I.

NOTICE OF THREE URNS OF THE DRINKING-CUP TYPE AND OTHER RELICS DISCOVERED IN A MOUND AT FORGLEN, BANFFSHIRE.

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Early in 1906 an artificial mound, on the estate of Forglen, belonging to Sir George W. Abercromby, Bart., was explored under the direction of Mr Douglas Abercromby, who kindly granted me permission to examine the site and record the discoveries.

The mound is situated in a plantation called Meadowheads Wood, within the policies of Forglen House, $\frac{3}{4}$ of a mile south of the mansion and 550 yards north-east of the Kirk of Forglen, in the parish of the same name in Banffshire. On the Ordnance Survey map the site is marked "Tumulus," and it stands above the 300-feet contour line, on the eastern slope of a hill running in a northerly direction parallel to the river Deveron, which is $\frac{1}{2}$ mile distant and 200 feet lower. Before the trees surrounding the site were planted, the mound would command an extensive view of the opposite side of the valley of the Deveron to the east. Rather more than a furlong to the S.S.E., in a field under cultivation, there is another mound surrounded by a trench, almost obliterated by the plough, and about $7\frac{1}{2}$ furlongs to the north-east there is a cairn. On the Ordnance map the former is marked "Rounie Law," and the latter, "Barbara's Hillock—Stone Coffin containing Human Remains found A.D. 1850."

The Forglen tumulus (fig. 1) is nearly circular in shape, it measures from about 64 to 68 feet in diameter, and rises in the centre to a height of 7 feet above the natural surface of the ground. It is almost entirely composed of yellow sand mixed with clay, no stones having been used in its construction except as adjuncts to two of the deposits in the cairn. It resembles the English earthen barrow more than the Scottish cairn, which as a rule is largely composed of stones. Mr Andrew Bell, the forester on the estate, who supervised the excavations and from whose

careful observations I am enabled to give many of the following details, informed me that the soil of which the mound was composed was not to be found in the immediate neighbourhood.

The first discovery made in excavating the mound was near its south-west edge, where, at a depth of 6 inches under the surface, a flat, rectangular, causeyed pavement A was exposed. It was 6 feet long by 3 feet broad, and its longer axis was north-west and south-east. This causeyed area was not level, but was laid at an angle following the slope of the mound. The 6-inch layer of mould that covered this space was dark in colour, apparently being composed of decayed vegetable matter like leaf-mould. At no other part of the surface of the mound was there anything like this thickness of vegetable mould. The stones used in the construction of the pavement were water-worn pebbles of quartz and quartzite varying from about 3 to 6 inches in diameter, and they were generally light grey in colour. Under the pavement there was nothing but the yellow sandy clay of the cairn.

The excavations were continued towards the centre of the mound, and 17 feet from the inner edge of the first pavement a second causeyed area was met with, 2 feet under the surface of the cairn, which at this spot was about 6 feet high. This pavement B differed from the first pavement in being laid level, and it was only 3 feet square. At a depth of 1 foot below it and 3 feet from the surface of the mound, a complete urn (No. 2) of the drinking-cup type (fig. 3) was found standing on its base but leaning slightly to one side. It rested on a deposit of black burnt material largely composed of charred wood, which surrounded it to a thickness of 1 foot. Between the top of the urn and the overhead pavement, and above the pavement, there was yellow sandy clay only. No bones were observed in the blackened soil under, or surrounding the urn.

