically lonely body at Nash might have been one of those unfortunates. But this is pure conjecture; we shall probably never know the true answer.

Stone coffin No. 2 was revealed in digging a grave outside the north wall of the church of Cadwaldr Fendigaid (Cadwaldr the Blessed), Bishton, some four miles northeast of No. 1, at a depth of about 6 feet. The coffin lay slightly diagonally across the bottom of the newly dug grave, giving it an orientation of ESE–WNW, and for this reason it was not possible to uncover the whole of the coffin for detailed examination without disturbing the new grave. The head-end, however, was completely exposed and also a part of the body, sufficient to observe that it closely resembled the Nash coffin in form. In this case the skeletal remains were reasonably well preserved and in the opinion of Dr. Absalom were those of a well-built male. There were no objects in the coffin.

When I discussed this discovery with our late Hon. Secretary, Mr. J. R. Gabriel, he expressed the opinion that the remains could be those of one of two persons—John Pascall, bishop of Llandaff 1347–61, or Ifor Hael, of Wern-y-Cleppa, Bassaleg, the well-known patron of Dafydd ap Gwilym, the Welsh poet. The bishop, Ifor Hael and his wife Nest, went to reside at Bishton to escape the plague of 1361, but even here, in this comparatively thinly populated district, they were not safe and the three of them died of the plague in the same year[6]. It is reasonable to assume that Ifor Hael and his wife would have been buried near each other, or even in the same grave; that being the case the one body found in 1950 might well be that of the bishop. The absence of a ring or pastoral staff, which were often placed in coffins with ecclesiastics, might be due to the hurried inhumation of plague victims. That being so, how, then, was there time to carve out a coffin from a solid block of sandstone? In Captain Willmore's view, it is likely that in certain centres, where good stone was plentiful, enterprising stone masons made and stored stone coffins ready for use, and this practice would probably be extended during a plague. Even under normal conditions it was quite common for coffins to be constructed in the lifetime of the future occupants.

[1] For a more detailed discussion see "Stone coffins, Gloucestershire," by Captain H. H. Willmore, R.N. in *Transactions* of the Bristol and Gloucestershire Archaeological Society, Vol. LXI – LXII, 1939–40. I am grateful to Mr. G. C. Boon for this reference.

[2] *Ibid.* Fig. 1, p. 140.

[3] Joseph Bradney, *A History of Monmouthshire*, Vol. IV, p. 274.

[4] *Ibid*, p. 275.

[5] "Four Alien Priories in Monmouthshire," *Journal* of the British Archaeological Assoc., Vol. XXXV, p. 119.

[6] Bradney, Vol. IV, p. 258.

NOTES AND NEWS

A CAERLEON MUSEUM CENTENARY

On February 1st, 1862, J. E. Lee wrote the Preface to his *ISCA SILURUM; or, an Illustrated Catalogue of the Museum of Antiquities at Caerleon* (Longman, Green and Co., 1862). Lee was an amateur etcher and lithographer of talent, and in the 52 plates of this volume, drawn throughout by his own hand to make the cost as small as possible, he depicted many of the familiar inscriptions and relics which, thanks to Lee and those like him, have continued to grace the Museum ever since. Members of this Association will not need to be informed that its prime object was the establishment of the Museum; and Lee's part in this project may be judged from the fact that it was at his house, The Priory, that the inaugural meeting was held on October 28th, 1847. Three years later, the Museum was opened to the Public. Eighty years later still, in changed times, the Association wisely concluded an agreement with the National Museum of Wales whereby responsibility for the building and its contents was transferred to the National Museum.

John Edward Lee was born in Hull in December, 1808. His first interests lay with natural history, and at the end of his day's work in the family shipping-office, it was his custom to work far into the night at the Museum on the arrangement of its specimens. After wide travels in Europe, begun originally to mend his health, he settled at Caerleon in 1841, having become connected with the Newport firm of iron-manufacturers, Cordes and Co. (now Cordes Steel Mills Ltd.). He married in 1846.

