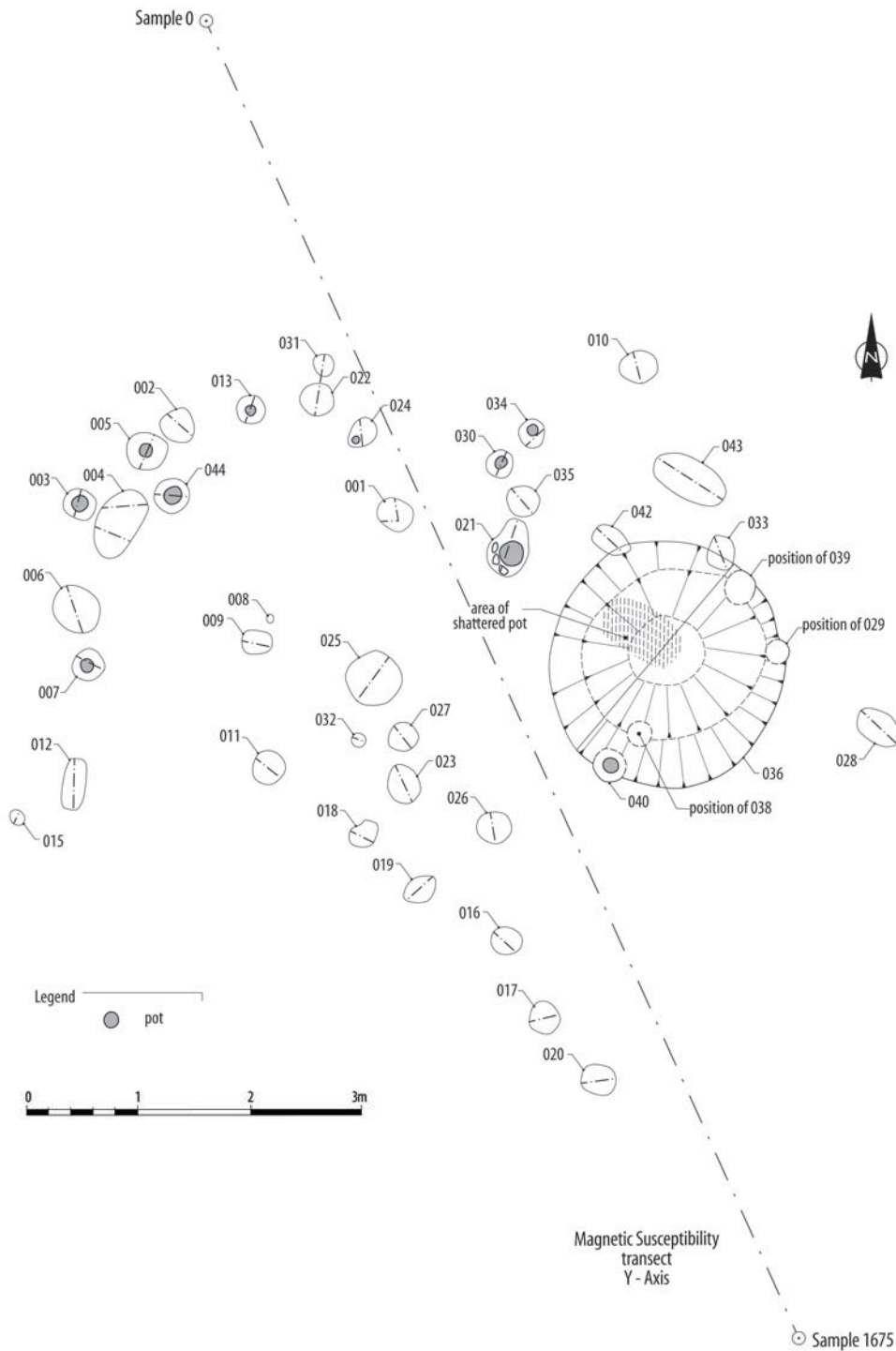


3 UNENCLOSED CREMATION CEMETERY AND OTHER FEATURES

A tightly clustered group of 41 circular and oval pits, all lying within an area c 12m in diameter, was identified within the eastern half of the pipeline spread (illus 2 and 3). This group included 29 pits contain-

ing cremated human bone. There was no obvious overall spatial layout within the cremation cluster and various groupings could be postulated. Eleven cremation urns of both Collared and Cordoned Urn



Illus 2 Plan of cremation cemetery



Illus 3 General view of the site during excavation

type were found, ten of them in pits. The features had been truncated and there was no evidence for an enclosing bank or ditch; the cemetery is presumed to have been unenclosed. No trace of any covering barrow has been ascertained.

The cremations have been extensively dated and were found to be Early Bronze Age in date, falling in the first half of the second millennium BC. The single large pit (036) cut by later features was dated to the late Mesolithic through radiocarbon dating.

There are two distinct groups of burials – urned and un-urned cremations – and a group of pits without cremation deposits. These will be discussed in turn below. A summary of the human remains found within the pits is provided in [Table 1](#), and a summary of the contents of the pits is provided in [Table 9](#). Radiocarbon dates are detailed in [Tables 6](#) and [7](#).

3.1 Urned cremation burials, with contributions by Melanie Johnson and Kathleen McSweeney

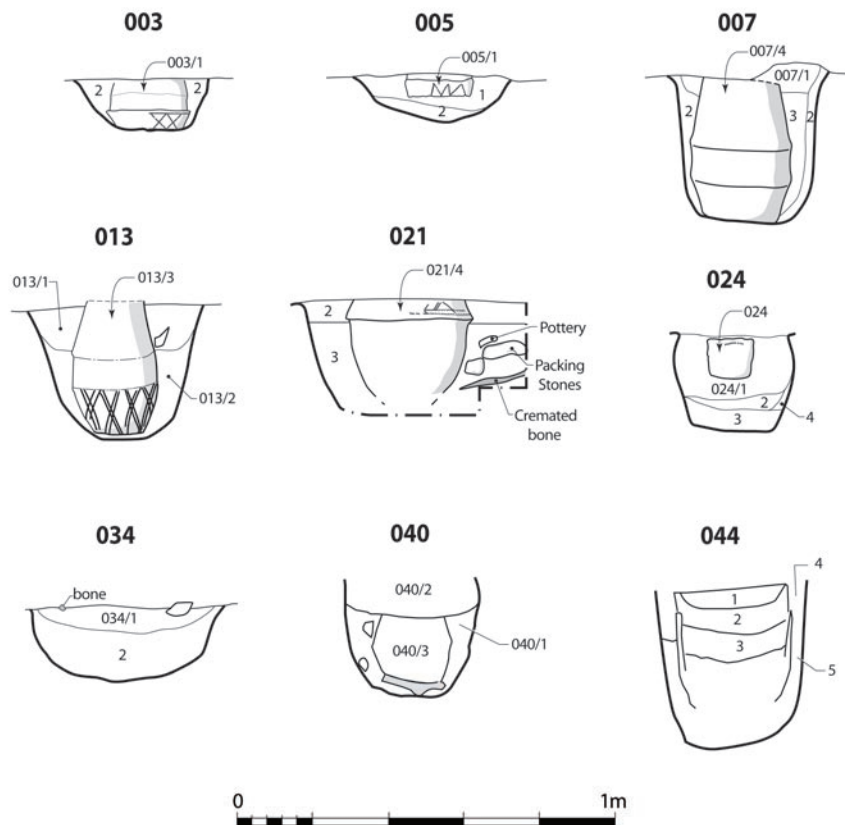
There were at least 11 urned cremation burials. Nine of the pits (003, 005, 007, 013, 024, 030, 034, 040, 044) contained inverted urns that varied in size, shape and decoration. A single pit (021) contained an upright urn. Many fragments of a single vessel were found on the surface of the late Mesolithic pit (036) and may have come from a further disturbed burial cut into this pit ([illus 2](#)). Two of the vessels were Cordoned Urns (013 and 030) while the remainder

were Collared Urns. The pits and their associated vessels are described individually below.

