A Beaker Grave at Springwood, Kelso, Roxburghshire

by Audrey S. Henshall and Isla J. MacInnes

A short cist was discovered, in January 1967, during ploughing on the farm of Springwood, and it was reported to the National Museum of Antiquities by the farmer, Mr James Elliot. We wish to record our gratitude to Mr Elliot for reporting the find so promptly, and for his assistance during the examination of the burial. We were also helped by C. Martin, F.S.A.Scot., and J. C. Wallace, F.S.A.Scot., to whom we extend our sincere thanks.

The site is a little over half a mile SW. of Kelso, and just over quarter of a mile from the S. bank of the River Teviot a short distance above its confluence with the River Tweed (N.G.R. NT 71903312). The cist was on the top of a gentle rise, the highest point in a large undulating field (figs. 1 and 2). The field has been parkland until recently, part of the policies of Springwood House, now demolished.

The capstone had been dislodged during the ploughing. As the upper edges of the side stones of the cist were only about 9 in. below the present surface, the depth of soil above the capstone must have been small: presumably there has been gradual soil creep from the rise due to agricultural activities.

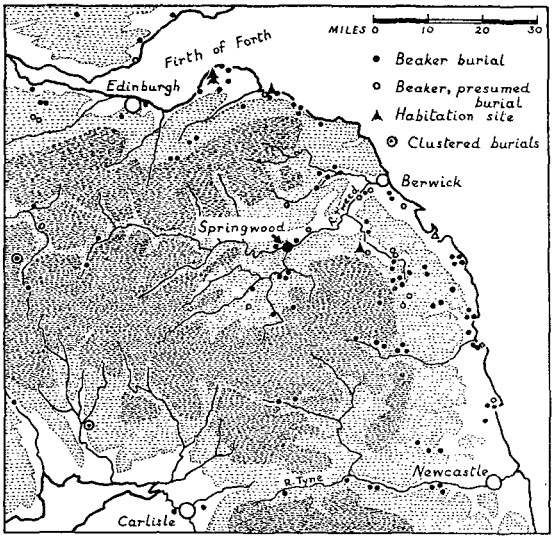

FIG. 1. Distribution map of Beakers in the Tyne-Forth region and the location of Springwood (based on Mitchell, *PSAS*, LXVIII (1933–4), 174–78, and Tait, *Beakers from Northumberland* (1965), 65–70). Land over 200 and over 800 ft. stippled

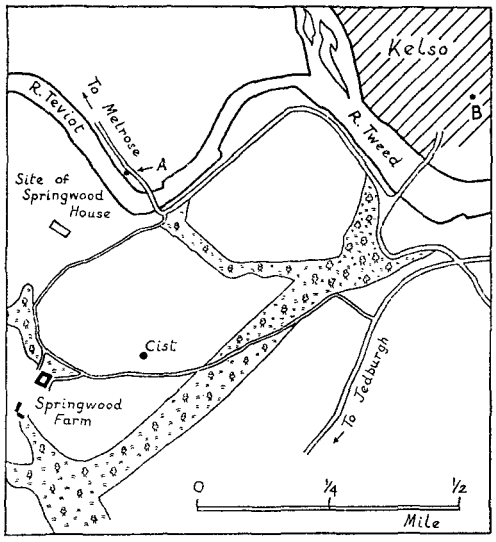

FIG. 2. Map showing the site of the Cist at Springwood; A, Beaker found before 1888; B, Beaker found in a cist in 1864

The capstone was a flat sandstone slab 5 in. thick, of irregular shape, 5 ft. 7 in. long, by 3 ft. 7 in. in width at one end, tapering to 2 ft. 9 in. near the other end.

The cist (fig. 3) had been constructed of four rectangular sandstone slabs, set with their flatter surfaces to the interior, and with their upper edges carefully levelled. Part of the upper surface of two slabs had been dressed down by pecking to obtain a perfectly level seating for the capstone (Pl. 6). The slabs were smooth blocks, only one of which had been split, and they had probably been obtained from the river bed a short distance away. They fitted very neatly, except for the lower parts where the less regular tapering form of the long stones created small gaps which had been plugged with stones inserted from the exterior.

