

beautifully delineated; and, like Cuvier when he placed the bones of the mammoth together for the first time, we looked with delight on seeing the surface of the moon as no one had seen it before. With data like this to go by, we proposed to get a screen made fifty-six feet square, to cover the side of St. George's Hall, and to project the image across the hall by the means of an oxyhydrogen light. We were very kindly assisted in this by Mr. Wood, of the firm of Messrs Abraham and Co., Lord street.

It was found necessary to enlarge the first impression suitable for the magic lantern. This part of the arrangement was intrusted to Mr. John M'Innes, who adopted the mode of enlargement proposed by Mr. Stewart in a letter to Sir John Herschel, which appeared in the *Athenæum* early in 1854—with only this difference, that instead of having the box made in one piece he used his small camera, introducing the lens into the opening of a half-plate camera box, thus placing them front to front. The negative to be copied he placed in the groove of the slide of the small camera, and exposed it to the direct rays of the sun, or to the brightest portion of the sky, the picture being received upon a collodionised glass plate placed in the side of the larger box.

In the course of our experiments a question arose as to the practicability of taking a stereoscopic view of the moon. Mr. Hartnup suggested a plan by which this would be settled: it was by taking the moon twelve hours before her full and then twelve hours after, and the result was that we got a shadow of both sides. We put these impressions into the stereoscope, on looking through which the moon appeared a perfect ball.

This paper was followed by a description given by the Rev. A. Hume, D.C.L., Hon. Secretary, of the Ancient Messedag Stave or Prim Stave, derived chiefly from a treatise of the learned Professor Munch of Copenhagen.

After describing the old Scandinavian system of measuring and dividing the year, the rev. gentleman proceeded to say that, although the calendar was altered, on the introduction of Christianity, everything which could in any way be retained was transferred from the old to the new. Instead of Pagan festivals came those of the Christians, which out of church were celebrated as before by merry-making, and several, as, for instance, Christmas (yule) did not even change names. The Summers-feast became St. John's day, and the harvest-feast was either transferred to Michaelmas day, fourteen days before, or to All Saints' day, fourteen days after. Instead of the old pagan Gods, to whom special days had been dedicated, came the Catholic Christian saints, and the confidence reposed in the former as patrons was transferred to the latter. Inasmuch now as particular Gods were supposed to exercise influence over the weather, the yield of the crops, &c.; and the days dedicated to them denoted when particular work, as ploughing, shearing, &c., ought to be done, or were supposed to indicate the coming state of weather and the prosperity of the year (the so called Mark-days)—it became necessary to have saints to supply their place. As may be supposed, it was the office of the clergy to keep account of the time, and calculate when the various holydays would occur. For the laity this was much more difficult than formerly, as so many Christian festivals do not fall on any fixed day, but are governed by Easter, and thus occur now sooner and now later. The fixed holydays could be more

easily remembered by the common man, as, without knowing how to write, he might make a list of the days of the year in the shape of points or strokes, and denote the holidays by certain marks. It was of importance to know the proper "mark-days," not so much in a religious point of view, as to be able to make the necessary prophecies regarding the weather. There can be no doubt that such self-made calendars existed in Pagan times, and the same system prevailed after the introduction of Christianity up to the last century, by arranging the so-called Messe or Prim Staves.

There are two descriptions of Staves, Messedag-Staves (Messedag i.e. day of mass) and Prim-Staves. The former, which are the most simple, only contain the days and signs for those to be particularly observed; the Prim-Staves, besides, contain the marks for the Sundays and the changes in the moon, whence their name, as the first full-moon after equinox, (in Latin *prima luna*) was thus ascertained. The Messedag-Staves are met with most frequently. They consist mostly of flat pieces of wood, about an ell long, two inches broad and half an inch thick, and have frequently a handle, giving them the appearance of a sword. Sometimes they have served as measure of an ell. The flat side is divided into two unequal parts by a line running lengthways. In the narrower space the days are marked at equal distances, half a year on each side, or 182 marks on the one side and 183 on the other side. In the wider space, and connected with the days, stand the signs for those to be particularly observed. On the edges the weeks are indicated. The marks for the days do not run from January to July and from July to December, but, on the side called Vetr-Leid, i.e., winterside—from the 14th October till the 13th April; and on the other, called Somar Leid, i.e., summerside—from the 14th April till the 13th October. The signs are partly taken from the meaning they have with regard to the weather, husbandry, or from some legend of the Saint for the day. Hardly two staves alike can be found; they are more or less elaborately carved, and the days marked often vary. Nor are the Staves all of the form described: some are made of a round or oblong shape, and the name "Stave" can, therefore, hardly be applied to them. A semi-circular mark sometimes placed immediately before a Saint-day, denotes the eve of such a day.

