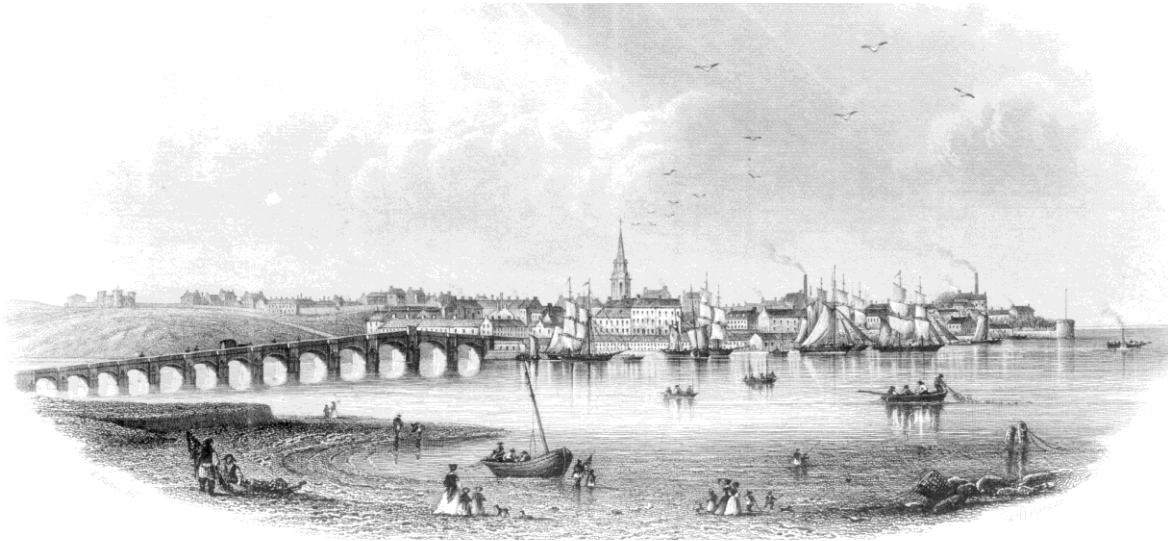


**Friends of Berwick & District  
Museum and Archives  
Newsletter**



***NUMBER 17 – DECEMBER 1997***

**[Selected articles]**

1997 December

## BERWICK ADVERTISER 9 APRIL 1836

Several issues ago, I reproduced an article about the Wooler Gymnastics Games. Whilst looking for interesting material for a talk on Crookham, I found the following about the Etal and Crookham Tillside Games which were very well attended and monopolised by the Nevins Brothers.

### ETAL AND CROOKHAM TILLSIDE GAMES

The first meeting of the Tillside Border Games took place on Crookham Haugh - a fine grass field on the banks of the Till - in Ford Parish, Northumberland on Easter Monday, the 4<sup>th</sup> inst. The day being exceedingly fine, a considerable number of persons had collected on the ground at an early hour; and this number was progressively increased as the day advanced till it became a vast assemblage, amounting to several thousands, and including, of course nearly all the gentry of the surrounding district, many from a greater distance, and not a small proportion of the fairer sex. A Band of Music from Coldstream was in attendance and played many national and appropriate airs. The games which were in general contested with great spirit and good feeling commenced at 10 o'clock within a spacious ring of 60 yards in diameter and came off in the following order:

- 1. Quoiting** - at 18 yards distance and eleven points to a game. Prize, a handsome Silver medal. Sixteen competitors contended for this prize which was won after a keen competition by Mr Robert Nevins, Heaton Mill, gamekeeper to the Earl of Tankerville. Mr William Forster, saddler, Coldstream was second and Mr David Smith, New Etal and William Brady, Cornhill were third and fourth.
- 2. Rifle Shooting** - at a target 180 yards distance, 3 shots each. Prize - silver medal. The competition in this exercise was confined to Members of the Games; the competitors were twelve in number and the medal was gained by Mr Charles McLeod, farmer, Etal whose shots scored most on the target although not nearest the bull's eye.
- 3. Standing, Hop, Step and Leap** - Silver medal. 5 competitors entered the ring, and had five trials each. The prize was gained by Mr Thomas Nevins, Heaton Mill who cleared 27 feet 3 inches. John MacIntyre of Lilliesleaf, Roxburghshire being second.
- 4. Running, Hop, Step and Leap** - Silver medal. 12 competitors entered for this prize, which was also gained by Thomas Nevins, Heaton Mill who cleared with ease 35 feet 10 inches. Francis Brown, Cornhill and John MacIntyre, Lilliesleaf were second and third.
- 5. Standing High Leap** - without a hitch. Prize a silver medal. There were three competitors for this prize which was gained easily by Thomas Nevins, Heaton Mill whose leap in perpendicular height was exactly 4 feet. Second best, John MacIntyre..
- 6. Running High Leap** - The silver medal for this event, which was contested for by four competitors, was also carried off by Mr Thomas Nevins, the height of whose leap was 5 feet exactly and that of John MacIntyre 4 feet 11 inches. As there was no second prize announced for any of the leaping exercises in most of which John MacIntyre was second, and he had come from a considerable distance to attend the Games; in which his most strenuous efforts to obtain a Prize were rendered ineffectual, because opposed to superior opponents - the Managers considered this a case deserving of an extra prize, and accordingly a purse of silver was awarded to him.

- 7. Short Foot Race of 100 yards** - Prize, a silver medal. Upwards of ten competitors started for this race, which was well contested and won in fine style by John Gillie, tailor of Cornhill. Mr George MacLeod, Etal and Andrew Archer, Lowick coming in second and third.
- 8. Throwing the light or 10 ½ lbs Hammer** - Silver medal. Thirteen competitors, including several gentlemen, entered for this game but it was merely for amusement that they did so; as the superior throwing of Robert Nevins put all competition out of the question. Mr Nevins, to the astonishment of the spectators, threw the hammer with perfect ease and with only one hand 129 feet 1 inch and thereby became entitled to the prize.
- 9. Throwing the Heavy Hammer of 16 lbs** - Silver medal. This prize was gained by Thomas Nevins, Heaton Mill who beat Henry Glendinning, Berryhill, his brother David Nevins, and six other competitors - thus making the third Medal won in the course of the day. The distance performed was 71 feet 6 inches. Mr Robert Nevins who had previously won four medals did not enter for this prize but after it was gained by his brother, he took the hammer in one hand and made a couple of throws to amuse the spectators and exhibit his own superiority. In one of these, the distance cleared was exactly 90 feet 4 inches, being merely 19 feet further than the throw which won the medal.
- 10. Long foot race of 300 yards with a turn** - silver medal. This race, like the short one was won in beautiful style by John Gillie, Cornhill who had again to contend with George MacLeod, Etal, Robert Barber, Chillingham - by whom he was hard pressed - and five other competitors.
- 11. Putting the light or 16 lb ball** - silver medal. Eleven competitors appeared for this prize, which however was won in one throw by Robert Nevins who threw the ball 37 feet 10 inches being just 5 feet 6 inches further than Peter, his brother who was second.
- 12. Putting the Heavy Ball of 22 lbs** - Prize, a silver medal. Only three competitors offered to contend for this prize, which was also won at one throw by Robert Nevins whose superiority in this as in almost every other athletic exercise excited the admiration of the beholders. This was the sixth medal won in the course of the day by Mr Nevins and the distance thrown was 32 feet 6 inches.
- 13. Wrestling - a main of 16 competitors** - Prize, a silver medal. The interest excited during the competition for this prize greatly exceeded that which had been manifested at any of the games which had previously taken place. In several instances the struggle, though short was very severe. That between William Cockburn of Yetholm and Thomas Clarke of Tiptoe was highly interesting and called forth the admiration of the surrounding multitude: Cockburn however ultimately floored his man but was himself grassed instantly in the next bout by John Stevenson, shepherd, Attonburn, near Yetholm who previously in the first class, and subsequently in the third, threw his adversary in a similar manner. Stevenson's fourth and last opponent was George Trotter of Crookham, one of the projectors of the Games who also had thrown his three opponents successively, in fine style. The match between these two competitors who had both acquitted themselves so well, was therefore of itself more interesting than any of the fourteen wrestling trials which preceded it; but it became doubly so when it was considered that the winner of it would also be the winner of the prize. All therefore remained in breathless anxiety during the contest - which, though not long was particularly severe; much science and agility were displayed on both sides; and the twisting and twining on their part along with the running about of the judges to ensure fair play, kept the lookers on in a state of feverish suspense during its continuation. Stevenson, however, who appeared the heavier, at last got the advantage and succeeded in flooring his scientific antagonist amidst the shouts and congratulations of the assembled multitude.

