

HILLEND

ARMIT, COWIE, & RALSTON

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2: E1

STRATIGRAPHY

A full account of the contexts encountered on site is offered in Armit and Hamilton, 1992, 11-13, where the stratigraphic diagram is, however, erroneous. The following listing is restricted to the fills of the features discussed in this report.

Pit 1

007 Uppermost refill of recut. Very similar to 005 (discussed below), but with a more silty matrix and a greater amount of carbonised organic material.

008 Penultimate fill of recut. Dark grey fine silt incorporating 25 - 30% 50 mm rounded and angular pebbles. The only fill not to produce ceramic finds.

014 Second fill of recut. Orange-brown fine silt with abundant (60%) coarse grits and 30% 50 mm rounded pebbles. Mottled with fragments of charcoal, this is interpreted as redeposited natural subsoil.

009 First fill of recut. Orange fine silt including, unevenly distributed, 40% rounded and angular 30 - 50 mm pebbles. The matrix included burnt organic material and infrequent fine roots.

012 Initial fill of this pit. Light reddish-brown coarse silt including abundant coarse grits. 25% of the matrix was composed of angular and rounded 30 - 50 mm pebbles. Carbonised organic material, infrequent roots and worm activity were all identified.

Pit 2

005 Single fill of this pit. Very similar to fill 003 in Pit 3, but with a slightly more clayey matrix. Contained carbonised organic material, as well as indications of root and worm activity.

Pit 3

003 Single fill of this pit. Dark brown coarse silt including abundant coarse grits with 10 - 15% 100 mm rounded pebbles. Included abundant carbonised material, in which both charcoal and hazelnut shell were noted, as well as evidence for worm activity and root penetration.

POTTERY CATALOGUE (Illus 5-6)

Trevor Cowie

Notes

1. The entries are set out in the following order:

form - fabric - colour - decoration - condition and surface alteration - size - dimensions - percentage of rim present (if applicable) - weight

site code (RT) / context / archive number.

2. Catalogue numbers correspond to those on illus 5-6.
3. Selected sherds were sampled by Anita Quye (AQ), Conservation & Analytical Research Dept, NMS in September 1992.

Catalogue

1. Two decorated rim sherds (illus 5, 1); orientation uncertain but almost certainly from barrel- or bucket-shaped vessel with inturned rim; very friable fabric, with profuse grey stone grits; construction joints visible; int: very dark grey (7.5YR N3/); ext: greyish-brown/brown (10 YR 5/2/ 10YR 5/3); vertical mouldings approximately 20mm apart run down from the top of the rim to meet and extend below a low apparently discontinuous horizontal moulding or cordon c 40mm below the rim; the area from rim to horizontal moulding is ornamented with irregular oblique incised lines or slashes and in some cases these cross the ribs; the oblique lines run in the same direction but the angles at which these are applied vary; similar filled ornament appears to have extended below the horizontal cordon; organic residue on interior (sampled by AQ); estimated rim diameter 280-300mm; 73.7g. A small body sherd, very similar in fabric and bearing the end of an incised line, may also be from the upper portion of this vessel; 23 x 17 x 12mm; 4.4g. RT/003/2; RT/005/5; possibly RT/007/3.

2. Three decorated body sherds, from a fairly straight-sided pot, probably the same vessel as 4; fabric of 1, but differentiated by surface texture and colour; int: very dark grey (7.5YR N3/); ext: light yellowish brown (10YR 6/4); decoration comprises oblique incised lines or slashes bordered by low vertical ridges formed by drawing fingertips or an implement down the wall of the pot; the filled decoration on the largest sherd (RT/003/1) consists of opposed oblique incisions (2a); one sherd (RT/014/2) has traces of two ribs c 20mm apart, with an undecorated space inbetween (2b); organic residues on interior (RT/003/1 sampled by AQ); 169.5g. RT/003/1; RT/012/7; RT/014/2.

3. Two decorated body sherds, fabric/colour similar to 2 but surface texture more vesicular and possibly from a different vessel; decoration (on RT/007/25) comprises oblique incised lines or slashes bordered by traces of a low rib on one side and a single vertical incised line on the other, adjacent to a reserved area (3); on smaller

sherd (RT/007/29) opposed oblique incised lines meet at a low vertical rib; organic residue on interior ((RT/007/25) sampled by AQ); 67.5g. RT/007/25; RT/007/29.

