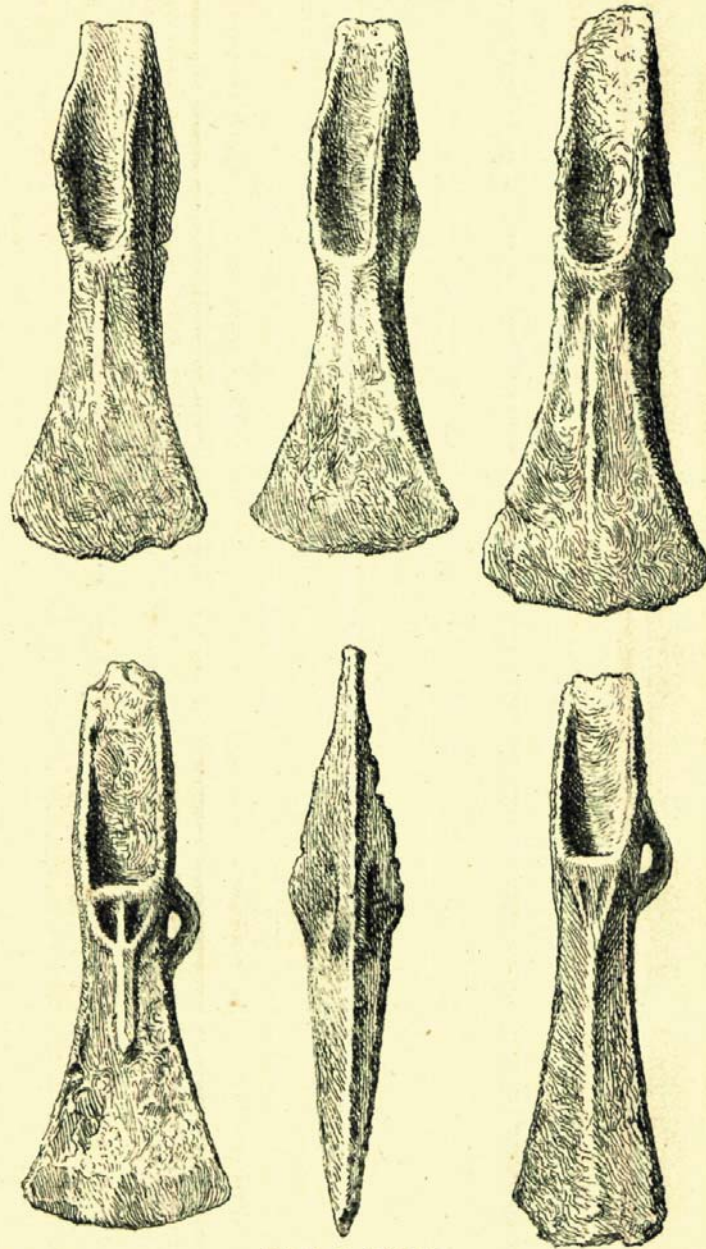




Ellen Stevens

HALF SIZE.

BRONZE PALSTAVES, FOUND AT PEAR TREE GREEN.

W. H. STUBBS & SONS, PHOTO-LITH.
LONDON.

BRONZE IMPLEMENTS FROM THE NEIGHBOURHOOD OF SOUTHAMPTON.

BY W. DALE, F.G.S.

Since the publication of Mr. Darwin's paper on Bronze Implements found at Bitterne, and one by the present writer on Palæolithic Implements and Bronze Weapons from the neighbourhood of Southampton in our Proceedings,¹ other discoveries have been made. In November, 1897, a hoard of eight palstaves found at Titchfield was brought to the notice of the Vicar, the Rev. R. A. R. White, who became possessed of the entire collection. The workman who unearthed them unfortunately commenced a process of scouring, with a view to improving their appearance, and one or two are so much oxidized as to be quite mis-shapen. They average about 5½ inches in length, and appear to have been finished and used implements, cast without loops at the side.