From his earliest days at Caerleon until 1868, the date of his *Supplement* to *Isca Silurum* and that of his removal, for the sake of his wife's health, to Torquay, Lee devoted his leisure to learned pursuits, mainly archaeology and geology. It is only of the former that I can write.

His first archaeological work, *Delineations of Roman Antiquities found at Caerleon*, appeared with 27 plates of his drawings in 1845; the preface conveys more than a little of the self-effacing quality of the true scholar—a quality which was never to leave him, and which illuminates his largest work, the 'translation' as he called it—in reality the editing—of Ferdinand Keller's papers on the Swiss Lake Dwellings. This appeared in 1866 with 97 plates, and reappeared in 1878 in two volumes with 206 plates, under the title of *The Lake Dwellings of Switzerland and other Parts of Europe*; the facility which his travels gave him in French and German enabled him to make this but one of the services which he rendered insular archaeologists.

Lee acted as Secretary of this Association from 1847 to 1868. In May, 1861, he was elected Fellow of the Society of Antiquaries of London, and served as that Society's local correspondent in Devon after his removal to Torquay, where he died in August, 1887. Obituary notices appeared in *Proc. Soc. Antiq. Lond.* ser. 2, XII (1887–8), 142–3, and *Geol. Mag.* n.s., dec. iii, IV (1887), 526–8, where many details bearing on his geological interests will be found; he was elected Fellow of the Geological Society of London in 1859.

George C. Boon.

TREASURE TROVE AT TREGAER

In August, 1962, Miss Ann Morgan was playing with the children of Mr. J. O. Jones of Cefn Garw Farm, Tregaer (Mon. XIV NW), when she discovered two ancient gold coins.

One was lost, and the other was shown at the National Museum of Wales on October 23rd. It was an Angel of Henry VII. A search was thereupon made for others, and a total of nine, excluding the lost specimen, was eventually listed:

Angels (6s. 8d.)	Edward IV, 1471–83	initial mark, *annulet*	1
		initial mark, *cross and pellet*	1
	Henry VII, 1507–9	initial mark, *greyhound's head*	1
		initial mark, *pheon*	2
	Henry VIII, 1509–26	initial mark, *castle and pellet*	1
Crowns of the Double Rose (4s. 6d.)			
		with *H K* for Henry and Katherine of Aragon	1
	1536–7	with *H I* for Henry and Jane Seymour	1
Cruzado (Portuguese)	John III,	1521–57	1

These coins were declared Treasure Trove at an Inquest held by Mr. D. J. Treasure, the Monmouthshire Deputy Coroner, at Pontypool on November 21st. They had been found in a meadow on the top of a locally-prominent ridge, and had been brought to light by the recession of the side of an old limestone-working; four coins, the core of the hoard, were found together at the base of the topsoil. The original total of the hoard can never be known; it seems probable that the quarry is later than the deposit of coins, and many may have been disturbed when the quarry was dug[1]. A mine-detector search, using an instrument once more kindly lent by the Territorial Army Engineers, Llandaff North, was carried out, and as a result it seems unlikely that many strays remain to be picked up.

The latest closely dateable coin, of 1536–7[2], suggests that the hoard may have been buried as a consequence of the suppression of the small Abbey of Grace Dieu, which lies a mile to the east, and from which this hill-top could have been seen. Grace Dieu was dissolved under the Act of February, 1536, and within a twelvemonth had been closed—its last Abbot, John Griffith, was awarded a state pension of £4 a year on February 4th, 1537.

George C. Boon.

[1] The limestone, known as Psammosteus Limestone, is, as it occurs at this locality, described by geologists as a nodular limestone mixed with purple marl. It consists of lumps or nodules of calcareous rock embedded in a clayey matrix. A characteristic feature of the rock is its varying thickness as it is traced from one locality to another. The occurrence of old workings such as that at Cefn Garw facilitated the mapping of the limestone outcrops by the Survey Officers in 1933–1938. Its present distribution is shown on the recently published Geological Survey 1-inch sheet for Monmouthshire.

