

## Excavation of a cist burial on Doons Law, Leetside Farm, Whitsome, Berwickshire

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with contributions by M Bruce, B Finlayson, F Hunter & A Sheridan

### ABSTRACT

*A cist burial was unearthed by ploughing on Leetside Farm, Whitsome, in Berwickshire. The cist contained the fragmentary remains of a skeleton (probably female), a decorated Northern British/Northern Rhine Beaker, a group of flints, a fragment of copper awl and some fragments of burnt bone and charcoal. A sample of the skeletal bone yielded a radiocarbon date of 2135–1935 cal BC at one sigma. Analysis of the pollen and spore content in an area of stained cist-floor sediment surrounding the skeleton suggested that flowers of Brassicaceae and Filipendula were deliberately deposited in the cist at the time of the inhumation. A series of trial trenches was excavated around the burial to investigate whether any additional archaeological evidence was detectable, but none was found.*

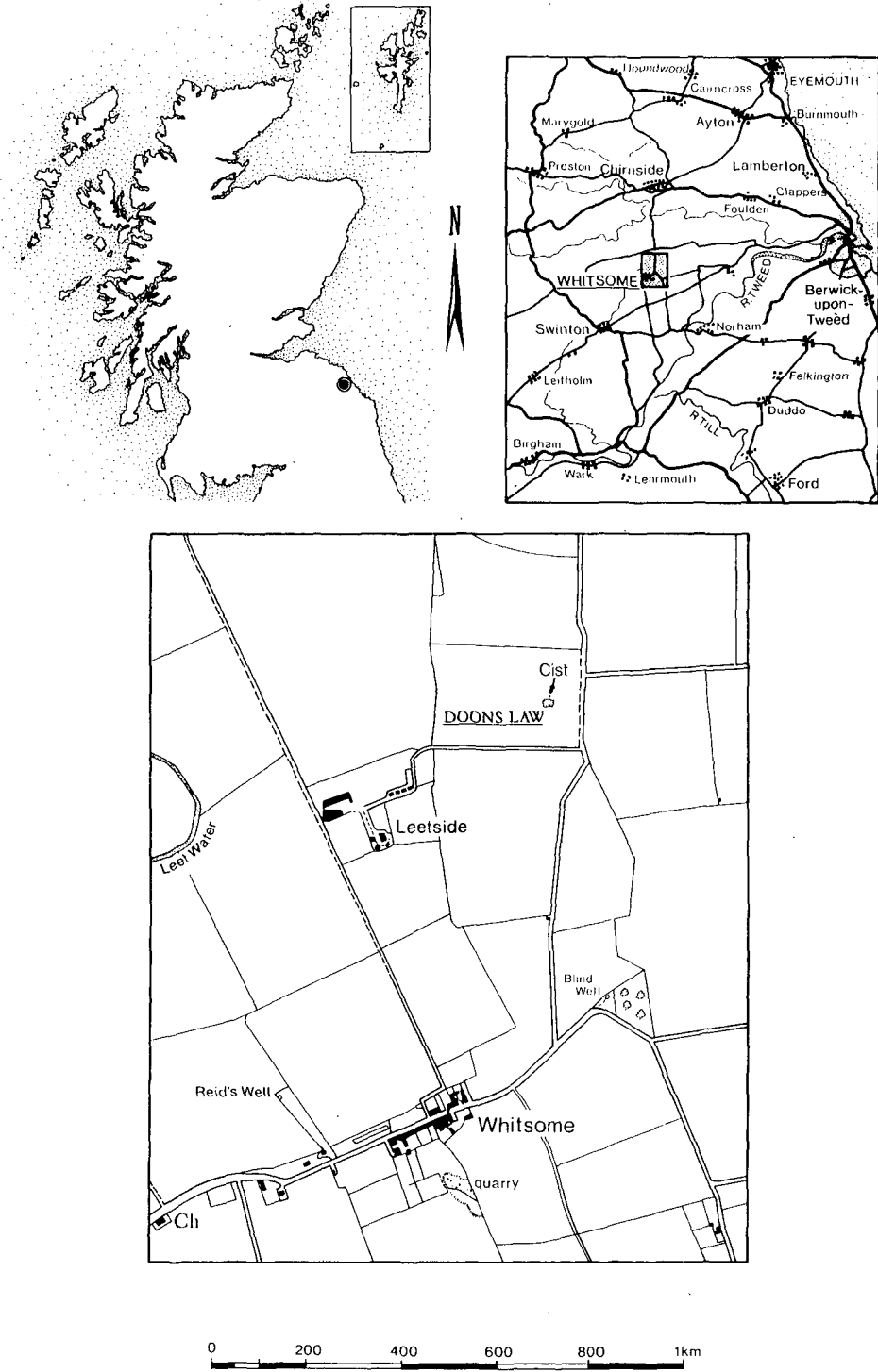
### INTRODUCTION

As a result of ploughing in early January 1995 a cist burial was unearthed about 3 m to the north of a prominent mound of glacial material known as Doons Law, on Leetside Farm, Whitsome, Berwickshire (illus 1). The capstone was displaced by the plough and damaged, and was shown to overlie a cist composed of four upright sandstone slabs with an approximately east/west alignment. Archaeological excavation of the cist was carried out by the Centre for Field Archaeology (CFA). The work was commissioned and funded by Borders Regional Council and funding for post-excavation analyses was supplemented by Historic Scotland.

Prior to the arrival of CFA a preliminary record of the cist had been made by John Dent, Borders Regional Archaeologist: the vault of a skull was exposed at the western end of the cist and an intact decorated Beaker lay to the north of the skull. The Beaker was then removed for safe-keeping and taken to the National Museums of Scotland for identification and reporting for Treasure Trove. It was subsequently allocated to the Scottish Borders Museum Service.

Excavation of the cist by CFA revealed human skeletal remains, a group of flints, a copper awl and fragments of burnt bone and charcoal. In addition an area of dark organic-rich sediment was evident within and around the skeletal remains on the cist floor. Four long trenches radiating to the north, south, east and west of Doons Law revealed no additional archaeological features.

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ILLUS 1 Location of the burial cist at Doons Law (Based on the Ordnance Survey map © Crown copyright)



ILLUS 2 General view of Doons Law