From a point C near the middle of the inner edge of the second and smaller pavement, two straight but diverging rows of single pebbles extended forward, the first on the left CD in a north-easterly direction, the second on the right CE in a more easterly direction for a distance of

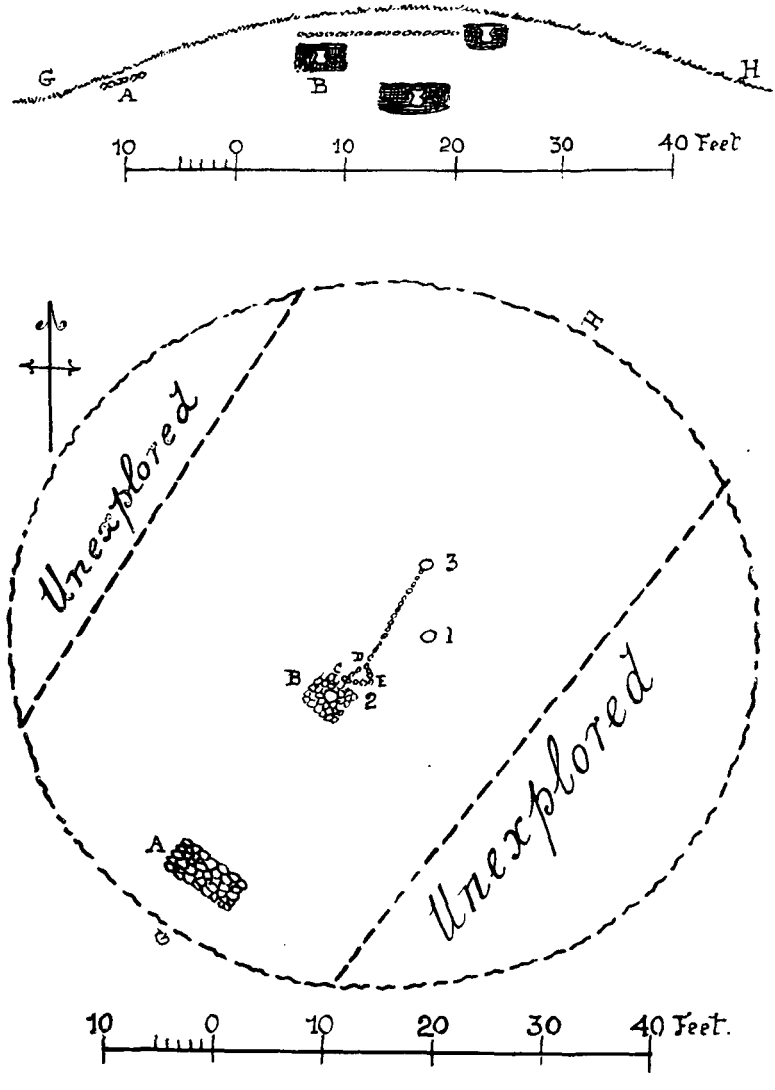

Fig. 1. Ground-Plan and Section of the Mound at Forglen.

2 feet, when it turned abruptly to the left, and after running 2 feet, joined the first row 2½ feet from the edge of the pavement, thus forming a triangle. From the junction of the rows D a single row of pebbles continued across the mound, in a slightly more northerly direction than the first row, for about 11 feet, terminating in a second black deposit almost in contact with the base of another urn (No. 3) of the drinking-cup type (fig. 4). The rows of pebbles were laid almost level, and the stones forming them and the second pavement were of the same shape, size, and material, as those used in the formation of the first-discovered paved area.

After discovering the second pavement, and the urn and rows of pebbles connected with it, instead of carrying the working face of the digging right to the bottom of the mound, the excavators followed up the rows of pebbles till they exposed the urn just mentioned (No. 3). It was in fragments, but from the position of the base it was evident that the vessel had been placed on its base. It was covered with 16 inches of sand. The fragments of the urn were entirely embedded in a black deposit of material similar in composition and extent to that accompanying the first-discovered urn (No. 2). No fragments of bone were observed.

The second urn having been unearthed, the portion of the mound between it and the first urn, which had not been explored pending the examination of the rows of pebbles, was excavated down to the natural surface of the ground. Slightly east of the centre of the mound a third but much larger black deposit was encountered, in the middle of which, and at a depth of 5 feet from the surface of the cairn, yet another urn (No. 1) of the drinking-cup type (fig. 2) was found. This urn, which was quite embedded in the black material, was lying crushed on its side, but as the base was lying horizontal, it was seen that it had been deposited [illegible]

the skeleton were recovered, and what survived were in a very fragmentary condition. A small part of the jaw, containing two adjoining molar teeth in good condition, was the only well-preserved portion. A small barbed and stemmed arrow-head of light yellow flint, 1 inch in length and $\frac{5}{8}$ inch across the barbs, was found amongst the bones and blackened soil.