The interior of the cist measured 3 ft. 9 in. along the E.–W. axis, by 1 ft. 10 in. across the E. end and 2 ft. 3½ in. across the W. end, but a slight inward movement of the long side-stones

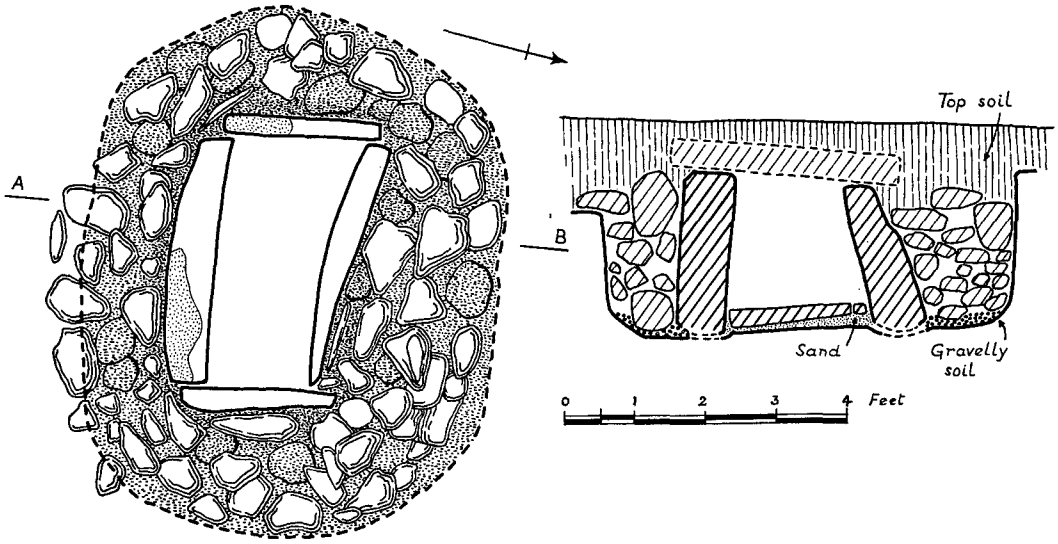

FIG. 3. Left, plan of cist and pit at ground level; right, section on A–B

somewhat reduced the width at the upper level. The depth was 1 ft. 6 in. The floor of the cist was paved, by two large flat slabs, the corners filled in with smaller stones.

The cist had been built in an oval pit measuring 7 ft. 4 in. by 4 ft. 10 in. The space between the cist and side of the pit had been tightly packed with large cobbles supplemented by smaller cobbles; the largest were about 1 ft. cube. Between the cobbles were air spaces, and only near the bottom was there gravelly soil. These air spaces are a curious feature for there was no apparent reason for the top soil not to have percolated down. Possibly there had once been a clay capping over the top of the cist and the pit, disturbed by the recent ploughing, but no clay was observed during the excavation. The lower edges of the long side stones were rather irregular, and at the centre, where deepest, had been set in a groove in the floor of the pit. The slightly shallower W. stone and the flooring slabs had been set in clean sand.

In the soil around the pit there was a proportion of cobbles and smaller stones, which were not common in the rest of the field. It seems likely that there had been a small cairn over the pit.

In the cist a small amount of fine soil in the corners represented a gradual percolation through the upper parts of the joints between the stones. Otherwise the cist had been almost free of soil until the capstone was removed and plough-soil had fallen in.

When cleared of soil, it was found that the bones of an inhumation lay in a disordered heap in the centre of the cist (fig. 4). Although most of the bones were in poor condition it could be seen that many were broken, and teeth were found throughout the mass. A tibia was the only complete bone of any size, and this lay roughly parallel to the S. side slab. As it turned out, it had been only slightly disturbed from its original position. When these displaced bones had been removed a few bones were found in position lying on the paving. These showed that the body had lain on its left side with the head near the NE. corner and the legs doubled along the S. side. Part of the pelvis was found with the left femur articulated. Alongside the femur were the tibia and fibula, all