#### SITE DESCRIPTION (ILLUS 1 & 2)

The site lies within the Whitsome Soil Association, Unit 575 (Soil Survey of Scotland 1984). It is situated in a landscape of undulating lowland with gentle slopes in which the tills have been moulded into long drumlin-like ridges. The soils developed on the clay tills are naturally fertile, a factor which may have attracted prehistoric populations to the area. As described above, the cist itself was located at the base of the mound known as Doons Law (NGR: NT 868 516), in an area of clays overlying fluvioglacial sands and gravels. The mound lies on the 85 m contour (OD). It is sub-circular and measures approximately 11 m in diameter, rising to a height of about 2 m. It is surmounted by dead elm trees (victims of Dutch elm disease). The mound has clearly been modified at some time in the past and is now enclosed by a close-set retaining wall, so that it appears in profile to have almost vertical sides.

#### ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

Cists containing Beakers are often associated with mounds and, in general, areas of sand and gravel are reportedly preferred locations for Bronze Age burials (McAdam 1974). Examples of cists with Beakers occurring on mounds include Broomend, Inverurie (Callander 1920); Nether Criggie, Dunnottar (Kirk & Mackenzie 1956); and Mains of Scotstown, Aberdeenshire (Ralston 1996).

A number of other cist burials and related finds have previously been identified from the vicinity of Doons Law. This is in keeping with the patterns of Bronze Age cist distribution observed by McAdam (in Watkins 1982, 129) in that solitary short cists are not typical of Early

Bronze Age Scotland. Craw (1922) reported several 19th-century discoveries of cists in the vicinity. In 1831 a cist containing bones was discovered during ploughing adjacent to Doons Law on the southern side. In 1839 several other cists containing bones and pottery were discovered near the mound (NGR: NT 868 515), again by ploughing, at a depth of 0.25–0.3 m beneath the surface. Craw reports the discovery of another cist near the mound in 1870, complete with a skeleton and a flint scraper or knife. About 200 m south-east of Doons Law (NGR: NT 869 513) a short cist containing a skeleton and a flint scraper was found in 1869, again as a result of ploughing (Stewart 1870). Further afield, several cists were found in 1838, during land drainage, about 1 km west of Doons Law (NGR: NT 86 51). These contained crouched inhumations, each accompanied by probable food vessels (Craw 1922). Four kilometres north of Doons Law, west of Allanton (NT 880 544), a cist containing fragments of bone and a Beaker was recorded in 1912 (op cit).