3.1.1 Pit 003

This pit measured 0.35m across and 0.15m deep ([illus 4](#)). It appears to have been quite severely truncated. A single fill, consisting of compacted, mottled dark brown/black silt with redder (ashy) patches, was found surrounding the vessel (003/2).

It contained a tripartite Collared Urn ([illus 5](#)). The vessel has quite a pronounced overhanging collar, with an internal rim bevel. It most closely corresponds to Longworth's Secondary Series Form Va (1984). The entire circumference of the collar survives but there are portions of the rim missing. It was in a very poor condition when taken for conservation; the vessel was broken, with some sherds dislodged, and was otherwise badly cracked. Once the vessel was removed, the deposit below consisted of orange-coloured natural, perhaps heated or burnt, which contained bone and soil. There is no base and the vessel survives to a height of 180mm. The rim diameter is 210mm and the collar has a height of 70mm. It is decorated with impressed twisted cord, forming a single horizontal line below the rim and at the bottom of the collar, with linked lozenges between. On the internal bevel of the rim the decoration is again impressed twisted cord, forming a single horizontal line around the upper side of the bevel with short parallel diagonal lines beneath,



Illus 4 Sections of pits containing urns

fairly closely spaced. The decoration has been neatly executed.

No other artefacts were found in the pit or urn. The cremated bone was dated to 1880–1530 BC (GrA-26519), and comprised three individuals: two children (one aged 5–7 years and one aged about 12) and an adult; the adult, however, was represented by a single bone. There was no indication of the sex of any of these individuals. The significance of the mixed remains is not clear. The majority of the remains are from the two children, and the single mature bone may simply be a stray. There did not appear to be any layering of remains from different individuals to suggest that each was deposited in the pot at different periods. As there were no obvious differences in the colour or texture of the remains, it is possible that all individuals died at the same time and were cremated together; however, it is equally possible that the individuals died at different times and the remains were stored elsewhere until placed in the pot. The completeness of the remains indicates that it is likely that the entire skeletons of the two children were placed inside the pot.

3.1.2 Pit 005

This pit measured 0.4m across by 0.13m deep (*illus 4*). The upper fill of the pit outwith the pot was compacted medium brown silt (005/1). Bone had

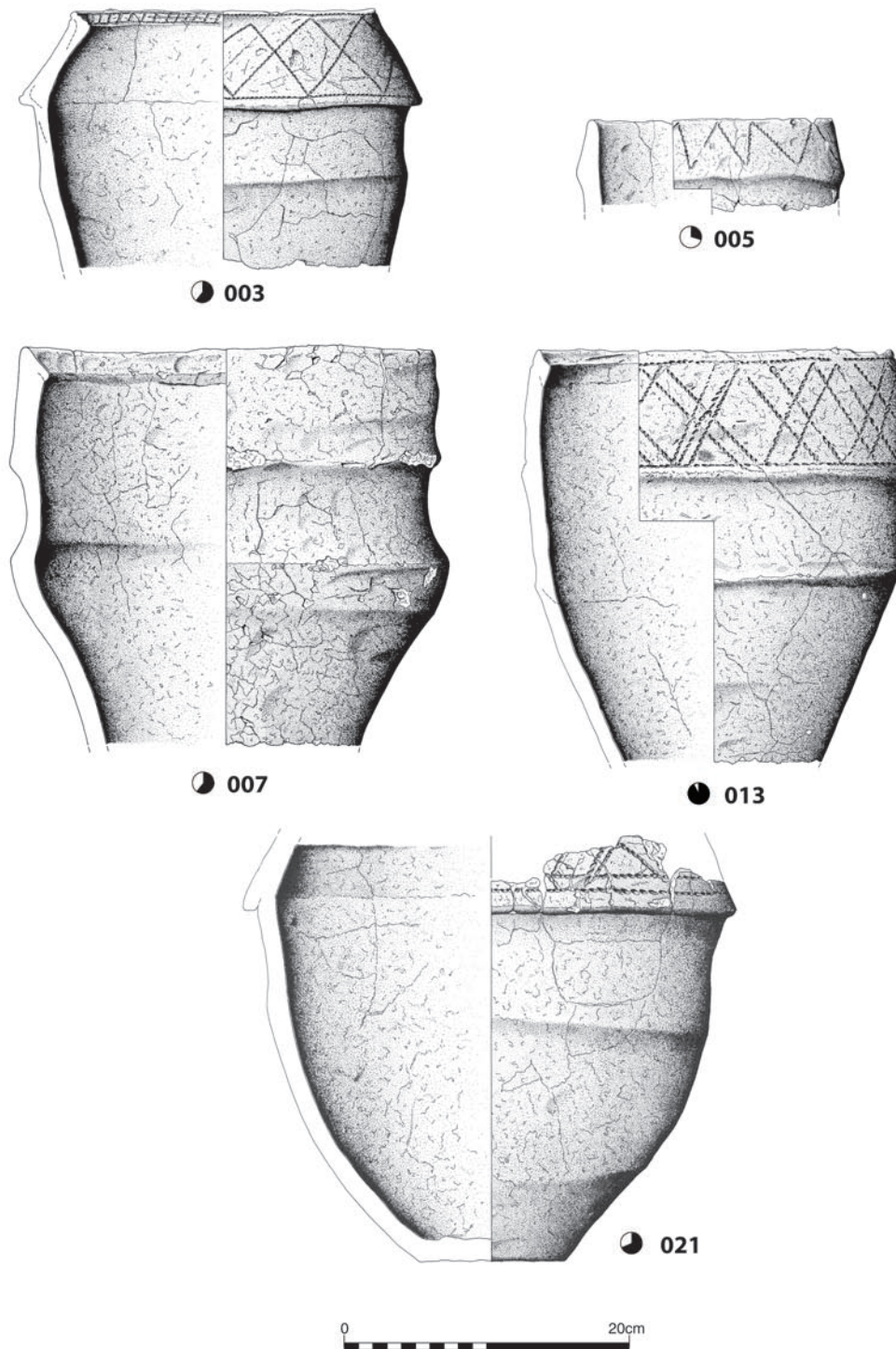
spilled out from the vessel when it was placed in the pit, beneath which was a distinct layer of charcoal at the base of the pit (005/2).

