

A bronze-age cemetery at Ferniegair, Lanarkshire

by H G Welfare

SUMMARY

Exiguous field-notes, contemporary newspaper articles and a confused published report have been amalgamated to reconstruct the excavation of a small bronze-age cemetery in 1936 and 1939. The burials comprised four inhumation cists, four urned cremations and a simple inhumation. Among the artefacts were a beaker decorated with finger-nail impressions, at least three food vessels, an enlarged food vessel, an 'encrusted' urn, a cordoned urn containing an archer's bracer, some fabric woven from vegetable fibre and a cist-slab decorated in the 'passage grave style'.

INTRODUCTION

In April 1936 and September 1939 sand-quarrying operations in the former Deer Park of Chatelherault uncovered the site of a small bronze-age cemetery. Although all of the artefacts appear to have survived, any substantial records of the site that may have been kept by the excavator, Ludovic Mann, have not been preserved, and this account is drawn primarily from the newspaper reports that he contributed at the time. A brief description was given by A G Miller in 1940 (Miller 1947), but further research, undertaken during the preparation by the Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland of the *Inventory of Prehistoric and Roman Lanarkshire*, has revealed that that description was far from complete and contained a number of inconsistencies. In the circumstances many uncertainties must remain, but the purpose of this paper is to publish the finds from the site and to attempt, as far as possible, to sketch in the context in which they were discovered.

THE CEMETERY

The two areas from which the burials came (NGR NS 739540 and 740538: fig 1) lay in gently undulating parkland at a height of about 80 m OD, less than 600 m from the gorge of the Avon Water and 2 km S of its confluence with the River Clyde. Quarrying operations for the sand subsoil have since been transferred to the NW of Chatelherault and the ground worked in the 1930s has been landscaped and returned to pasture.

Cist 1 The first cist, which contained an inhumation, was revealed in the quarry-face at the end of March or the beginning of April 1936, lying at a depth of about 1 m below the surface. The cover was a heavy red sandstone slab measuring 1.58 m long by 0.61 m wide and with a thickness of 0.18 m (*Hamilton Advertiser*, 18 April 1936). Photographs taken by J Harrison Maxwell and now in the National Monuments Record of Scotland show that the side slabs, which were described as being about 0.14 m thick, were similar in character. Internally the cist measured 0.94 m in length, 0.37 m in maximum width and had an approximate height of 0.48 m (*ibid*). These dimensions agree very roughly with those given by Miller (1947, 17-19). If it is indeed to

this cist that all his details refer then we can add that the long axis, which was at right-angles to the quarry-face, was aligned almost exactly E-W. 'The body had been laid in the stone grave in a contracted position, that is with the knees well drawn up towards the chin, and the remains, while decayed and crumbling and despite a certain infiltration of sand at the north-west corner of the cist, were quite recognisable. The skull was at the west end of the tomb although the lower

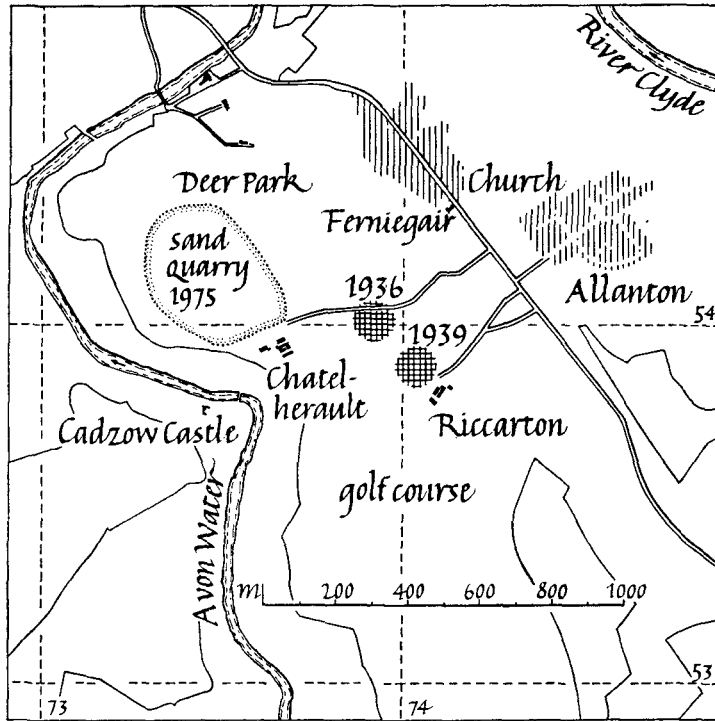


FIG 1 The sites of the excavations of 1936 and 1939 are indicated by cross-hatching



FIG 2 1, flake tool, Cist 1; 2, unworked flake, outside Cist 1 (1:2)

jaw was at the opposite one. About the centre of the cist were the hand, arm and leg bones. The teeth, 28 of which were recovered, were in perfect condition, showing no sign of decay or even of wear' (ibid, 18-19).

The inhumation was examined by Dr David Fyfe and was reported to be that of a woman approximately 25 years of age 'placed in the grave in a bent and reclining position with the head leaning towards the shoulder' (*Scotsman*, 15 April 1936). The transposition of the lower jaw need

not necessarily imply any disturbance of the burial other than by rodents. Close to, or perhaps under, the jaw lay a small flake-tool of light grey flint (fig 2, 1) and outside the SE corner of the cist an unworked flake was found (fig 2, 2). Perhaps in the confusion of retrospection Miller states that the body had been covered with a 'shroud' of moss fabric, a fact that may cast doubt upon his description, since Cist 2, to which he makes no reference, certainly contained such a fabric.

