

A survey of the Neolithic pottery of eastern and central Scotland

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ABSTRACT

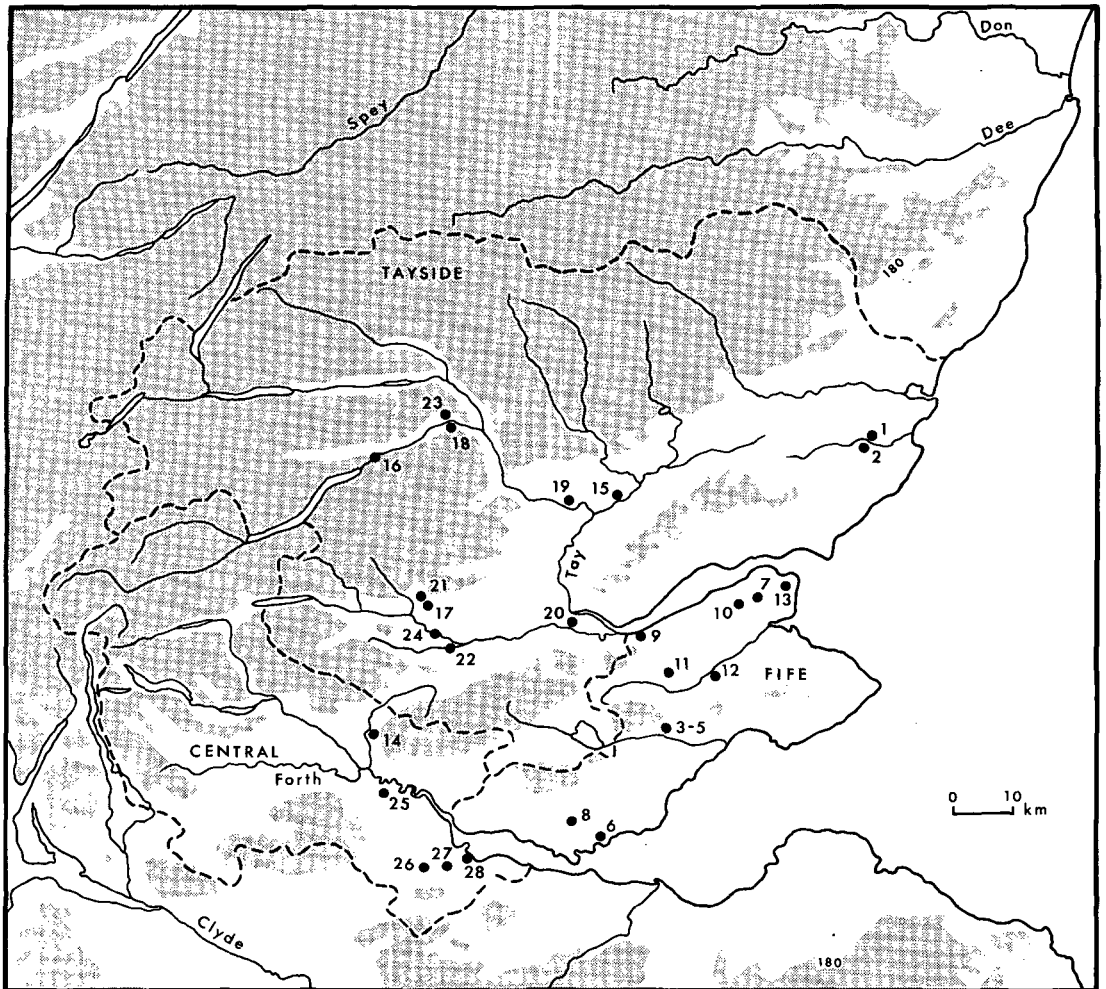
Pottery from at least 16 sites in eastern and central Scotland can be attributed more or less confidently to the Earlier Neolithic. Although the quality of much of the evidence precludes detailed classification, at least some of the groups, characterized by the presence of carinated bowls, may be presumed to date from an early stage of the Neolithic. Other types, including a range of heavy unshouldered bowls, were certainly current by the mid- to late fourth millennium BC, in terms of calibrated radiocarbon dates, while the evidence from other regions suggests that some decorated pottery may have made a similarly early appearance. The Later Neolithic pottery from the region is discussed briefly, mainly to highlight some of the problems which may be resolved by future discoveries.

At least some of the Earlier Neolithic pottery from the region derives from intact contexts apparently involving the structured, and probably selective, deposition of artefacts; however, much of the material derives from sites where the presence of the Neolithic sherds can really only be explained as residual, and almost certainly unrepresentative, scatters; as yet, major domestic assemblages are unknown. Difficulties in classifying and dating the pottery, and in interpreting its significance, are unavoidable while the inventory of Neolithic ceramics from the region remains so very restricted.

INTRODUCTION

In the course of preparing his contribution to the recent volume of essays presented to Audrey Henshall (Sharples & Sheridan 1992), the present writer attempted to catalogue all finds of Earlier Neolithic pottery from eastern and central Scotland. Unfortunately, owing to constraints of space, publication of that catalogue had to be deferred, and discussion had to be focused mainly on the group of pottery from Barbush Quarry, Dunblane, which formed the core of the paper (Cowie 1992). This survey therefore complements and augments that paper, by presenting not only a further range of unpublished material but also a number of sherds which have periodically been referred to in the literature but which have not hitherto been treated in detail. However, in order to allow the present discussion to stand on its own and to avoid the need for undue cross-referencing, some of the points made in the previous paper have been reiterated here.

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ILLUS 1 Map showing area covered by survey: the numbers correspond to those used in the catalogue

The emphasis will be on the Earlier Neolithic ceramic evidence; summaries of the sources of Late Neolithic pottery from the region have been included in the Catalogue for the sake of completeness, but such material is largely beyond the scope of this paper, either because it has been, or is soon to be, published in accessible form (eg Longworth 1967; Simpson & Coles 1990; Mercer 1981; Barclay & Russell-White 1993; Stevenson forthcoming). The geographical scope of the area covered by the catalogue comprises Tayside, Fife and Central Regions, and thus includes material from the former counties of Angus, Perthshire, Fife and Stirlingshire, and part of West Lothian (illus 1). While a comprehensive study of the Neolithic pottery from Lowland Scotland as a whole must await full publication of several of the sites mentioned, if not new discoveries, it is hoped that this survey will provide a guide to the available source material for a major part of that zone and

that it will usefully complement Henshall's corpus of Neolithic pottery from the north-east of Scotland (1983) and Kinnes's wider review of the Scottish scene (1985).

Where a site included in the Catalogue is mentioned in the text, the relevant catalogue number is shown in parentheses thus: Douglasmuir (2), Angus.

The radiocarbon dates cited in the text are listed in Table 1, accompanied by details of their errors at one standard deviation and by their laboratory reference numbers. Within the text, individual radiocarbon dates are cited in their calibrated form, to one sigma, and labelled 'cal BC'. The calibration is based on high-precision C14 measurements of Irish oaks as published by Pearson *et al* (1986), and has been produced using the University of Washington Quaternary Isotope Laboratory Radiocarbon Calibration Program 1987; the ranges therefore vary slightly from those cited in Cowie 1992 (see Sharples & Sheridan 1992, ix).

EARLIER NEOLITHIC POTTERY

Carinated bowls and associated pottery

The most distinctive element of assemblages of Earlier Neolithic plain wares in Scotland as a whole is the carinated bowl. Disregarding differences in detail, plain carinated bowls form a major component of the sizeable assemblages from Boghead, Moray (Burl 1984) and Easterton of Roseisle, Moray (Henshall 1983), Auchategan, Argyll (Marshall 1978), and Biggar Common, Lanarkshire (Sheridan 1989; Ward 1990, 1991, 1992). Bowls also feature prominently among several smaller but significant groups of pottery (eg Lochhill, Dumfriesshire (Masters 1973); Camster Long, Caithness (Masters forthcoming) and Machrie Moor, Arran (Haggarty 1991). However, the relevant groups of pottery in the region under review are all very small, precluding similarly detailed discussion: they include Balfarg Riding School (5: Area C) and Clatchard Craig (9), Fife; Pitnacree (23), Perthshire; and Bannockburn (25) and Bantaskine (26), Stirlingshire. To this list should be added a number of rim and/or body sherds probably from carinated vessels, from Boysack Mills (1: Cat. no. 2), Angus; Barns Farm (6) and Calais Muir (8: Cat. no. 1), Fife; and Croft Moraig (16: excavators' Group II), North Mains (22), and, less certainly, Barbush Quarry (14), Perthshire.

The forms of these vessels vary considerably: some of the pots from Clatchard Craig have relatively deep proportions and feature upright necks and prominent carinations, while the groups from Balfarg Riding School (Area C), Pitnacree, Bannockburn and Bantaskine include pots with more open profiles – although none has the very open flared forms seen in the north-east. There is also a wide range in fabric quality, for example amongst those groups just cited. For delicacy and finish, few vessels compare with the fragmentary carinated bowl from Bantaskine (26: Cat. no. 1) with its fine ripple-burnished surfaces, the thinness of the walls of this vessel possibly having been achieved by beating, or by careful trimming of the clay when it was leather-hard. The walls of the fine bowl from Pitnacree decrease in thickness below the carination to less than 4 mm, reflecting a similar degree of skill in manufacture, while the best of the Clatchard Craig pottery is also comparable in quality. Despite their thinness, such vessels were certainly used: a recurrent feature noted on sherds from the lower bodies of bowls from several sites is the presence of small scars on the surfaces where spalls appear to have been detached as a result of heat action. Although the forms of the pots are uncertain, carinated vessels with heavier rims and of more substantial proportions are likely to be represented by the sherds from Barns Farm (6), Calais Muir (8) and Bantaskine (26: Cat. no. 2).

Although relatively rare on such vessels, lugs were certainly or probably present on carinated pots found at North Mains and at Pitnacree; it has been suggested (Atkinson 1962, 8–11; Henshall 1983, 31) that this may reflect influence from a different ceramic tradition, but the possibility of correlation with vessels of certain size or function requires further investigation. Within the region under review, decorative fluting is also very rare, occurring only on the rather unusual bowl from Cultoquhey (17), Perthshire, which has wide rippling on the neck and upper body, and on two of the sherds, probably from carinated pots, from Barns Farm, Fife. Despite the relatively wide geographical area under review, the imbalances in the actual distribution of sites and the sizes of the assemblages, it again appears that real differences will be found to exist between the Earlier Neolithic pottery of east/central and north-east Scotland, where the prevalence of fluting forms one of the characteristics of what can tentatively be seen as a north-east style (Henshall, *in* Burl 1984, 61). The unusual features of the bowl from Cultoquhey have been noted by Henshall, who pointed out that it seemed to represent a link between the pottery of eastern/central Scotland and the Achnacree Bowls of the west, ‘having a rim form and fabric not quite typical of either’ (1972, 172); the recovery of sherds in similar fabrics from North Mains suggests that this aspect need not be seen as quite so exceptional (Barclay 1983a, 251).