It occurred to the writer, on hearing of this discovery, that a carefully worded advertisement in one of the county papers might be the means of bringing to light other similar finds. Such an advertisement was inserted as an ordinary paragraph in the "Hampshire Independent," and was the means of hearing of what proved to be a very remarkable hoard found in January, 1898, at Pear Tree, close to Southampton, not far from the mouth of the river Itchen, and about 200 yards south-east of the church on Pear Tree Green. Here there is a valley running parallel to

¹ Vol. iii., pp. 53, 261, 265.

the greater valley of the Itchen, made by a small brook which empties itself into Southampton Water. The locality has lately been cut up for building purposes, and a new road, called Brook Road, made across the valley. In digging the foundations for one of the cottages in this road, a workman came across what he imagined to be a quantity of spikes or tops of some old iron fence which had been buried as rubbish. He ruthlessly struck his pick into them, and scattered the fragments hither and thither. The subsoil is loamy clay, of a yellow colour, belonging to the Bracklesham beds. The hoard was about two feet deep, and, according to the finder, the implements were all lying together in a square cut hole in the clay. Another workman present, a plumber, pronounced them to be gun metal, and the master-builder, thinking they might be of some value intrinsically, ordered the pieces to be gathered up and thrown together in a corner of the joiner's shop. Here they remained for some weeks until his eye caught the advertisement above referred to, offering a reward for any metal implements of a greenish colour found in digging or trenching the soil. He wrote in reply, and thus by the merest chance the discovery was saved from oblivion.

The first care was to obtain as many fragments as possible with a view of piecing them together. The task looked hopeless at first, but in the end succeeded better than might have been expected, although the loss of a good many fragments is to be deplored. The metal, itself, especially in the thinner parts, seems singularly brittle, almost like pottery in its character, probably the result of oxidization, so that the rough handling the implements received worked more havoc than would otherwise have been done. The attempt to institute further digging on the spot, in hope of finding traces of a bronze founder's work, proved fruitless, and as the walls of the house were rising nothing more could be done. That the implements were cast close by is almost certain, the local clay being used for the purpose. The square-cut hole in which, according to the finder, they were lying seems to indicate that they were buried immediately after casting, to be finished off afterwards at some convenient season which never came.