It contained the remains of an inverted Collared Urn (*illus 5*). The vessel, badly cracked, survives as a complete rim and collar to a maximum height of 65mm. The simple rounded rim has a diameter of 170mm. It is decorated on the collar with a continuous running zigzag of impressed twisted cord.

A natural quartzite pebble was found below the mouth of the urn inside the pit. No artefacts were found in the urn or pit. The cremated bone, of an adult, has been dated to 1760–1530 BC (GrA-26520). Age at death was at least in the mid-20s and the individual had arthritis in the jaw; this would no doubt have caused pain while eating. There were no indicators of sex. The homogeneous nature of the remains indicates that burning was even throughout and the colour indicates that it was at a high temperature.

3.1.3 Pit 007

This pit measured 0.4m across and 0.38m deep (*illus 4*). Around the top of the pit, the upper fill was very compacted re-deposited subsoil of yellow-orange clay. A charcoal-rich fill appeared to line the cut and could be seen on the surface as a faint ring of darker material by which the feature was



Illus 5 Cremation urns 003, 005, 007, 013 and 021

initially identified. It contained at least one obvious carbonised wood fragment that had been placed horizontally near the edge of the cut. The lower fill of this pit (context 007/3) lying outwith the pot was charcoal-stained dark grey-brown silt. It is possible that these charcoal-stained deposits may have corresponded to a wicker basket, within which the urn was originally set.

The pit contained an inverted tripartite Collared

Urn (*illus 5*) which most closely corresponds to Longworth's Secondary Series Form Ia (1984). This vessel is almost complete but lacks its base, and was in poor condition when taken for conservation, with extensive cracking and surface crazing. The internally bevelled rim has a diameter of 280mm and it survived to a height of 280mm. It is not decorated. At the top of the uppermost spit (the base of the vessel), there were a few broken sherds and the fill



Illus 6 Urn 013 undergoing excavation

contained little charcoal or bone. It appeared as if the pot had been damaged; when the base fell in, soil was deposited on top. No artefacts were found in the pit or urn.

The cremated bone comprised an adult female and a foetus; the adult was dated to 1870–1530 BC (GrA-26521). The evidence for the sex of the adult was slightly conflicting, however on the basis of pelvic morphology this individual is more likely to have been female and in her late 20s at the time of death. The child was likely to be 35–40 foetal weeks. Although there is no indication of the cause of death of either individual, the presence of foetal remains in the same urn as a young adult who was probably female makes it tempting to speculate that death occurred during childbirth. Some patterning in the distribution of the remains from the two individuals suggest that the foetal bones may have been added to the urn after the adult remains, and that some subsequently filtered down to become mixed with the rest of the remains, which would indicate that the adult and child had been cremated separately. On the other hand, foetal remains were found throughout the pot and there are no doubt other immature bones among the unidentified remains, so both may have been commingled prior to insertion in the pot, or placed in the pot simultaneously.

3.1.4 Pit 013

Pit 013 measured 0.47m across by 0.35m deep (illus 4). There were some traces of heat changes, notably reddened scorch marks, around the top of the pit. The upper fill (013/1) was very compacted re-deposited subsoil consisting of fine orange clay, only slightly pinker than the surrounding subsoil (illus 6). The rest of the pit was filled with fine dark brown silt with a high charcoal content (013/2). Traces of burnt bone within the lower fill and from beneath the vessel had perhaps spilled from the urn.

The pit contained an inverted Cordoned Urn (illus 5), almost complete but lacking its base. The vessel had a rim diameter of 260mm and survived to a height of 290mm. The rim has a small internal bevel, slightly concave. There are two cordons, the upper one slightly more pronounced. The vessel is decorated with impressed twisted cord, forming a lattice between two horizontal lines between the rim and upper cordon. The cord used was quite thick. It would appear that the vessel was only partially filled when it was inverted. The base either collapsed or was damaged by ploughing and thus earth from the immediate surroundings gradually infiltrated.

A natural quartzite pebble was noted in the fill beneath the urn. A fragment of calcined worked

bone, the point of a pin, was recovered from inside the urn (see McLaren [below](#)).

The cremated bone was that of an adult male and was dated to 1690–1500 BC (GrA-26523). Age at death was at least 25 years; however, the presence of widespread spinal degeneration points to a more advanced age, probably of at least middle or old adulthood. A number of pathological lesions were noted, including poor dental health, arthritis of the left thumb and possibly of the knee, advanced spinal lesions and a muscle injury on the right radius. The number of lesions present indicating toothache and joint pains suggest that this individual must have been incapacitated to some degree.

3.1.5 Pit 021

This pit was irregular on plan, and although the cut was clearly defined it had been damaged by plough-dragged stones. On plan it measured 0.5m across, extending to 0.7m where it was disturbed, with a depth of 0.25m ([illus 4](#)). The upper fill of the pit probably derived from the urn's contents, as this pot had lost the upper part of its rim, probably during plough disturbance. The upper fill (021/2) of the pit external to the pot consisted of compacted mixed medium brown silt and re-deposited subsoil. The lower and main fill (021/3) was dark brown silt with charcoal staining.

The pit contained an upright tripartite Collared Urn ([illus 5](#)). One side of the pot had been crushed and stones had been placed against it where parts of the wall were missing. There appeared to be four of these lining the inside of the vessel, set into the fill in vertical positions, while a fifth stone lay horizontally. These may have been inserted deliberately to seal the broken wall, which appears to have been damaged in antiquity. The area of missing wall appears to have been replaced by these stones and a layer of re-deposited natural placed around the inner wall of the vessel to seal in the cremation; then the rest of the vessel was filled with natural. As the re-deposited natural is clay and as the stones were so tightly packed within this material, it is possible that the clay and contained stones were wet when the stones were inserted into the vessel. The pot may have been broken before being placed into the pit or damaged while it was being inserted.

The vessel's rim diameter is about 260mm, basal diameter 105mm, and it survives to a height of 300mm. It is decorated with a double row of impressed twisted cord at the bottom of the collar, with a motif of twisted cord above which appears to be a lattice. The vessel corresponds most closely to Longworth's Form Va ([1984](#)).

No other artefacts were found within the pit or urn. The cremated bone was dated to 1890–1660 BC (GrA-26524), and comprised a child of about 10–12 years old. Two oak charcoal dates from the same pit calibrate to 1970–1740 BC (Poz-7690-1). A single

odontoid process of axis vertebra that did not belong with the rest of the material was found. This bone belonged to an individual over 12 years and it would seem that this bone is a stray unassociated bone and that there were essentially only the remains of one individual present in the pot. No pathological lesions were found.