On the plan of the mound the distances between the urns were:

Fig. 2. Urn No. 1, from the Mound at Forglen.

from No. 1 to No. 2, 9 feet 6 inches; from No. 1 to No. 3, 5 feet 9 inches; and from No. 2 to No. 3, 14 feet 6 inches. No. 1 was about 4 feet east of the centre of the structure.

At various depths throughout the mound, from the natural surface of the ground on which it was erected to within about 12 inches of the top, thin layers of charred wood of no great extent were observed.

As already mentioned, the three urns are of the drinking-cup type. Urn No. 1 (fig. 2) is a very rare, if not unique, variety, it having a raised beading or moulding about $\frac{1}{8}$ inch in height encircling the

vessel about $\frac{1}{2}$ inch under the rim. It is reddish yellow in colour and is made of a fine paste, the wall being rather less than $\frac{1}{4}$ inch in thickness. It measures $6\frac{1}{2}$ inches in height, $5\frac{7}{16}$ inches in diameter across the mouth, $4\frac{15}{16}$ inches at the neck, $5\frac{1}{2}$ inches at the bulge, and $2\frac{7}{8}$ inches at the base. With the exception of a plain band $\frac{1}{2}$ inch wide which encircles the vessel $1\frac{1}{4}$ inches from the bottom, the wall of the urn is ornamented, from the base to within $\frac{1}{2}$ inch of the raised mould-

Fig. 3. Urn No. 2, from the Mound at Forglen.

ing, by the impress of a roughly twisted cord wound spirally round it eleven times between the base and the plain band, and twenty-four times between the plain band and the top of the ornament. Six to seven of the spiral lines occupy the space of an inch.

The other two urns are much alike and of a common shape. Urn No. 2 (fig. 3) is light yellow in colour and is coarser in texture than No. 1, the wall of the vessel being $\frac{5}{16}$ inch thick. The urn is $6\frac{7}{8}$ inches in height, 6 inches across the mouth, 5 inches across the neck, $5\frac{7}{16}$ across the bulge, and $3\frac{3}{4}$ inches across the base. It bears four zones of orna-

ment about $2\frac{3}{8}$ inches, 1 inch, $1\frac{1}{4}$ inches, and $\frac{3}{4}$ inch broad respectively, and $\frac{5}{8}$ to $\frac{3}{4}$ inch apart. The first occupies the everted part of the vessel from the edge of the rim to the neck; the second is just above the bulge; the third is midway between the second and the fourth, which is within $\frac{1}{4}$ inch of the base. The scheme of ornamentation is different in all the four zones. The upper zone is divided into nine narrow bands by nine parallel transverse lines; the first and sixth bands are occupied by vertical lines, seven or eight to the inch, the fourth and eighth bands by crossed oblique lines, and the remaining bands are left plain. The second zone is formed into five narrow bands by six parallel transverse lines; the second and fourth bands are filled in by crossed lines and the others are left devoid of design. The third zone, like the last one, is composed of five parts formed by six transverse lines; the first narrow band is occupied by short oblique lines slanting to the left, the third by perpendicular lines, and the fourth by crossed lines, and the other two are plain. The vertical and oblique lines are about $\frac{1}{6}$ to $\frac{1}{8}$ inch apart. The lower zone is composed of four parallel transverse lines having no ornament between them. All the transverse lines have been made with a toothed, comb-like stamp, and the others with blunt-pointed tools. Much less care has been bestowed on the ornamentation of this urn than on either of the other two; the crossed lines especially are very carelessly and roughly done.