However, all the groups of pottery discussed above are very small; inevitably, therefore, as long as a representative cross-section of the Earlier Neolithic repertoire remains wanting, the significance of these variations in form and fabric will be uncertain. At several sites, other forms are certainly present. At Clatchard Craig (9), at least one rim sherd was considered to be from an unshouldered vessel (Close-Brooks 1986, 151, no. 7); a rim sherd of somewhat similar form was found with sherds of a carinated bowl in one of the pits at Bannockburn (25: Cat. no. 2). At Balfarg Riding School, the classic ‘Grimston’-type carinated bowl was associated with a shouldered bowl with a more upright neck (5: Cat. no. 2) while a further sherd from the same pit group apparently derives from a simple unshouldered bowl. Simple hemispherical bowls form a minor feature of the assemblage from Pitnacree, a reasonably satisfactory closed group, while parts of two simple bowls were recovered along with carinated vessels from Bantaskine (26: Cat. nos. 3 & 4), although nothing is known of their original context. Several of these simple bowls share an almost gritless fabric, perhaps suggesting some common functional type within the ceramic repertoire. Finally, rim sherds of plain, somewhat globular small bowls with little elaboration of the rim, were thought to be represented at Barbush (14). Other aspects of the range of fabrics found among these groups of Earlier Neolithic pottery have been discussed previously (Barclay 1983a, 249–53; Cowie 1992, 279–80), but there is still a pressing need for further research on Neolithic pottery manufacture, production and distribution in Scotland.

‘Heavy bowls’

In discussing the pottery from Barbush Quarry, the writer drew attention to two rim sherds which appeared to stand in marked contrast with the remainder of the Earlier Neolithic material from that site on account of their generally heavy proportions and coarse fabric (14: Cowie 1992, nos. 12 & 13). These were compared with the important group of distinctive pottery recovered from a series of pits and scoops excavated to the west of the Balfarg Henge (5: Area A). The Balfarg group comprises predominantly what appears to be a range of deep and heavy bowl forms in well-made but coarse fabrics, often bearing obvious signs of tooling of the surfaces and a low standard of finish.

Such 'heavy bowls' augment what has hitherto been a relatively restricted range of related pottery, mainly from southern Scotland: this includes the much smaller bowl from Oatslie Sandpit, near Roslin, Midlothian (Stevenson 1948, 294–5), portions of vessels from Knappers, Dunbartonshire (MacKay 1948, 236–7, no. 5; Ritchie & Adamson 1981, 184–7, nos. 1 & 2, with details of comparative material in the Clyde area) and rim sherds from two large vessels found in the course of excavations on the Roman civilian settlement at Inveresk (Henshall, *in* Thomas 1988, fiche 1: G10–11). The writer has suggested that this accumulating range of unshouldered, relatively coarse, heavily proportioned pottery may be seen as *analogous* to the so-called Towthorpe style of Yorkshire, which appears to have been current as a ceramic tradition complementary to the Grimston style during much of the fourth millennium cal BC (Manby 1988).

Relatively coarse thick-walled vessels do form a component of assemblages of Earlier Neolithic pottery (eg East Finnercy, Aberdeenshire: Henshall 1983, 30, 42). It is thus perhaps arguable that the group of heavy bowls from Balfarg simply represents one extreme of a range of bowl pottery manufacture. However, not only are the rim and wall thicknesses considerably greater than those found in the heavy component of early assemblages, but also the fabric is quite different in composition and texture, inviting comparison instead with the generally coarser wares of the Later Neolithic. While the ancestry of the vessel shapes is hardly in doubt, the heaviness of the rim forms, and the relative coarseness and thickness of the fabrics appear to reflect changing methods and techniques of manufacture. Typologically, such vessels may lie behind the development of the thick-rimmed heavy bowls which form a major element of the Scottish Late Neolithic Impressed Ware assemblages – a development that principally involved further elaboration of the rim to provide a major 'platform' for decoration. However, further work is required in Northern Britain to permit a more objective assessment of these differences.

Decorated pottery

An equally cautious note needs to be struck, for the present, when considering the possible contribution of Earlier Neolithic decorated pottery to the so-called 'Impressed Wares' of the Late Neolithic. At the moment the evidence from the region under review is limited to two rim sherds from Douglasmuir (2), Angus, and a body sherd from North Mains (22), Perthshire, one of a small group of sherds recovered from pits associated with the smaller of the two ring-ditches excavated at that site (Barclay 1983a, 243, 246, SF8, fig. 63). In discussing that sherd, the present writer noted that aspects of that particular small ceramic group lacked ready comparison in the relevant Scottish Earlier Neolithic material, and was driven to hint at the possibility of more distant links with decorated styles in the South (*ibid.*, 252). However, tentative comparison was made between the North Mains sherd and the two rim sherds from Douglasmuir, now published here. Attention may also be drawn here to the close similarity in form between the Douglasmuir sherds and the rim sherd of an undecorated bowl with unusual vertically perforated lug from the same context at North Mains (Barclay 1983a, 246, SF7, fig. 63).

Publication of the pottery assemblage from Balbridie, in Kincardine, may provide in due course a more secure framework against which such miscellaneous decorated sherds can be assessed, without recourse to a search for long-distance parallels. Balbridie falls outwith the geographical scope of this paper but some features of the pottery assemblage are worthy of mention, for the site is of major significance from the ceramic viewpoint as well as

architecturally (cf. Ralston 1982). In the first place, a somewhat misleading impression of the nature of the Balbridie material has emerged as a result of the emphasis placed on the decorated biconical vessels in the main published interim report (Ralston 1982, 240–2, fig. 1). Although very distinctive, these vessels form part of a wider ceramic assemblage, characterized by bowls with simple rims and carinations and occasional fluting, and thus in keeping with much of the Earlier Neolithic pottery from the north-east catalogued by Henshall (1983; and see Burl 1984, 61). Turning to the biconical vessels themselves, the likelihood that there is a close relationship to Unstan bowls has been strengthened by the recent discovery of sherds of classic Unstan bowl form at Spurryhillock, near Stonehaven (unpublished excavations by Centre for Field Archaeology, University of Edinburgh).

Whatever its origins, the presence of a vigorous Earlier Neolithic decorated pottery style in the north-east, characterized by biconical vessels with incised and stab-and-drag decoration, suggests that there may be a satisfactory 'indigenous' context for the presence in that region of vessels such as the unusual bowl from Den of Craig, Auchindoir (Callander 1929, 34, figs. 40, 49), and, as Isla McInnes noted, for the range of decorated Late Neolithic biconical vessels with impressed decoration, best represented by the pit group from Brackmont Mill (McInnes 1969, 25; Longworth 1967, 67–75). Finally, although not of great size, the Balbridie assemblage is of unusual importance in that it appears to have the elements of a more truly representative range of ceramic forms than most of the groups of pottery from the north-east or eastern/central Scotland; it incorporates vessels ranging widely in size, form and fabric and quality of finish, and presumably reflects patterns of functional variation that might be expected in a domestic setting (even if that begs the question of the function of the building), with the added significance that the assemblage is well contexted and supported by radiocarbon dates.

Contexts of Earlier Neolithic pottery

An assemblage of the quality of Balbridie is still wanting in the region under review; however, while the inventory of pots has not been greatly augmented by recent finds, knowledge of the circumstances of their deposition has been enhanced by their recovery in the course of systematic excavations. In particular, pottery from Balfarg Riding School (5) and Bannockburn (25), and possibly that from Douglasmuir (2) too, was recovered from pits which, despite truncation, betray recurrent patterns of deliberate filling, involving the structured deposition of both artefactual and non-artefactual material (Barclay & Russell-White 1993).

In most cases, however, nothing of value is known about the original contexts of the pottery from the region: several sherds have been found in the course of work on sites of later date (eg Inchtuthil (19) and Strageath (24), Perthshire) and are presumed to derive from contexts disturbed in the course of that later activity. The small group of sherds from Boysack Mills (1), Angus, is thought to be residual but their relatively fresh condition and the presence of organic deposit on one body sherd (Cat. no. 3) suggest their fairly rapid incorporation into the ditch fills following disturbance of original contexts. The group of pottery from Clatchard Craig (9) adds to the small but possibly significant body of evidence for Neolithic activity on Scottish hilltops (Close-Brooks 1986, 125), while the fragmentary collection of sherds from the shell-mounds at Nether Kinneil (28), West Lothian complements a range of radiocarbon dates demonstrating activity on these sites at a later date than originally anticipated (Sloan 1982).

Dating

Radiocarbon determinations for so-called Grimston/Lyles Hill pottery in Britain and Ireland appear to range from the late fifth to the mid-third millennium in terms of calibrated radiocarbon dates BC. However, recent reappraisal of the dating evidence for carinated bowl assemblages suggests that the currency of carinated bowls, if strictly defined, may have been more restricted, and possibly limited to the first half of the fourth millennium cal BC (Herne 1988, 23–4); much of the evidence for the supposed prolonged currency of such bowls has been called into question (*ibid.*, 14–15). Until a range of dates became available from the north-east, the date of 3699–3508 cal BC from the pre-mound surface at Pitnacree virtually underpinned Neolithic chronology in Lowland Scotland; to this may now be added several relevant dates from other sites in the region under review, including Douglasmuir (2), Angus, Balfarg Riding School (5: Area C) and Barns Farm (6), Fife, and North Mains (22), Perthshire. Also relevant here is the early date of 4150–4055 cal BC obtained from charcoal from a post-pit associated with bowl fragments at Linlithgow Priory, West Lothian (Lindsay 1989, 63). The early dating of the carinated bowl assemblages has been reinforced by several recent radiocarbon dates from the west of Scotland (Newton, Islay, 3813–3694 cal BC: McCullagh 1989, and three from Machrie Moor, Arran, ranging from 4407–4331 cal BC to 3649–3498 cal BC: Haggarty 1991, 57–8). The date of 2820–2690 cal BC (I-4705) from Auchategan, Cowal, Argyll (Marshall 1978, 43) now looks increasingly isolated (cf Kinnes 1985, 23, *illus* 4).

In the area under review, the reassessment of the dates for carinated bowls has implications for the supposed association of Earlier Neolithic sherds and coarse ware in the so-called ‘Flat Rim Ware’ tradition at Croft Moraig (16) in particular; the grounds for associating the two groups of pottery at that site now look weak. Only three ‘Western Neolithic’ sherds were found, as opposed to 26 sherds of coarse pottery; the former are now more economically interpreted as residual. While Stuart Piggott and Derek Simpson were right to draw attention to the coarse component of Earlier Neolithic assemblages, at least some of the coarse pottery at Croft Moraig invites more ready comparison with undecorated Grooved Ware (Henshall, *in* Mercer 1981, 132).