3.1.6 Pit 024

This pit lay close to 022 and was positioned between that pit and 030 and 034, which also contained urns. The pit was sub-rectangular on plan, measuring 0.36m by 0.52m by 0.3m deep ([illus 4](#)). It was steep-sided, with a rounded base. Its upper fill (024/1) was a medium brown silt with occasional fragments of burnt bone and charcoal. A fill of cremated bone (024/2), deeper on the south side, was present across the entire pit. Underlying this and lying on the base of the cut was a lens of burnt red ash (024/3). A trace of a charcoal-rich deposit (024/4) lying against the north side of the pit cut was noted on the surface as an arc of darker material marking the edge of the pit.

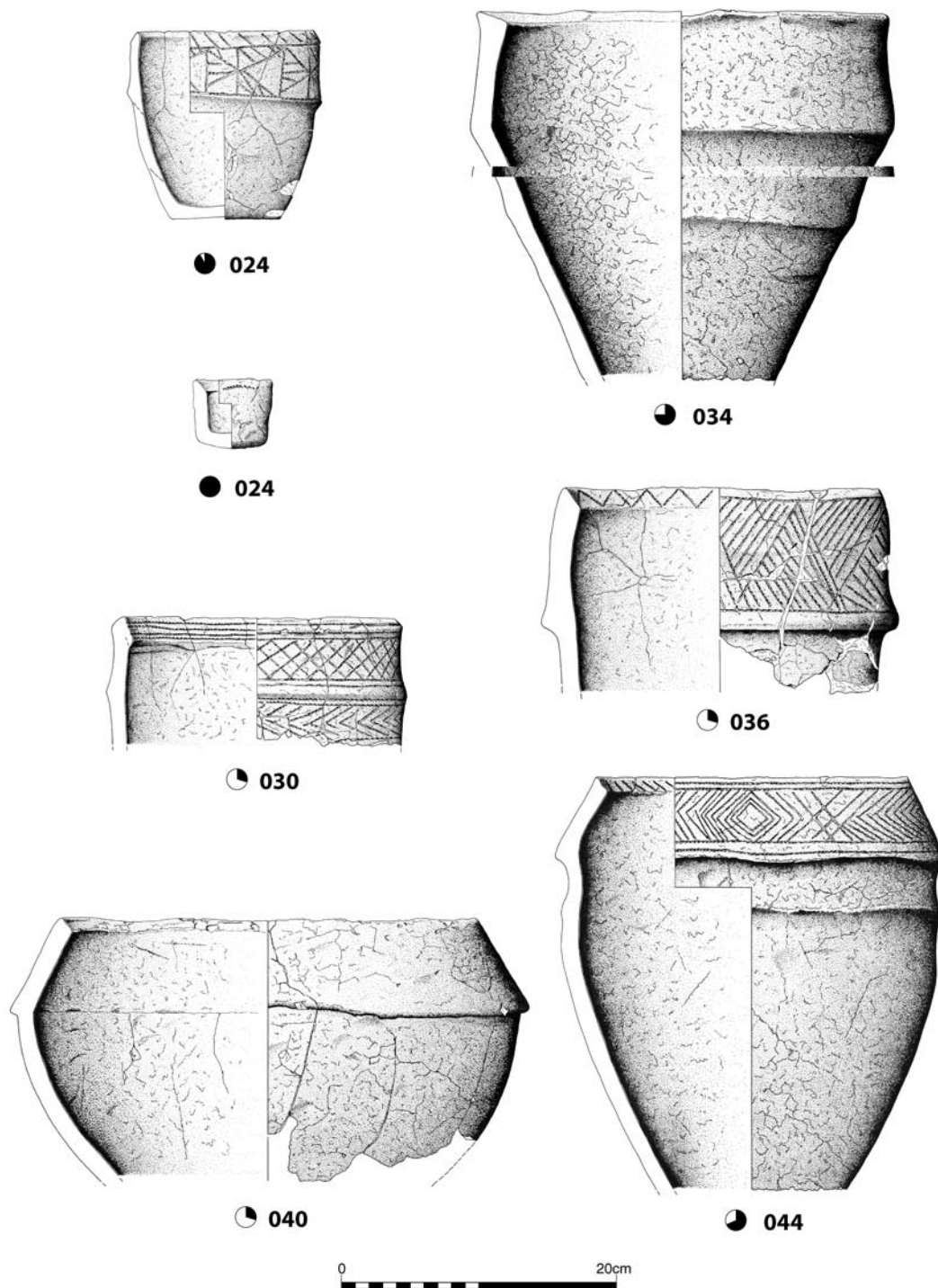
An inverted Collared Urn ([illus 7–9](#)) was found at the west side of the pit. Urn 024 is the smallest of all the urns, having a rim diameter of only 130mm, base diameter of 80mm and surviving to a height of 140mm. Its complete profile survived. It was too small to contain a complete adult cremation, and most of the cremation deposit was found spread between the basal fill of the pit and the fill surrounding the urn.

The vessel is complete and corresponds most closely to Longworth's Form IIIb (Secondary Series, [1984](#)). It is decorated on the collar with twisted cord impressions forming panels of radiating triangles; each alternate triangle is filled with lines of cord. A single horizontal line is found at the top and bottom. Immediately below the rim are short diagonal lines.

Inside the urn was found an intact, small cylindrical accessory vessel ([illus 7](#)), straight-sided with a slightly rounded base, 60mm in diameter. It has one short length of whipped cord decoration on the exterior near the rim top. It was found lying on its side. Some of the cremated bone was contained within the accessory cup.

It appeared that the urn had been only partly full when it was inverted in the pit and had broken in antiquity; the basal sherds appear to have dropped into the urn, after which the pot gradually filled with soil. A perforated stone disc was found within the cremation material in the pit (see [below](#)).

The cremated bone was that of an adult male and was dated to 1750–1530 BC (GrA-26525). Although there were no paired or matching bones that would provide an indisputable link between 024/1 and 024/2, similarities in age and pathological lesions and the absence of duplicated bones suggest that the two sub-deposits were from the same individual. The



Illus 7 Cremation urns 024, 030, 034, 036, 040 and 044

small quantity of identified bone fragments from the pot make it difficult to say for certain whether they relate to that from 024/1 and 024/2. A single pair of duplicated bones is present within the remains found inside the pot, which may be evidence for a second individual or may simply be a stray bone. A number of pathological lesions were noted, comprising dental disease, arthritis of the hands and feet and spinal disease.

3.1.7 Pit 030

Pit 030, which lay very close to Pit 034, measured 0.35m across and contained a single fill of mixed re-deposited natural with very little visible charcoal. Some cremated bone towards the base of the cut is likely to have spilled from the urn.

The pit contained an inverted Cordoned Urn (*illus 7*). The complete rim circumference survives



Illus 8 Urn 024 undergoing excavation

though part of the circuit has sprung. Its diameter is 200mm and it survived only to a height of 90mm. The vessel was very distorted and cracked. The rim of the pot was found to be covered with pink/orange-coloured natural, which had perhaps been heated or burnt. There is a cordon on the rim exterior at the top, with a second cordon 50mm below. Decoration, all impressed twisted cord, is found both above and below the second cordon in two separate panels, each defined by double rows of cord. The upper panel is decorated with a lattice while the lower has chevrons. There are four horizontal bands of twisted impressed cord on the internal rim bevel. The decoration has been carefully and evenly executed.