Urn No. 3 (fig. 4) is taller than the others and its colour is a greyish yellow. The greater part of the inside of the vessel and the outside of the everted lip is much darker; this might have been occasioned by its being in contact with the black deposit in which it was found, but as neither of the other two urns, which were found in similar circumstances, have been discoloured, it is more probable that the dark colour is to be accounted for by different firing and composition of the clay of the vessel. The clay is coarser than in the other urns and the wall of the vessel is $\frac{5}{16}$ inch thick. The height of the urn varies from $7\frac{11}{16}$ inches on the one side to $7\frac{3}{8}$ on the other, the diameter of the mouth is $5\frac{3}{4}$ inches, of the neck $4\frac{7}{8}$ inches, of the bulge $5\frac{7}{16}$ inches, and of the base

$3\frac{1}{2}$ inches. Three zones of ornamentation closely resembling each other encircle the vessel; they measure $1\frac{5}{8}$ inches, 2 inches, and 2 inches in breadth respectively. The upper zone, which commences about $\frac{1}{4}$ inch from the rim, occupies the everted part; the middle zone, which encircles the bulge, is $\frac{7}{8}$ inch from the upper and $\frac{3}{4}$ inch from the lower zone; the latter extends to within $\frac{5}{16}$ inch of the base. The upper and lower

Fig. 4. Urn No. 3, from the Mound at Forglen.

edges of the first and second zones are each composed of three parallel transverse lines $\frac{1}{8}$ inch apart, with a zigzag line on the outside; the space between the inner transverse lines is occupied by perpendicular zigzags of four parts in the upper zone and of five parts in the second one, about $\frac{1}{6}$ to $\frac{1}{8}$ inch apart. The lowest zone is similar to the second, only the zigzag line is wanting on the lower side of it. The vertical zigzag lines in the upper and lower zones commence by slanting to the left, while in the middle zone they slant first to the right. The whole

of the ornamentation on this urn has been made with a toothed stamping tool.

From the preceding description of the mound and its contents the following deductions may be made. The last-discovered and central deposit was the primary interment. A shallow grave having been scooped out of the surface of the ground, the body was placed in it, and a large quantity of charred wood, or soil mixed with charred wood, was scattered over and around it. Judging by the two remaining teeth, the body was that of an adult. Above the body, and surrounded by the charred matter, a drinking-cup urn was placed erect. This urn having been found in fragments, it was impossible to ascertain if its contents differed from the matter amongst which it was placed. A mound of sandy clay was then heaped up over the deposit to the depth of several feet. Besides the urn, the only artificial object recovered from this interment was the arrow-head. It might be suggested that a single arrow had been deposited in the grave with the body, or that the deceased had been killed by an arrow, of which the flint head is the sole remaining evidence.[1] Before the mound was raised over the body, fires were kindled at various places on the surface of the ground, and the remaining traces of them cover small areas of 4 to 5 feet in diameter. I have seen the whole foundation area of a cairn covered with similar charred material. What may have been the object of these fires, or whether they were lit before, during, or after the burial ceremony, we cannot say, but as the body was interred amongst charred wood, they may have been lit for the purpose of preparing the charcoal. It has been suggested that the charred appearance of the wood may have been the result of eremacausis, but this is not so, because some pieces of decayed wood were found quite close to burnt wood, and there was no resemblance between them.

[1] B. C. A. Windle, *Remains of the Prehistoric Age in England*, p. 82, fig. 35, quoting from *L'Anthropologie*, says that in the Grotte de la Tourasse, in France, a skeleton was found with a flint arrow-head embedded up to the barbs in the front of one of the lumbar vertebræ, showing that the arrow had completely traversed the person's abdomen.