**14. A Foot Steeple Race** - Silver medal. There were six competitors for this race who were directed to run round a pole placed on the top of a rather steep hill about half a mile distant, and return to the ring. This race afforded much amusement to the spectators on account of some awkward obstructions which the runners had to encounter in their course; but these were successfully got over and the prize gained by William Cockburn of Town Yetholm who had previously distinguished himself at the Wrestling - though unable to obtain the prize.

**15. Archery** - the target (at 150 yards distant) was the next exercise and being a novelty in this quarter, of course it attracted considerable attention. No prize, however, being announced for this game, the present exhibition was to be considered merely as a preparatory step to its being practised and introduced among the other exercises at the next meeting. The competitors were Mr William Foster, Coldstream, Mr Robert Nevins, Heaton Mill and Mr Percy Foster, Alnwick by whom several ends were shot for the amusement of the spectators.

**16. A Sack Race** for which two prizes were awarded finished the sports of the day. The competitors were about ten in number and the race afforded more merriment to the dense throng who witnessed it than all the games put together. The prizes were gained by John Harbottle, joiner, Etal and John Moffatt, tailor, Cornhill.

At 5 o'clock 30 gentlemen members of the Games sat down to dinner in Mr Cockburn's tent.

*Linda Bankier*

### **A Baylives Courte holdeth at the TowleBooth the 28<sup>th</sup> day of February 1572**

#### **1. Rotten Row**

We the Jewrye do ffynde and presente that the wife of Thomas Maxwell is a Woman of evill Demaynor in that she doth reslett and with Dr \_\_\_\_\_ her neighbours polloy with other of their Goodes.

There is a Woman in Thomas Sheapperde house and hathe a chylde by a soldier.

#### **4. Marygate**

Thomas Thompsone wife a Scottishe woman dwelling in the Backside of Richard Browne and a scoulde of her tongue.

In Raphe Shettle house a Scotte man. Roger Harroppes wife a Scotte Womman and also Thomas Rowles daughter in his house she havinge a chyled to one Roger Harropp.

William Taylor's wife is Scotle Womman in the Backside of Weddowe Preston.

Martin Chambers a Scotte boye. Richard Smythe hathe a Scotte man to his servante.

Henry Lorrymann's wife's Daughter hathe a chylde with one Gudgeon, Soldier also Captain Beade.

Edward Stringer his wife a Scotte womman.

## **Briggate**

Durstey Small in George Robinson's house an Idell Womman.

William Spencer wife a Scotte Womman in the Backside of Richard Lanese's house.

Widdowe Watterson a Scotte Woman.

William Brewton's wife and her mother Scotte Wommen.

Bartie Cave an Idell persone.

William Brewton a Scotte man to his servante.

John a Barrowe's Daughter an Impotent person.

Janyne Addams an Idell Womman before Davie Colters.

## **Walkergate**

Raphe Chamberlayn's wife a Scotte Woman and in her backside one Horner's wife a Scotte womman.

John Bolton an Idell person and was bannished the Towne of severall times.

Monckaster's Daughter of ile Demayner and was put out affore.

In John Richardson's an Idell Womman.

A man of William Thompson's called John Thompson kepithe a hoore the woman is Anne (?)unghons by the Whytewall Tower.

A Pypper in James Watson's house with his wife a vagabonde and she a scoulde.

