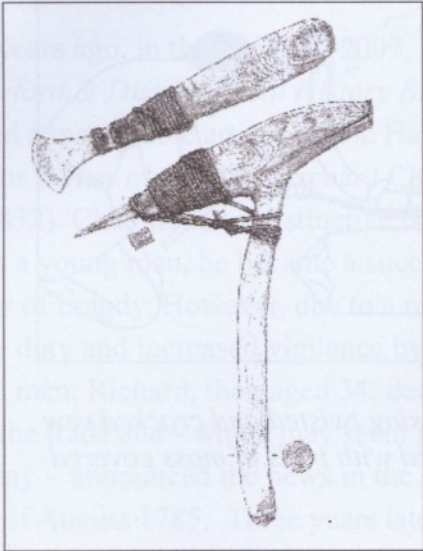


A characteristic Middle Bronze Age woodworking tool is known as a 'palstave'. Its haft can be fitted either in line with the blade or at right angles to it. Thus it can be used either as an axe for cutting, or as an adze for trimming and incutting. Tool marks on the boat showed that palstaves had been used in both ways. Fitting a handle (haft) on earlier flat axes was problematic; through the centuries the design of the butt-end changed in order to make the fastening more secure. Flanges and stops were created to prevent the metal tool splitting the wooden haft to which it was lashed.



*Replica bronze palstave  
hafted transversally for  
use as an adze*



Although the design incorporated a thickness of metal at the end of the flange, a weighty haft was still needed. Such hafts look ungainly to us, but bronze tools are not as heavy as are later tools made of iron. We found that in use the lashing naturally tightened as the forked haft was pushed into the butt. However, tools had to be sharpened frequently, and hafts replaced.



*New bronze tools shine like gold – a clue  
to how much they must have been desired.  
Archaeological finds are usually corroded  
after long burial in the soil.*

*Two views of two tools:*

*top: a replica Waddell type C2 palstave*

*below: a badly corroded palstave of the  
same type found in Capel St Andrew*