The group of heavy plain bowls found at Balfarg, which it has been suggested may be analogous to the Towthorpe style, can be dated firmly to the mid- to later fourth millennium cal BC as a result of two radiocarbon determinations from pits containing sherds of this type at Balfarg Riding School (5): Area A), one of the dates being obtained from a carbonized cereal grain actually embedded in the wall of a rim sherd (3474–3378 cal BC (GU-2606); 3691–3625 cal BC (UtC-1302)).

The lower end of the date range of these vessels is uncertain, although there is some decidedly weak evidence to suggest that such pottery may still have been current both in northern England and in Scotland as late as the first half of the third millennium cal BC (cf Henshall, *in* Thomas 1988, *fiche* 1: G11).

LATE NEOLITHIC POTTERY

As mentioned at the outset, a review of the Late Neolithic pottery from the region is beyond the scope of this paper, but mention may be made of a few of the issues which may be resolved by future discoveries.

The general family of Late Neolithic ‘Impressed Wares’ has recently been augmented

TABLE 1
List of radiocarbon dates cited in text

<i>Site</i>	<i>Lab. no.</i>	<i>Radiocarbon date (uncal BC)</i>	<i>Calibrated date range (cal BC)*</i>
Sites listed in catalogue:			
Angus			
Douglasmuir (2)	GU-1210	2900±55	3701–3623
Fife			
Balfarg Riding	GU-1903	2815±55	3636–3507
School (5)	GU-2604	3220±90	4047–3932
	GU-2605	3000±70	3813–3682
	GU-2606	2770±70	3474–3378
	UtC-1302	2880±40	3691–3625
Barns Farm (6)	SRR-529	2761±50	3431–3378
Kinloch Farm, Collessie (11)	GU-1375	2775±70	3624–3571
Perthshire			
Grandtully (18)	GaK-1396	1970±100	2577–2280
	GaK-1398	2130±190	2910–2404
North Mains (22)	GU-1546	2690±65	3513–3393
Pitnacree (23)	GaK-601	2860±90	3699–3508
West Lothian			
Nether Kinneil (28)	SRR-1485	2230±50	2789–2737
	SRR-1486	3110±50	3954–3898
Other sites mentioned in text:			
Auchategan, Argyll	I-4705	2300±110	2820–2690
Newton, Islay, Argyll	GU-1952	3010±60	3813–3694
Machrie Moor, Arran	GU-2315	2820±90	3649–3498
	GU-2320	3550±70	4407–4331
	GU-2321	2870±50	3690–3619
Meldon Bridge Peeblesshire	SRR-645	2132±80	2668–2573
	SRR-646	2336±50	2928–2881
Linlithgow Priory West Lothian	GU-1875	3315±55	4150–4055
Thirlings Northumberland	HAR-1451	2130±130	2700–2560

* Calibrated age ranges, to one sigma, by probability method, using the University of Washington Quaternary Isotope Laboratory Radiocarbon Calibration Program 1987 (CALIB Rev 2.0)

by a small assemblage from Balfarg Riding School (5), composed of badly abraded sherds recovered from the old ground surface under, or incorporated into the make-up of, two cairns (Barclay 1985; Barclay & Russell-White 1993). In particular, the recovery of sherds of an unusual biconical vessel with stab-and-drag decoration from Balfarg Riding School has added a further example to the range of decorated Late Neolithic vessels exemplified by the important pit group found at Brackmont Mill (7), while vessels of this general form have also been found in pits/scoops at Grandtully (18) and near the margin of the barrow at North Mains (22: see Barclay 1983a, 211, SF 21, fig. 54). Pending full publication of the Balbridie assemblage, the origins of these Late Neolithic biconical forms may well lie among Earlier Neolithic assemblages in the general region of northern and eastern Scotland, and it may be unnecessary to invoke the direct influence of Peterborough styles (*pace* Longworth 1967, 74). In general terms, however, these 'Impressed Wares' clearly form the northern counterpart of Peterborough wares further south, but variations in the forms of the pots and the relative frequency of decorative techniques suggest a variety of local sub-styles (McInnes 1969).

Grandtully is one of the few sites to have furnished radiocarbon dates for features associated with this general tradition of pottery (Simpson & Coles 1990, 35); determinations of 2910–2450 cal BC (GaK-1398) and 2570–2210 cal BC (GaK-1396) indicate a date range in the third millennium. These are in keeping with the dates from Meldon Bridge, Peeblesshire (Burgess 1976), where a cluster of five dates ranging from 2928–2881 cal BC to 2668–2573 cal BC indicate the general currency of the local 'Meldon Bridge style' (Burgess 1976, 173–6); this in turn is in agreement with a date of 2700–2560 cal BC for related pottery from Thirlings in Northumberland (Miket 1976, 119).

Such discoveries are gradually helping to redress the wholly biased distribution of Late Neolithic pottery in Scotland resulting from collections from coastal dunes such as Luce Sands, Hedderwick and Tentsmuir, where unusual circumstances may favour both survival and recovery. The evidence of contemporary settlements remains elusive but the potential for recovery has been demonstrated by the partial excavation of a ditched enclosure of Neolithic date at Kinloch Farm, Collessie (11: Barber 1982), where a radiocarbon date of 3624–3571 cal BC was obtained from charcoal within the inner ditch. Further light may be thrown on Neolithic settlement as extensive fieldwork continues in the Leuchars area of Fife. In this context, too, the potential time-depth of settlements in the upland areas and in marginal land should not be overlooked; this was demonstrated as long ago as the 1940s by the excavations at Scotstarvit Covert (12), Fife.

While not wholly satisfactory, the term Impressed Ware has been retained here (and elsewhere, eg in Barclay & Russell-White 1993) to distinguish this category from Grooved Ware. As noted in the introduction, the need for further discussion is obviated by Audrey Henshall's consideration of the sizeable assemblages from Balfarg Henge (4) and Balfarg Riding School (5). The discovery of Grooved Ware at Beech Hill House, Coupar Angus (15), Perthshire, has extended the regional distribution north of the Tay, and it has been suggested that some of the broad gaps in the Scottish mainland distribution pattern might begin to close before long (Cowie 1992, 283). Just how rapidly the overall picture might change is suggested by the results of recent rescue excavations in southern Scotland where the hitherto limited inventory of Grooved Ware has been significantly augmented by several groups of pottery, eg Wellbrae and Hillend, Lanarkshire (CFA 1992), and Beckton, Dumfriesshire (Pollard 1992).

It is worth reiterating the point that the northern distribution, at least, has to take into account that plain vessels that were formerly classed under the portmanteau heading of 'Flat

Rimmed Ware' may be related to the undecorated component of Grooved Ware assemblages (as Henshall noted with specific reference to Balbirnie (3), Fife, *in* Mercer 1981, 132; but see also Henshall 1972, 182). Thus, as Henshall noted, coarse plain sherds from Croft Moraig (16), Moncrieffe (20) and Monzie (21) now have to be seen in the light of the sizeable assemblages available from Balfarg (4,5).

CONCLUSION

In summary, a limited quantity of pottery from at least 16 sites in the region under review can be attributed more or less confidently to the Earlier Neolithic. The quality of the evidence currently precludes detailed classification, but at least some of the groups characterized by the presence of carinated bowls must date from an early stage of the Neolithic – perhaps as early as the first half of the fourth millennium cal BC. As the body of material grows there may be scope for the recognition of regional variations within the bowl assemblages.

Other types, including the range of 'heavy' unshouldered bowls, were certainly current by the mid- to late fourth millennium cal BC, while the evidence from other regions suggests an equally early appearance for decorated pottery. At least some of the vessels from the region appear to derive from intact contexts involving the structured, and probably selective, deposition of artefacts (eg at Bannockburn and Balfarg Riding School); however, much of the material derives from sites where the presence of the Neolithic sherds can most economically be explained as residual, and again almost certainly unrepresentative, scatters. Difficulties in classifying and dating the pottery, and in proceeding to higher levels of interpretation, are hardly avoidable while the inventory of Neolithic ceramics in east and central Scotland remains so very restricted.

In discussing the small group of Early Neolithic pottery from Clatchard Craig (*in* Close-Brooks 1986, 151), Audrey Henshall drew attention to the inadequacies of the inventory of such pottery from the region as a whole, noting that most of the sherds were too small to merit discussion and were lacking significant associations – limitations that very soon became apparent to the present writer once he had embarked on this paper! However, while the material at our disposal has not changed radically enough over the intervening period to allow many new insights into the Neolithic pottery in the region, the inventory of finds has been augmented sufficiently for this review to have been worthwhile, particularly in the light of several new radiocarbon dates. If nothing else such an exercise enables the present shortcomings of the evidence, and some of the possibilities for the future, to be brought into sharper focus.

In his seminal paper on Scottish Neolithic pottery, J G Callander mapped and described the sherds from only one site – Bantaskine – within the area covered by this survey (1929, 90, fig. 60). Approximately 30 years later, Atkinson listed only three additional sites: Cultoquhey, Scotstarvit and Tentsmuir (1962, 33–6, figs. 1, 2, 4). The fact that the total number of findspots is now approaching 30 should, perhaps, therefore give some grounds for optimism, but it is still a low figure, and it masks, as we have seen, the indifferent quality of many of the sources. Both points are reflections of the relative absence of modern fieldwork in the farming heartlands of lowland Scotland, absence which is only gradually coming to be redressed as their archaeological richness is revealed from the air (Barclay 1992; RCAHMS 1994). Small groups may help to fill out the picture, but the recovery of major domestic assemblages is now an overriding need if Neolithic ceramic studies in the region are to be advanced.

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CATALOGUE OF NEOLITHIC POTTERY FROM EASTERN AND CENTRAL SCOTLAND

NOTES TO CATALOGUE ENTRIES:

- 1 Items marked with an asterisk are illustrated in illus 2–7.
- 2 The catalogue which follows is intended primarily to be a guide to the available sources, but fuller entries have been provided in the case of material which has either not previously been published in detail or is relatively inaccessible.

Entries are set out as follows:

Site: the numbers correspond to those on the location map (illus 1). Individual sites are set out in alphabetical order by county.

National Grid Reference.

Principal references.

Circumstances of discovery and details of context of pottery if known.

Description of pottery, based on the writer's observations unless stated otherwise (or summary of published catalogue where applicable).

Comments (if applicable).