Burials 1 and 2 On 7 April two large cinerary urns, each inverted and surrounded by four small slabs, were discovered. Their position is not recorded other than that they stood about 10 m away from Cist 2 and Burial 3 (see below; *Scotsman*, 15 April 1936). One of the two, a cordoned urn (fig 3, 3), is of special interest since it contained a cremation and an unburnt archer's bracer (fig 3, 4), is of special interest since it contained a cremation and an unburnt archer's bracer

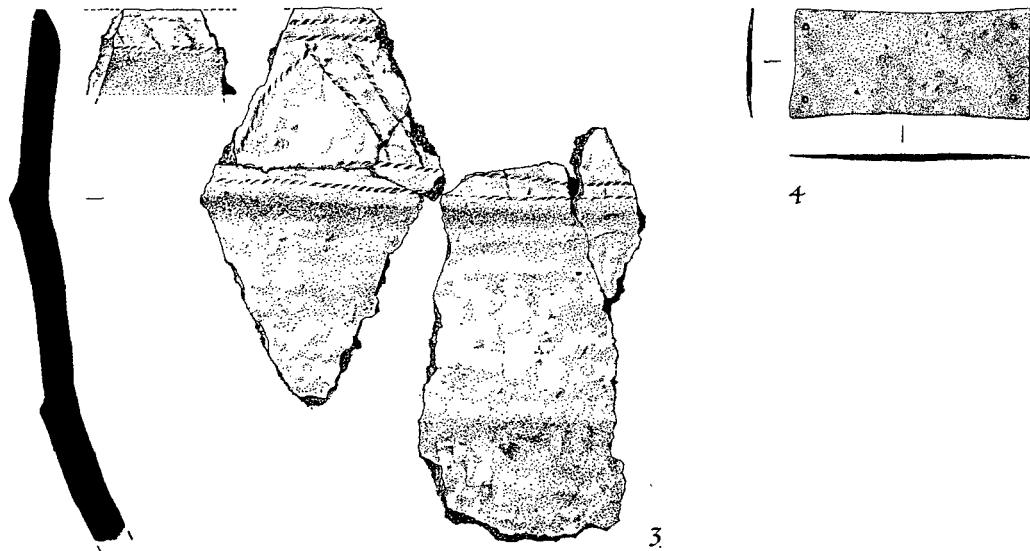


FIG 3 Burial 1: 3, cordoned urn; 4, archer's bracer (1:3)

(fig 3, 4; *Scotsman* and *Glasgow Herald*, 17 April 1936: Mann MS notes in Glasgow Art Gallery and Museum). The second cremation had been placed in an encrusted urn: there appear to have been no further associations (fig 4, 5; photographs in National Monuments Record). Neither urn was lifted intact, but each has since been restored. Morrison (1968, 118) wrote that the encrusted urn had not been used for a cremation, presumably on the basis of a statement by Miller: 'Another vessel was found which was not associated with any grave or burial. It was of a tall slender shape quite different from any of the other urns or food vessels. Unfortunately it crumbled into fragments soon after exposure' (1947, 20). The encrusted urn is the only one recorded from the site that might answer such a description, but in view of the other, more positive evidence, together with the discrepancies found elsewhere in Miller's report, this statement appears to have no substance.

Cist 2 A week later, on 14 April, a second inhumation cist was unearthed, again at a depth of approximately 1 m. No details of the cist have been published but a photograph in the National Monuments Record shows it *in situ* after excavation. Any covering stone that may have existed has been removed, but three of the sides can be seen each to have been constructed of thin slabs, with two forming the fourth. There is no scale in the photograph but some idea of size is given by the inverted enlarged food vessel in the foreground (Burial 3: see below): from this the internal