No reference was made in these early reports to the presence of a cairn or barrow at Doons Law and the Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland refers to the archaeological character of the mound as ‘uncertain’ (NMRS record NT 85 SE no 7). None of the trenches opened by CFA — either over the cist or around the base of the mound — yielded evidence that Doons Law is of artificial construction.

## EXCAVATION

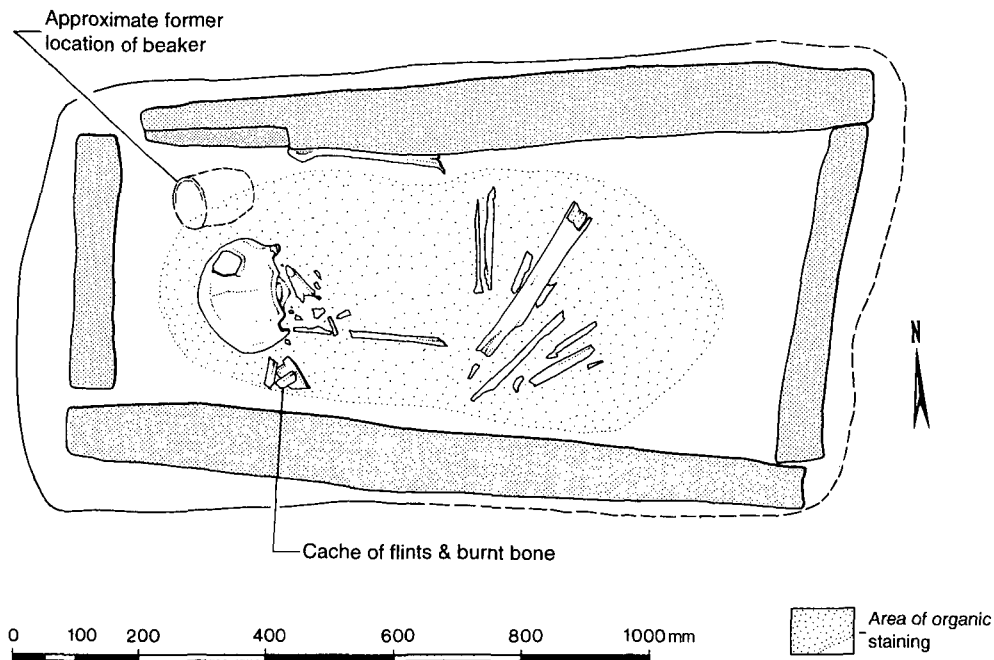
A total area of 76 sq m was cleared of topsoil by a machine using a smooth-edged ditching bucket. A trench 6 m by 6 m was positioned around the cist, north of Doons Law, and four other trenches were opened, each 10 m by 1 m, radiating from the base of the mound to north, south, east and west. These trenches were cleaned by hand and inspected for features but none was found.

The general topsoil depth recorded in all five trenches was about 0.3–0.4 m. It was not possible to determine the depth of topsoil above the capstone itself, as this had been displaced and damaged by the plough. As ploughing in January 1995 was no deeper than usual, it seems probable that the cist was revealed as a result of gradual erosion of the topsoil cover from the higher ground surrounding Doons Law.

## CIST (ILLUS 3)

Excavation of the cist began with the removal of the topsoil which had been dragged in by the plough when the capstone was displaced. Beneath this patches of a shallow clay soil were encountered. The skeletal remains and the group of flints and burnt bone lay below these upper deposits. Beneath the soil and in the vicinity of the skeletal remains lay a layer of fine, dark organic-rich sediment. This was 20–30 mm deep and did not extend to the edges of the cist. The stain is assumed to derive from a combination of the decomposition of the body along with any vegetation remains interred with the corpse. Similar ‘body stains’ were observed in cists at Ashgrove, Fife (Henshall 1964), Beech Hill House, Perthshire (Stevenson 1996), and Sketewan, Perthshire (Mercer & Midgley 1997). In a cist at Sandfjold, Orkney (Tipping 1994), the stain accompanied cremated remains and, because of its association with relatively abundant pollen, was interpreted as the remains of decayed plant matter. Similar staining has been noted from Mains of Scotstown, Sandhole Quarry and Tavelty Farm in Aberdeenshire (Ralston 1996).