Current location of pottery (with museum registration nos. if available)

ANGUS

1 **Boysack Mills, Inverkeilor** NO 626491. Reynolds, Ralston & Haggarty 1977; RCAHMS 1978, 9, no. 26; Close-Brooks 1984, 91–2, fig 4 (Boysack I); Kinnes 1985, 46

A series of crop marks recorded by the RCAHMS were excavated in advance of gravel extraction; the best-known of these sites is **Boysack I**, a square-ditched enclosure of Iron Age date, with deep central burial-pit containing an inhumation in a timber coffin. The sherds described below were found in the

filling of the ditches of **Boysack IV**, a shallow-ditched circular enclosure, with a probable entrance to the east and containing various shallow pits. The sherds are assumed to be residual.

The following catalogue entries are based on the unpublished report on the pottery prepared by Joanna Close-Brooks, with some additional details by TGC:

- *1 Rim sherd; flattened rim, orientation uncertain, from vessel with curved wall, but of uncertain overall form; dark grey throughout; coarse fabric tending to laminate; 28 × 35 mm; 13 mm thick. Illus 2, no 1.1.
- *2 Rim sherd; rim flattened on top, beaded externally, but orientation uncertain; from a bowl of uncertain overall form; brown; fairly fine fabric with fine white angular stone grits; 20 × 20 mm; 6–7 mm thick. Illus 2, no 1.2.
- 3 Body sherd, possibly from same vessel as 2; organic deposit on internal surface; 22 × 26 mm; 6–7 mm thick.
- 4 Seven body sherds and two fragments, from more than one vessel; ranging in size from 11 × 17 mm to 36 × 20 mm, and 9–12 mm in thickness.

Dr Close-Brooks noted that the sherds comprising Cat. no. 4 ‘could be of almost any date from Neolithic to pre-Roman Iron Age’ but the present writer would feel more confident about assigning a Neolithic date to the group as a whole.

Finds currently with excavator.

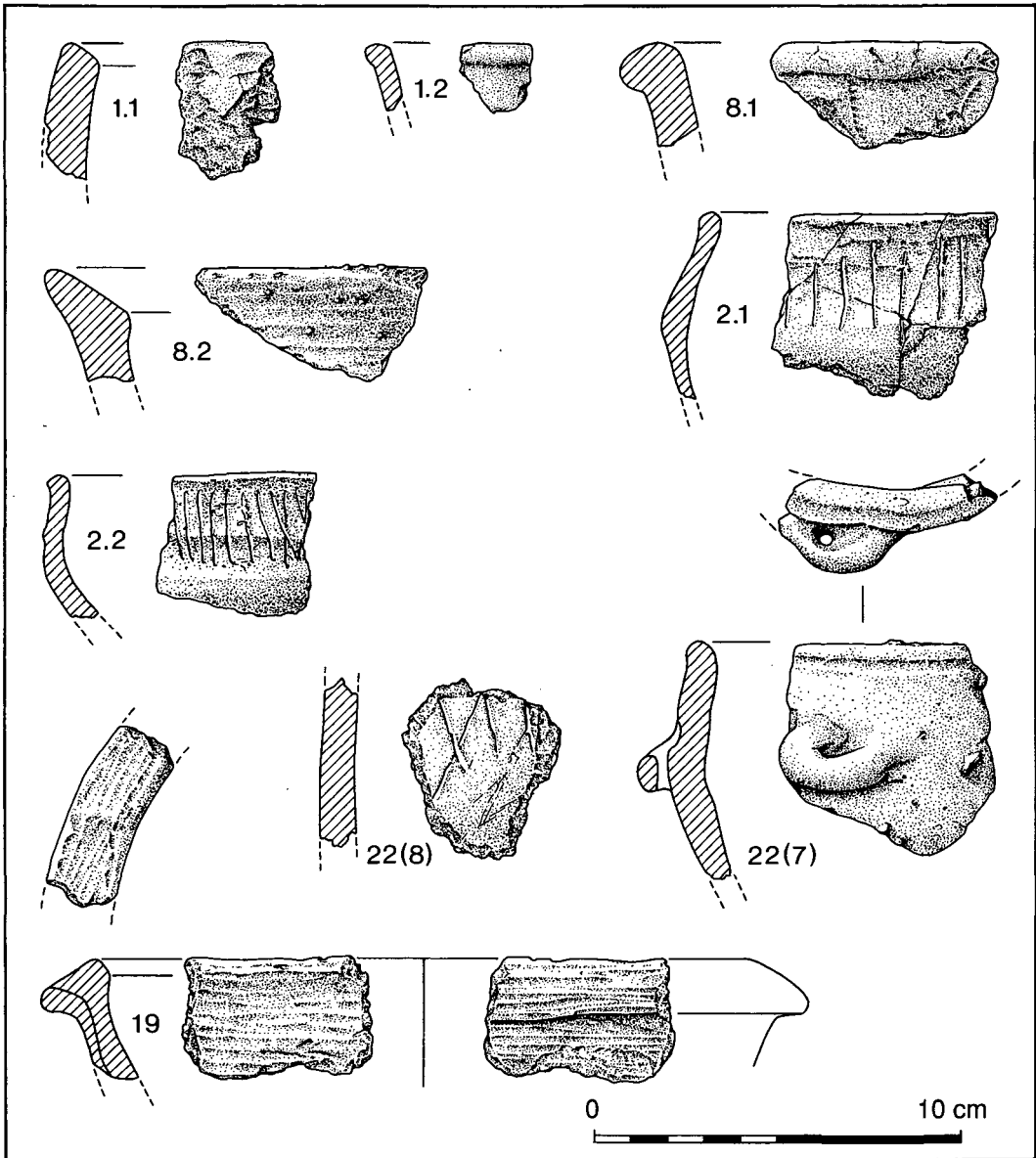
2 Douglasmuir, Inverkeilor NO 615481. RCAHMS 1978, 15, no. 91; Kendrick & Gregson 1980; Kendrick 1980, 12, 14; Kendrick 1982, 136; Kinnes 1985, 48

Neolithic sherds were found in a group of shallow pits discovered in 1980 during construction work on a British Gas installation in the area between the LBA/EIA unenclosed settlement and the Neolithic rectangular enclosure excavated in advance of the development. Twenty-three pits, post-holes and stake-holes were investigated but dating evidence was limited to the pottery found in only four of the pits. Three (FAA, FAC & FAE) contained Neolithic sherds, those from pit FAC being described below; Beaker sherds were recovered from a further pit (FAG) (inf. J Kendrick). The excavator also refers to the recovery of sherds from one of three shallow pits to the west of the rectangular enclosure but it has not proved possible for the writer to examine these. A radiocarbon date of 3701–3623 cal BC (GU-1210) was obtained from charcoal (*quercus*) in one of the post holes (F514) of the rectangular enclosure.

The Neolithic sherds (from pit FAC) known to the writer include:

- *1 Four joining rim and body sherds from a bowl with simple rounded rim and gentle shoulder, and a further five wall fragments assigned to same vessel (on a cursory inspection in 1978); reddish-brown with grey core; compact fabric with micaceous inclusions; smoothed external surface; decorated with incised vertical lines on exterior. Illus 2, no 2.1.
- *2 Rim sherd of a bowl of similar form to but smaller than 1; grittier external surface than 1 with a poorer surface finish; decorated with incised vertical lines on exterior. Also a body sherd probably from same vessel. Illus 2, no 2.2
- 3 Body sherd, with traces of cordon or lug, and five fragments possibly of same vessel; reddish-brown; undecorated; scorched.

The Neolithic sherds from the remainder of the features were apparently undecorated (inf. J Kendrick). Finds currently with Historic Scotland.



ILLUS 2 Neolithic pottery from Boysack Mills (1) and Douglasmuir (2), Angus; Calais Muir, Dunfermline(8), Fife; North Mains (22) (after Barclay 1983a) and Inchtuthil (19), Perthshire

ANGUS: ADDENDUM

■ **Auchlishie, Kirriemuir** NO 387578. Dick 1993, 96.

Report of Neolithic pottery found in course of trial excavation of reputed site of souterrain.

FIFE

3 Balbirnie, Markinch NO 285030. Ritchie 1974, 15, 18–20, cat. no. 29; Mercer 1981, 132–3.

Stone circle and cairn excavated in 1970–1.

In the original report, two sherds (cat. no. 29) found in the upper level of the packing of stone hole 10 were identified as Grooved Ware, and were thus associated with the erection of the stone circle (Phase 1). Re-examination of the Balbirnie pottery by Henshall in the light of the large pottery assemblage excavated at Balfarg henge (*in* Mercer 1981, 132) suggested that further Grooved Ware might be represented among the sherds recovered from the much disturbed Phase 3 cairn (possibly including Ritchie's cat. nos. 8, 9, 12, 14, 22 & 28).

NMS: EP 210–11, 214, 216, 223, 228–9

4 Balfarg Henge, Markinch NO 281031. Mercer 1981; Kinnes 1985, 49; Mercer, Barclay, Jordan & Russell-White 1988

Henge monument excavated in 1977–8. The deposition of Grooved Ware appears to have taken place prior to the first of the major phases of ceremonial activity, which involved the construction of concentric circles of timber uprights, to be followed by one or two stone circles.

The first sizeable assemblage of Grooved Ware to be found in mainland Scotland, comprising several hundred sherds representing a minimum of 37 pots.

NMS

5 Balfarg Riding School, Markinch NO 281032. Barclay 1983b; Barclay 1983c; Barclay 1984; Barclay 1985; Kinnes 1985, 46, 49; Barclay & Russell-White 1993 (this volume)

Aerial photography in 1978 revealed an enclosure in the north-east corner of the same field as the Balfarg henge. In the course of excavations between 1983–5, the enclosure ditch and a range of features within and around it were investigated; much of the remaining area of the field was extensively sampled, resulting in the discovery of a group of features to the west of the henge. Earlier Neolithic pottery was recovered principally from two main areas, A to the west of the henge and C, near the Balfarg Riding School enclosure itself. *Area C* comprised a group of at least seven pits of which two contained significant amounts of Earlier Neolithic pottery. The pits were characterized by the presence of large, densely packed stones, with charcoal-stained soil and/or fragments of burnt bone. Three radiocarbon dates were obtained from samples of charcoal from pit 8016/8019: these were 4047–3932 cal BC (GU-2604), 3813–3682 cal BC (GU-2605), and 3636–3507 cal BC (GU-1903). In *Area A*, a number of features were found scattered across the summit of a low ridge to the west of the Balfarg henge: Neolithic pottery was recovered from 16 main features, comprising pits, scoops and possible post-holes, the fill of which again suggested deliberate backfilling and structured deposition. In the most productive feature, 2430, for example, parts of at least 12 vessels were recovered. Two radiocarbon dates are associated with this group of features: 3474–3378 cal BC (GU-2606), obtained from a charcoal sample from a pit/scoop (2050), and 3691–3625 cal BC (UtC-1302) obtained from a carbonized cereal grain preserved within the fabric of a rim sherd found in one of the pits (2212).