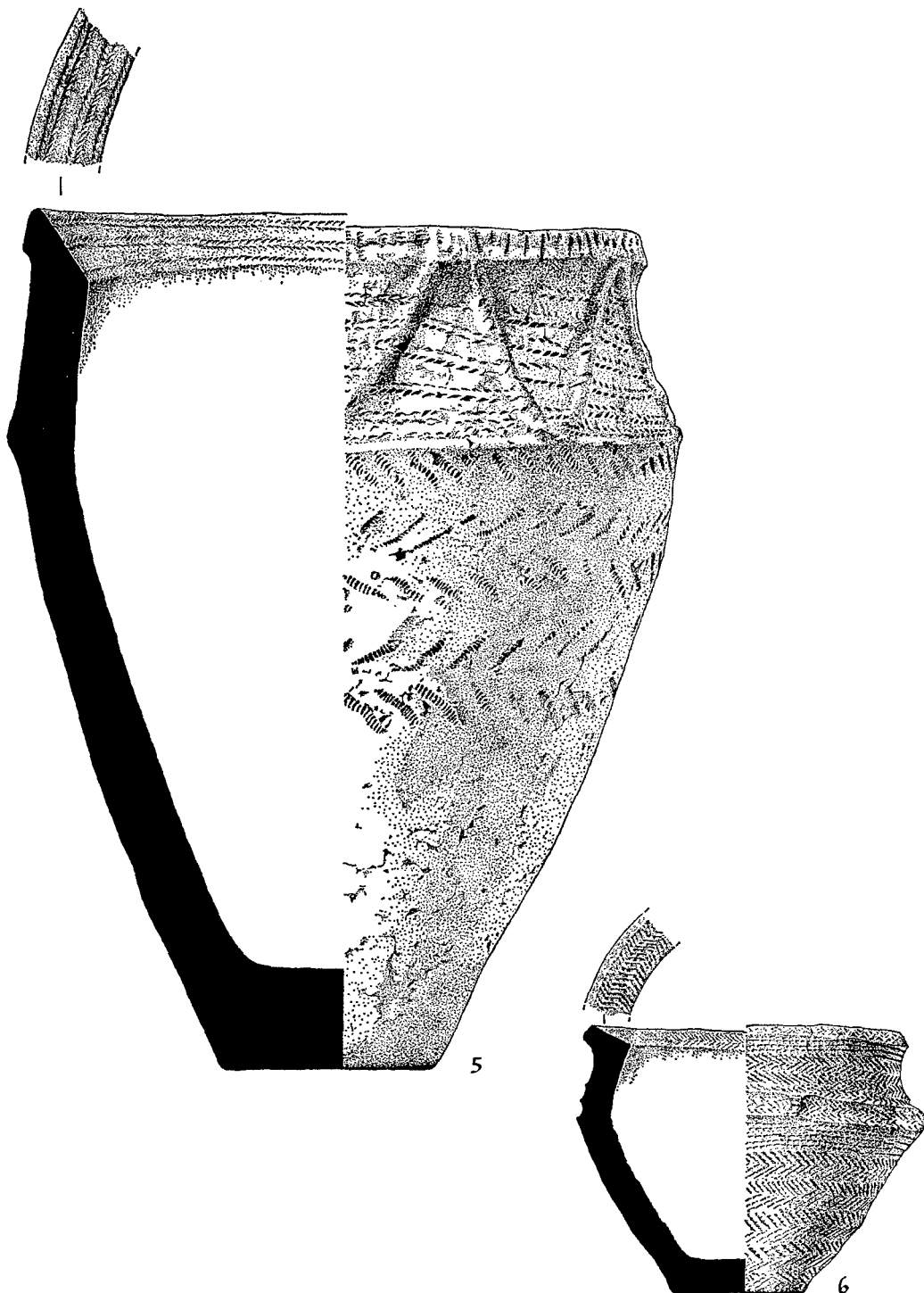


FIG 4 5, encrusted urn, Burial 1; 6, food vessel, Cist 2 (1:3)

dimensions of the cist can be estimated at approximately 1 m in length and 0.5 m in width and depth. The axis appears to have been aligned roughly NE-SW.

The scanty details of the newspaper reports were confined to the contents of the cist. 'The bones were in a remarkably fine state of preservation, the spinal cord being especially well defined. The jaw bones and dental arrangements were also sound, and the leg and arm bones were in good condition. Unfortunately the skull was desiccated and little remains of it. Besides the bones was found an urn which, it is believed, had been filled with food. . . . The urn was well preserved and was moved without serious damage' (*Scotsman*, 15 April 1936; *Hamilton Advertiser*, 18 April 1936). Mann's manuscript labels and notes preserved with some of the finds in Glasgow Art Gallery and Museum, Kelvingrove, identify the 'urn' as a food vessel (fig 4, 6). The statement that this had been filled with food was not prompted by the term applied to the pottery type, for Mann later reported that 'Traces of a black substance which was found adhering to the interior of the vessels has been shown by chemical analysis to be the remains of some cereal food which has slowly carbonised' (*Scotsman*, 20 July 1936; also Mann 1937).

In view of Mann's usual speed in releasing to the press the more unusual features of his recent work, it is surprising that none of the earlier newspaper reports mention the fact that the skeleton in Cist 2 was wrapped in or covered by a length of fabric woven from moss (*Scotsman*, 20 July 1936), fragments of which are preserved in Glasgow Art Gallery and Museum, Kelvingrove. There is, however, no doubt about the association of this fabric with the cist and the food vessel for it is confirmed by the manuscript notes now in Kelvingrove.

Burial 3 The report in the *Scotsman* (15 April 1936) describes how a third cinerary urn had been found 'alongside' Cist 2. Two of the photographs in the National Monuments Record (one of which is reproduced in the *Glasgow Evening News*, 15 April 1936) identify this urn as the enlarged food vessel (fig 5, 7) that stood inverted on a flat square stone and protected by four small slabs. There is no indication whether or not a covering stone was found.

Burial 4 The last of the burials found in 1936 turned up on 21 April, and Mann's notes in Kelvingrove tacitly give the impression that this was some distance away, since its position is related not to the others but to a now unidentifiable point – 3.6 m away from a fence and 19.5 m from its corner. In this instance all we know is that a cremation had been placed in a small friable vessel of which only a few sherds have survived (fig 5, 8). This piece falls into one of the categories usually regarded as domestic beaker ware.

No details of the structure or stratigraphy of the site were recorded by Mann, who constantly referred to all these burials having been found under a 'cairn'. Certainly there was a quantity of stone present, and this was a sufficiently unusual occurrence in the sand of the Deer Park to provoke comment. Mann's opinion was that the upper part of the cairn had 'long ago been demolished by the farmer. No surface traces were discernible until the sand diggers began their operations. The under-structure, however, survives and consists of some 80 tons of loose, broken stones, and an occasional water-rolled stone taken from the bed of the neighbouring River Avon. An unusual feature was noticed in the construction of the cairn. The spaces between the stones had been filled by pieces of turf laid horizontally one upon the other. These had been cut from a grassy surface and the decayed vegetation showed itself in the form of layers of black carbonised matter' (*Scotsman*, 20 July 1936; see also Mann 1937).