The skeleton was cleaned and recorded *in situ*. A group of four flints, two pieces of burnt bone and charcoal fragments were found to the south of the skull. After the body stain had been intensively sampled for palynological analysis the skeletal remains were removed. The remainder



ILLUS 3 Plan of the cist showing the location of skeletal remains Beaker and flints

of the cist floor deposit was bulk-sampled (fragments of a copper awl were later recovered while sieving this material).

There was no evidence that the cist had been deliberately sealed in any way as was the case, for instance, at Mains of Scotstown, Sandhole Quarry and Tavelty Farm, all in Aberdeenshire (Ralston 1996), where clay luting was recorded; and at Upper Kenly Farm, Belliston Farm and Dalgety Bay, in Fife (Proudfoot 1997), where clay luting was used to seal the cists and also to level the capstones. Although a shallow clay soil was found overlying the skeletal remains and body stain in the Doons Law cist, there was no indication that it derived from clay luting and there was no evidence of clay applied to any of the cist slabs.

Below the cist floor, which contained no pebbling or paving, the underlying deposits consisted of redeposited clays, sands and gravels. The upright cist slabs were supported in this matrix. It was removed and the cist slabs then extracted. The smaller or eastern end slab was 0.55 m long, 0.53 m high and 0.07 m thick. The western slab measured 0.51 m by 0.56 m by 0.6 m. The northern slab, leaning slightly inwards, measured 1.17 m by 0.62 m by 0.12 m. The southern slab was 1.18 m by 0.66 m by 0.1 m. There was no basal slab. The floor area defined by the cist was 1.05 m by 0.5 m. Overall dimensions of the oval capstone were 1.79 m by 0.7 m by 0.14 m.

The cut for the cist was excavated and the packing soils from behind the slabs sampled and removed. This cut proved to be only marginally larger than the cist, measuring 0.7 m wide, 0.75 m deep and 1.3 m long. There was no evidence of barrow material around or under the cist.

## SKELETAL MATERIAL

Margaret F Bruce

Little survived of the skeleton except teeth, fragments of the upper and lower jaws, of the skull vault, of the right humerus, of the left femur and some very small fragments probably of ulna, radius and femur shafts. The bone was in poor condition, with the outer and inner tables of the skull and the cortex of long bone shafts being badly flaked. The remains are of a single adult of gracile build, probably female. No cause of death was evident.

*Skeletal elements*

**Skull** The vault was represented by most of the frontal bone, most of the left and right parietal bones, part of the left temporal (including the mastoid process, tympanic plate and zygomatic process) and part of the left side of the occipital. The face was represented only by the left maxilla (including part of the palatal shelf, part of the alveolar process and frontal process) with a very small attached portion of the palatine bone and the three molars *in situ*.

**Mandible/teeth** Part of the body extending from the right of the midline to beyond the level of the left third molar, with left teeth from incisor to third molar *in situ*. All the remaining (21) teeth were recovered.

**Lower limb** Only the badly eroded left femoral shaft and some other very small femoral shaft fragments survived.

*Skeletal analysis*

**Age** Third molars erupted; moderate molar attrition; skull sutures closing *ectocranially*; humeral epiphysis closed. Dental wear is consistent with an age-at-death in the range 25–35 years.

**Sex** Small mastoid process, very slight nuchal ridging; slight supra-orbital ridges; small frontal sinuses; gracile long bone shafts; small humeral head. These features suggest female sex.

**Stature** The long bones were too incomplete to estimate height. The skull looked high, short and rounded, with a cranial index of 80 (brachycranial). The long bone shafts were gracile suggesting slight build.

**Non-metric features** No metopic suture; Pacchionian depressions on the right and left of the sagittal suture endocranially; very deep grooves for the anterior branches of the middle meningeal blood vessels in the pterion region; a supra-orbital notch on the right; a parietal foramen on the right; a small downward projection of bone 'protected' the stylo-mastoid foramen on the left.

**Pathology** A small isolated fragment of skull vault showed some bony reaction suggestive of an infection. Unfortunately it was too small to make any further diagnosis. There were two small carious pits on the occlusal surface of the left mandibular third molars. There were deposits of calculus on most of the teeth. There was no evidence of bony reaction indicating infection on the walls of either the exposed frontal or maxillary air sinuses. There was no evidence of cause of death.

**Metric data** Maximum cranial length 176 mm (estimated); maximum cranial breadth 140 mm (est.); cranial index 80; humeral head diameter 27.5 mm (est.).