No other artefacts were found within the pit or urn. The cremated bone was dated to 1920–1690 BC (GrA-26528) and comprised an adult female. Age at death is likely to be the early to mid-20s. Fourteen fragments of cranium had slight pitting on the external surface, which may indicate the presence of iron-deficiency anaemia during childhood. The roots of the upper and lower third molars had fused into single conical masses; these are fairly common morphological variations.

3.1.8 Pit 034

Pit 034 lay very close to Pit 030. It measured 0.4m across. The upper fill (034/1) of the pit lying outwith the urn consisted of compacted re-deposited subsoil, with a limited charcoal content (*illus 4*). The lower fill (034/2) was dark brown-black silt containing charcoal chunks and burnt bone, which had possibly spilled from damaged parts of the vessel. The vessel was laid on a layer of stones placed at the base of the

pit. This layer comprised six large and one smaller stone, all of which were sitting below the mouth of the vessel as excavated. The stones had been split from one larger rock that appeared to have been smashed; these stones were placed in the pit, making a platform for the vessel to sit on. However, the stones had not been placed in the pit in their original relative positions.

The pit contained an inverted bipartite Collared Urn (*illus 7*), largely complete except for its base. Its form corresponds most closely with Longworth's Form Vb (Secondary Series, 1984); it is not decorated. The rim diameter is c 300mm and the vessel survived to a height of 270mm. The vessel was in a very poor condition when taken to be conserved. The collar was much displaced, broken up and distorted: much of it was supported by the fill as the wall was missing.

An unburnt flint foliate knife (see Ballin *below*) was found in the centre of the urn, along with the cremated bone of an elderly man. The bone was dated to 1920–1690 BC (GrA-26529), while charcoal dates from the same context calibrated to 1940–1690 BC (Poz-7679-80). Several pathological lesions were noted, including cranial pitting which may signify the presence of anaemia during childhood, osteophytes of the knee and heel which may or may not have resulted in pain or stiffness, and spinal degeneration (osteophytosis).

3.1.9 Pit 036

This vessel was found as a scatter of sherds across the surface of Pit 036 (*illus 2*). The vessel does not originate from this pit, which is of late Mesolithic

date, but is likely to have been disturbed from another pit, perhaps by ploughing. The vessel is a Collared Urn (*illus 7*), and has a rim diameter of 235mm and surviving height of 150mm. It is decorated with impressed twisted cord. On the internal rim bevel there is a continuous zigzag. On the collar is a motif of opposed triangles infilled with diagonal parallel lines, which is bordered by a single horizontal line at both top and bottom. There was no associated bone nor any artefacts.

3.1.10 Pit 040

Pit 040 measured 0.34m across by 0.32m deep and was cut into Pit 036 (*illus 4*). The cut was relatively straight-sided with a flat base. Its upper fill was re-deposited natural (040/2), which masked the pot and appears to have filled the pit after the pot lost its base. The remaining lower pit fill surrounding the vessel was a medium brown silt containing occasional pieces of bone and charcoal (040/1).

The pit contained an inverted Collared Urn (*illus 7*). Although the full circuit of the rim is present with a diameter of 310mm, the base is missing (surviving height 190mm). The pot is not decorated. One side of the vessel had been crushed and a large sherd had broken off and had been pushed into a horizontal position. The pot was extremely distorted when removed.

The vessel was sitting on the naturally weathered side of a large piece of metamorphic schist, identified as andalucite spotted schist of local origin (Dr Nigel Trewin, Aberdeen University Geology Department, pers comm). It is not clear whether the slab was initially laid at the bottom of the pit, or whether it had been used to contain the urn's contents and was flipped over in tandem with the urn. No artefacts were found in the urn or pit.

There is evidence to suggest that there were two individuals, one inside the urn and the other from the surrounding pit fill. The individuals were both adults; the individual contained within the pot was male and was dated to 1900–1690 BC (GrA-26530). Oak charcoal from the same context was dated to 1900–1660 BC (Poz-7681–2). Although not entirely unambiguous, two molars appeared to have been lost during life. A Schmorl's node on a vertebral body surface probably signifies a traumatic injury to an intervertebral disc of the spine. There was one fragment of parietal bone with blue colouring on the internal surface. This colour-change occurs when bone is burned at a high temperature. Two bones had blue/green staining which is probably due to contamination with metal.

3.1.11 Pit 044

Pit 044 measured 0.4m across by 0.4m deep and the cut was steep-sided with a rounded base (*illus 4*). The upper contents of the pit and vessel were

excavated prior to the lifting of the pot as the urn was not immediately visible. Three fills were evident within the vessel, the upper fill (044/1) consisting of re-deposited subsoil stained with charcoal, the middle deposit (044/2) comprising cremated bone, and the lower fill (044/3) charcoal-rich black silt. Surrounding the vessel and filling the pit was an upper fill (044/4) of clean re-deposited natural and a lower fill of black-brown silt with occasional traces of bone (044/5), again possibly spilled from the urn.

The pit contained an inverted Collared Urn (*illus 7*). The vessel was in very poor condition and its surface was extremely crazed with numerous cracks. The rim diameter is 230mm and its surviving height is 300mm. The collar is decorated with a motif of impressed twisted cord, bounded by double horizontal rows, and formed around lozenges. The internal rim bevel has short diagonal lines of twisted cord.

It appears that the vessel's base was already missing in antiquity. Its loss was not a product of the excavation and is unlikely to be due to ploughing, given the presence of undisturbed deposits at the top of the pit fills. It is possible that there was a primary cremation inside the pot and a secondary one inserted on top which resulted in the removal of the pot's base. There is however no clear evidence for a re-cut in any of the upper pit deposits. There were no artefacts within the urn or pit.