It is not possible to say with which of the cists or burials (if any) this large amount of stone and turf was associated; certainly not with Cist 1, which the photographs in the National Monuments Record show to have lain in pure sand. A small amount of stone is visible around Cist 2, but again sand predominates, and at most the rubble could only have lined the pit that received the cist. The most likely explanation seems to be that some or all of the burials were

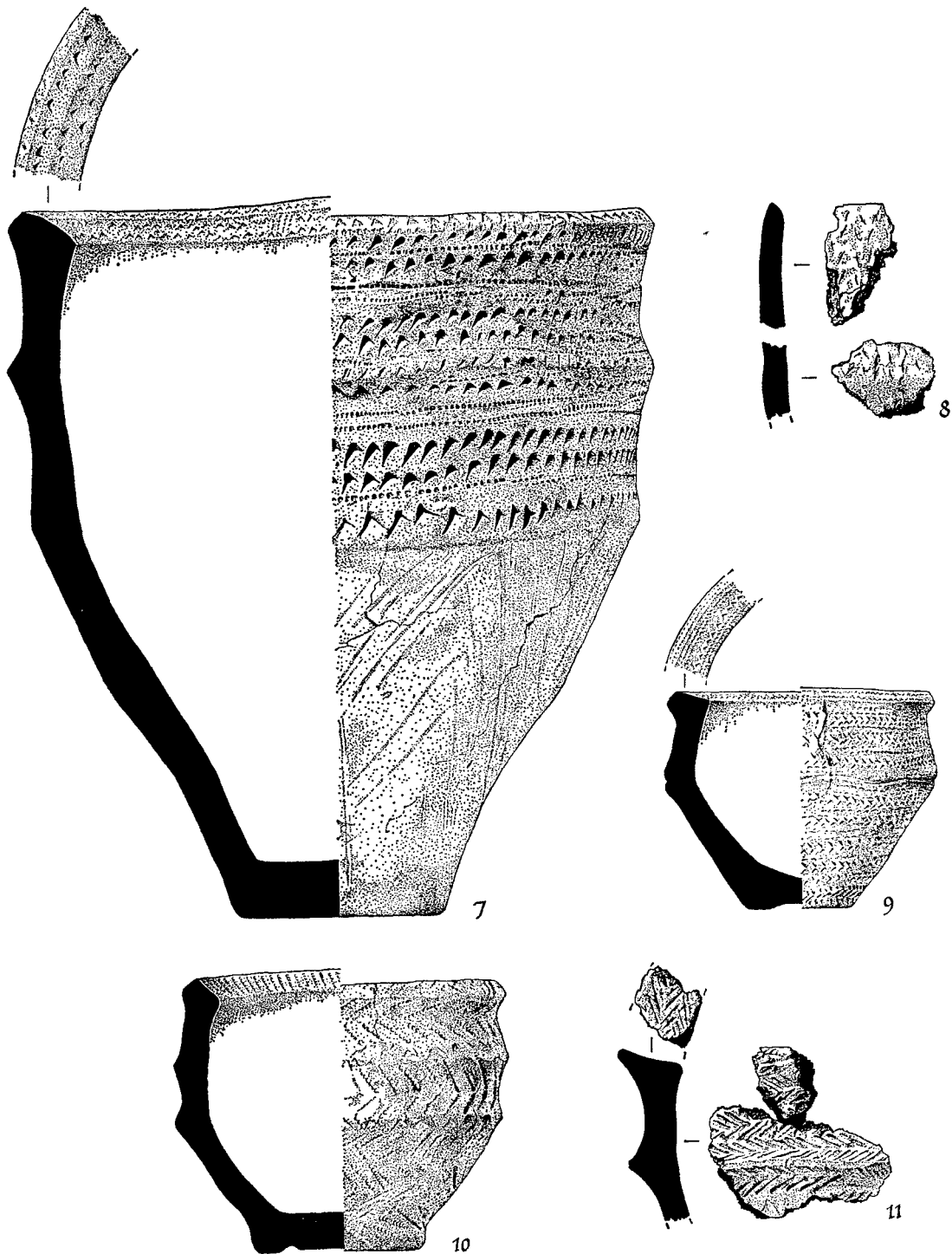


FIG 5 7, enlarged food vessel, Burial 3; 8, beaker, Burial 4; 9, food vessel; 10, food vessel, Cist 3; 11, food vessel (1:3)

inserted into a natural sand knoll: their position may subsequently have been marked by some rubble but this does not, on its own, account for the presence of the turf. If at a later date the knoll became a local focus for field-clearance, this might have allowed a series of ground surfaces to build up between successive loads of field stones. Unless, however, turf was also cleared away this does not seem very likely. Alternatively we might indeed have here an example of a cairn (or a barrow, since the essential difference between the two is not great, nor necessarily significant), the rubble of which was supplemented with turves, a reasonable substitute in those areas where large quantities of stone were not immediately available. Such a structure would not normally be identifiable in field survey. In this instance the information at our disposal is insufficient to support comfortably any of these suggestions.

Finally, two other artefacts are extant from the activities of 1936. Another food vessel (fig 5, 9) was found on 17 April, but apart from the place and date of its discovery no details have been recorded. However, it is possible that it is to this that Miller refers when he mentions 'another food vessel being found' (1947, 20), with the implication that it was unassociated. The second artefact, a clay mould allegedly for casting ingots in the shape of an astragalus, is discussed in a report of a lecture given by Mann to the Glasgow Archaeological Society (*Scotsman*, 17 April 1936). From its fresh appearance and the lengths of cotton thread adhering to it, this object can be dismissed as modern and was even possibly a hoax (not illustrated).

No further finds appear to have been made in the quarry for over three years. Then on 25 September 1939 the last three graves, two cists and a simple inhumation, were unearthed at a depth of about 1.2 m to 1.5 m, close to the first tee of Hamilton Golf Course and roughly 100 m SE of the previous finds (*Glasgow Evening News*, 27 September 1939).

Cist 3 The descriptions of this cist are vague and even ambiguous, but it was not such an impressive structure as Cist 4 and may be the smaller of the two reconstructed in Hamilton District Museum. The latter measures internally 0.8 m in length, 0.5 m in width and 0.45 m in depth. Cist 3 contained a food vessel and an inhumation that, as in the case of Cist 2, may have been covered by 'a shroud of some vegetable material' (*Hamilton Advertiser*, 30 September 1939). No further details are forthcoming and the alleged presence of the moss may have been no more than an unfounded assumption.