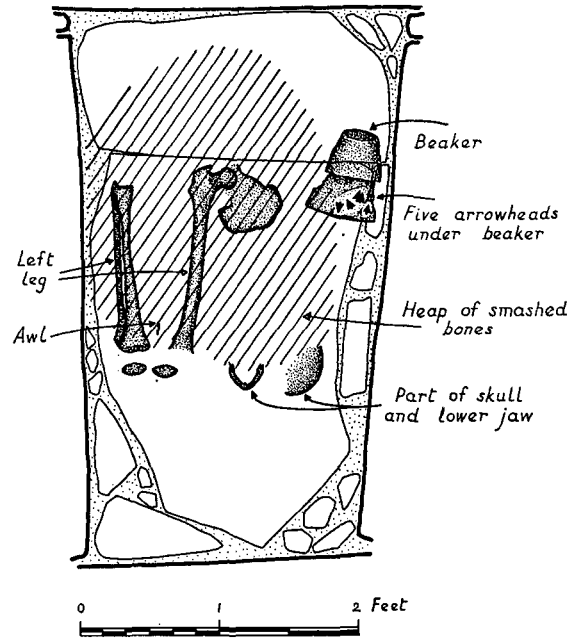

FIG. 4. Plan of the bottom of the cist

the bones lying almost parallel. Both patellae were at the E. end of the long bones, and many of the bones of the ankle and feet, some articulated, were near the SW. corner. Part of the cranium and the lower jaw, inverted, lay displaced near the E. end of the cist.

Against the N. stone towards the W. end lay a shattered Beaker. The remains were undisturbed, but in very poor condition; its shattered condition may be partly due to the movement of the side stone. Below the Beaker were five arrowheads, and amongst the disturbed bones was a bronze awl.

The condition of the burial leads to the surprising conclusion that the cist had been opened at some time in the past, the articulated skeleton had been considerably disturbed, and then the capstone had been replaced. Presumably the Beaker was already broken, and held no interest for treasure seekers; the arrowheads would have been hidden from sight beneath the sherds of the broken vessel.

The Beaker (fig. 5)

This must have been intact, laid on its side, when placed in the grave. It is of an unusual friable heavily gritted ware, reddish-pink with a variable dull brown to pink surface, the inner

surface tending to break away. These defects may be largely due to overfiring in the kiln. Because of the poor quality of the ware the vessel had collapsed *in situ*, and only the upper surface remained sufficiently intact to be reconstructed into a complete profile. The whole of the base survived, and parts of the lower wall round the rest of the pot, but most of the upper walls were recovered as little more than crumbs.

The Beaker has evidently been irregular in shape, leaning somewhat to one side, with an uneven rim. The complete profile has a graceful curved outline with a short everted neck and