[2] The bulk of the hoard is earlier than this, and from this fact it is thought that the John III *cruzado* is not likely to be later. No detailed work has been done on that series.

REPORTS OF MEETINGS AND FIELD DAYS

AUTUMN FIELD DAY, 16TH SEPTEMBER, 1961

An aspect of industrial archaeology first claimed the attention of over sixty Members this day when they gathered at the Sudbrook pumping station to inspect the last of the original beam-engines which had pumped out millions of gallons of water from the Severn Tunnel since its construction in 1886, and which were being replaced by modern machinery. Members were shown over the engine houses by the Station Engineer and his assistants to whom we are indebted for their kindness and patience in answering many questions.

Members then walked the short distance to Sudbrook Camp where Mr. Cefni Barnett was the speaker. Sudbrook, he said, lies at the eastern end of a series of multiple-ramparted cliff-camps scattered along the South Wales seaboard overlooking the Bristol Channel towards Devon and Somerset. It is of special interest on account of its massive construction and its dominating position on the main lines of entry into south Wales from England. Excavation by the late Dr. V. E. Nash-Williams in 1934–6 brought to light traces of prehistoric hut floors alined along the foot of the main rampart. The evidence showed that Sudbrook Camp belongs to the first extension into south Wales of the Iron Age B south-western culture and was founded in the 1st century B.C.

Caldicot Castle was visited after luncheon. Mr. Arthur Clark was the speaker: Caldicot, he said, appears first as an entry in the Gloucestershire section of Domesday Book since Southern Gwent, traditionally independent, had been added in 1063 by Harold to his Earldom of Hereford. It was owned in 1086 by Durand, the sheriff, to whom Shirenewton, ' the sheriff's new manor,' was also given later. Durand was succeeded by his nephew Walter whose son, Milo Fitz Walter, was in 1141 created Earl of Hereford. Milo's five sons died without heirs and his lands were divided among three daughters of whom Margaret received Caldicot, together with the office of Constable. Her husband, Humphrey de Bohun, probably built the round stone tower on the motte erected by Durand and later Bohuns added a moat and enclosed the bailey with curtain walls and angle turrets.

The Bohun inheritance was divided in 1383 between two heiresses, Alianore, wife of Thomas of Woodstock, who received Caldicot, and Ann, wife of the future Henry IV. Woodstock carried out extensive alterations to the castle, including the building of the magnificent Gatehouse and reconstruction of the curtain wall and insertion of windows with decorated tracery in the living apartments.

After the murder of Woodstock, Henry IV granted Caldicot to Ann, wife of Edmund, Earl of Stafford, but from 1433 it was again in Crown hands until Richard III rewarded the second Duke of Buckingham with it in 1483. Buckingham's widow married Jasper Tudor and received Caldicot from Henry VII, but after the execution of the third Duke in 1521 it was incorporated in the Duchy of Lancaster. In 1857 it was sold to Charles Lewis of St. Pierre and in 1891 purchased by Mr. J. R. Cobb, who carried out extensive renovations.

Caerwent was next visited and Members were again addressed by Mr. Cefni Barnett: *Venta Silurum*, said the speaker, was the only Roman town established in Wales and was founded in the late 1st century A.D., immediately following the Roman conquest of the Silures of South-east Wales. The name shows that the town was intended to form the Romanized capital and administrative centre of the territory. Mr. Barnett described the defences and lay-out of the town and conducted members on a tour of the walls, the blocked-up south gate, the foundations of houses in Pound lane, and finally, the Church porch where the significance of the inscription on the important ' Silurum ' stone was discussed.

Spring Field Day, 24th May, 1962

In glorious weather, some seventy Members assembled on the Roman temple site in Lydney Park. Mr. Cefni Barnett gave an outline of the three main phases in its history—the prehistoric Iron Age; the Roman, or Romano-British; and the Dark Ages, after which Members inspected the defences and the remains of the Roman Temple and other buildings. They were also privileged to visit the private museum wherein are housed the many treasures found on the site, and were gratified to see how well they were preserved and displayed.