4. Four decorated body sherds (4), probably all from the lower portions of a fairly straight-sided pot, probably the same vessel as 2; one sherd (RT/009/12) has broken just above the basal angle but actual orientation of wall uncertain (4a); fabric/colour similar to 2; decoration comprises fingertip impressions applied 'vertically' to one side of, and in one case between, low vertical ribs formed by drawing fingertips or an implement down the wall of the pot (very similar to 2); on one sherd, there is a trace of an incised line which may indicate alternating panels of fingertip and incised ornament; organic residues on interior (RT/009/12, RT/012/3 sampled by AQ); 141.0g. RT/005/1-4 [sherd in 4 pieces, fresh breaks]; RT/007/1; RT/009/12; RT/009/6; RT/012/8.

5. Three decorated body sherds, two of them joining and all almost certainly from lower wall of the same vessel (5a); fabric similar to 2 but possibly a different vessel; decoration comprises fingernail impressions applied 'horizontally' between low vertical ribs worked up from the wall of the pot; organic residues on interior; badly scorched - ext reddish yellow (7.5 YR 7/6); 59.7g. RT/007/24; RT/009/9-10 [joining sherds].

6. Two plain body sherds and three fragments, similar in fabric and probably from the same vessel(s) as 2 - 5; largest sherd 38 x 35 x 18mm; 32.3g. RT/003/5; RT/014/3; RT/007/17 RT/012/3-4 (not illustrated).

7. Decorated body sherd (7); generally similar in fabric and colour to 1-6 but slightly more compact and probably from a different vessel; broken along building joint; surviving decoration comprises fingernail impression applied horizontally to one side of a low vertical ridge worked up from the wall of the pot; unusually, no organic residues visible on interior; 21.8g. RT/014/1.

8. Two rim sherds, probably joining (8), and four fragments; orientation uncertain but almost certainly from vessel with intumed rim; very friable; generally very dark grey (7.5YR N3/); rim sherds in very poor condition but the vessel appears to have had shallow vertical grooves or groove-defined ribs worked up from the surface of the exterior and over the rim top itself; organic residue on interior; 19.7g. RT/005/6; RT/005/7; RT/005/8; RT/007/6; RT/012/2.

9. Two decorated rim sherds (inc. 9) and a small body sherd all joining; orientation uncertain but possibly from vessel with upright rim, high rounded 'shoulder' and tapering body; relatively compact fabric (7-8mm thick; generally 7.5 YR N3/); decoration comprises traces of opposed oblique lines around the uppermost part of the exterior and extending to rim; organic residue on interior (sampled by AQ); 12.8g. RT/007/14; RT/007/18; RT/007/22.

10. Decorated rim sherd (10), and three body sherds (one of them a 'false rim') probably all from the same vessel; relatively compact fabric (9-10mm thick) with vesicular ext surface; int: pale brown (10 YR 6/3); ext dark grey (7.5 YR N4/); decoration on rim sherd is limited to a few random horizontal fingernail impressions just below rim on exterior; organic deposits less pronounced: 23.8g. A large body sherd, generally similar in fabric, may also be from the straight lower wall this vessel; possibly bearing traces of a worked-up rib, the clay of which has been smeared to one side while soft; organic deposit on interior: 55 x 48 x 9mm; 28.5g. RT/009/5; RT/009/11; RT/009/15; RT/012/1 and possibly RT/012/5.

11. Decorated rim sherd (11a), and three decorated body sherds (11b-d) probably all from the same vessel; orientation uncertain but probably vessel with pointed rim formed by addition of clay; interior concave with slight horizontal moulding c 20mm below lip; relatively compact fabric (11-12mm thick); construction joints; decorated with either comb impressions or individual close-set impressions resembling comb; design uncertain - impressions presumably over the uppermost portion of the vessel - but absence on one of the body sherds suggests not an all-over design; organic residue on interior; 34.3g. A small body sherd may be from the undecorated portion of this vessel (not illustrated); 16 x 15 x 11mm; 2.0g. RT/007/23; RT/007/30; RT/009/4; RT/009/14; possibly RT/007/31.

12. Plain rim sherd (composed of two joining pieces, 12a), and five decorated (inc. 12b-d) and two plain body sherds, probably all from same vessel; orientation uncertain but almost certainly from vessel with intumed rim; compact fabric (7-9mm thick) with rather pimply surfaces; int: dark grey (10YR 4/1), ext: dark grey/greyish-brown (10 YR 4/1/10 YR 5/2); decoration comprises low groove defined ribs bordered by oblique lines: overall design uncertain but uppermost portion of vessel may have been plain, while the orientation of the construction joints indicates that the lay-out probably included both vertical and horizontal moulded ribs; unusually, no organic residues visible on interior; 46.6g. RT/003/4; RT/007/2; RT/007/4; RT/007/12 (joins

RT/007/4); RT/007/20; RT/007/26 (joins RT/007/2); RT/009/7; RT/009/8; possibly RT/007/5.