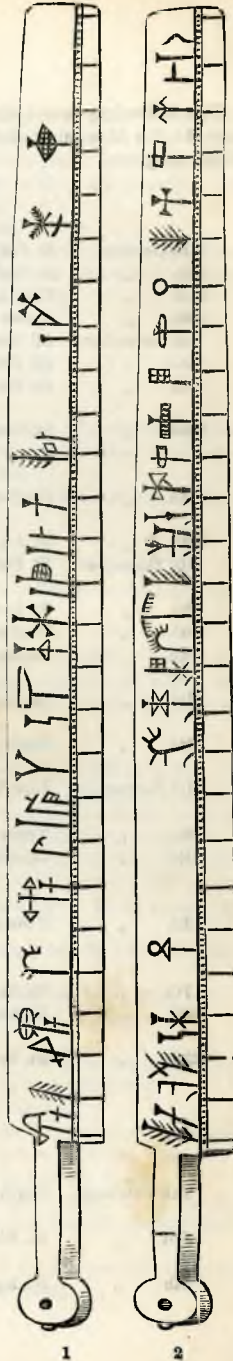


Fig. 1, Winter Side. Fig. 2, Summer Side. (One-fourth size.)

The following description will be seen to apply, with tolerable accuracy, to the Messedag stick belonging to the Society, an illustration of which is given.

WINTERSIDE.

14th October.	St. Calistus—Sign generally a fir tree.
18th "	St. Luke—Sign, a cross.
21st "	The 11,000 Virgins—A ring or some female figures.
28th "	Simon and Judas—A treble cross or a sledge.
1st November.	All Saints'—A ships mast, "the navigation then ceasing."
2nd "	All Souls'—A cross.
11th "	St. Martin's Day—The neck of a goose, which was then eaten (This custom is still observed.)
23rd "	St. Clement's Day—An anchor, the Saint being tied to one and drowned. All vessels should be in port on this day.
25th "	St. Catherine—A cross—sometimes a wheel to indicate the way she died.
30th "	St. Andrew—A fishing-hook or St. Andrew's cross. X
4th December.	St. Barbara—Generally a tower or a chain to indicate her imprisonment.
6th "	St. Nicholas—Sometimes a candle with three branches.
8th "	Virgin's Conception—Generally a cross.
13th "	St. Lucy—Sometimes a pike "many fish being then caught." Sometimes a stake, St. L. being burnt.
21st "	St. Thomas—Sometimes a barrel as the Christmas ale was then brewed.
25th "	Christmas—A drinking-horn, seven branched candlestick or a sun.
1st January.	New Year—A small sun, a treble cross or an hour-glass. If the sky was red, war would follow.
6th "	Three Kings—Generally three crowns, sometimes a can.
11th "	St. Brictiva (a saint not known)—Generally a horse, as a peasant, who neglected the day and drove out, broke one of his horse's legs.
13th "	Twentieth day after Christmas—Generally a reversed horn or a barrel, the Christmas ale being then finished.
17th "	St. Anthony—Generally a cross.
20th "	Fabian and Sebastian—A double cross or an axe, as firewood should be cut about this time.
25th "	St. Paul's Conversion—A cross, sometimes a bow or a sun. If the sun shone, even so long only as it took to mount a horse, the year would be a good one:—Storm would bring war; Fog, sickness; Snow and Rain, famine.
2nd February.	Purification of Virgin—Some candles or a seven branched candlestick.
8rd "	St. Blaise—Generally a vessel or a horn. If it blew on that day it would blow all the year.
5th "	St. Agatha—Generally a mouse.