Apart from the two areas of Neolithic activity mentioned above, the other main features investigated at the site comprise two rectilinear timber structures, interpreted as mortuary enclosures,

the ditched enclosure, interpreted as a second henge monument, a complex ring ditch/ring cairn sequence culminating in Bronze Age funerary activity, and a Bronze Age cremation cemetery.

Only some of the more significant Earlier Neolithic material is noted here (see the full report by TGC in this volume).

Pottery from pits in Area C: Feature 8016/8019:

- 1 Portions of a carinated bowl; estimated rim diameter 260 mm; estimated height 110 mm. Barclay & Russell-White (this volume), illus 11, no 1.
- 2 Portions of a coarse shouldered bowl; external surface rough and lacking slip; estimated rim diameter c 300 mm. Barclay & Russell-White (this volume), illus 11, no 2.

Pottery from pits/scoops in Area A: Feature 2430:

- 3 Complete bowl with externally expanded rim; rim diameter 255 mm; height 213 mm. Barclay & Russell-White (this volume), illus 13, no 11.
- 4–
- 13 Rim sherds of a variety of other vessels represented by broken portions, with very few detectable joins, so that in most cases overall form of pot uncertain. Some have clear tool and/or wipe marks on surfaces. Barclay & Russell-White (this volume), illus 13, nos 12–14, illus 14 nos 15–21.
- 14 Oval lug, possibly from same vessel as Cat. no. 8. Barclay & Russell-White, illus 14, no 22.

Feature 2212:

- 15 Rim sherd from vessel of uncertain form, but probably a large round-based bowl of similar proportions to Cat. no.3; carbonized grain in core of sherd submitted for radiocarbon dating. Barclay & Russell-White (this volume), illus 14, no 23 (a = carbonized grain).

Feature 2050:

- 16 Rim sherd from a vessel of uncertain form, but probably a large round-based bowl of similar proportions to Cat. no. 3. Barclay & Russell-White (this volume), illus 14, no 24.

In addition to the Earlier Neolithic pottery mentioned here, the pottery assemblage includes sizeable quantities of Late Neolithic Impressed pottery, Beaker sherds and a significant assemblage of Grooved Ware (report on latter by Henshall, *in* Barclay and Russell-White, this volume).

NMS

6 Barns Farm, Dalgety NT 178841. Watkins 1982 (note that in figure 22 the sherds are drawn at 1:2, not 1:1 as stated in caption); Kinnes 1985, 46

Early Bronze Age cemetery of cists and earthen graves excavated in 1973. A few Neolithic sherds, interpreted as a residual scatter, were recovered from Hearth 1, Grave 2, and Pits 10 and 11 respectively. A sample of marine shells from Pit 1 gave a date of 3431–3378 cal BC (SRR-529) ‘according well with expectations for the date of the Neolithic phase of activity’ (Watkins 1982, 52).

The Neolithic pottery includes a rim sherd from a large bowl, diameter c 280 mm with traces of fluting and burnishing; a small sherd from just below the thickened rim of a further large bowl, probably of similar size to the first; and two body sherds, one with faint wide fluting on the outside

(but, unusually for such vessels, unburnished). All the sherds are from substantial well-built bowls manufactured in hard finely-tempered fabrics. The forms are not known, but fluting usually occurs on carinated bowls (after Henshall *in* Watkins 1982).

NMS: EQ 922–5.

7 Brackmont Mill, Leuchars NO 436224. Longworth 1967; Kinnes 1985, 49

Pit found in 1960, containing stones and dark sand intermingled with 51 sherds of Late Neolithic pottery (representing at least 20 vessels) and some pieces of flint.

NMS: EX 8–27

8 Calais Muir, Dunfermline NT 130870. Beveridge 1886, 244–52 (for details of site only, no specific reference being made to these sherds); Watkins 1982, 113; Kinnes 1985, 46.

Part of the assemblage of finds recovered from a cairn/barrow at Calais Muir, Pitreavie, near Dunfermline, investigated in 1885. Circumstances of discovery of Neolithic sherds unknown.

- *1 Rim sherd from a bowl of uncertain overall form; rounded rim externally thickened to form a crude beading of uneven thickness; rim top unevenly moulded and also of irregular thickness; external surface brown to dark brown; core dark grey; internal surface pale yellowish-brown; fairly coarse fabric profusely gritted with grey grits up to 7 mm across, but external surface originally carefully smoothed or semi-burnished; the sherd appears to have been re-fired or burnt (possibly in the course of the later activity on the site); 28 x 62 mm; 12 mm thick; estimated rim diameter 240 mm. DUFMM.1969.139. Illus 2, no 8.1.

The following sherds have also tentatively been included in this catalogue:

- *2 Rim sherd from a vessel with a slightly flaring rounded rim with internal bevel; surfaces pale to light brown; core dark grey; hard fine clay matrix with profuse grits, up to 7 mm across, visible in break, although external surface smoothed; as in the case of 1, the sherds may have been re-fired. 64 x 35 mm; 12–13 mm thick. Also a smaller rim sherd almost certainly from the same vessel but with slightly less angular bevel/wall junction. DUFMM.1969.138a–b. Illus 2, no 8.2.

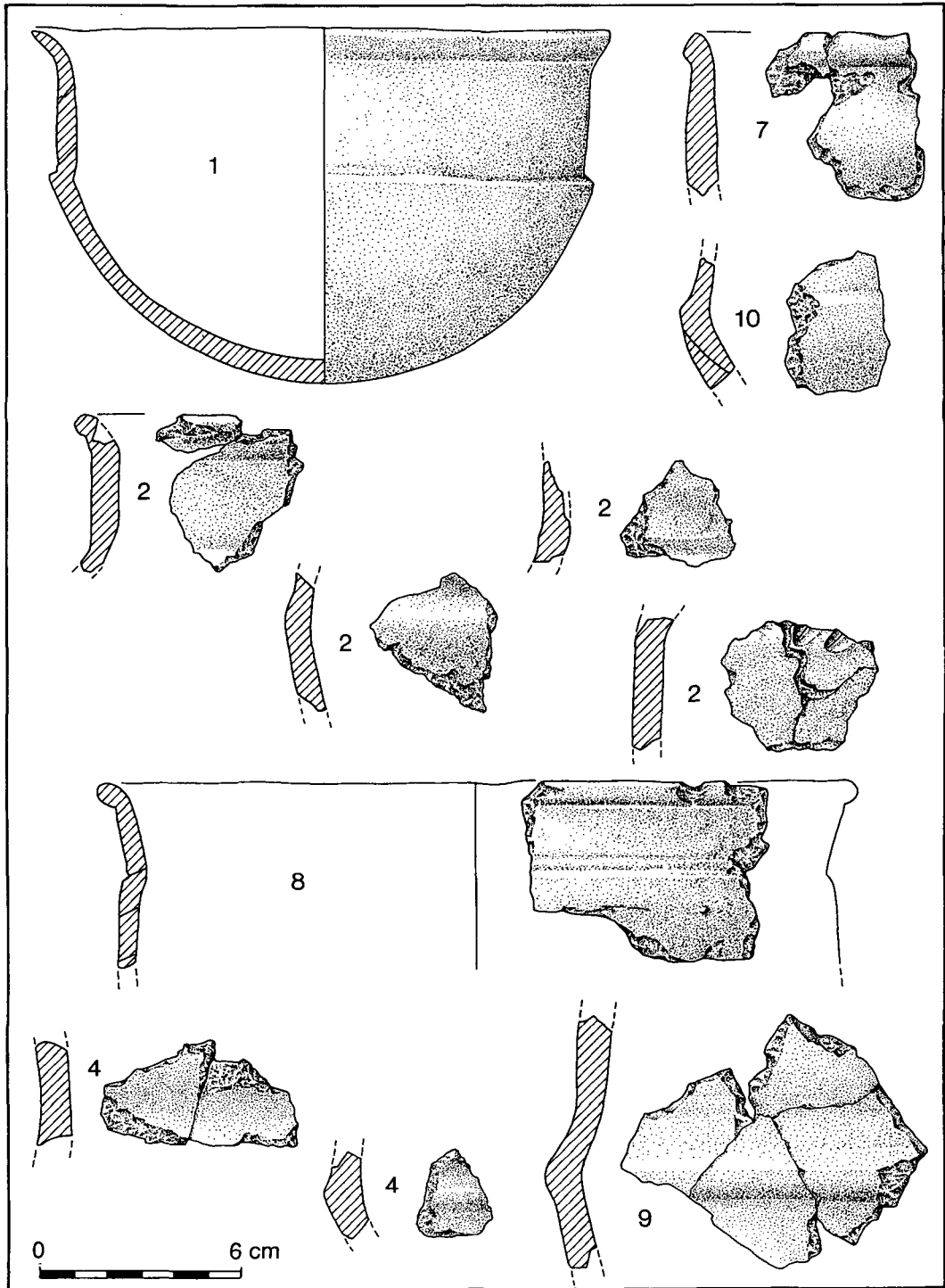
Dunfermline Museum: 1969.138–9

9 Clatchard Craig, Abdie NO 243178. McInnes 1969, 26; Close-Brooks 1986, 125, 150–3; Kinnes 1985, 46

Small assemblage of Neolithic pottery found during excavation of multivallate hill-fort in advance of quarrying which subsequently destroyed the site. The Neolithic sherds were found on top of the hill within the area enclosed by Rampart 1 (in Trenches B & J) with the exception of two tiny sherds which were found in or under Rampart 2 at Trench E. There were no associated structures. The main group of sherds may possibly have been buried in a pit truncated by later activity, while others may have been in patches of old buried soil.

The sherds represent a homogeneous group of pots, a minimum of seven being distinguished on the grounds of fabric and form. Carinated forms predominate, cat. nos. 1, 2 and 8 having vertical, straight-section necks and relatively deep proportions; however, cat. no. 7 represents the rim of a vessel of simple form with vertical walls, probably not of shouldered or carinated form (after Henshall, *in* Close-Brooks 1986, 150–3). Illus 3 (numbering after Henshall).

NMS: HHC 1–13



ILLUS 3 Neolithic pottery from Clatchard Craig (9), Fife (after Henshall, in Close-Brooks 1986)

10 Easter Kinnear, Kilmany NO 406235. Driscoll 1989

Stray sherd found in course of excavations on site of a scooped structure of Early Historic date situated on a gravel ridge, first discerned as square crop-mark.

Neolithic body sherd.

Finds currently with excavator.