A vagabonde called Jane Nobell in Symonde Rutherforde on the greenses.

Jenny Bell a Scoulde and a Drunckarde??? And a mysuser of men's chydren in brockelinge?? She is in the Nowteherde or thereabouts.

## **Soutergate**

Sympson's wife the Pencyoner a Scotte Womman and a Scoulde.

Ballentyne the fyfe kepeth a whore in the Backsyde of Quentyne Stronge's a Scotte Womman.

A Idell Womman in the Backsyde of John Pyndelbarga and a Scotte.

Bartie Mallyborne his wife a comon Scoulde and a Disordered person.

## **Crossgate**

The Goldsmith a stranner.

### **The Nesses and Rotten Row**

One Scotte Jenny and her sonne in Bonnington's house.

Thomas Jackson kepeth a hoore in his house having a chylde by her besides his wife

In Rollande Scotte's house there is a Scott's womman.

Thomas Forster's wife kepith disorder in her house at inconnvenyant tyme in the night.

### **In the Pallice Street**

Cuthbert Harrison's wife's daughter havinge a chylde by a womman's husbnde.

*Lindy Tindley - Hon. Court Reporter*

## **MARITIME HERITAGE PROJECT**

This project is underway with some material now being put into the Record Office computer database. There is a vast amount of typescript and other data already in the Record Office which will ultimately need to be put onto the computer and VOLUNTEERS will be much in demand for this task. Any offers! To further interest in the Project, and matters Maritime in general, the following notes regarding ships and timber is offered:-

In Primaeval times when England was largely covered by dense forests, the fight for existence in the dense and dim tangled masses of closely growing trees made the Oak grow straight to a great height before the branches could spread out into light and sunshine. Examples of excavated dug-out boats suggest the use of oaks up to 18 ft., in circumference and with no branches until 50 ft., from the ground.

In the 16<sup>th</sup> Century, England found it necessary to import iron because of the limitations on home production occasioned by a growing shortage of the wood needed for the iron smelting process. This became such an urgent problem that, on the eve of Elizabeth's reign, there were some who advised the elimination of iron foundries altogether because of the enormous areas of forest they consumed. In 1559 it was forbidden, by Parliamentary Act, to fell Oak, Beech, Ash and other timber for the smelting of iron and other metals, within 14 miles of the coast. Various other regulations were also issued designed to conserve the diminishing acreage of forest. The smelting of metals by the use of charcoal necessitated the felling of around 1700 trees each week in order to feed the smelters of Sussex alone.

Timber was urgently sought-after by England in the second half of the 16<sup>th</sup> century, primarily for the construction of ships' hulls and masts. In 1608 a survey of royal forests found only 350,000 trees, of which less than half were fit for the construction of Naval vessels. Oak and other woods were sold by the 'load', a measure of 40 cu ft of rough timber averaging 1 ton in weight. Some idea of the quantities required can be judged that around 4000 healthy, well grown trees were needed for the construction of an average size '80' gun ship. In 1760 it was estimated that around 3700 loads of mixed Oak, Elm and Fir timber were required for the construction of a third-rate '74' gun ship.

A further difficulty for the 17<sup>th</sup> century shipbuilders was that of getting felled trees from their forest locations to the waterside building locations. This was exceedingly difficult because of poor or non-existent roads coupled with a shortage of manpower and draught animals. By the middle of the 18<sup>th</sup> century the forests of the world were being scoured for timber to build naval and merchant ships, and every means were taken to reduce wastage in converting it to the timbers necessary to build a ship, and ways were also studied of supplementing it with iron. Various economies in timber use were practised in the 1690's including the laying down of two smaller vessels at the same time as a larger one was being built in order that the smaller pieces of timber not being required by the larger could be used on the smaller.

Large scale imports of timber began during the 17<sup>th</sup> century because of the growing shortage and increasing cost of English timbers such as Oak and Elm. Increasing imports were of softwood such as Fir, Spruce and Pine. The Oak timbered building, often with its laths and boards of oak was giving way to the brick built house with its deal joints and boarding. Merchant shipbuilders were gradually given to accept the use of foreign timber; Norway or Baltic Fir or Spruce for boards and planking; Baltic Oak for frames, Norwegian masts and, later, masts from Riga were imported.

