

Archæological Notes

A Bronze Emblem from Portishead, Somerset. The bronze (*Fig. 10*) is a surface find made at the St. Mary's Lane, Portishead, site (Brown, 1965).

It is a cast socketed disk. The decorative head was filed smooth, and both file marks and the centre point for scribing the true circle can be seen. The interstices of the design appear to have been cut clean by cold chiselling. The head is 44 mm. in

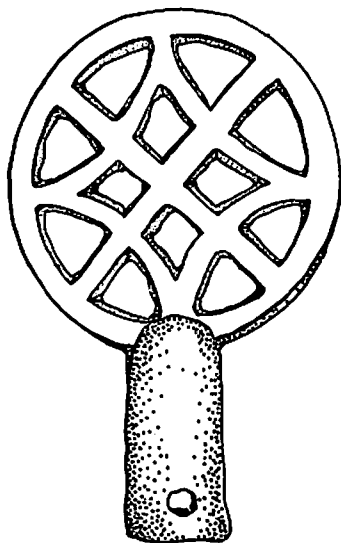


Fig. 10.

diameter and 4 mm. thick. The internal diameter of the socket is 10 mm. There are two pairs of holes through the socket, each pair being at the same level. The second pair was drilled, presumably, because the socket split. As they are drilled right through at the same level they probably were intended to take a through pin, rather than nails or rivets. The object appears to be meant for a staff or wand.

I am much obliged to Mr. G. C. Boon for his wide ranging efforts to identify it. It does not appear to be Roman but no medieval parallel has been found.

J. CLEVEDON BROWN.

A Roman Applied Brooch from Charterhouse-on-Mendip. (N.G.R. ST 504563.) The subject of this note was picked up from the surface of a field at Charterhouse-on-Mendip by Mr. Christopher Hawkes, who kindly presented it to the Society's museum after having shown it at the National Museum of Wales. The brooch consists of a rectangular bronze plate, 3.9 cm. by 1.9 cm., with traces of a hinged pin-fastening behind. The face is slightly recessed for the seating of a thin repoussé leaf of bronze. The design has almost disappeared, but a beaded border is evident here and there, and, within, what may be the back paws of an animal. These details recall a slightly smaller Camerton brooch (Wedlake, 1958, *Fig. 55*, No. 54A) dated to the middle of the 3rd century A.D., showing a prancing dog to left within a beaded border of the same kind. The dog's body is elongated and is reminiscent of the animals found on Castor ware.

No other exact parallel is known to the writer: these two brooches are clearly the products of a local workshop. Circular brooches with applied animal figures are, however, fairly widely known. From Wookey Hole comes an example bearing a hare (?) to right within a beaded border (Balch, 1914, *Fig. 13*). A second group, which has a plain linear border in place of the beaded type, comes from sites in the south and east of England. Its latest member may be a specimen from Lancing (Sussex) showing a hippocamp of ordinary Roman-provincial style (Leeds, 1933, *Fig. 30a*); its earliest, perhaps, the Santon Downham (Norfolk) specimen, datable to about A.D. 50-75, bearing a gryphon of deeply Celtic style, well compared by the late R. R. Clarke with the devices of Celtic coins or repoussé figured work such as that of the Marlborough bucket (Toynbee, 1964, *Plate Ic*).

Circular applied brooches bearing triskele patterns are also well known and belong to the later 2nd and 3rd centuries A.D. (Note 1). Their Celticism, however, owes much to Continental sources. It is stylistically close to the swelling scrollwork of the cast openwork attachments so common along the Rhenish and Danubian frontiers of the empire, and imported in some quantity into this country (Note 2). The *appliqué* technique, however, seems to remain an essentially insular phenomenon. Motifs of a vaguely Celtic character are also found on the bright enamelwork produced in the Namur region in the 2nd century, and it is tempting to see in the deservedly popular small zoomorphic silhouette, brooches (Note 3), the inspiration for the animals of the Camerton/Charterhouse and Wookey type.

Note 1. A list, *Medieval Archaeol.*, Vol. III (1959), 85 and n. 16. Another group abandoned the Celtic style in favour of designs ready made to scale upon the imperial coinage, e.g. *Allocutio* scenes: R. G. GOODCHILD, *Antiq. J.*, Vol. XXI (1941), 1ff. Their beaded border—retained as a feature of the triskele type and also of the Camerton/Charterhouse-specimens—may well be derived from the beaded border of the coin-prototype.

Note 2. Compare, e.g., the Vechten silver buckle, *Archaeol. Trajectina*, Vol. III (1959), *Plate 2*, 2, with that from Silchester, G. C. BOON, *Roman Silchester* (1957), *Fig. 11*, 2. Other examples, Caerleon, *Archaeol. Cambrens.*, 1932, 84, *Fig. 33*, nos. 30-31.

Note 3. E.g., BRITISH MUSEUM, *Guide to the Antiquities of Roman Britain* (1951); F. HENRY, *Préhistoire*, Vol. II (1933), 128-129.

GEORGE C. BOON.

Investigations at Stanton Drew Stone Circles, Somerset. In 1958 Grinsell and Kendal reported briefly on their probing for lost stones and concluded that Seyer's account (1821) was correct about the stones missing at the west end of the south side of the 'avenue of the Great Circle and the next stone south on the perimeter of the circle. They concluded, like Seyer, that the stones lay buried under the soil. They numbered these stones 1 and 2. Seyer had also reported other areas of burnt grass in times of drought and he interpreted these as being above buried stones notably between Dymond's (1806) 7 and 8 and 9 and 10 (Seyer's 10 and 13).

In 1961 Professor L. S. Palmer started an extensive electrical resistivity survey of the Great Circle but ill health prevented the completion of the work and, after his death, the records were examined in the Physics Department of the University and pronounced to be essentially negative in that they provided little evidence of any value in assessing the site. The present author worked with Professor Palmer on the site and took the opportunity to carry out extensive probing, involving the whole of the perimeter of the Great Circle and the south side of the avenue of that circle as far as the line of the old hedge bank and the steep drop to the flood channel of the River Chew.

A start was made at the site of the missing stones which Grinsell and Kendal claimed to have located. At first it seemed that their conclusions were correct and that the missing stones lay buried where they claimed them to be. The next objectives were the gaps between visible stones, either upright or prone, where it was thought that additional stones might lie buried or might reasonably be assumed to have once stood. Here again at a number of these sites a hard layer was found at a depth of 0.5-2.0 ft., but no outline of any stone could be determined except in the case of stones lying prone but still partly visible. The forms of these stones could be determined accurately both as to their outlines and uneven surfaces. The "feel" of these stones under the probe was quite different from the feel of the ground where stones had been suspected and probed for.