11 Kinloch Farm, Collessie NO 287117. Barber 1982; Kinnes 1985, 49

Partial excavation of a ditched enclosure comprising two concentric ditches revealed by aerial photography; a radiocarbon date of 3550–3370 cal BC (GU-1375) was obtained from a charcoal sample from the fill of the inner ditch.

Assemblage recovered from site includes Late Neolithic pottery, mostly plain but including some sherds with impressed decoration.

NMS

12 Scotstarvit, Ceres NO 360109. Bersu 1948; Kinnes 1985, 49

Enclosed homestead on site of an earlier open settlement. The sherds were recovered from a hollow and a hearth pre-dating the house.

Small body sherd, possibly Late Neolithic/Early Bronze Age; reddish external surface with grey/brown core and grey internal surface; traces of three parallel lines of whipped cord impressions; 21 × 13 mm; 8–9 mm thick. Two featureless body sherds may belong to the same period (after Stevenson, *in* Bersu 1948, 262, with some additional details by TGC).

NMS: HD 1908–9

13 Tentsmuir, Leuchars c NO 4825. Longworth 1967; Mercer 1981, 132; Kinnes 1985, 49

Finds from eroding sand bunkers in area of sand-dunes.

Pottery includes Grooved Ware and a variety of other pottery of probable Late Neolithic date, including both plain and decorated sherds. Also a rim sherd of an Earlier Neolithic plain bowl among material formerly in St Andrews University Museum, now in the collections of NE Fife Museum Service (G Wilson pers. comm.)

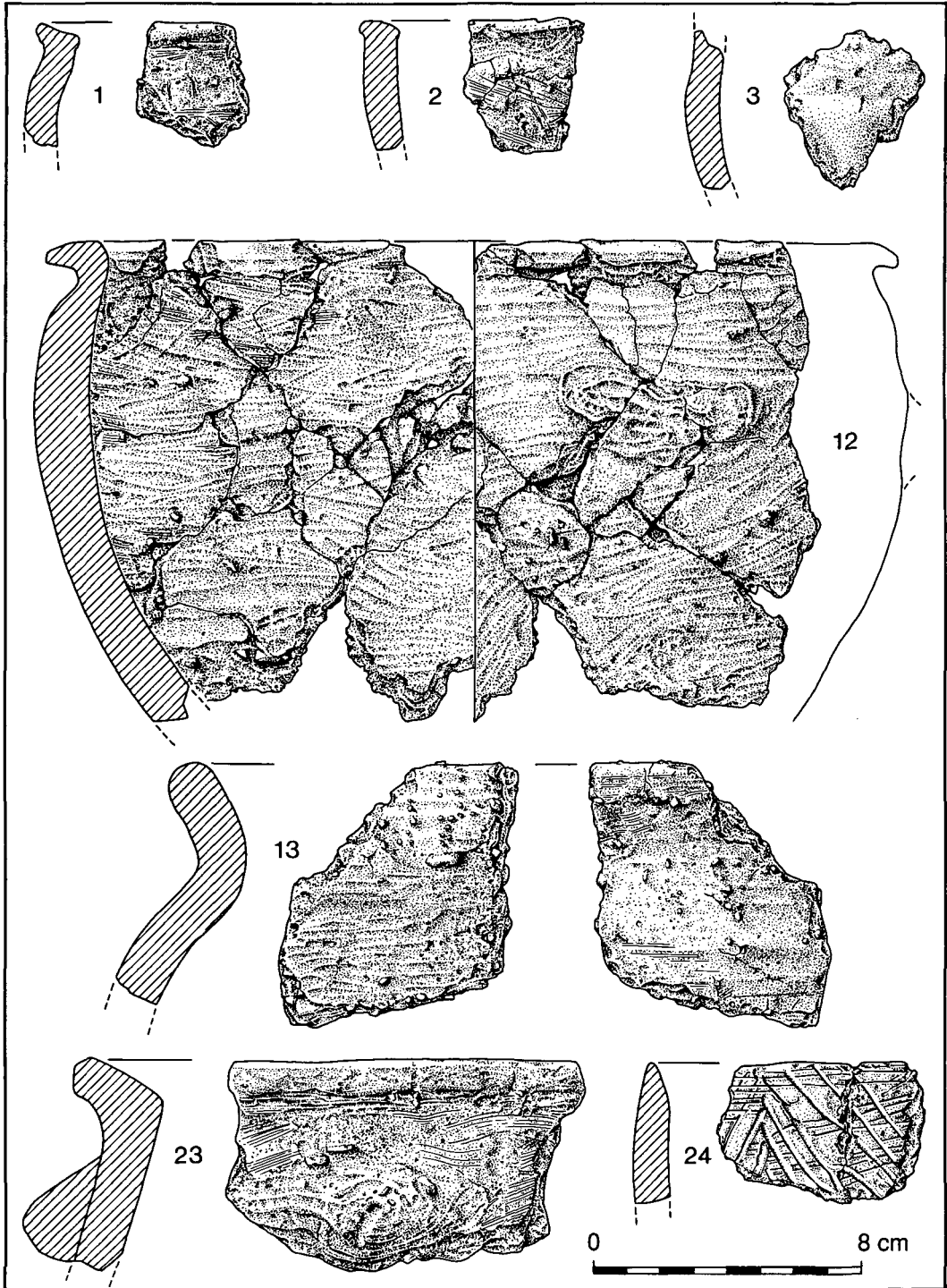
NMS; NE Fife District Museum Service

PERTSHIRE

14 Barbush, Dunblane NN 784020 and general area centred NN 785025. Barclay, Brooks & Rideout 1982; Barclay 1983a, 253; Main 1984; Kinnes 1985, 45; Main 1986; Cowie 1992

Scatters of Neolithic pottery, including rim sherds of two small plain unshouldered bowls (cat. nos. 1–2), a carinated sherd (3), substantial portions of the rim and upper body of heavy globular bowl with traces of a lug (12) and an everted rounded rim possibly from a further heavy globular bowl (13). The remaining Earlier Neolithic pottery comprised featureless body sherds and fragments. Also rim sherd from vessel with expanded rim with broad internal bevel and prominent oval lug on exterior (23), possibly Late Neolithic, and a single rim sherd of a Grooved Ware vessel with incised decoration (24). Illus 4 (numbering after Cowie 1992).

NMS: EO 1123–35, MEA 5; Smith Museum, Stirling



ILLUS 4 Neolithic pottery from Barbush Quarry, Dunblane (14), Perthshire

15 Beech Hill House, Coupar Angus NO 220404. Stevenson 1990; Stevenson forthcoming

Kerbed cairn excavated 1989.

Small assemblage of Grooved Ware recovered from pre-cairn ground surface.

Finds currently with Historic Scotland

16 Croft Moraig, Dull NM 797472. Piggott & Simpson 1971; Kinnes 1985, 45

Stone circle excavated in 1965.

Twenty-nine sherds of pottery were recovered from the fill of the penannular ditch, falling into two main fabric groups. Group I comprises coarse ware (cf. Flat Rimmed Ware); Henshall has raised the possibility that such pottery might be related to the undecorated component of Grooved Ware assemblages such as that from Balfarg. Group II comprises three body sherds of dark brown burnished ware, well-fired and finely tempered with quartz, including one from the neck of a small carinated bowl.

NMS

17 Cultoquhey, Fowlis Wester NN 892234. Henshall 1972, 475 (PER 4) with further site references; Kinnes 1985, 46

Chambered cairn of Clyde group, excavated in 1957. The sherds of the bowl were found in the south-east corner of the inner compartment of the chamber.

Rim and wall sherds comprising nearly half a carinated bowl, with wide rippling on the neck and upper part; two surviving lugs with vertical perforations, out of a possible original total of four; hard fine fabric with small stone grits, external surface burnished; estimated rim diameter 165 mm (after Henshall).

NMS: EO 1002

18 Grandtully, Logierait NN 927527. McInnes 1969, 22, 28 (where dates misquoted); Kinnes 1985, 49; Simpson & Coles 1990

Following the discovery of a cinerary urn during construction of gas pipeline, excavations in 1966–7 revealed a series of pits and scoops dug into a gravel terrace overlooking river Tay. Two phases of activity were represented: a Late Neolithic phase with pottery deposited in a number of shallow pits and hollows filled with stones, gravel, sand and charcoal, and a subsequent Bronze Age cremation cemetery which appeared to respect the earlier features. The following radiocarbon dates were obtained from Neolithic features: Pit 15: 2910–2404 cal BC (Gak-1398); Pit 40: 2577–2280 cal BC (Gak-1396).

Portions of four vessels and about 25 sherds, mostly in the Scottish ‘Impressed Ware tradition’ (cf. McInnes 1969, 22).

NMS

19 Inchtuthil, Caputh NO 115393. Abercromby, Ross & Anderson 1901, 182–242; Pitts & St Joseph 1985 (for details of site only, no specific reference being made to this sherd); Barclay & Maxwell 1991.

Found during excavations on the Roman fortress in 1901. Adhering to the internal surface of the sherd is a label reading: ‘Small Fort / (crest end) / 18 inches’ [and also a further illegible word, possibly the finder’s name]; ‘Small Fort’ tends to suggest that the sherd was found on the site of the promontory fort to the west of the main fortress (where, interestingly, the 1901 excavations revealed ‘the ditch of an earlier work filled up’ in the interior and also what was interpreted as a palisade trench on the inside of the ditch).

*Rim sherd from a large bowl; bevelled rim, externally expanded by adding clay, the resultant building junction marked by a slight concavity on top of rim; narrow concave neck; external surface, core and internal surface all dark to very dark grey (10YR 4/1, 10 YR 3/1), but top of rim shading to brown (10YR 5/3); compact hard fine matrix tempered with fine grits including mica; surfaces burnished, horizontal tooling and trimming marks; 37 × 51 mm, 8 mm thick (at break edge); estimated rim diameter 180 mm (at mouth). Illus 2, no 19.

NMS: FY 108

20 Moncrieffe, Dunbarney NO 132193. Stewart 1985

Henge monument, stone circles and cairns excavated in 1974.

Sherds of an undecorated bucket-shaped pot (cat. no. 10), possibly related to Grooved Ware.

Perth Museum and Art Gallery

21 Monzie, Crieff NN 881241. Young & Crichton Mitchell 1939; *Proc Soc Antiq Scot*, 100 (1967–8), 201

Kerb-cairn excavated in 1938.

Two joining rim sherds of a plain vessel, possibly related to Grooved Ware.

NMS: EP 190

22 North Mains, Strathallan Henge: NN 92801633; Barrow: NN 92621622; Ring-ditches: NN 93111632. Barclay 1983a; Kinnes 1985, 45

Henge: residual scatter of Neolithic pottery, including rim sherd of large plain bowl (Henge SF26), and another rim sherd from a vessel of uncertain form (SF1), but otherwise mainly featureless body sherds and fragments.