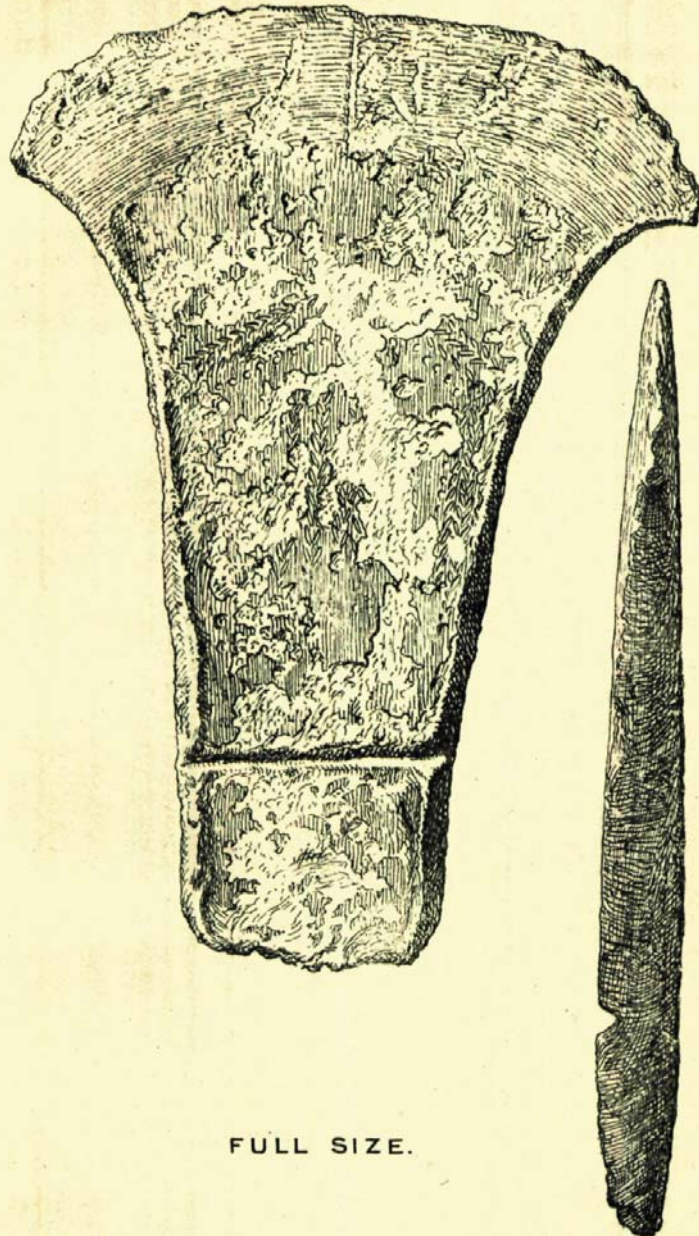
The implements all belong to that form of bronze celt called the palstave. In order to ascertain the full extent of the hoard a reward was offered for any pieces taken away by workmen. Forty-one palstaves, reckoning those that are represented only by broken fragments, were thus received, and probably comprise all the find. Some of the specimens are extensively corroded, and a few so misshapen as to suggest the idea of their being imperfect castings. One broken celt is worthy of notice, because the stop-ridge is absent. The breaks appear to be old, and it may have been a worn and broken implement intended for recasting. With this exception the palstaves are just as they dropped from the mould. There are two forms: a thick implement with a width at the point of $1\frac{1}{2}$ inches, and a thinner one splaying out to a width of $2\frac{1}{2}$ inches at the cutting edge. It is important to notice that though all of the same age some are cast with loops, and some without. The loops are attached to both narrow and broad palstaves. In some the casting of the loop appears to have been a failure, the eye being closed up. The ornamentation springing from the stop-ridge varies considerably, and no two appear to have been cast in the same mould. A selection drawn to $\frac{1}{2}$ scale is shewn on Plate I.

On the 31st March the hoard was exhibited at a meeting of the Society of Antiquaries of London, and a summary of the present paper was read. The President, Viscount Dillon, and several distinguished archæologists were present. Mr. W. Gowland, F.S.A., who has paid special attention to this branch of study, remarked:—"that an important feature of this hoard of palstaves is the large number of unfinished specimens which it contains. Most of these are rough, untrimmed castings, just as they were taken from the moulds. They all closely resemble one another, although they all differ more or less in the dimensions, and in the lines of the ornamental ridges below the stop. From this, he thought, it may be concluded with certainty that they were all made by the founder to whom the hoard belonged; also, that the differences they present are due to each palstave having been cast in a separate *clay* mould, and not in a metal mould. Such moulds, even when the

same object has been used as a pattern in making them, rarely yield castings uniform in size and shape, as, on account of the irregular contraction of the clay in drying, the interior of the mould almost always requires to be trimmed, more or less, with tools before the metal is poured into it."

An examination of the palstaves in the hoard by means of a touchstone showed that they all consist of bronze rich in tin.

As a result of the publicity given to the above-mentioned find, it transpired that a workman, in digging clay for bricks at Sholing, had found, some time previously, a bronze celt, which proved to be one of the very early flat celts—a kind much more rare than either socketed celts or palstaves. It is of the simplest shape. The edges have been slightly beaten over to form incipient flanges. There is, across the root of the blade, a deep cut at a slight angle, indicating probably the inclination at which it was hafted. It is well known that both flint and bronze celts of the early type were not put into the stick at right angles. The most interesting and remarkable feature is the ornamentation, which consists of a series of short parallel lines punched upon the metal. In shape and style of ornamentation it resembles several which have been found in Ireland, but neither in the British Museum nor in any local collection in England can be found a celt which entirely coincides with this example. The material is of bronze, but contains less tin than the palstaves described in the previous part of this paper. It is here drawn to the full size (Plate II.).



FULL SIZE.

Ellen Stevens

BRONZE CELT, FOUND AT SHOLING.

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