13. Three decorated (**Inc. 13a-b**) and two plain body sherds and fragments, and 2 crumbs probably all from the same vessel; orientation uncertain; compact fabric with fine stone grits; generally dark grey (7.5 YR N4/); decoration comprises possible traces of worked up wavy-line cordons and converging mouldings; very fragmentary; unusually, no organic residues visible on interior; 12.5g. RT/005/9; RT/007/9 + RT/007/10 + RT/007/11 (joining); RT/007/15; RT/007/16; RT/007/27; RT/009/1; RT/009/3.

14. Five plain sherds and fragments including two from basal angle of vessel with flat base with slight protruding foot (**inc. 14**); on larger sherd (RT/009/13) part of internal surface intact; possibly part of same vessel as 13; fabric and colour similar to 13; estimated diameter 140-160mm?; unusually, no organic residues visible on interior; 21.0g. RT/005/10; RT/007/8; RT/007/13; RT/007/21; RT/009/13.

15. Two plain body sherds (not illustrated); orientation uncertain - larger sherd convex; compact fabric similar to 13; generally grey/greyish brown (10 YR 5/1/10 YR 5/2); construction joints; unusually, no organic residues visible on interior; 21.9g. RT/012/6.

16. Three plain body fragments and a crumb (not illustrated), not assigned to any of the above, but probably from cat nos 2-8; 5.0g. RT/007/19; RT/007/28; RT/009/2; RT/009/16.

CHIPPED STONE TOOLS

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Discussion

A total of 19 pieces of deliberately worked, chipped stone were recovered. Two raw materials are represented: flint and chert. Although there are variations within these material classes, an absence of cortex, the restricted size of the collection, and the smallness of individual pieces makes detailed comment difficult. Chert is available locally, both in outcrops and in river derived contexts. There is no local flint source. The flint could have been imported from any of the possible medium distance sources, including the north of England, north-east Scotland, or beaches on the west coast of Scotland.

No pieces of specific chronological significance were recovered. The sample is too small to make much of the technology employed. All that can be said is that the dominant technique used is a direct hard hammer flake technique. Given the small sample this observation is of limited value. One flake (a surface find) has a flat, smooth dorsal surface. It is probably derived from a polished flint tool. The general impression is of a post-Mesolithic assemblage.

Catalogue

All measurements are given in millimetres.

Surface Find

Inner regular flake on grey translucent flint. Medium hard hammer direct percussion is demonstrated by a medium bulb and pronounced ripples. Hinging and flaking at the distal end indicates end shock. The dorsal surface is very smooth and flat, probably polished, although a microscope examination would be required to confirm this. The flake is probably struck from a polished flint tool, possibly during use.

18 x 15 x 2

Surface Find

Ten inner flakes of homogenous fault-free chert. Six of the flakes are less than 10mm in maximum dimension. All the pieces appear fresh, which suggests that they have been little disturbed since deposition.

16 x 34 x 4, 15 x 10 x 2, 9 x 13 x 2, 13 x 5 x 3, (and 6 pieces <10mm max dimension)

Fill of Pit 3 (003)

1) Inner irregular flake of fine grey translucent flint. Limited areas of secondary modification and snapped edges indicate that this is a fragment of an unidentifiable retouched tool.

28 x 23 x 8

2) Inner irregular flake of black homogenous chert with occasional flaws running parallel through the material.

30 x 38 x 7

Uppermost fill of Pit 1 (007)

1) Inner regular flake of black chert. Dorsal scarring indicates that this piece may have been produced as part of a deliberate blade reduction strategy.

26 x 10 x 3

2) Inner regular flake of grey translucent flint. The platform, large bulb, bulbar scar and pronounced npples all suggests direct hard hammer percussion.

16 x 14 x 4

3) Inner irregular flake of fine grey translucent chert. Large platform, bulb of percussion, prominent ripples and hinged truncation all indicate hard hammer direct percussion.

22 x 20 x 5

Primary fill of Pit 1 (012)

1) Inner regular flint blade of grey mottled opaque flint. The dorsal surface suggests that despite the overall morphology this piece is not the product of a deliberate technique, but is a burin spall, from the edge of a larger flake, possibly produced as the result of a silet fracture. Damage to the ventral surface at the distal end indicates end shock to the large, parent, flake.

27 x 8 x 3

2) Inner regular flake of brown retouched flint. Despite the lack of a well-defined bulb and the extreme thinness of the piece it appears likely from the pronounced ripples that this has been produced by hard hammer percussion.

20 x 23 x 2

Fill of linear feature

Inner regular flake of homogenous dark grey chert, with edge damage distributed in a manner suggesting that it is the result of tool use. The flake terminates with a pronounced hinge and lip.