Barrow: residual scatter of Neolithic pottery, including several rim sherds (Barrow SF 13, 23 and possibly 19), body sherds with lugs (SF 3, 45), and portions of a carinated vessel with traces of a lug (SF 1). The remaining Earlier Neolithic pottery comprised featureless body sherds and fragments. Also portions of a Late Neolithic vessel with impressed decoration (SF 21).

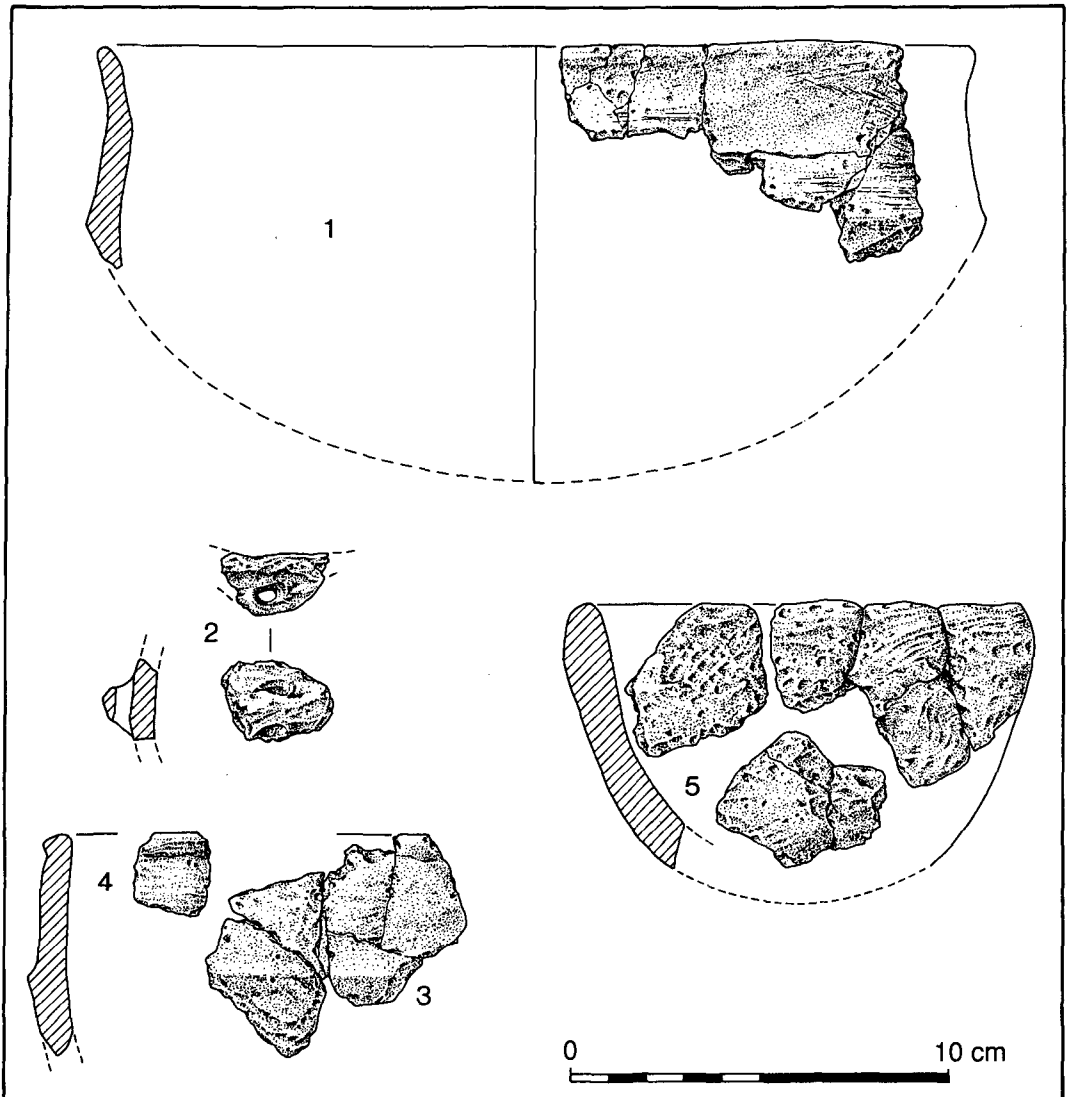
Ring ditches: sherds were recovered from two features on either side of the south-west edge of ring-ditch 2. Four sherds were recovered from F3, which had apparently been cut by the ring-ditch. The feature contained 6 g of burnt bone, possibly but not certainly human. A radiocarbon date of 3513–3393 cal BC (GU-1546) was obtained from a layer of charcoal within its fill. A further four sherds, including a rim sherd with perforated horizontal lug (Ring-ditches SF 7), and a body sherd with incised decoration (SF 8), were retrieved from F4, a small pit which appears to have been respected by the ring-ditch. Illus 2, nos 22 (7)–(8).

NMS

23 Pitnacree, Logierait NN 92875337. Coles & Simpson 1965; Henshall 1972, 167–72; Kinnes 1979, 11; 1985, 46

Non-megalithic round barrow; a single radiocarbon date of 3699–3508 cal BC (GaK-601) was obtained from charcoal from the old land surface underlying the barrow. Sherds representing a minimum of nine vessels were retrieved from the old land surface, apart from a few featureless sherds, fragments and crumbs from the central enclosure.

Re-examination of the pottery suggests that some minor adjustments should be made to the published catalogue: in the case of Coles & Simpson cat. no. 1, a small fragment of wall joins on to the



ILLUS 5 Neolithic pottery from Pitnacree (23), Perthshire: selected sherds

lower break edge of the reconstructed group of sherds, extending the profile further below the carination and indicating that the walls of the vessel may have been as thin as 4 mm. In addition, Coles & Simpson allocated 17 small body sherds to this vessel, but some may derive from other vessels not otherwise represented in the assemblage. Finally, the slightly expanded and externally bevelled rim sherd (cat. no. 6, fig. 4.4) is almost certainly from the same pot as cat. no. 5, comprising sherds, fragments and crumbs of a small bowl with a slight carination swelling into two small poorly defined lugs, for the uneven lower edge of the bevel is just visible on the upper break-edge of the largest group of joining body sherds. Illus 5.

NMS: EO 984-1000

24 Strageath, Crieff NN 898180. Frere & Wilkes 1989, 269, fig 135

Residual sherd found in course of excavation of the Roman fort.

Body sherd; reddish-brown external surface, black core and internal surface; coarse fabric, hard clay matrix with profuse grits up to 5 mm across; 47 × 40 mm, 13 mm thick.

NMS

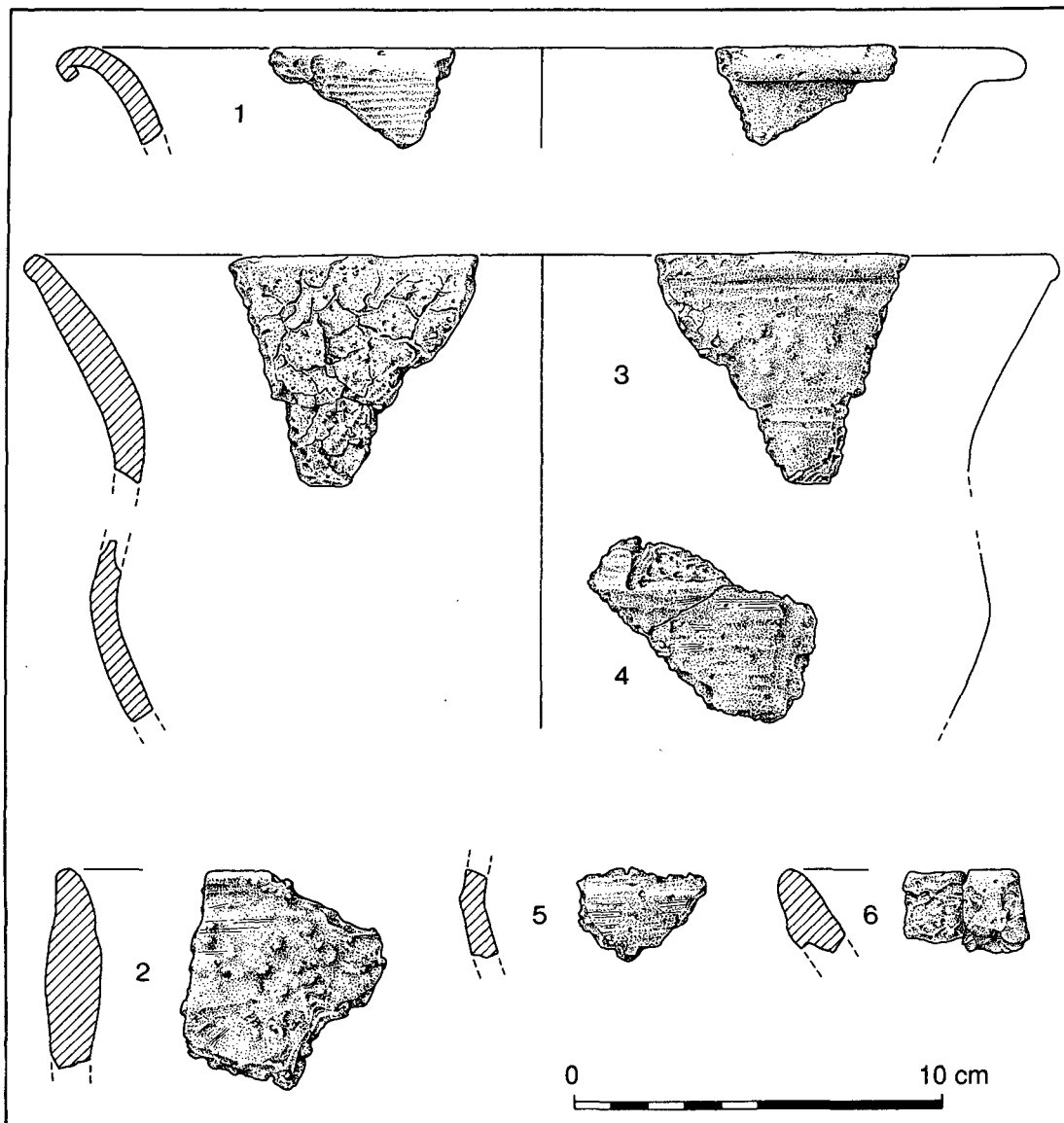
STIRLINGSHIRE

25 Bannockburn, Stirling NS 816902. Tavener 1987

The terminals of two alignments of unknown total extent, one composed of pits, the other of post-holes, were excavated in 1984 and 1985. The terminal of the pit alignment was U-shaped, the two lines of pits being approximately parallel and c 30 m apart. Neolithic pottery was found in the topmost fills of several of the pits, and, although their original function remains uncertain, it appears to have been associated with their abandonment. The post-hole alignment lay c 10 m to the west, and comprised two lines terminating in a flattened arc. At the north-east corner of the post-hole alignment, two of the post-holes cut a pit which produced approximately half of the Neolithic pottery recovered from the site. The pit (marked E in Tavener 1987, fig 25) was filled with dark loam and charcoal, while several stones in the centre appeared to have been heat-shattered. This was the only pit which contained any burnt bone. Sherds were recovered from only a few of the post-holes of the post alignment itself.