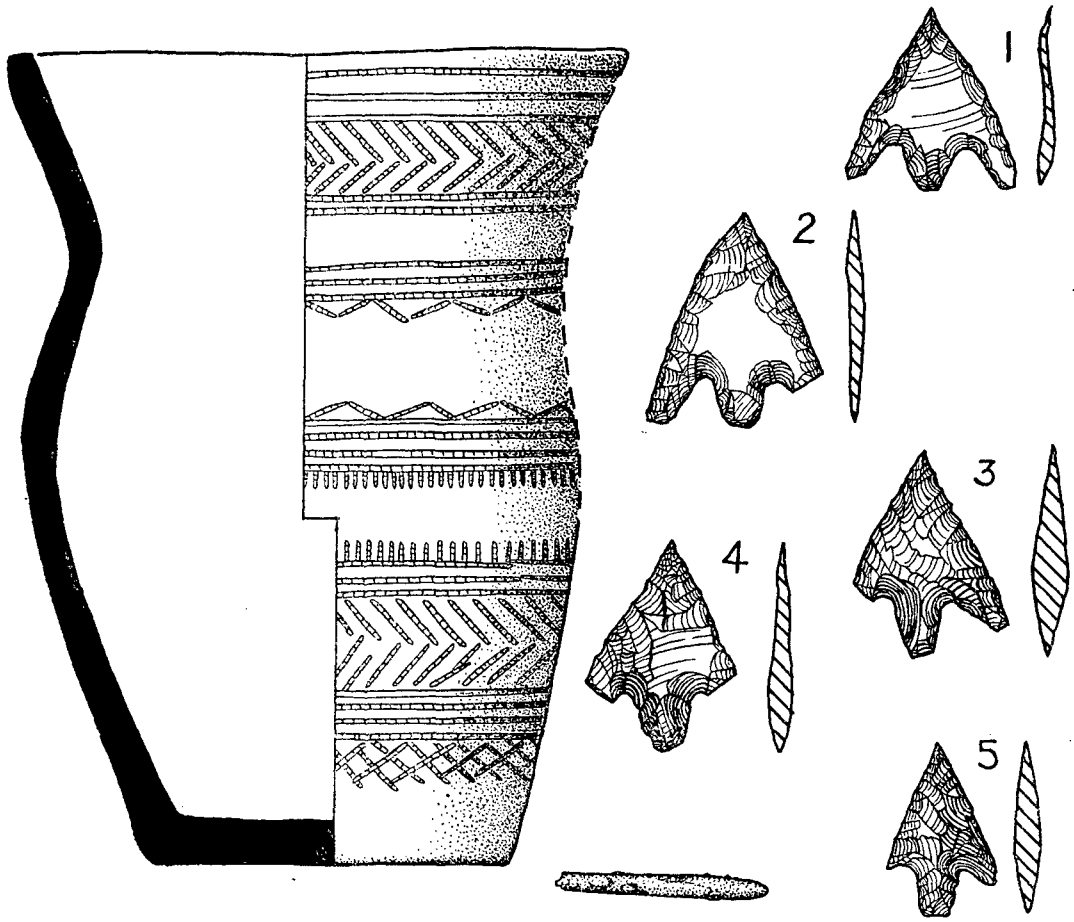

FIG. 5. The Beaker (½); the arrowheads and awl (full size)

rounded body. But what remains of the lower part of the opposite side is much flatter and more vertical (the missing upper part of this side is indicated by a dotted line on the drawing). The height has varied from 8·15 to 8·6 in., the rim diameter outside was about 6·3 in.

The decoration forms two main zones, on the neck and on the body, though the lower part of the upper zone, and upper part of the lower zone are each detached from the rest of the zone by an undecorated strip. The decoration is by comb impressions, though in the horizontal lines the comb has often been pulled to leave a smooth wide incised line. The comb used for the latter had wider teeth separated by very slight nicks. The other comb appears to have been 0·53 in. long

with six teeth. In places the pattern has been smeared by handling whilst the pot was still soft. The base of the Beaker is rough, apparently due to the pot having been placed on some vegetable matter whilst it was still plastic. Unfortunately there are no clear impressions.

The Arrowheads (fig. 5)

These lay undisturbed below the Beaker. It was clear that they had not been placed in the grave attached to arrows, for one arrowhead pointed E., three pointed W., and one to the SW.

Four arrowheads were made from mottled grey flints, the fifth (No. 4) from a translucent brown-grey flint. Arrowheads 1, 2 and 4 were formed from a thin flake, the original surface remaining in the centre of both faces. Arrowheads 3 and 5 are thicker, having been made on heavier flakes which were retouched all over both faces. The arrowheads also vary somewhat in form, 1 and 2 approaching the 'mitre' shape, having squared barbs the same length as the tang, 3 and probably 4 having shorter more pointed barbs, and 5, which is smaller, having a heavy squared tang and short pointed barbs. Arrowheads 2 and 3 had one barb, and 4 had both barbs, damaged. The edges and points are all very sharp.

The Awl (fig. 5)

It is much corroded, with a surviving length of 1·1 in. The intact end is rounded, the other end is broken. The awl is round in cross-section.