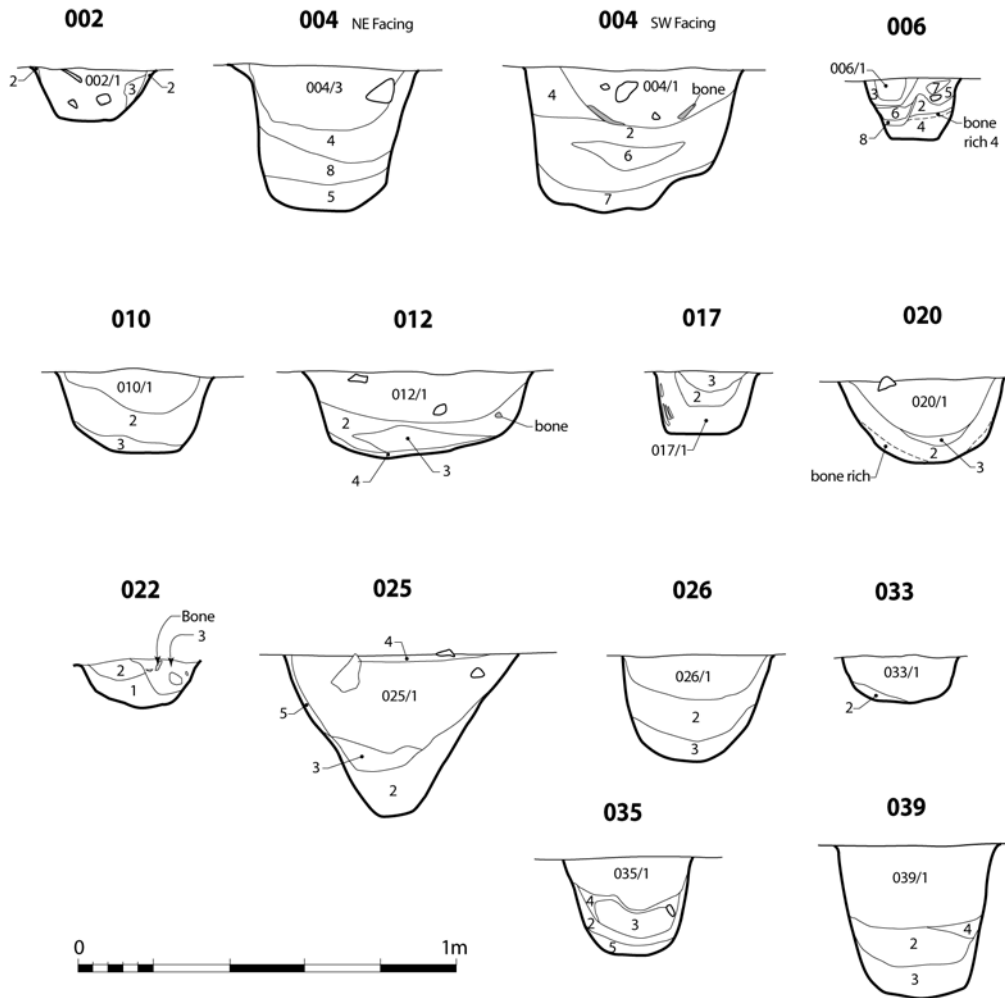
There was clear evidence that there were two individuals in two separate deposits, one from inside the urn and one from the surrounding pit fill. They were both male, the individual inside the urn being an adult in his mid to late 20s, while the individual in the pit fill was a sub-adult aged 12–16 years old. The adult male was dated to 1890–1680 BC (GrA-26531). Oak charcoal from the same context was dated to 2870–2490 BC (Poz-7706) and 1930–1740 BC (Poz-7708). No pathological lesions were noted on the child while on the adult there was cranial pitting that may indicate iron-deficiency anaemia. A pair of upper second premolars belonging to the adult had partially bifurcated roots, a common variation. The same individual had a large vastus notch on the right patella, again a fairly common variation.

3.2 Un-urned cremations

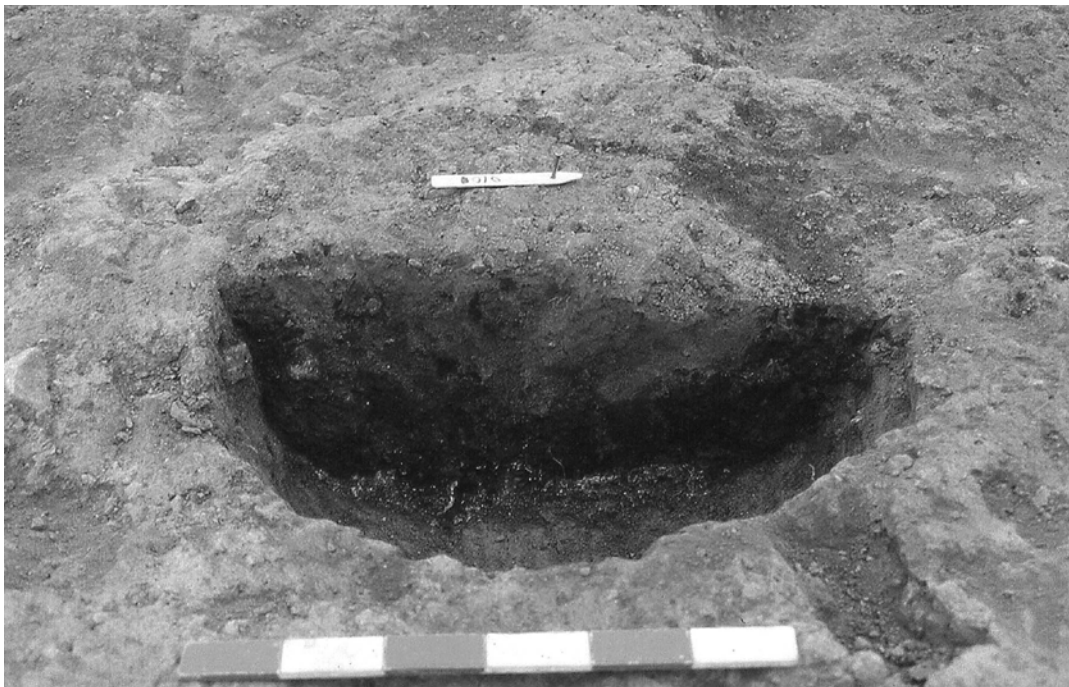
Nineteen further pits yielded a cremation deposit. Most of these were circular on plan, but there are some exceptions. Pit 043 was oval and, at 0.92m by 0.48m, was one of the largest pits on site (*illus 2*).

3.2.1 Excavation and filling of the pits

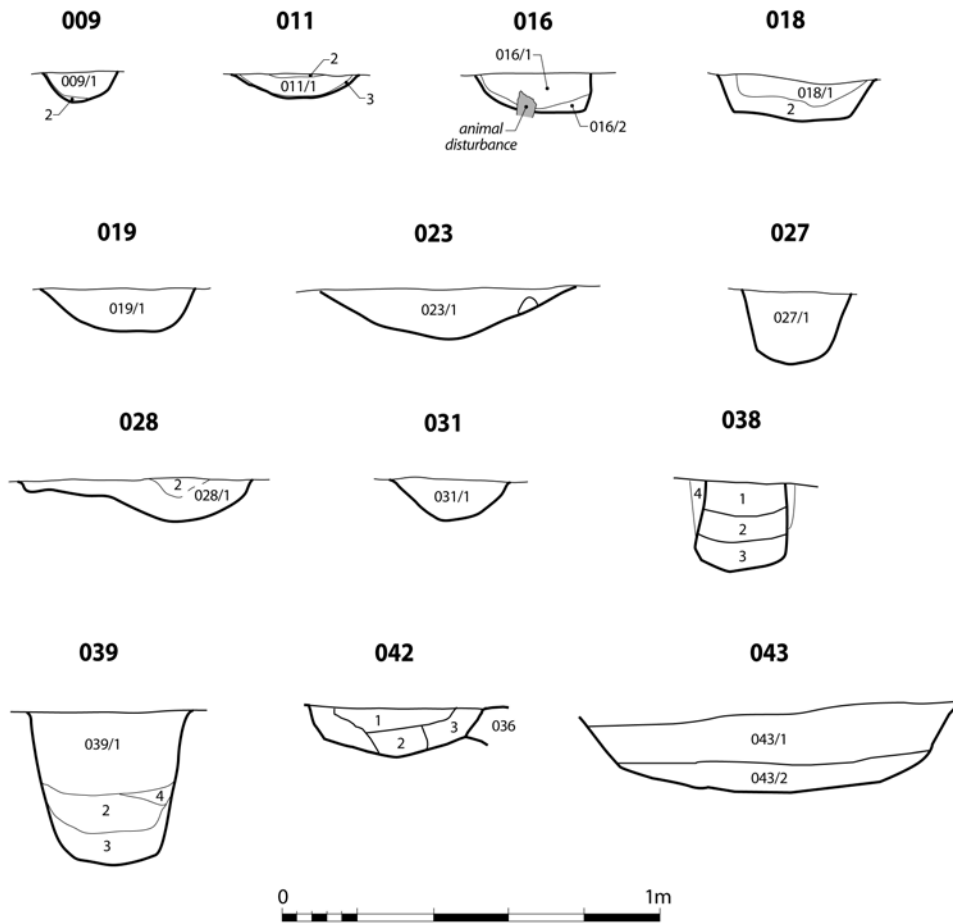
The fills of these pits varied, but most contained a charcoal-rich deposit as well as a cremation deposit and an upper fill of redeposited subsoil. Although similarities occurred, the pit fill sequences differed and some were stratigraphically more complex than the others (004, 006). The presence of redeposited