The contexts of the illustrated sherds are as follows: 1: from context 3015A, pit alignment on N; 2: from context 3045, pit alignment on S; 3–6: from context 4011, pit at north-east corner of post-hole enclosure (inf. A. MacSween, AOC/Historic Scotland).

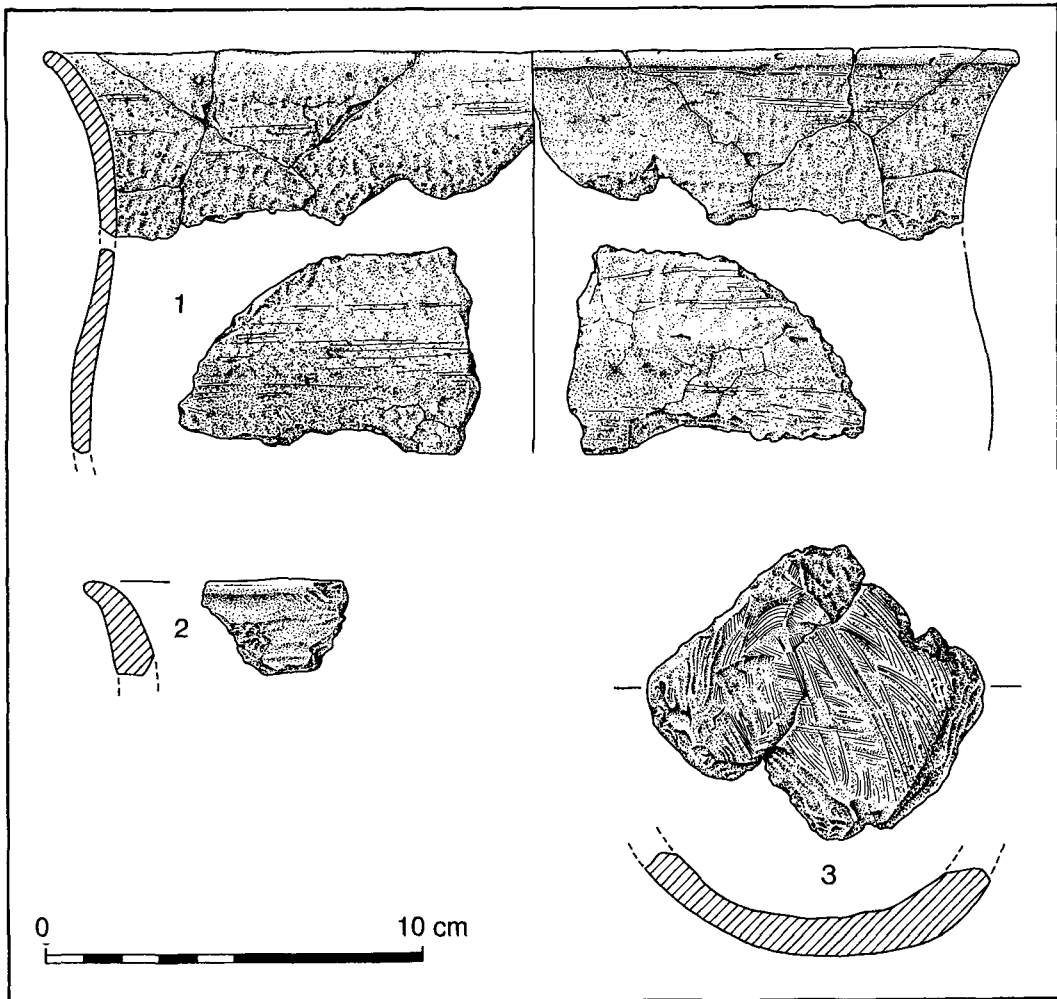
- *1 Rim sherd: externally expanded and rolled-over rim from a carinated bowl; very dark grey throughout; hard fine clay matrix with sparse finely crushed stone grits including mica; burnished surfaces, with horizontal tooling marks; 33 × 48 mm, 7 mm thick; rim diameter c 250 mm. (Site find no: 47/322.) Illus 6, no 1.
- *2 Rim sherd: simple rim very slightly out-turned at lip from vessel of uncertain form but almost certainly unshouldered; dark grey external surface, light brown core and internal surface; coarse, rather laminated matrix with prominent stone grits, including quartz fragments up to 4 mm across; rather pimply surfaces; scorched; organic deposits adhering to exterior; 60 × 55 mm, 11 mm thick; estimated rim diameter 300 mm. (47/334.) Illus 6, no 2.
- *3 Rim and neck sherd from a carinated vessel; flaring rim with external bead; dark grey/greyish-brown external surface and core, grey internal surface; fairly coarse, hard matrix tending to laminate, with profuse quartz and occasional micaceous grits; partially re-fired, with badly crazed internal surfaces from which grits stand proud; 68 × 68 mm, 8 mm thick at lower break edge; estimated diameter 240 mm. (47/365.) Illus 6, no 3.
- *4 Body sherd with carination (composed of joining fragment and sherd), probably from same vessel as 3; dark grey external surface, grey internal surface; burnt, and partially re-fired resulting in grits standing proud; total size 55 × 61 mm, 7 mm thick at lower edge. (47/379.) Illus 6, no 4.
- *5 Body sherd with carination; dark grey throughout; hard fine clay matrix with sparse stone grits; 26 × 35 mm, 6 mm thick at lower break edge. (47/364.) Illus 6, no 5.
- *6 Rim sherd (composed of four joining fragments); somewhat flaring or everted rim from a vessel of uncertain form, possibly carinated; reddish-brown surfaces (5 YR 5/3); grey core; soft gritless fabric; scorched?; 26 × 35 mm, 12 mm thick. (47/366.) Illus 6, no 6.



ILLUS 6 Neolithic pottery from Bannockburn (25), Stirlingshire

- 7 Approximately 21 body sherds, and several fragments and crumbs, including some in a good quality dark grey fabric with hard fine matrix with few grits (similar to that of 1), several with more profuse, quartz gritting, and a few in very compact gritty fabric; several sherds either well-smoothed or semi-burnished; some with tool-marks. (47/309, 314-16, 323, 326-7, 330, 335-7, 339, 341-2, 345, 349, 357-8, 363, 370-1, 379.)

Currently with Historic Scotland



ILLUS 7 Neolithic pottery from Bantaskine (26), Stirlingshire

26 Bantaskine, Falkirk NS c. 875796. *Proc Soc Antiq Scot*, 50 (1915–16), 255; Callander 1929, 35, 56–7, 81, fig 38 (omits the carination of 1 and exaggerates the thickness of 2).

Found by J S Richardson in December 1915 while military trenches were being dug at Bantaskine: the sherds were found in a dark layer in sand about 3 ft below the surface. As no indications of a grave were found, the site was assumed to be domestic.

- *1 Portion of the rim and neck, composed of five joining sherds (partially restored), and a detached gently carinated sherd, together representing the upper part of a shallow bowl with an open S-profile; the flaring rim has a very slight external bead; very dark grey throughout; very hard compact matrix with profuse fine grits <1 mm including quartzite and mica; surfaces tooled and burnished with a 'ripple' effect, surviving particularly well on interior; estimated diameter 250 mm; 4–4.5 mm thick at lower break edge of carinated sherd. NMS: HR 632. Illus 7, no 1.

- *2 Rim sherd; simple everted rim, probably from carinated bowl; dark reddish-grey external surface (5YR 4/2), grey core, reddish-brown interior (5YR 4/3); fairly hard clay matrix with quartz grits < 2 mm across; scorched and abraded surfaces probably originally burnished; 29 × 42 mm; 10–11 mm thick; estimated diameter c 240 mm. Also two body sherds probably from lower portions of same vessel; quartz grits up to 5 mm exposed; 21 × 25 mm, 46 × 37 mm, 10 mm thick. NMS: HR 633 (part). Illus 7, no 2.
- *3 Rounded basal portion (made up of two joining sherds) of thick-walled ?hemispherical bowl; external surface light reddish-brown (5YR 6/4), core grey, and internal surface reddish-yellow (5YR 6/6); smooth surface texture, organic temper, with no obvious stone grits; clear wipe marks on internal and external surfaces; size 90 × 77 mm, 8–12 mm thick. NMS: HR 633 (part). Illus 7, no 3.
- 4 Sherd from near rounded base of a bowl similar to Cat. no. 3, and a small wall sherd from same vessel; fabric and colour similar to Cat. no. 3; scorched, and surfaces now abraded and dusty; 46 × 30 mm, 11–15 mm thick; 23 × 22 mm, 9–11 mm thick. NMS: HR 633 (part).

NMS: HR 632–633.

27 Mumrills, Falkirk NS 918794. MacDonald & Curle 1929, 544, fig. 107

Found during excavations on the Roman fort in 1923–8.

Body sherd; horizontal rows of close-set semicircular jabbed impressions.

NMS: FRB 359

STIRLINGSHIRE: ADDENDUM

■ **Gillies Hill, Stirling** NS 768917. Rideout 1992, 127–70

Possible residual Neolithic sherds incorporated into the ramparts and occupation layer of a hill fort.

WEST LOTHIAN

28 Nether Kinneil, Bo'ness NS 958801. Sloan 1982

Neolithic pottery was recovered from two of the areas of shell midden excavated in 1978–9. In area XVII, nine sherds, several fragments and a crumb of pottery, including some pieces certainly from a single vessel, were found scattered on the midden surface, while seven body sherds and a fragment were found within the midden; a further four body sherds were associated with the shell midden in this area but their relationship to it is uncertain. In area XII, however, five body sherds, a fragment and some crumbs were found within the earliest midden deposits (inf. D Sloan). Published radiocarbon dates from samples of oyster shell from the Nether Kinneil sites range from 3954–3898 cal BC (SRR-1486) to 2789–2737 cal BC (SRR-1485).

The assemblage consists of about 25 very small and featureless body sherds, and a quantity of fragments and crumbs, all in a compact, slightly gritty fabric. The total weight of pottery recovered amounts to only c 105 g. All the body sherds are undecorated, and in no case does enough survive to throw any light on the form of the vessel (summary of unpublished report on pottery by TGC).

Currently in NMS.

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