## RADIOCARBON DATE

A radiocarbon-date was obtained from a sample of the jawbone and yielded the following results.

TABLE 1

Radiocarbon-dated jawbone sample

Lab No	yrs BP	$\delta^{13}\text{C}(\text{‰})$	Calibrated yrs	
			1 sigma	2 sigma
AA-29066	3645 ± 65	-21.2	2135–1935 BC	2200–1800 BC

## ARTEFACTS

All artefacts have been declared Treasure Trove (TT8/96) and were allocated to the Scottish Borders Museums Service.

## BEAKER (ILLUS 4)

Alison Sheridan

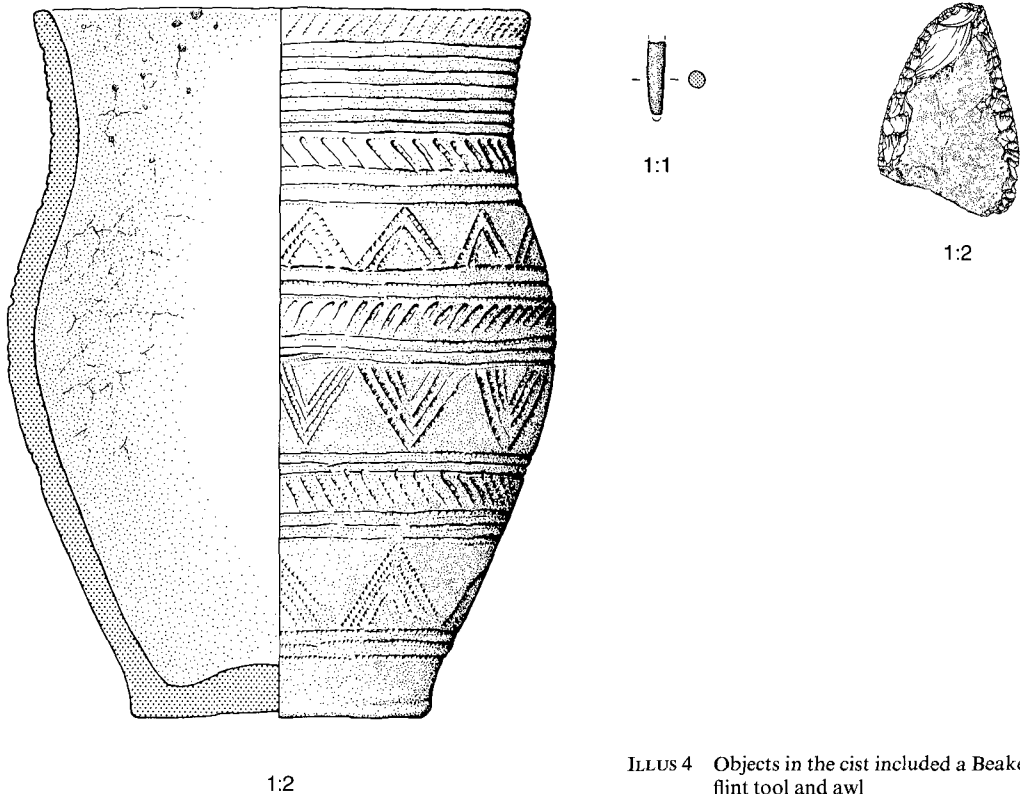
A complete, fine Beaker of Clarke's Northern British/Northern Rhine (1970) and Lanting & van der Waals' Step 4 (1972) type was found standing upright in the north-west corner of the cist, to the north and in front of the skull. It is 189 mm high, with walls about 6.5 mm thick, and diameters at the rim, belly and base respectively of 130 mm, 143 mm and 78 mm. There was minor damage to the rim when found, and four spalls missing from the belly; minor cracking and incipient spalling occurred as the pot dried out, but it is now stable.

The rim is squared off and slightly everted; the neck upright; the belly high and rounded; and the base pedestalled, flat on the exterior and with a low interior omphalos. The pot is of a fine-textured fabric, reddish with buff patches on the interior and exterior surfaces and with a thick black core. The clay contains small (up to 4 mm) sub-angular grits of a black mineral and some tiny mica platelets. The grits have been concealed by careful smoothing of the surfaces, and the exterior shows signs of having been polished to a low sheen prior to decoration.