Members re-assembled after luncheon at Chepstow Castle where they were met by the owner, Mr. Desmond Lysaght, who conducted them over the Castle, despite a heavy storm (the first rain on a Field Day for six years !). On this occasion, attention was focused on the architectural features rather than the history of the site. Evidence that the builders of the castle robbed stone and tiles from the site of the Romano-British town at Caerwent was seen in the layer of Roman tiles built into the walls of the great hall. In the hall also is the curious *oeil de boeuf* window that is not centrally placed when viewed from the inside, but is so from the outside !

The day ended with tea being taken in interesting and beautiful surroundings at St. Pierre Country Club.

Autumn Field Day, 29th September, 1962

The first place visited this day was the Priory Church of St. Mary, Abergavenny, where seventy Members were welcomed by the retiring Vicar, the Rev. Canon M. E. Davies. Mr. Cefni Barnett read a paper in which he dealt with the early history of the priory and described the unique collection of very fine monuments in the church. He discussed, in particular, the identity of some of the early effigies.

By the kind invitation of Mrs. Molyneux, some Members partook of their picnic lunches in the beautiful garden at Trewyn, but because of the keen wind many took advantage of her "open house" and fires.

The party then went in motorised procession to Cwmyoy Church where Mrs. Molyneux was the speaker. This charming lop-sided little building, clinging to the hillside, was founded by the parent-body of Llanthony Abbey in the late 12th century, with a dedication—rare in this part of the country—to St. Martin.

At Llanthony Abbey, Members were met by Mr. O. E. Craster, Inspecting Officer of the Ancient Monuments Branch, Ministry of Works, who gave an account of its history and described the features of the Abbey.

Refuge from the cold wind which blew across the valley was sought in the Abbey Hotel and the Old School House where tea was served.

Annual General Meeting, 1962

The 115th Annual General Meeting of the Association was held on February 10th, 1962 at the Beaufort Hotel, Raglan, when nearly eighty Members attended. The Chairman, Mr. E. L. P. Bowen, presided.

After welcoming the Members, the Chairman asked the company to stand in silence in memory of five Members who had died in the course of the year.

The Minutes of the last Annual General Meeting were read and signed.

The Hon. Treasurer, Mr. E. Parry, presented a satisfactory report, but warned that the *Monmouthshire Antiquary* could not in future be printed and distributed free to Members on the present subscription as the printing costs had amounted to £65.

Arising out of the Hon. Treasurer's statement, the question of raising the annual subscription was discussed, and the proposal by the Chairman that it be increased to 10/- was agreed to without dissension.

The Hon. Editor, Mr. Cefni Barnett, reported that the first issue of the *Transactions* of the Association had been well received, particularly by the various learned bodies to whom copies had been sent. He gave an assurance that future numbers of the publication would contain reports of the Association's activities. The Editor paid tribute to Lt.-Col. Llewellyn Hughes for his interest and advice on technical matters in the production of the *Monmouthshire Antiquary*.