There is some confusion over the identity of the food vessel associated with Cist 3 since all three newspaper articles refer to a pot decorated in horizontal series of twisted-cord impressions covering the whole of the exterior *including the base*, the latter being marked out for notice as an especially unusual feature (*ibid*; *Glasgow Herald* and *Glasgow Evening News*, 27 September 1939). Although the discovery of only one pot is described, the food vessel that survives from this date (fig 5, 10) is comb-impressed and has an undecorated base. The *Hamilton Advertiser* carries a photograph of this food vessel, but in the next sentence comments on the basal decoration. J H Maxwell (1949, 214) wrote that one of the food vessels from Patrickholm 'like the one found by Mr Ludovic Mann at Riccarton in 1939, is also ornamented, an unusual feature'. Maxwell may simply have been referring back to the newspaper article, a copy of which, now in the National Monuments Record, he certainly possessed. Since the base of the surviving food vessel is clearly labelled by Mann as having come from the smaller cist, the present writer suspects that all this confusion arises from an ambiguity in Mann's press release in which he may well have alluded to the vessel's unusual foot-ring.

Cist 4 The second of the two cists found in 1939 was rather larger than Cist 3; 'a massive structure of huge sandstone slabs more than five feet in length' (*Glasgow Herald*, 27 September 1939). It was aligned N-S and was protected by two closely set slabs (photographs exist in the National Monuments Record and Miller 1947, 18). As reconstructed in Hamilton District

Museum, the cist measures 1.25 m by 0.4 m internally with a depth of 0.34 m. The sides each consist of a block of grey sandstone about 0.25 m in thickness, supplemented on one side by uncoursed rubble that presumably lined the pit in which the cist was constructed. The two red sandstone cover-slabs each measure approximately 1.5 m in length by 0.45 m in width and are 0.2 m thick; the end-slabs are not nearly so substantial, having a maximum thickness of 0.1 m.

The occupant was a well-preserved, contracted adult skeleton, 'rather delicately built although it was impossible to state definitely whether it was that of a male or a female. It was placed on its side, with the head at the south end of the cist and facing east' (*Glasgow Evening News*, 27 September 1939).

The exceptional feature of this cist is that one of the side-slabs is carved on both its internal and external faces in what has become known as the passage grave style (fig 6). Mann's press statements speak of two decorated slabs, but this must refer either to the second side of the principal slab or to the rather dubious cup-marks on the edge of what is now one of the two capstones.

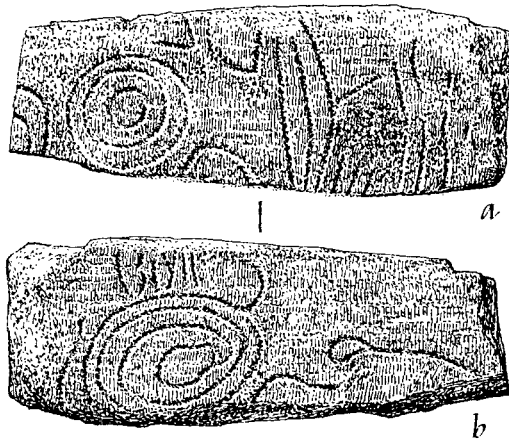


FIG 6 Decorated slab, Cist 4. a, exterior; b, interior (1:15)

Burial 5 This appears to have been a simple grave, although whether for an inhumation or for a cremation remains unclear since it is described as consisting 'merely of a cavity containing bones, without any accessory work' (*Glasgow Herald*, 27 September 1939).

THE FINDS

Flake tool (fig 2, 1) of a light grey flint with pale mottled patches. Length 43 mm, width 29 mm. Very rough secondary working on one edge, but rather finer on the other. Cist 1. GAGM A 6915c.

An unworked flake (fig 2, 2) of a fine-grained khaki-coloured stone. Outside Cist 1. GAGM A 6915d.

Cordoned urn (fig 3, 3). Two large sherds in a gritty dark grey fabric with a buff surface. Altogether a restrained piece, it has a simple rim with an internal bevel and two slight cordons. The decoration of twisted-cord impressions is confined to the rim bevel and to the uppermost zone of the exterior. On the former, parallel slanting lines are enclosed between two horizontals, and on the latter a chevron of single and double lines runs between horizontal impressions. Burial 1. GAGM '55-96.

Archer's bracer (fig 3, 4) of a fine, polished grey-green stone mottled with darker patches. No more than 3 mm in thickness, it has four concave sides. The upper surface is slightly convex and the lower axially concave; this design enables the bracer to fit most comfortably over the tendons of the lower arm that are drawn out into relief when a bow is held. The four holes have been most carefully bored from both sides to minimise the chances of fracture. The 'hour-glass' perforations thus formed have average diameters of 4.5 mm on underside and 2.5 mm on the upper side: the holes themselves vary from 1.5 mm to 2 mm in diameter. Atkinson's type C1 (Clarke 1970, 261, 570). Burial 1, GAGM '55-96.

'Encrusted urn' (fig 4, 5) 0.37 m high. A gritty buff fabric, oxidised in places to a light brick-pink colour. Partially restored but substantially complete, the pot has an almost vertical rim with a deep internal bevel: the zone between the rim and the carination is occupied by a simple chevron in low relief that consists of a series of applied strips the edges of which have been smoothed into the wall of the pot by a finger-tip. The major part of the wall of the vessel is convex, curving down to a small, but very thick base. A herring-bone pattern of twisted-cord impressions decorates the internal bevel of the rim, and on the exterior are vertical 'maggots' made by coiling a length of thick twine around a core the size of a thin twig. The 'encrusted' chevron is covered with double lines of twisted-cord impressions applied in short lengths that are not normally taken over the strips of the chevron themselves. Below the carination, the decoration of just under half of the remaining height of the pot is in the form of five lines of slanting 'maggots' arranged in rough horizontal herring-bones. Burial 2. GAGM '55-96.