The pot is decorated over all of the exterior surface, from the outside of the rim to just above the base, with incised and comb-impressed designs. At least two rectangular-toothed combs have been used, one about 7.0–9.5 mm, the other 30.0–31.5 mm long. The decoration is arranged as bands (of variable width) of alternating motifs, with sets of three horizontal lines interspersed with bands of slanting lines and filled chevrons, the whole topped by a fringe of sloping lines above a band of eight horizontal lines.

No staining from the pot's original contents was noted, as is sometimes observed on Early Bronze Age funerary pottery, but various stains and concretions considered to be post-depositional in origin were present: small patches of black staining, with some black encrustation, scattered over the exterior surface, including a blotch extending down a couple of centimetres from the rim; some small flakes of blackish, unidentified material in the interior, at upper belly level; and a white concretion filling some of the decorated areas. The white material is probably a natural calcareous deposit, and the black flakes inside the pot could conceivably have entered along with soil when the cist was disturbed. The patches of black staining do not accord with the normal patterns of staining seen when pots' former contents evaporate. (No analysis of this deposit was attempted.)

In its shape and decoration, the Doons Law Beaker finds its closest parallels among those classified by Clarke (1970) as Northern British/Northern Rhine (N/NR) — that is, a group



ILLUS 4 Objects in the cist included a Beaker, flint tool and awl

found principally north of the Wash and on the east side of Britain, with affinities with some Dutch Beakers (but cf Lanting & van der Waals' critique of Clarke: 1972). According to Lanting & van der Waals' scheme, it would class as a Step 4 Beaker. Comparable Beakers include those from Chatton Sandyford, Northumberland (Jobey 1968; Clarke 1970, fig 299), and Newton Penrith, Cumberland (Clarke 1970, fig 295). The Doons Law example joins a cluster of N/NR (Step 4) Beakers found along, and to the south of, the lower Tweed valley (*ibid*, map 4).

The dating of the skeleton accompanying the Doons Law Beaker to (AA-29066)  $3645 \pm 65$  BP, or 2200–1800 cal BC at 2 sigma, accords with dates obtained for other N/NR (Step 4) Beakers in southern Scotland and northern England. In Table 2, the first three examples were also derived from human bone.

TABLE 2

Radiocarbon dates associated with N/NR (Step 4) Beakers in southern Scotland and northern Britain (calibrations for Scottish examples derive from the Historic Scotland Datalog)

	BP	cal BC, 2 sigma	Lab no	Ref
Ruchlaw Mains, East Lothian	$3720 \pm 80$	2393–1887	GU-1356	Ashmore <i>et al</i> 1982
Dryburn Bridge, East Lothian (two cists)	$3850 \pm 160$ $3620 \pm 85$ $3550 \pm 80$	2866–1789 2197–1742 2130–1697	GU-1406 GU-1408 GU-1409	Pollock & Triscott 1980; Historic Scotland
Chatton Sandyford, Northumberland	$3620 \pm 50$	2137–1883	GaK-800	Jobey 1968 (This <i>TAQ</i> date was rejected by Kinnes <i>et al</i> 1991)



## FLINT (ILLUS 4)

Bill Finlayson

Four pieces of chipped stone were recovered. These included one secondary flake with shallow semi-invasive retouch along both lateral margins, to form a well-made tool; a small scraper that had subsequently been further reduced by bipolar flaking, leaving only the distal ends of the retouch scars that once formed the scraper edge, and removing the ventral surface of the tool; an unretouched secondary flake; and an unretouched inner flake. All the pieces are on good-quality, largely flaw-free grey flint that is clearly not from a local source.

The collection of flint artefacts corresponds to a common pattern of deposition in Bronze Age cists, where a well-made flint artefact is buried — in this case the double edge retouched flake — sometimes with a small number of other pieces. These artefacts are frequently unused and presumably made for interment with the dead, as at Biggar Common (Johnston 1997), the cists at West Water reservoir near West Linton (Hunter forthcoming), and at Sketewan in Perthshire (Mercer & Midgley 1997). It is also possible that whatever function these grave goods served was enhanced by the use of high-quality, rare, or exotic material (for example, the use of pitchstone and flint from Yorkshire at Biggar Common), and the fact that even the unretouched pieces of chipped stone at Doons Law are made of good-quality nodular flint may support this.