After the mid-eighteenth century there were important changes in North European timber exports to the UK. First, Norway lost its position as a main supplier of timber. Ports on the Baltic and White Sea (Archangel) began to rival Norwegian ports. The Russian Baltic ports accounted for an increase in value and volume of mast timber. Masts for the Navy and for commercial shipbuilding were felled in the forests of Byelorussia and floated downriver to Riga. This was the source of the 'great Masts', upward of 18 inches in diameter.

Because ships in the Baltic trade were unsuitable for transporting long heavy logs, the larger masts were lashed together and towed as rafts. Masters were obtained from a number of sources. The finest pines came from New Hampshire where every tree fit for the masting of ships of the Royal Navy were preserved for the Crown. Tall, straight white pine grew to great girth and height, often 3ft and more in diameter and from 200 to 300 ft tall. No masts smaller than 25 inches diameter were accepted from America and were shipped to England in specially built 'mast Ships', carrying 45 to 50 masts per voyage.

The merchant shipping Navigation Act of 1861 prohibited foreign ships from bringing into this country cargoes emanating from any country other than their own. This was a great blow to the Dutch, but of itself would not have increased the size of the English merchant fleet. In the resultant Anglo-Dutch war of 1652-4 however, so many Dutch ships were captured that the size of the English merchant fleet was doubled. Based on the bulk carrying trades of timber and coal, the east coast trade boomed and by the end of the 17<sup>th</sup> century shipbuilders in dozens of small English ports were building vessels similar to those captured from the Dutch. So great was this expansion that supplies of English Oak became scarce resulting in the importation of Baltic timber. Other shipbuilding materials such as flax for sails, pitch and tar for waterproofing and hemp for ropes, were also imported from the Baltic.

By the time of the 1861 Navigation Act the timber trade had become the greatest single employer of British owned vessels. The timber resources of British North America had rapidly replaced traditional Baltic supplies by the end of the Napoleonic wars.

*Dennis Nicholson*

## **MUSEUM NEWS**

### **The Burrell Collection**

Those of you who read the Scottish papers may have noted the intense debate over the Glasgow Burrell and the terms of Sir William Burrell's bequest. The Director of Glasgow Museums and Galleries, Julian Spalding, backed by the City Council have argued for the alteration of the terms to allow items from the Burrell Museum in Glasgow to travel overseas. This would not only bring the name of the Glasgow Burrell Collection to a wider audience, but it would enable reciprocal loans to Glasgow which would add interest and scope to their exhibitions. The Burrell Trustees were vehemently against overturning the conditions primarily because it would set a precedent for other collections and perhaps dissuade private collectors from bequeathing their collections to the nation. There is also some concern over allowing vulnerable works of art to travel abroad, although conditions are considerably improved since Burrell made the ban.

We were asked by both the Trustees and their Solicitors if our collection had any similar conditions attached to it. After an extensive search of official papers by the Chief Executive's department and in the Borough Record Office by Miss Doley, no trace was found of any limiting conditions and consequently we reported that we felt able to lend overseas as seemed appropriate. The solicitors also drew attention to the crack discovered in the frame of the Degas after its return from Chicago, which was reported in an article in the Glasgow Herald. The Trustees had hoped to use this as a piece of evidence against the desirability of foreign loans. However having spoken to the conservator, June Wallis, who inspected it on behalf of the National Gallery, we were able to tell them that this could have happened at any time in the last fifty years and because of its small size and position could easily have been missed until now.

The outcome of the enquiry was in favour of Mr Spalding and The City Council, so that the Glasgow Burrell will now be able to lend items, with the exception of the most delicate, to overseas exhibitions. This may well affect the number of requests we receive from foreign museums in the future. But it is the quality of the work and not just the fact that it is part of Sir William Burrell's collection which attracts attention. For example Boudin's "River Touques" is of international importance because of the subject matter which is not usually associated with the artist. By coincidence it is off on its travels again and will feature in the "Treasures of Britain Exhibition" at the Royal Academy in the New Year, which is highlighting the marvellous collections held by Municipal museums.