Food vessel (fig 4, 6), 0.12 m high, in a grey-buff fabric with a dark gritty core appearing in fracture. Complete except for some damage to two of the stops. There is a gentle and slightly concave internal rim bevel, below which the wall is markedly concave. A small external rim bevel. The concave upper zone of the exterior has a slight kick just above the edge of the wide carination groove: the groove itself has five imperforate applied stops. The internal bevel of the rim is decorated with a double herring-bone pattern of comb-impressions, the outermost element of which is discontinuous. On the external bevel a series of opposed angular stabblings creates a chevron in false relief, into which oval jabs have been made; here, as on the face of the stops, they are the size and shape of small grains of rice. The whole of the rest of the exterior of the vase is covered by a dense series of comb-impression herring-bones, relieved only by four lines of horizontal impressions below the rim and a further six below the carination groove. A variety of combs has been used in the decoration, two-, three-, five- and seven-tine combs being represented. Cist 2. Hamilton Museum, 1971-147.

Moss fabric (not illustrated). It was claimed at the time that the moss used was *Polytrichum Commune*, but the strands are rather coarse and this identification may be in question. Mann's method of preserving this material by saturation with wax succeeded in so far as it survives at all; even so, only a few fragments of the 'shroud' are sufficiently well-preserved for its structure to be studied. Mann described it as follows: 'These prepared wiry strands (of moss stripped from the main stem) were then twisted one upon the other. The resultant composite threads, plaited with others, and set knotted together in parallel rows, composed the fabric' (*Scotsman*, 20 July 1936). From this description and from the surviving portion, measuring 0.18 m by 0.07 m across, that adheres to the proximal end of the left tibia, it seems that a cross-twisted technique was employed. In this method of weaving the 'parallel hanks of material which are the foundation of (the) work are set close together and give substance to the fabric, whilst the transverse twisted threads are spaced some distance apart' (Henshall 1950, 153, fig 2c). In this case the hanks are unusually coarse. Cist 2. GAGM '55-96.

Enlarged food vessel (fig 5, 7) 0.32 m in height. A large tripartite vessel in a light orange-buff

fabric: partially restored, especially on the exterior. Intermittently bipartite internal bevel to the rim and a small external bevel: the former is decorated with three registers of angular stabbings which are interrupted in places by slanting comb-impressions, and the latter by one similar register. The major carination of the rim is ornamented with spaced single-tine impressions, and the remainder of the upper body of the pot with a series of angular stabbings and the horizontal impressions of a nine-tine comb. Roughly scored irregular filled chevrons cover the lower half of the exterior. Burial 3. GAGM '55-96.

Beaker (fig 5, 8). Three wall-sherds, a rim and part of the base of a small beaker in a friable pinkish buff fabric. Apart from having a flat base, the overall shape of the vessel is difficult to reconstruct with certainty, but the rim has a slight internal bevel and a gentle carination in the lower wall is suggested by one of the sherds. The whole of the exterior is decorated with a loose crowsfoot pattern of finger-nail impressions. Burial 4. GAGM '55-96.

Food vessel (fig 5, 9) 0.10 m in height. A small vase in a light buff fabric in which very little grit is visible. The rim has a gently sloping internal bevel and an almost vertical external one; below this is the slightly concave upper wall that swells out slightly above the small, sinuous carination groove. The base is concave. The decoration on the rim is in the form of a double row of opposed angular stabbings flanked by two parallel twisted-cord impressions. This pattern is repeated over the whole of the exterior except at the base where three horizontal lines of smooth oblong impressions are arranged in a herring-bone pattern. Nothing known of context. Hamilton Museum 1971-146.

Food vessel (fig 5, 10). A tripartite bowl in a light buff fabric oxidised for much of the exterior to a light brick-red; the core is very dark with a high proportion of grit. Complete except for one small portion of the rim. Below the major carination the wall is slightly convex, becoming almost vertical at the base. A shallow annular groove runs around the base, which is undecorated. The exterior decoration is composed almost entirely of rather irregular herring-bone arrangements of the impressions of a comb with eleven or twelve tines. The only exceptions to this pattern are the angular stabbings that emphasise the carinations of the central zone. This stabbing also appears for a short stretch in the central zone itself, but has been replaced by the comb impressions. Cist 3. Hamilton Museum 1971-145.

Decorated slab. Both principal faces of this side-slab have been decorated with punched designs which consist of grooves, or of bands of individually distinct pock-marks, varying in width between 0.02 and 0.03 m. The designs, which are not deeply cut, were picked out (rather inaccurately) in white paint by Ludovic Mann: the two line-drawings reproduced here (fig 6) are a reinterpretation from the stone itself.

The most prominent motif on the exterior (fig 6a) is that of three concentric circles, 0.09 m, 0.18 m and 0.25 m in diameter. Two arcs surviving at the lower corner of the stone may be the remnants of a similar design of approximately the same dimensions. To the right of the concentric circles there are three simple and gently angular lines, probably incomplete, which occupy the upper and lower edges of the slab. Most of the remainder of the surface is filled by a series of vertical grooves, varying in length from 0.07 m to 0.35 m, which run approximately parallel with one another. One of them is forked, but any other details have been masked by an area of dense pock-marking (conceivably an attempt at erasure) which occupies much of this lower quarter of the slab.

The decoration of the internal face (fig 6b) is somewhat different in character. The principal motif is the greater part of an irregular spiral which has an overall diameter of 0.37 m and is based upon a central rounded lozenge, 0.14 m long by 0.10 m broad. A short arc, 0.10 m in length, springs from one side of the spiral, and on the opposite side a groove in the form of a shallow

reversed s briefly follows the curvature of the outer edge of the spiral, before turning away and dying. Six short grooves, roughly 0.04 m long and 0.02 m apart, stand above the upper edge of the spiral. The decoration of the interior is completed by a gentle angular line broadly similar to those on the exterior, and by a small irregular oval, 0.08 m across, from which a groove runs off the lower edge of the slab.