Subsequent to the first, another interment was made nearer the south-west side of the mound. Charred material was heaped over the body and an urn was placed amongst, but not covered with, the black deposit of charred wood. The tumulus was heaped up further till this second burial was covered with a foot of sand, then a causeyed pavement, 3 feet square, was laid right above it. From the inner edge of this pavement rows of pebbles were laid across the mound to where a third interment was made in circumstances similar to the last. The cairn was then further augmented by the addition of more sandy clay, till this deposit was covered with 16 inches and the pavement with 2 feet of soil. No osseous remains were seen in the deposits connected with the last two urns, but the probability is that both were associated with human interments like the primary burial. Although the two deposits were only about $2\frac{1}{2}$ feet in diameter, which may seem rather small a space in which to place a body unless that of a child, remains of skeletons, not cremated, accompanied by drinking-cup urns, have been found in cists of smaller area. The soil of the mound is free and open, and, as the two deposits were quite near the surface, it is not surprising that the bodies should decay and entirely disappear. Even of the primary interment, which was covered with 6 feet of soil, there was only a small handful of broken bones left. Also, the two urns were placed in the same relative positions to their accompanying deposits as the urn with the first burial. We are therefore, I think, justified in saying that there had been a body deposited with each urn.

It has not been demonstrated when the first-discovered and larger pavement was made, whether at the same time as the smaller one or after. No lines of stratification were observed in the mound, by which it might have been possible to say if the deposits were contemporary. The fact of there being only 6 inches of soil over the larger pavement and 2 feet over the smaller, does not point to different times for the construction of them, as soil heaped up in a mound is necessarily higher near the centre and thinner towards the edge, and the larger pavement was quite near the edge. However, as the stones used in the con-

struction of both pavements are of the same kind, it is very likely that they were both laid at the one time.

It was conclusively shown that the mound had been increased after each burial. The tumulus had not been raised to its greatest height immediately after the first interment and before the other two, and openings afterwards made in it to receive the latter deposits. Had this been so, the sides of such excavations would have been clearly marked by the black material of the deposits, but there was no discoloration of the yellow sandy clay which immediately covered them.

We are unable to say whether the three burials were contemporary or not, but if it be the case that the material of the mound was brought from some distance—and there is no difference between the soil at the foundation and at the top—it would seem not improbable that all three were nearly contemporary, or at least belonged to one generation, as the persons who completed the mound must have been in touch with those who began it. But, if the first interment were made some time previous to the other two, it is almost certain that they took place about the same time. There can be little doubt that the smaller pavement was laid in connection with the second interment, and as the rows of pebbles connected it with the third burial, we may consider them to have been made about the same time and by the same persons.

It has been remarked that the six inches of soil covering the larger pavement was black, like leaf-mould, while at the other parts of the cairn the yellow material came practically to the surface; but we are unable to say whether this pavement was laid on the surface, or whether it had been sunk into the surface and left exposed for some special purpose. If laid on the surface it would point to the mound having increased by some inches all over, by the accumulation of decayed vegetation. The operations of burrowing animals would account for the difference in colour of the soil above the pavement and on the other parts of the surface of the mound; at all parts except above the pavement the decayed vegetation would be mixed with the underlying yellow sand. If the pavement had originally been

sunk slightly and the stones left bare, falling leaves would have lodged in the hollow, and as they decayed would have filled it up gradually while they were blown away from the rest of the mound.

It is not known what was the purpose of the pavements or of the rows of pebbles, and the occurrence of them in the Forglen mound in connection with Bronze Age burials seems to be unique so far as Great Britain is concerned. The only example which bears a slight resemblance to it, so far as I can ascertain, is mentioned in Mr John Smith's *Prehistoric Man in Ayrshire*, p. 29, fig. 35, where he says that, according to the *New Statistical Account of Ayrshire*, under a sand mound at Dubbs, in the parish of Stevenston, in 1832, a causeway, 18 feet in length and 2 feet in breadth, was discovered; at one end of the causeway was a large stone about a ton in weight, and at the other end a stone coffin, 3 feet long and 2 feet broad, which contained two urns and five jet buttons.

The Society is indebted to Mr Abercromby for kindly allowing the urns and other relics to be exhibited.