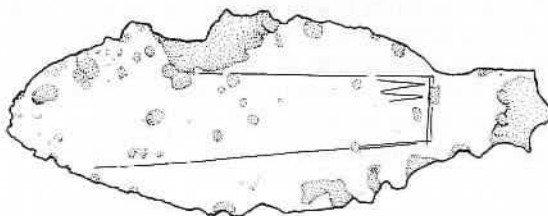
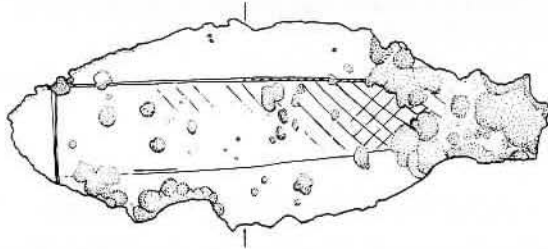


NOTES

AN EARLY BRONZE AGE RAZOR FROM WEST CRANMORE

A leaf-shaped razor was amongst a collection of predominantly Romano-British material found by Mr. Richard Pitcairn at West Cranmore (NGR ST 68814248). The razor is complete but for part of the tang, although the edge has sustained varying degrees of damage throughout most of its length. Viewed from the edge, the surviving tang is bent at an angle of some 10° out of alignment with the blade, something which probably occurred at the time of breakage. Both edges are damaged at the junction of blade and tang although enough survives to indicate that there was a gentle curve rather than a pronounced shoulder. The blade has a central longitudinal thickening with a regular tapering towards the edge on both faces. The dimensions are: length 72.5mm, width of blade 28.0mm, thickness 2.5mm, and surviving width of the tang 11.1mm. Honing has produced a mass of striations on both sides, generally running lengthwise.

Both blade faces have very finely incised decoration applied after casting. Corrosion damage makes the full extent of the decoration indecipherable. On one side it consists of cross-hatching within a rectangular central panel bounded by



Razor from West Cranmore Scale 1:1

double lines. In part at least the narrow strip between the double lines contains a third, broken line. The other side also seems to have had a rectangular panel formed of double lines although less has survived. Within the rectangle a small area of zig-zag ornamentation at the tang end is all that survives, but is sufficient to show that the decoration differed between the two faces.

The leaf shape and relatively broad tang place the razor in Butler and Smith Class 1A (1956, 28–29). Class 1A razors commonly possess a rivet hole in the tang; and a small notch in the centre of the broken edge may represent the vestige of a rivet hole. Such a position for a rivet hole would certainly be in keeping with comparable examples and implies that only a short length of the tang has been lost.

Dating from the Early Bronze Age or early Middle Bronze Age, razors are a relatively unusual find and most frequently occur as grave goods. The most closely comparable local find is the razor in Bristol City Museum (registration number E1783) probably found in Limekiln Barrow, Priddy, when it was dug by the Reverend J. Skinner in 1816 (Piggott 1946, 131, no. 29 and Grinsell 1971, 112). No evidence for a burial was found at West Cranmore either on the site or on aerial photographs. The nearest barrows lie c. 2km to the west. (Grinsell 1971, 103–104).

The razor has been donated to Somerset County Museum, accession number TTNCM: 60/1990/1.

Acknowledgements

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