No simple cup-marks occur on the side-slab itself, but on the inner edge of the capstone that it supports there is one cup 0.07 m across and 0.03 m deep, together with four or five smaller cups and some isolated pock-marks that form no recognisable pattern. None can be described as being other than poor in quality and at this minimal level there must be some doubt whether they should be considered as a form of ornament at all. Cist 4. Hamilton Museum.

The section of the Mann collection in Glasgow Art Gallery and Museum that is devoted to the finds from Ferniegair contains some unlabelled sherds from another food vessel. Although nothing whatever is known of them, nor indeed whether they came from the site at all, they are published here for the sake of completeness.

Food vessel or enlarged food vessel (fig 5, 11). One rim and two wall sherds of a large, heavy vessel in a dark grey fabric which has been oxidised on the exterior to a pinkish buff colour and on the interior to a yellowish grey. The internal bevel of the everted rim is wide and shallow and below the rim the concave neck terminates in a strong carination. The whole of the exterior is decorated with a dense herring-bone pattern formed by the repeated jabbing of a smooth oblong instrument; the only exception to this lies below the carination where the design appears to take on a more open, angular character. Too little of this pot survives to distinguish with any certainty whether it should be classified as a food vessel or as an enlarged food vessel. GAGM '55-96.

DISCUSSION

Much of the information and material that would now normally be available from an excavation is missing here: nothing whatsoever is known of the stratigraphy of the site and no report can be prepared upon the skeletal material since none of the cremations survives and the identification and associations of the few unburnt bones still extant are not sufficiently reliable to make a detailed examination worthwhile. Nevertheless, the artefacts themselves can provide useful links towards establishing a relative chronology for the types to which they belong.

The beaker from Burial 4 is poorly preserved but falls into one of Clarke's three main classes of secondary domestic ware, the FN group, which he describes as non-plastic rusticated ware in which a 'crowsfoot' effect is achieved by paired finger-nail impressions (1970, 258-9, 569 and *passim*). Although it does not have a markedly northern distribution the FN is, of the three classes, the most frequently identified in Scotland (*ibid*, 552-3). The classification of this pottery as domestic ware can only be treated as a trend that may have been to some extent accentuated by the accidents of discovery and survival; for although Clarke (1970, 453), perhaps unjustly, greatly disparages the evidence for cremations in beaker contexts, rusticated vessels have been recorded from burials (*cf* Chitty 1933). In this instance none of the burnt bone has been preserved and thus it cannot be definitely asserted that this was indeed a true cremation burial: nevertheless it does seem unlikely that Mann (who, in the previous three weeks, had exhumed three cremations at Ferniegair and those at Doonfoot in Ayrshire) would be wildly out in his description. With the other pottery from the site in mind, the deposition of a beaker cremation and of an archer's bracer in a cordoned urn point to cultural links with the cremating groups and thus to the makers of food vessels. While not necessarily strictly contemporary, the interments must be close enough in time for the site to have become a traditional focus for burial. The chronological overlap and continuity between

beakers and food vessels is further emphasised in Ayrshire and Lanarkshire by their almost mutually exclusive distribution; the Ferniegair beaker is only the second to have come from lower Clydesdale (Ritchie 1970, fig 1, 135).

The bracer belongs to Atkinson's type C1 (Clarke 1970, 570, 261-2). Some caution must be exercised in assuming too readily that the association of bracers with beakers is as exclusive as has been apparent, and Shepherd has recently commented upon other bracers found in non-beaker contexts (Ritchie and Shepherd 1975, 29). Although a more perishable material such as leather could have been substituted for stone or bone, thus imposing a survival factor in the archaeological record, it would be curious if such a practical object as a bracer did not continue in production for some time or if it were restricted to those members of the population who used a particular style of pottery. An economic factor may have been at work if it was the case that only the users of the recognisable beaker fine wares normally had sufficient wealth to possess the archery equipment of a higher quality. The survival factor also cannot be ignored in terms of relative chronologies since such a beautiful and finely made article must surely have been the work of a specialist craftsman and might be considered worthy to become an heirloom. It may be mentioned in passing that bracers of this quality would be an ideal object for trade, the extent of which would only reveal itself through a series of petrological examinations, a course which, in view of the delicacy of the objects themselves, is most unlikely to be followed.

Beaker characteristics have been identified by Shepherd in the orientation of Cist 1 and in the presence of a moss fabric with an inhumation (Ritchie and Shepherd 1975, 27. The association of the moss with Cist 1 is no longer tenable.) While a 'shroud', grave-clothes or the deposition of a woven bag (the size of the fabric has not usually been ascertained) may well have been a characteristic of beaker inhumation cists, the evidence from Ferniegair suggests that this was probably equally true for those deposited with food vessels. The likelihood must be that this was a very common feature that again is emphasised by the accidents of survival and discovery and one that therefore enjoys a wide margin of error in the archaeological record.

Decorated cist-slabs have also been associated with both beakers and food vessels, and thus it is unfortunate there was no pottery in Cist 4 to provide a *terminus ante quem* for the re-use of the stone in the cist. No decorated natural rock-surfaces have been found in Lanarkshire, the only other example of such art from the county being the slab re-used as the cover of a cist which contained a step 5 or Developed Northern Beaker from Wester Yards, Carnwath (MacLaren *in* Ritchie 1970, 137-8). At both these sites the stones appear to have been re-used, indicating that the carving of the slabs was not necessarily executed by the cist-builders themselves: in Scotland this re-use appears to have been the rule rather than the exception (Simpson and Thawley 1972, 92).