### **Conservation**

The anonymous drawing of Berwick Castle which was sent for conservation some months ago has now been returned. The drawing would seem to show the Earl of Dunbar's palace built between 1604 and 1611 but never lived in. The drawing has been restored very well and the conservator's researches into the materials used would suggest a date between 1830 and 1835. This might correspond with local antiquarian interest taken in the Castle in advance of its demolition by the railway company, and might point to Robert Good (brother of Thomas Sword Good) being the artist. Robert Good produced a print of the Castle in 1853, based (so he claimed) upon extensive research purporting to show the Castle as it was in 1296.

Work on the N.U.R. banner is now nearing completion at the Textile Conservation Centre at Hampton Court Palace. The conservators are very pleased at how the restoration has gone and hope to feature the banner in their next newsletter. The cost of this undertaking has been met in part by the Berwick Trades Council who have raised £2,500 towards the banner's restoration and the Museum is very grateful for their assistance.



## Museum Telephone Exchange

Visitors in the early part of the summer were intrigued to watch Mr Eric Bruce at work installing the former Holy Island Telephone exchange in the Museum. Those who arrived later in the summer were actually able to try it out and it proved very popular with the younger generation, many of whom had not used the dial telephones which were connected to the exchange. The exchange has also proved a boon to museum staff as we can now contact colleagues in the remote corners of the museum without resorting to shouting or running up the stairs! We are very grateful to Mr Bruce, a former BT engineer, for his efforts in installing the equipment, and also to Cllr. McClymont through whose good offices we obtained the machinery in the first place.

The exchange, a UAX 13, though not particularly old (it was installed on Holy Island in the early 1970's) has been superseded by recent technology. Its replacement is digital electronic which is much more compact and has no moving parts.

*Chris Green*

## EXHIBITS OF THE MONTH

### **Two Stone Axe-Heads Found on Chatton Moor Neolithic Period BERMG: 1997.12.1-2**

These items are the latest objects to be acquired by the Museum, having been presented by the finder's widow on 17<sup>th</sup> November. They were found just after the last war within half a mile of each other in an area of Chatton Moor which is dotted with ancient earthworks and other evidence of Prehistoric life. The shape of these axe-heads places them conclusively in the Neolithic Period, probably dating to around 2500 B.C. This was a time when farming had been underway in Britain for a while and an increasingly sophisticated culture was developing. One of these axe-heads is hard stone with a sharp cutting edge, which is slightly chipped. This could have been a practical tool, fixed into a shaft, but its highly polished surface belies such a mundane use. Recent research into the petrology of this sort of axe shows that often individual specimens have travelled far and wide from their places of geological origin. For example axe-heads made from the greenish distinctive stone found at Langdale Pikes in Cumbria, have been found throughout Britain. It could be that our polished axe is one of these. The wide distribution of these axe-heads points to a well developed trade, with either the axe-heads being the objects traded for use, or, some scholars have argued, the axe-heads were a form of currency for which goods could be exchanged.

Certainly some form of symbolic use must be inferred for our second axe-head which is roughly hewn in a stone that is too soft to be of any use in felling trees. Perhaps, if the currency argument is pursued, rough hewn and highly polished represented different levels of value in the Neolithic economy. Alternatively the axe-head, found in later period graves as a symbol of power, could have had a ritual significance now lost to our imaginings. We shall probably never know for sure.

[See illustrations on next page.]