Use-wear analysis of the Doons Law edge-retouched flake has been undertaken. This has shown that although there are microscopic polish traces, these appear to be the product of the secondary modification. As far as can be determined the tool has never been used. This accords with evidence from Biggar Common and Sketewan, where it appears that well-made flint tools have been placed in burials without being used or, if they have been, this use has been so marginal as to leave no trace. Two possibilities seem plausible: one is that the tools were made for burial and were kept in a pristine state until that event (and this is most strongly supported by the mint condition of the imported Yorkshire tools at Biggar Common); the second is that the tools may have been used, but in a ritual manner that has not been sufficient to produce use-wear traces.

## COPPER AWL (ILLUS 4)

Alison Sheridan

Fragments of a thin, round-sectioned artefact of copper were retrieved from the floor of the cist. As they were recovered while sieving a bulk sample of the cist floor material, their precise location cannot be determined. They survive as one main piece, 8.9 mm long, plus a few smaller fragments and crumbs. The main piece is round in section and tapers from a diameter of 1.6 mm to a rounded end; the very tip is missing. The most plausible interpretation is that these represent the remains of an awl. The overall length cannot be extrapolated, although other Bronze Age awls are no longer than 55 mm (excluding handle: Clarke *et al* 1985), and most are generally estimated to have been 30–40 mm long.

Although rare and easy to miss, several authors draw attention to the incidence of awls of metal or bone in a number of Early and Middle Bronze Age graves (Clarke 1970; Kinnes & Longworth 1985; Longworth 1984; Thomas 1968). Ceramic associations are with Beakers, Food Vessels, urns and accessory vessels, though examples without ceramic associations also occur, including Culduthel, Inverness-shire (Low 1929) and Barns Farm, Fife (Watkins 1982).

Metal awls fall into two basic types (Thomas 1968; Henshall & MacInnes 1968): an earlier and long-lived type, double-ended and with a central swelling; and a later type, with a flattened

tang and no medial swelling. The Doons Law example is too fragmentary to determine its type, but to judge from ceramic associations elsewhere, the former type is more likely.

In Scotland, as elsewhere in Britain, awls are more frequently associated with female interments than with male (cf Clarke 1970; Kinnes & Longworth 1985; Thomas 1968). A male association was noted for the awl found with a Step 4 Beaker at Springwood, Roxburghshire (Henshall & MacInnes 1968), but in all other Scottish Early Bronze Age cases known to the author where the sex of the corpse could be determined or extrapolated, this has been female. Examples occur at Edderton, Easter Ross (Ralston 1996), Mount Stuart, Bute (Bryce 1904), Culduthel, Inverness-shire (Low 1929), Kirkcaldy, Fife (Childe 1944), and Balcalk, Angus (Sturrock 1880). The Doons Law specimen thus conforms to a pattern.

#### BURNT BONE

Fraser Hunter

Two pieces of burnt bone were found within the cist but both were too small and damaged to be identified to any element or species. One piece crumbled on removal; the other was examined at the National Museums of Scotland. Its measurements were length 39 mm, width 19.5 mm and thickness 13 mm. Its surface was blackened but X-ray fluorescence confirmed that it was bone rather than charcoal. One end bore remains of a facet, but this may well be from damage or wear rather than use as an artefact. The bone was found associated with some degraded pieces of charcoal which crumbled on contact and therefore could not be identified. With hindsight it is possible that the material initially identified as charcoal could equally have been burnt bone. It is possible that the burnt bone/charcoal relates to cremation activity in the cemetery or a secondary deposit of a cremation within the cist. The inclusion of burnt bone in an inhumation is highly unusual, and the possibility that this is an accidental inclusion cannot be ruled out.

#### POLLEN AND SPORES

Ciara M Clarke

The sampling strategy employed for the stained organic sediments — ie the ‘body stain’ on the cist floor — was designed to allow finely resolved spatial resolution of the occurrence of pollen and spores and to investigate the location of any recovered taxa relative to the position of the body. Small discrete samples of this sediment were removed for palynological analysis. Other, unstained areas of the cist floor were also sampled for comparison. In all, 17 samples were taken, 11 from the stained area of the cist floor, three from the unstained area, and three from outwith the cist. The sampling policy adopted was to locate samples such that the entire extent of the cist floor was represented, though sample sites were chosen in relation to position of the body rather than on either a grid system or random basis. Standard palynological extraction procedures were used to prepare each sample, using potassium hydroxide/hydrofluoric acid/acetolysis, as described by Moore *et al* (1991). Full details of the palynological investigation, which includes pollen and fungal spores, can be found in Clarke (1999). The results are summarized here.