- 22nd February. St. Peter's Stool—Generally a key—sometimes a stone. The mariners should commence getting their vessels ready. There would be no change in the weather for forty days following.
- 24th " St. Matthias—Sometimes a cross.
- 12th March St. Gregory—Sometimes the figure of the saint; also a bird.
- 25th " Annunciation of Mary—The sign was generally a figure representing Mary.

SUMMERSIDE.

- 14th April. Tiburtius and Valerianus—A fir tree. If it snowed that day it would snow nine times more before Midsummer.
- 16th " St. Magnus—A pickaxe, as the fieldwork was then to commence.
- 23rd " St. George—Sometimes a cross.
- 25th " St. Mark—No definition of sign.
- 1st May. Philip and James—Sometimes a double cross, or a bird in a tree.
- 3rd " Invention of the Cross—A cross.
- 15th " St. Hallvard—A millstone, sometimes a number of dots signifying corn, three days before and three days after being the best time for sowing.
- 17th June. St. Botolf—Generally a cross or a scythe.
- 24th " St. John the Baptist—Sign sometimes a head on a dish. If it rained there would be a wet harvest.
- 29th " St. Peter and St. Paul—A key—sometimes a flower, as medicinal herbs should then be gathered.
- 2nd July. Visitation of the Virgin—St. Swithin—Generally two branches of a tree crossways. As the weather was on that day it would remain till 29th July.
- 8th " St. Sunniva—A great holyday, sign generally a double cross.
- 14th " Midsummer—A rake or a stave.
- 20th " St. Margaret—Generally a bucket the day being often wet.
- 22nd " St. Mary Magdalen—Sometimes a stool or a half-moon.
- 25th " St. John the Apostle—A sword.
- 29th " St. Olaf—The axe of St. Olaf. If full moon fell on that day a severe winter would follow.
- 3rd August. Discovery of St. Olaf's Body—A small axe
- 10th " St. Lawrence—A gridiron. If the day was clear, the winter would be severe; if misty, damp.
- 15th " Assumption of Mary—A crown, or a female figure.
- 24th " St. Bartholomew—Generally a figure of St. B. If the day was clear good harvest weather would follow.
- 1st September. St. Giles—A millstone, because if the day was dry the mills would want water.

8th September.	Nativity of the Virgin—A tree—sometimes a crown or a pair of shears, as the sheep should then be shorn.
14th "	Exaltation of the Cross—A cross.
21st "	St. Matthew—Sometimes a balance denoting equinox.
29th "	St. Michael the Archangel—Sometimes the face of St. M. If it froze before that day it would freeze after the 1st May.
4th October.	St. Francis—Sometimes a cross.
7th "	St. Birgita—Sometimes a cross with a ring at the top.

ANNUAL EXCURSION.

The Annual Excursion was made on Saturday the 27th of June, 1863; when the members, accompanied by numerous friends of both sexes, visited the Parish Church of Sefton, which was inspected under the guidance of Mr. Picton, the Rev. Dr. Hume and other gentlemen acquainted with the remarkable features of the building. On quitting the church the party proceeded to Ince Blundell Hall, which was kindly thrown open on the occasion by the proprietor, Thomas Weld Blundell, Esq.

A considerable time was spent in the examination of the fine collection of works of art in sculpture and painting for which the hall is renowned, and the beautiful pleasure-grounds were also visited; after which the company drove to Waterloo, where they dined together, Joseph Mayer, Esq., F.S.A., &c., Vice-President, occupying the chair, A. Craig Gibson, Esq., F.S.A., Hon. Curator, and D. Buxton, Esq., F.R.S.L., Hon. Librarian, acting as vice-chairmen. The usual loyal and complimentary toasts were proposed and responded to, that of "Continued Prosperity to the Historic Society of Lancashire and "Cheshire," being given by the Venerable Archdeacon Jones, and acknowledged by the Rev. A. Hume, D.C.L., &c., Hon. Secretary. Dr. Ihne, Dr. Heywood Thompson, J. A. Picton, Esq., F.S.A., George Artingstall, Esq., and other gentlemen also delivered addresses, at the close of which the party returned to Liverpool highly pleased with the day's proceedings.