DISCUSSION

The Springfield Beaker belongs to the type of Beaker commonly found on the north-eastern coasts of Britain which is of Dutch derivation.[1] The distinctive features are the zonal arrangement of the decoration and the 'fringe' borders to the zones. Similarly decorated Beakers are found in Yorkshire, Northumberland, Midlothian, Fife and Aberdeenshire.[2] The undecorated basal zone on the Springwood Beaker is a less common feature, but is found in all the areas mentioned, and particularly in Aberdeenshire. The 'fringe' decoration first appears on Dutch Beakers of Van der Waals' and Glasbergen's type 2^{1c}, but the spacing of the zones on the Springwood Beaker and the undecorated basal zone make it closer to type 2^{1b}.[3]

The association of barbed and tanged arrowheads in Beaker graves is quite common. Frequently there are several arrowheads placed with the Beaker; as many as seven have been recorded from Sutton, Glamorgan[4] and Ardiffery, Aberdeenshire.[5] In Scotland there are seven recorded sites on which arrowheads have been found with Beakers, Springwood being the eighth.[6] Barbed and tanged arrowheads are found with all types of Beakers in Britain, but Piggott has made a distinction between the types found with Bell Beakers and Short Necked Beakers, as at Springwood, and those found with Long Necked Beakers, and points out that the latter cannot be much earlier than Wessex I in context.[7] The arrowheads found with Bell Beakers and Short Necked Beakers tend to be small, often under 1 in. long, and may be somewhat irregularly formed, frequently with the minimum of trimming.[8]

[1] Piggott, *Culture and Environment*, ed. Foster and Alcock (1963), 89.

[2] Abercromby, *B.A.P.*, vol. I (1912), Nos. 125, 135 162, 204, 206, 228, 248 etc.

[3] Van der Waals and Glasbergen, *Palaeohistoria*, IV (1955), 5 ff.

[4] Fox, *Arch.*, LXXXIX (1943), 94.

[5] Crichton Mitchell, *PSAS*, LXVIII (1933–4), 174, No. 8.

[6] Crichton Mitchell, loc. cit., Nos. 8, 21, 25, 26, 119, 193, 206, also Newlands, Aberdeenshire, Low, *PSAS*, LXX (1935–6), 326 ff.

[7] Piggott, op. cit., 78.

[8] Bamford, *Arrowheads of Flint and other stone in Scotland*. Dissertation for degree of M.A. presented to University of Edinburgh, 1966.

It is unfortunate that the Springwood awl is only a fragment. This, however, is the case with many finds of awls. From the limited evidence available there would appear to be two basic types of awl found in Britain. The first type is pointed or rounded at both ends and has a central swelling of rectangular section.[1] Such awls occur in Reinecke A1 contexts on the Continent,[2] and are found with Beakers of rather evolved type in Britain at Minning Lowe, Derbyshire[3] and Rudston, Yorkshire.[4] These awls also occur in Wessex burials, as at Winterbourne Stoke G.8, Wilts.[5] The second type of awl has a flattened tang and no medial swelling[6]; this is Thurnam's type I awl.[7] Such awls occur on the Continent at a phase equivalent to Reinecke A2.[8] In Britain this type is found predominantly in Wessex and Food Vessel burials, e.g. Manton Barrow (Preshute G.1), Wilts.,[9] Radley, Berks.[10] and Garrowby Barrow 101, Yorkshire.[11] The awl with flattened tang is also found in Yorkshire with jet necklace at Garrowby Barrow 64[12] and Incense Cup at Aldro Barrow 113.[13] Awls are relatively common in the Yorkshire barrows but many are too corroded to be identified or exist only as fragments. Evans, however, mentions that some of the awls from the Yorkshire barrows were drawn out to a point at either end.[14] This may possibly refer to the type with medial swelling. There is no indication of a swelling on the Springwood awl. On the other hand the rounded end of the Springwood awl is not sharp enough to be the pointed tip and must represent the tang, thus precluding the possibility of the Springwood awl being of the type with flattened tang.