**Pollen** Analysis of samples from within the organic stain produced assemblages consistently dominated by three taxa — *Alnus glutinosa* (alder), *Pteropsida* undiff. (undifferentiated ferns) and Brassicaceae (cabbage family) — in association with a range of other taxa at lower frequencies. Three samples concentrated around the area of the skull were unusual in also containing *Filipendula* (meadowsweet), cf *Filipendula* and up to 5%

*Sphagnum* (moss). A further two samples, probably from below the knees of the individual and from within the stained area, proved non-polleniferous. Cereal-type pollen (Poaceae with annulus diameter  $> 8 \mu\text{m}$ ) was recovered from nearly all pollen-bearing samples. All samples outwith the body-stain along with those outwith the interior of the cist proved non-polleniferous.

Brassicaceae comprised up to 82.5% of the pollen assemblages and in some samples Brassicaceae pollen grains were encountered in clusters. Decomposition of anthers *in situ* could explain such pollen clusters, indicating that flowerheads were once present. Unfortunately, identification of this taxon beyond family level is not possible on the basis of pollen morphology alone. It includes members of the cress, rocket and mustard families in addition to whitlow-grasses, scurvy-grasses, charlock, shepherd's purse, pepperwort, cuckoo-flower, alyssum and radish.

Where *Filipendula* (probably *F ulmaria* or meadowsweet) occurred, including grains of cf *Filipendula*, it constituted up to 10% of the assemblage. The pollen type cf *Filipendula* is considered to be immature grains derived from the presence of flowerheads (Dickson 1978; Bohncke 1983; Whittington 1993; Tipping 1994).

**Charcoal** Microscopic charcoal was present in all samples from within the cist, including unstained areas of the cist floor, but was not present in samples from outwith the cist.

**Fungal spores** Fungal spores were recovered in all of the pollen-bearing samples. The dominant types demonstrated wide ecological amplitudes although others having more restricted ranges were also present. The detection of a cellulolytic fungal taxon was interpreted as indicating the former presence of straw or cloth.

### *Interpretation*

The pollen is considered to derive substantially from deliberate deposition of botanical material at the time of the inhumation. The original form of the vegetation could not be determined, though it is likely that flowerheads of Brassicaceae and *Filipendula* were present. The fungal spore evidence supports the predominance of leaves and flowers as opposed to woody branches and twigs. *Filipendula* was restricted in distribution to the area around the head, suggesting that it represents a special tribute or grave furnishing, perhaps in the form of a head-dress or pillow. This reinforces the consensus that *Filipendula* had a symbolic status in Scottish Bronze Age funerary practices (see, for example, Tipping 1994). An alternative explanation is that this pollen was an ingredient in some form of mead (see Dickson 1978), perhaps poured over the head as part of the burial rite. Elsewhere, the evidence suggests the presence of a vegetation covering, stuffing or mat composed predominantly of alder and fern leaves with Brassicaceae flowers.

The high amounts of Brassicaceae pollen are notable. Apart from substantial amounts of Brassicaceae recovered from a cist at Belliston, Fife (Whittington 1997), this taxon has not previously been recorded as a dominant floral component of Scottish Bronze Age cist pollen assemblages. Cruciferae (Brassicaceae) pollen has been reported in small quantities from the cists at Beech Hill House, Perthshire (Tipping 1994), and Upper Kenly Farm, Fife (Whittington 1993). It has also been recovered in association with *Tilia*, *Filipendula* and *Trifolium repens* (white clover) in a crust formed within a birch bark bucket which accompanied the body of a girl at Egtved, Denmark (see Dickson 1978).

## CONCLUSIONS

The cist excavated at Doons Law contained a rich assemblage of artefacts and ecofacts. A Northern British/Northern Rhine Beaker, four flint artefacts, a copper awl and fragments of burnt bone and charcoal were recovered. The artefact assemblage is typical of a Scottish Early Bronze Age cist burial. The skeletal remains have been identified as a single adult, probably female. Radiocarbon dating of the skeletal material provided corroborative evidence for the established chronology of this series of Beakers. Pollen assemblages dominated by Brassicaceae were recovered from the cist floor and are thought to relate to material deliberately incorporated at the time of burial. Occurrences of *Filipendula* pollen were restricted to the area of the head suggesting a head-dress or pillow, or possibly a libation of mead.

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