In so far as it is at all practicable, no parallels can be found for the minor motifs on the Ferniegair slab, but the spiral and the multiple concentric circles place the designs firmly in the repertoire of what has become known as the passage grave style (Piggott 1954, 211-13). Both motifs are found on natural rock-surfaces in apparent association with the 'cup-and-ring marks' of the 'Galician' style of art. The growing number of these associations, together with the contemporaneity of the two styles that has been demonstrated in Ireland (O'Kelly 1964), suggests that this bipartite classification has been over-simplified; but such a topic is, however, beyond the scope of this paper. Simpson and Thawley (1972, 92) have pointed out that only a few of the numerous passage grave motifs occur on cist-slabs, the three most commonly found being concentric circles, spirals and multiple semicircles. The Ferniegair slab is, however, exceptional in that it has been carved on both sides, inviting the thought that the original intention was for both sides to be visible as a free-standing block. The only parallel (and not a very close one) to this in a sepulchral context is the pyramidal block bearing multiple circles, spirals and double spirals

that stood at the head of two tiers of cremations in a pit on Lilburn Hill Farm, Northumberland (Moffat 1885). This block stood upright in the grave and was carved on all sides save one which had been damaged prior to burial; here again re-use or ritual breakage appears to be in evidence.

Much comment on both rock art and food vessels is inhibited by the lack of a corpus for each, but in connection with the latter ApSimon has rejected the term 'encrusted urns', preferring to classify the pots formerly included in this category as food vessel urns with applied relief-decoration (1969, 39-40, 66), although this is not the view taken in Ireland by Kavanagh (1973, 510-11). At Ferniegair the structure of the 'urn cists' for both types seems to have been more or less identical and the difference in style may simply have been due to fashion or to the whims of the potters.

There is a possibility that the finds of 1936 and 1939 were not the only artefacts to come from the site: Coles (1964, 148) lists a blade and an urn from Chatelherault of which nothing is known, and the Hunterian Museum possesses two food vessels discovered 'near Hamilton' in the 19th century which could conceivably also have come from the cemetery at Ferniegair.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The research was conducted on behalf of the Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland, and this account is published by courtesy of the Commissioners. The project could not have been undertaken without the kindness of Mr J G Scott and Miss H Adamson of Glasgow Art Gallery and Museum and of Messrs C Smith, G C Stewart and G Walker of Hamilton District Libraries and Museum, who made the objects in their care available for study. The writer is indebted to Miss A S Henshall for her comments on the moss fabric, and to my colleagues Mr A MacLaren, Dr J N G Ritchie and Mr J B Stevenson for their help and advice throughout the preparation of this paper. The drawings are the work of Mr J N Stevenson, Mr I G Scott and Mr I Parker, to each of whom I am especially grateful.

Copyright The drawings are Crown Copyright: Royal Commission on Ancient Monuments, Scotland.

REFERENCES

- ApSimon, A M 1969 'The Earlier Bronze Age in the North of Ireland', *Ulster J Archaeol*, 32 (1969), 28-72.
- Chitty, L F 1933 'A Beaker-like vessel from Bushmills, Co Antrim', *Antiq J*, 13 (1933), 259-65.
- Clarke, D L 1970 *Beaker Pottery of Great Britain and Ireland*. Cambridge.
- Coles, J M 1964 'Scottish Middle Bronze Age metalwork', *Proc Soc Antiq Scot*, 97 (1963-4), 82-156.
- Henshall, A S 1950 'Textiles and weaving appliances in prehistoric Britain', *Proc Prehist Soc*, 16 (1950), 130-62.
- Kavanagh, R M 1973 'The Encrusted Urn in Ireland', *Proc Roy Irish Acad*, 73C (1973), 507-617.
- Mann, L M 1937 'Ferniegair', in Congress of Archaeological Societies in union with the Society of Antiquaries of London, *Report of the forty-fourth Congress and of the Research Committee for the year 1936*, 30.
- Maxwell, J H 1949 'Bronze Age graves at Patrickholm sand quarry, Larkhall, Lanarkshire', *Proc Soc Antiq Scot*, 83 (1948-9), 207-20.
- Miller, A G 1947 'Bronze Age graves at Ferniegair, Hamilton', *Trans Glasgow Archaeol Soc*, 11 (1947), 17-21.
- Moffat, J G 1885 'A prehistoric grave from the Lilburn Hill Farm', *Archaeol Aeliana*, 2, 10 (1885), 220-2.
- Morrison, A 1968 'Cinerary Urns and Pygmy Vessels in South-West Scotland', *Trans Dumfriesshire Galloway Natur Hist Antiq Soc*, 45 (1968), 80-140.

- O'Kelly, M J 1964 'New Grange, Co Meath', *Antiquity*, 38 (1964), 288-90.
- Piggott, S 1954 *The Neolithic Cultures of the British Isles*. Cambridge.
- Ritchie, J N G 1970 'Beaker Pottery in South-West Scotland', *Trans Dumfriesshire Galloway Natur Hist Antiq Soc*, 47 (1970), 123-46.
- Ritchie, J N G and Shepherd, I A G 1975 'Beaker pottery and associated artifacts in South-West Scotland', *Trans Dumfriesshire Galloway Natur Hist Antiq Soc*, 50 (1973), 18-34.
- Simpson, D D A 1965 'Food Vessels in South-West Scotland', *Trans Dumfriesshire Galloway Natur Hist Antiq Soc*, 42 (1965), 25-50.
- Simpson, D D A and Thawley, J E 1972 'Single grave art in Britain', *Scot Archaeol Forum*, 4 (1972), 81-104.

The Society is indebted to the Civil Service Department for a grant towards the cost of publishing this paper