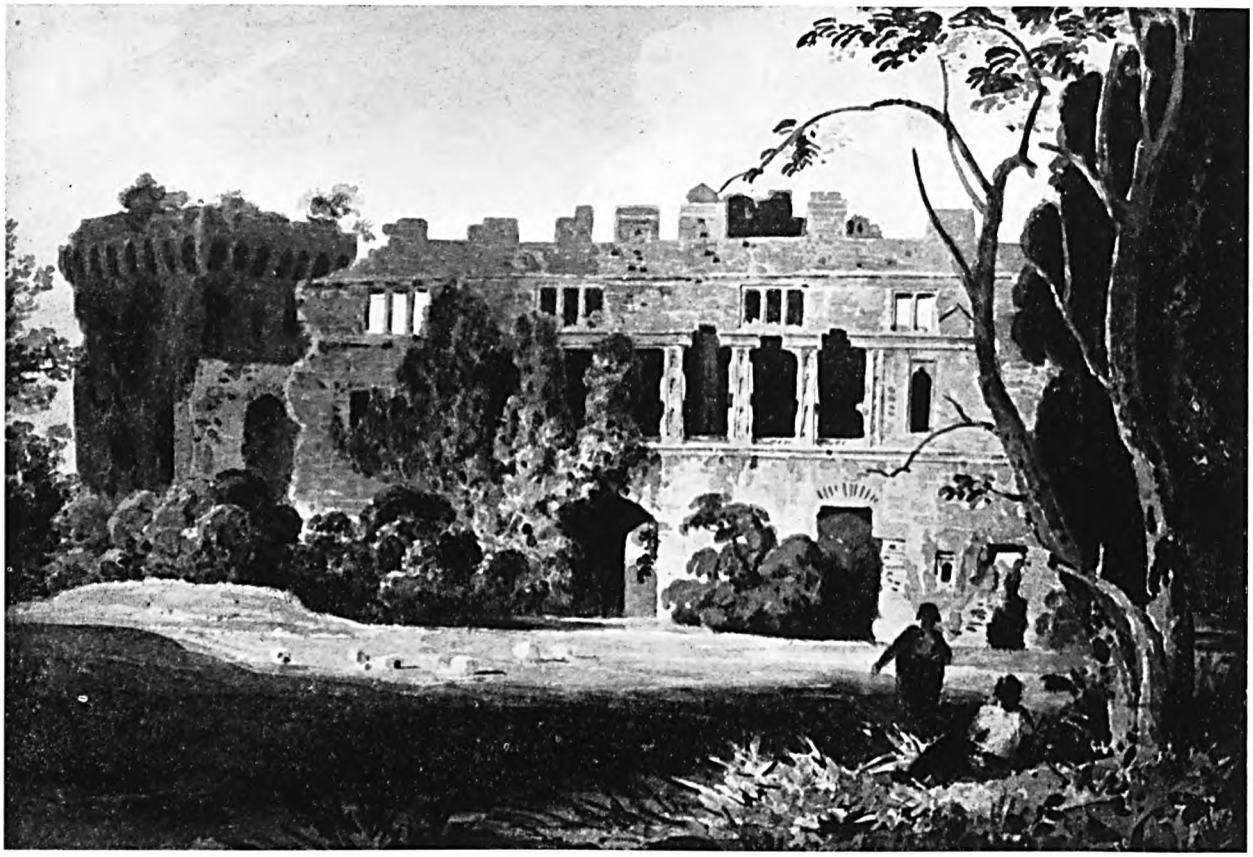
Twenty-four new Members—fourteen individuals and ten corporate bodies—were unanimously elected Members of the Association.

The Roman temple site in Lydney Park was suggested as one of the places to be visited during the Spring field-day, and St. Mary's Church, Abergavenny in the Autumn. The Hon. Secretary agreed to hire a coach for the excursions if Members so desired.

The Committee (p. 45) was re-elected *en bloc*.

The Chairman proposed a vote of thanks to the Hon. Secretary and Hon. Treasurer for their services during the past year and this was carried with acclamation.

On the termination of the business meeting, Mr. Cefni Barnett gave a talk on "The Romantic Approach of 19th century Archaeology." The speaker emphasised that 19th century romanticism was ultimately responsible for the formation of societies such as ours and for a new awareness for the security and preservation of our ancient monuments. Even as early as 1819 an effort was made to remove rubbish "which choked the rooms" in Raglan Castle and to regularly mow the grass "which was formerly grazed by the farmer's horses and pigs."



RAGLAN CASTLE DURING THE 'ROMANTIC' PHASE. *By courtesy of Newport Museum and Art Gallery*
FROM A MONOCHROME DRAWING BY THOMAS TUDOR (1785–1855)