There is one other find of an awl with a Beaker in Scotland. This is at Kirkcaldy, where a rather degenerate-looking cordoned Bell Beaker was found in a cist with an inhumation and associated with an awl, a tanged copper or bronze object, a flint flake, twelve small V-perforated jet buttons and one barrel-shaped jet bead.[15] The Kirkcaldy beaker must surely belong to the evolved cordoned Bell Beaker form recently studied by Tait[16] who found a significant association of this form with barbed and tanged arrowheads, although the scratched decoration on the Kirkcaldy Beaker suggests that it is very late. The Kirkcaldy awl is only a fragment, both ends being missing; of what remains, the section at one end is circular, at the other, rectangular. Although there can be no certainty it seems likely that the Kirkcaldy awl is of the type with flattened tang, more usually associated with Food Vessels. The tanged object from Kirkcaldy has been compared with the tanged object from Roundway, Wilts.,[17] and the suggestion made that these are pins of Scheibennadel type. On re-examination the Kirkcaldy object is clearly seen to be a blade with a tang, not a pin, the blade edge at one side being quite distinct; moreover when found the tang was in a hazel handle. This object should be regarded, as it was originally, as a tanged knife, perhaps analogous to the Palmella points of Iberia and Brittany. The small V-perforated jet buttons and the barrel-shaped bead also suggest rather a late date, recalling the find from Calais Wold Barrow 13, Yorkshire.[18] In all details the Kirkcaldy find would appear to be later than that from Springwood.

The grave group from Springwood can therefore be seen to belong to the secondary phase of Beaker expansion in northern Britain. The beaker itself, although of Scottish type, shows Continental affinities in decoration. The awl would appear to be of the earlier rather than the

[1] Simpson, *Devizes Museum Catalogue* (1964), fig. 415.
[2] Junghans *et al.*, *Ber. Rom.-Germ. Komm.*, XXXIV (1951–3), 85, fig. 6, 23.
[3] Bateman, *Vestiges* (1848), 41.
[4] Greenwell, *British Barrows* (1877), 236.
[5] Simpson, op. cit., 107.
[6] ibid., fig. 421.
[7] Thurnam, *Arch.*, XLIII (1878), 465.
[8] e.g. Hachmann, *Frühe Bronzezeit im westlichen Ostseegebiet*, Pl. 11, 12.
[9] Simpson, op. cit., 101.
[10] *Inventaria Archaeologica* G. B. 3.
[11] Mortimer, *Forty Years Researches* (1905), fig. 359
[12] ibid., fig. 363
[13] ibid., fig. 165.
[14] Evans, *Ancient Bronze Implements* (1881), 189.
[15] Childe, *PSAS*, LXXVIII (1943–4), 109 ff.
[16] Tait, *Arch. Ael.*[4], XLIV (1966), 5 ff.
[17] Simpson, op. cit., 15.
[18] Mortimer, op. cit., fig. 418a.

later type, and the arrowheads are of types common to the Bell Beaker and Short Necked Beaker traditions.

APPENDIX

Skeleton from Springwood, Kelso, Roxburghshire

by D. R. Brothwell
British Museum (Natural History)

The human skeleton sent for examination was in an extremely poor state of preservation. Parts of most regions of the skeleton were identified, including the skull, vertebrae, ribs, a clavicle, scapulae, both humeri, radii and ulnae, pelvis, one femur, both tibiae, and bones of the hands and feet. Most bones were eroded and fragmentary, and there was clear evidence of root and fungal attack. Some bone surfaces had a fissured and cremated appearance, but it is likely that this resulted purely from soil conditions. Bones of the feet suffered least from *post-mortem* decay.

Robustness of pelvic, femoral and tibial fragments suggest that the individual was male. Degree of dental attrition strongly points to an individual of no more than twenty-five years (there is very little wear on the third molars identified).

The skull was in a poor state and metrical data could not be obtained. The majority of teeth had become loose, owing to the disintegration of the alveolar bone, but at least 25 teeth remained at death. Some of the teeth were fractured and eroded, but although *post-mortem* decay was apparent, no *ante-mortem* caries cavities were detected.

Only one long bone, the left tibia, could give a maximum length reading, which was 383 mm. Applying a stature regression formula for Europeans to this tibial figure gives a total stature estimate of 174·6 cm.

There was no evidence of abnormality to be seen except the beginnings of osteo-arthritic deformity at the margins of two lumbar vertebra bodies.

West end-stone of the cist, showing dressing of the upper edge. Photograph by Colin Martin