25 x 15 x 9

GROUND STONE TOOLS

Ann Clarke

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Two utilised stone cobbles were recovered as surface finds.

Surface find

1) Small cobble of coarse-grained sandstone. Two hollows have been worn into one face, but it is uncertain as to whether these were formed naturally or deliberately.

L 81mm; W 72mm; Th 37mm; Hollows c. 5mm deep

Surface find

2) Cobble tool. Quartzite, ovoid in shape. Possibly worn smooth on one face.

L 108mm; W 86mm; Th 46mm.

PALAEOENVIRONMENTAL REPORT

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Introduction

Samples from all soil contexts were processed for the recovery of charred plant material and any other environmental or artefactual remains. Five contexts, representing two excavated pits (1 and 3), produced charred plant remains. These are catalogued below. Nomenclature follows Clapham *et al* (1989).

Method

A number of 4kg bulk-weight sub-samples from contexts selected on archaeological grounds were wet-sieved. Samples were disaggregated by immersion in water for 12 hours using Hydrogen Peroxide as a disaggregating agent. After repeated stirring the floating organic residue was removed by skimming and the dense residue sieved through nested 4 and 2mm mesh sieves. The residues were then hand-sorted under a x10 magnification binocular microscope. The residues were sorted into six general categories: plant macrofossils, charcoal fragments, insect remains, bone fragments, artefacts and lithic debitage. Most of these were not represented in the material studied.

No palynological work was carried out. Given the open fabric of most of the sediments sampled and the poor state of preservation of non-carbonised organic remains in general, on-site palynology can make little contribution to the study of these features.

Results

All the samples contained abundant charcoal fragments; in the majority of cases this was potentially identifiable. Identifications include hazel (Corylus) and birch (Betula), both from the uppermost fill of Pit 1. The large fragments recovered are unlikely to be the result of infiltration and are thus potentially datable by radiocarbon methods with a degree of confidence. There is no suggestion of charcoal derived from long-growing trees such as oak, and modern root material had not infiltrated the ancient charcoal.

Several of the samples produced hazel (Corylus avellana L) nutshell fragments (catalogued below). These fragments varied greatly in size and so are listed by weight in Table 2. Quantities of fragments are possibly under-represented as several small fragments may have been missed during hand sorting from the charcoal residues. Other plant macrofossils included a single slice (Prunus spinosa L) stone and a small number of indeterminate, distorted, carbonised seeds.

Very little can be said on the basis of these few remains, although wild plant resources were clearly being utilised at Hillend. The relative abundance of hazel shell suggests that it had an important seasonal role in the economy of the site. Accidental introduction with firewood can be ruled out since the nuts are fully developed (no immature fruits were noted) and wood gathered in the autumn would lose its fruit during felling and transportation.

It is disappointing that no cultivated plants were present, given the early date for these features, and in view of the proximity of Hillend to the site at Wellbrae (Alexander and Armit 1992), which produced significant deposits of cereals (Boardman, unpublished research).

Catalogue of residues

Fill 003 of Pit 3: Charcoal; Several potentially identifiable fragments up to 20mm, most fragments <10mm, 16.32g. Plant Macros; residue composed entirely of fragments of the nuts of Corylus, 3.7g.

Fill 005 of Pit 2: Charcoal; indeterminate fragments (<6mm), 0.27g. No macros.

Pit 1: Charcoal; indeterminate fragments (<6mm), 0.90g. No macros.

Uppermost fill (007) of Pit 1: Charcoal; several potentially identifiable fragments (probably Corylus and Betula) up to 25mm, majority smaller indeterminate fragments <10mm, 29.17g. Plant macros; composed entirely of the fragmentary shells of Corylus, 2.8g.

Silty fourth fill (008) of Pit 1: Charcoal; small fragments (<10mm), 10.54g. Plant Macros; shell fragments - Corylus, 2.3g.

Third fill (014) of Pit 1: sterile.

Fine silt, second fill (009) of Pit 1: Charcoal; several potentially identifiable fragments up to 20mm, most <10mm, 17.63g. Plant macros; shell fragments - Corylus, 2.10g.

Coarse silt, primary fill (012) of Pit 1: Charcoal; several potentially identifiable fragments up to 20mm, most <10mm, 18.89g. Plant macros; shell fragments - Corylus, 1.18g.

Table 2

<i>Context</i>		012	009	006	007	003
<i>Species</i>						
<i>Corylus avellana</i> L.						
- whole/quantifiable nuts/nelis	2	4.5	5.5	11	3.5	
- fragments			32	47	78	42 44
- total weight (grammes)		1.2	2.1	2.3	2.5	3.7
<i>Prunus spinosa</i> L. (whole)						
Quantifiable components		2	4.5	5.5	11	4.5