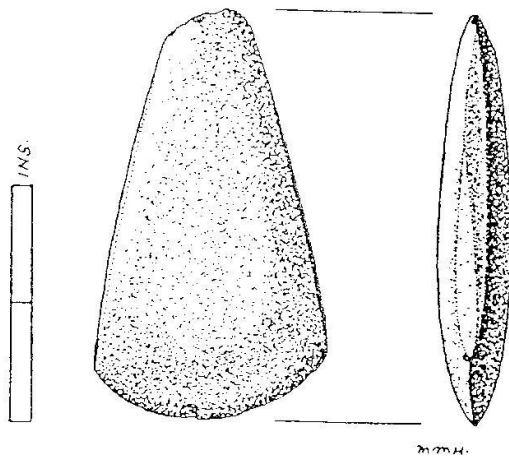


Fig. 1. ( $\frac{1}{2}$ )

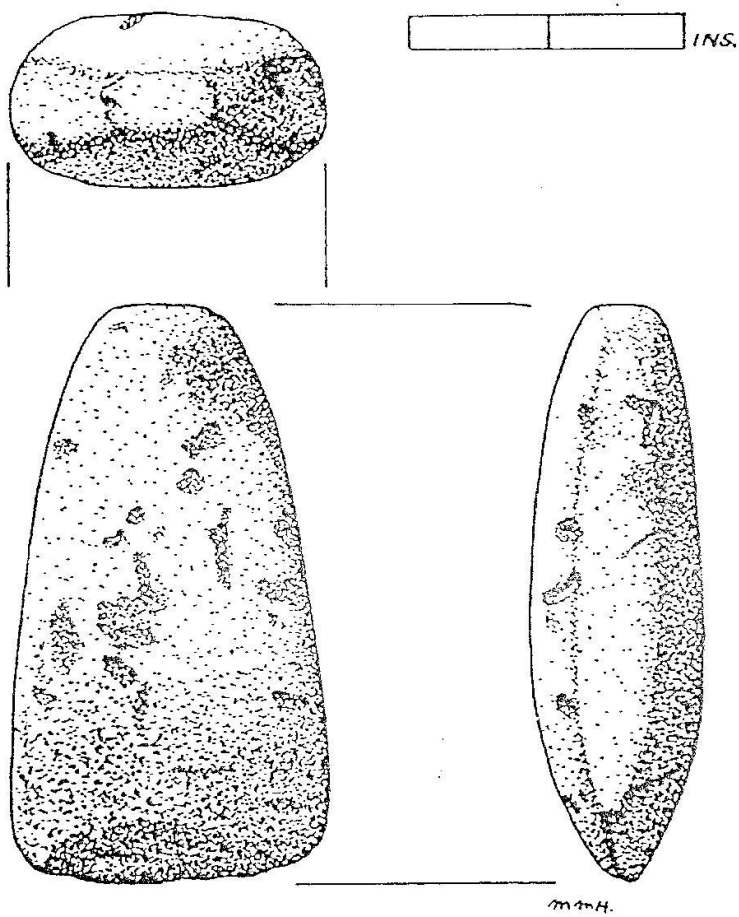


Fig. 2. ( $\frac{1}{2}$ )

The following advertisement appeared in the pages of the 'Leicester Journal' on the 4<sup>th</sup> of October 1844:-

## **RICHARDSON'S ROCK BAND**

### **New Hall, Leicester**

Messrs RICHARDSON, Inventors and Proprietors of the Rock Band, have the honour to announce to the Nobility, Gentry and Public of Leicester and its vicinity, that by request of several influential families, they will give one more MORNING and EVENING CONCERT, on Tuesday next, October 8<sup>th</sup>, 1844; the Programmes, comprising extensive selections of music from the works of the great masters, to be had of the Music and Booksellers, where also may be procured Tickets - Front Seats, 2s; Back Seats, 1s.

The intrepid band toured widely and an advertisement appeared in the 'Berwick Advertiser' for May 5<sup>th</sup> 1849, when it was reported that;

RICHARDSON'S ROCK BAND - The Messrs Richardson gave two concerts in this town on Monday - in the morning and evening. Both were respectably attended, and all present expressed themselves highly delighted not only with the accuracy and delicacy of the music, but also with the novel instruments by means of which such sounds were produced.

An example of a 'novel instrument' used by the band was reported by a local author writing of an entertainment by the same band in Stroud, in 1846, as consisting of 'two rows of stone laid on straw ropes and struck with stone hammers!' Heavy Metal music indeed!

*John Marlow*

Dennis Nicholson

Hon. Editor