Illus 9 Cremation pits containing a charcoal-rich deposit



Illus 10 Pit 010 showing the sequence of fills



Illus 11 Pits containing only a cremation deposit; pits with undifferentiated fills; and other pits

natural as the upper fill of these cremation pits was common, being noted in the majority of the pits, which often made locating them very difficult.

The pits can be divided into three broad types, differentiated on the basis of their fills:

1. containing a charcoal-rich deposit as well as a cremation deposit (*illus 9–10*);
2. containing only a cremation deposit (*illus 11*);
3. with undifferentiated fills (*illus 11*).

Most of the pits fall into the first category. In this group (001, 002, 004, 006, 010, 012, 017, 020, 022, 025, 026, 033, 035, 039) it was common for the fill to consist of a charcoal-rich deposit, which extended up the sides of the pit and in some cases (010, 020) caused a dark ring to be visible on the (surviving) surface of the pit (*illus 10*). Deposits of this kind often contained bone fragments and, in the case of 039, burnt soil (039/3) (*illus 9*). The upper fill often consisted of re-deposited subsoil and the cremated bone deposit was found either between these two fills or right on the base of the pit, with the charcoal-rich deposit lining the cut above, surviving as a loose fill almost solely of cremated bone.

This sequence of fills suggests that once the pit was excavated, charcoal-rich material perhaps taken from the pyre was added to the pit first; then the cremation was placed in the pit, perhaps inside an organic container (eg a leather bag); thereafter more pyre material was added around this bag to fill the pit. Alternatively, the charcoal fill was dished to accommodate the cremation or compressed by the weight of the cremation. Finally, the rest of the pit was backfilled with the soil that had been excavated from the hole.

This burnt deposit lining the pit was, in the best preserved examples, seen to include charred vegetation placed horizontally around the cut. One such deposit (Pit 006/8) was so clearly preserved as to suggest a roughly woven basket lining the re-cut. Laying such a deposit would seem to indicate that extreme care was taken or that the charred remains were fairly robust. The deposit did not appear to have been burnt in situ.

The largest of the cremation pits (025; *illus 9*) showed evidence for burning around the pit cut and contained five separate, clearly defined fills including a charcoal-rich pit lining (025/2, 025/5), a cremated bone deposit (025/3), a bone-free charcoal-rich soil

(025/4) and reddish ashy material with both bone and charcoal traces (025/1).

The second group of pits is a small group. The fills of these pits (029, 042, 043) did not include a charcoal-rich deposit. For example, Pit 042 had a discrete, tightly-packed cremation deposit at its base (042/2); this was surrounded by a pale brown-orange fill of mixed re-deposited subsoil and brown medium-textured silt (042/3) containing occasional fragments of cremated bone, and was capped with redeposited natural (042/1; [illus 11](#)). This sequence suggests that the pit was backfilled only with the material which came out of it and that no pyre material was added to the fill.

A further type of pit may be represented by Pits 027 and 031 ([illus 11](#)). These pits contained a single fill of soft dark brown and black silt with an occasional patch of re-deposited subsoil. Charcoal and cremated bone were present, suggesting no differentiation between fills, and no sorting of the contents prior to deposition. However, in Pit 027 there was clear evidence of animal disturbance, which may have caused the mixing, and in Pit 031 root intrusion was noted.

3.2.2 Re-cutting

Despite the close association of the pits, there was little evidence for re-cutting. This may be seen in just three pits: 004, 006 and 022.

Pit 004 was oval on plan and contains eight fills ([illus 9](#)). It appeared to have a secondary cremation re-cut into its northern end. This pit, measuring 0.48m by 0.97m by 0.35m deep, was the largest on plan in the cemetery. Its northern and southern portions had different sequences of fills. The upper fill (004/1) to the north consisted of pale grey clay with dispersed chunks of cremated bone and small patches of re-deposited subsoil. Underlying this was a deep ashy fill (004/2) consisting of burnt red, fine-textured silt containing dispersed fragments of strips of charcoal, and a small pocket of cremated bone (004/6). The basal deposit here (004/7) was similar to the overlying 004/2 but contained a greater proportion of charcoal. The main upper fill of the southern part of the pit (004/3) consisted of re-deposited subsoil. Underlying this was 004/4, a charcoal-rich deposit of mottled black, brown and burnt red compact silt. 004/1 was possibly cut through this layer. This deposit lined the edges of the cut to form a dark peripheral ring visible on the surface. Below 004/4 but overlying the basal fill was a compacted deposit of mixed brown silt and re-deposited subsoil (004/8). The basal fill (004/5) of the pit here consisted of loose cremated bone.

The majority of the cremated bone from this feature was recovered from contexts 004/1 (an adult female) and 004/5 (an adult male). The remains from contexts 004/2 and 004/6 were from a single child.

Pit 006 ([illus 9](#)), which measured 0.48m by 0.32m deep, appeared to display three episodes of re-

cutting. The primary fill was represented by contexts 006/4 and 006/2, cremation deposits contained within dark brown and black silts with occasional speckles of reddish ash. The first re-cut appeared to be represented by contexts 006/8 and 006/6, forming a shallow U-shaped cut through context 006/2. A second re-cut was represented by context 006/5 which truncated contexts 006/6 and 006/8. The final re-cut was defined by a thin layer of charcoal-rich soil (006/3) forming a U-shaped cut towards the top of the pit, and containing a fine-textured brown silt (006/1).

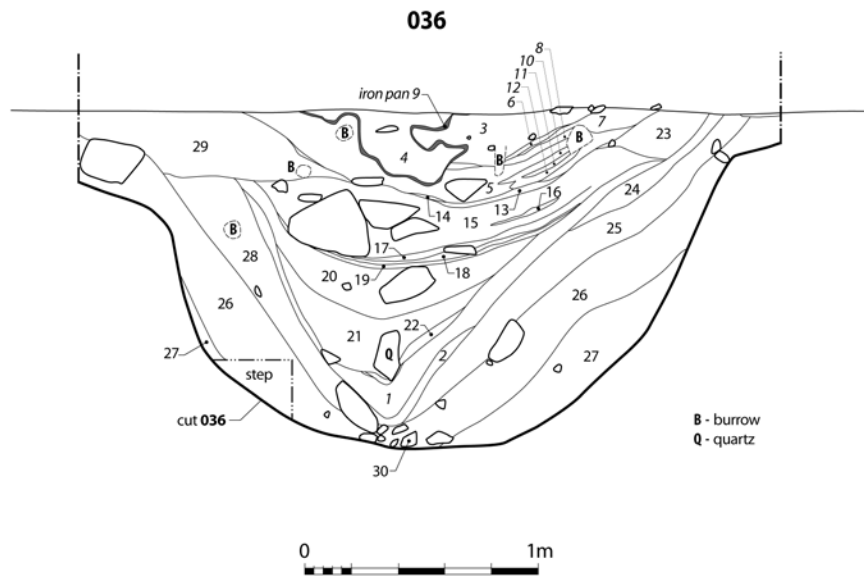
Despite the apparent re-cutting, there is only slight evidence for the presence of two individual cremations (see [McSweeney below](#)). Two cases of duplicated bones were found, in 006/1, the final re-cut, and 006/4, the basal pit fill. Similarities in the morphology and pathology observed indicate the deposits found in 006/2, 006/3, 006/4 and 006/5 were from the same individual. Perhaps the complex stratigraphy seen in the pit section was a result of the cremated bone having been deposited in a series of organic containers, around which were packed pyre material and soil.

Pit 022 perhaps also contained a re-cut ([illus 9](#)). The shallow bowl-shaped cut measured 0.29m across by 0.12m, its depth giving the impression of truncation so that the entire sequence of fills may not have survived. The basal fill (022/1), extending up one side of the cut, was a dark brown-black fill of crushed charcoal fragments and grit containing most of the bones, and above this was a deposit of brown clay (022/2). A clearly defined deposit of compacted clay containing bone fragments and charcoal (022/3) was possibly cut into the top of the pit.

3.3 Other pits

A number of other small pits did not appear to hold cremations: these were 008, 009, 011, 015, 016, 018, 019, 023, 028, 032 and 038.

A single bone was found in 009 ([illus 11](#)). This may be residual and relate to another cremation but, recovered from a depth of 0.16m, it may also be the only surviving evidence for a ploughed-out cremation pit. Some of the others may be the ploughed out remnants of cremation pits on account of the nature of the surviving fills (011, 015, 016, 018, 019, 023, 028). These features were only 0.01m to 0.16m in depth, suggesting that they were severely truncated. Pit 016 ([illus 11](#)), for example, was very similar in profile to the definite cremation pits. It contained a thin lining of charcoal-rich material, but as the pit was only 0.1m deep, it had lost any trace of a cremation, if there ever was one. Pit 023 ([illus 11](#)) contained a single fill of dark grey-brown silt with large charcoal flecks but only survived to a depth of 0.07m; the remnants of both pyre material and cremation may have been ploughed away. Pit 028 ([illus 11](#)) contained a black charcoal-rich deposit but no cremated bone.



Illus 12 Section of Pit 036



Illus 13 Pit 036 with Pit 040 cut into its upper edge

Two pits, 019 (illus 6) and 038 (illus 11), lacked cremated bone but did contain artefacts. Three burnt flints and one unburnt quartz piece were identified in 019, and one burnt flint in 038. Pit 038 was dated from charcoal to 2040–1690 BC (Poz-7704-5) and therefore certainly seems to be

contemporary with the cemetery. This vertical-sided pit, measuring 0.28m across by 0.24m deep, appeared bell-shaped in section. It contained three deposits: an upper fill (038/1) of mixed re-deposited natural with some charcoal staining; a middle fill of reddish-brown fine textured silt with charcoal

(038/2); and a basal deposit (038/3) consisting of a mixed fill of dark brown and black silt with red ashy patches and charcoal. A peripheral fill occupying the remainder of the feature consisted of clean redeposited natural.

A small pit (008), possibly a stakehole, was found beside 009. It measured 0.09m across by 0.19m deep and had vertical sides with a tapered base. Its fill contained charcoal. This may indicate the former position of a wooden marker.

Other features are likely to have had other origins; for example Pit 032 appears to have been caused by animal disturbance.

3.4 *Mesolithic pit*

This large and stratigraphically complex pit (036) measured 3.2m by 2.8m and had a depth of 1.4m (illus 12). Six cremation pits (029, 033, 038, 039, 040, 042) had been cut into its upper surface (illus 2 and 13) and post-dated its upper fills.

The surface of the pit (036) was poorly defined. Its upper fills (036/3, 036/4, 036/5, 036/23, 036/29) consisted of deposits similar in colour and make-up to subsoil. The main fill sequence (contexts 036/1–2, 15–22, 24–28, 30) consisted of steep tip-lines forming a roughly V-shaped profile in the centre of the pit (illus 12). These fills consisted of pale brown, orange and purple clays and silts, often sterile though some contained charred organic remains; 036/2, for example, lay towards the base of the pit and was a charcoal-rich layer with small reddish burnt stones. Micro-banding visible throughout some of the

contexts (036/15) indicates a gradual fill process. A patch of stones (036/30) measuring 0.25m by 0.4m at the base was composed of small densely packed sub-angular stones. These could have been deliberately placed or trickled in when the pit was freshly dug. The latter suggestion is favoured, as a number of other fills here contained large stones and their angle of rest indicates tipping.

This pit appeared to have two re-cuts within its upper layers (illus 12). The first contained fill 036/29 – and perhaps 036/23 – a mixed, mottled deposit containing redeposited subsoil, which appears to have been cut into the top of the pit to a depth of 0.3m. The second re-cut appears to have cut through 036/29 and 036/23, and contained contexts 036/3–14, thereby forming a pit measuring 1.7m across by 0.4m deep. These upper fills contained many small bands of charcoal and ash, and were generally more burnt, charcoal-rich and ashy in appearance than those forming the primary fills.

It was assumed during the excavation that this pit was part of the cremation cemetery and that it had perhaps held a pyre. However, the radiocarbon dates from charcoal in both lower and upper fills indicate that it is late Mesolithic in date (see Section 6 below), with a calibrated date range of 4510–3970 BC for the six dates obtained. Only one small piece of cremated human bone was recovered, from fill 036/15, while small quantities of poorly preserved oak, birch and hazel charcoal were present. No other artefacts were recovered. The Bronze Age cremation pits cut into its upper surface are, on balance, simply coincidental.