



Society of Antiquaries  
of **Scotland**

## SCOTTISH ARCHAEOLOGICAL INTERNET REPORTS

e-ISSN: 2056-7421

**Excavation of two Early Bronze Age short cists and a prehistoric pit at Lindsayfield, near Stonehaven, Aberdeenshire**

**How to cite:**

Johnson, M 2015 'Excavation of two Early Bronze Age short cists and a prehistoric pit at Lindsayfield, near Stonehaven, Aberdeenshire'. *Scottish Archaeological Internet Reports* 63

**DOI link:** <https://doi.org/10.9750/issn.2056-7421.2016.63>

Click <http://journals.socantscot.org/index.php/sair> to visit the journal homepage.

OPEN  ACCESS

**Please note:**

This document is the publisher's PDF of an article published in the Scottish Archaeological Internet Reports journal. This version has been peer-reviewed and contains all final editorial corrections and journal pagination.

Copyright © 2016 rests with the Society and the individual authors. Except where otherwise noted, this work is licensed under Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-No Derivatives licence. <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/>

The permission to reproduce the Society's copyright-protected material does not extend to any material which is identified as being the copyright of a third party. Authorisation to reproduce such material must be obtained from the copyright holders concerned.



# Excavation of two Early Bronze Age short cists and a prehistoric pit at Lindsayfield, near Stonehaven, Aberdeenshire

Melanie Johnson

with contributions by Sue Anderson, Torben Bjarke Ballin, Mhairi Hastie and Alison Sheridan

## Address

CFA Archaeology Ltd, Old Engine House, Eskmills Park, Musselburgh, EH21 7PQ, UK

## Author contact

mjohnson@cfa-archaeology.co.uk

## Funding

National Grid Transco

e-ISSN: 2056-7421

<https://doi.org/10.9750/issn.2056-7421.2016.63>

Published by the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland with the  
Archaeology Data Service [archaeologydataservice.ac.uk](http://archaeologydataservice.ac.uk).

Society of Antiquaries of Scotland  
National Museums Scotland  
Chambers Street  
Edinburgh EH1 1JF  
United Kingdom

Managing editor: Erin Osborne-Martin

Copy-editor: Paula Martin

Production: Adela Rauchova

Copyright © 2016 rests with the Society and the individual authors. Except where otherwise noted, this work is licensed under Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivatives licence. <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/>

Requests for permission to reproduce material from a SAIR report should be sent to the Director of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland, as well as to the author, illustrator, photographer or other copyright holder.

[www.socantscot.org](http://www.socantscot.org)

Registered Scottish charity no SC010440

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

---

List of illustrations	iv
List of tables	iv
<b>1. Abstract</b> . . . . .	2
<b>2. Introduction</b> . . . . .	2
<b>3. The cists</b> . . . . .	2
3.1 Site description	2
3.2 Burnt bone <i>by Sue Anderson</i>	3
3.3 Beads <i>by Alison Sheridan</i>	4
3.4 Lithic artefacts <i>by Torben Ballin</i>	7
3.5 Archaeobotany <i>by Mhairi Hastie</i>	8
3.6 Radiocarbon dating	8
<b>4. The pit</b> . . . . .	8
4.1 Site description	8
4.2 Pottery <i>by Melanie Johnson</i>	8
4.3 Lithic artefacts <i>by Torben Ballin</i>	10
4.4 Burnt bone <i>by Sue Anderson</i>	10
<b>5. Discussion</b> . . . . .	10
<b>6. Acknowledgements</b> . . . . .	11
<b>7. References</b> . . . . .	12

## LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

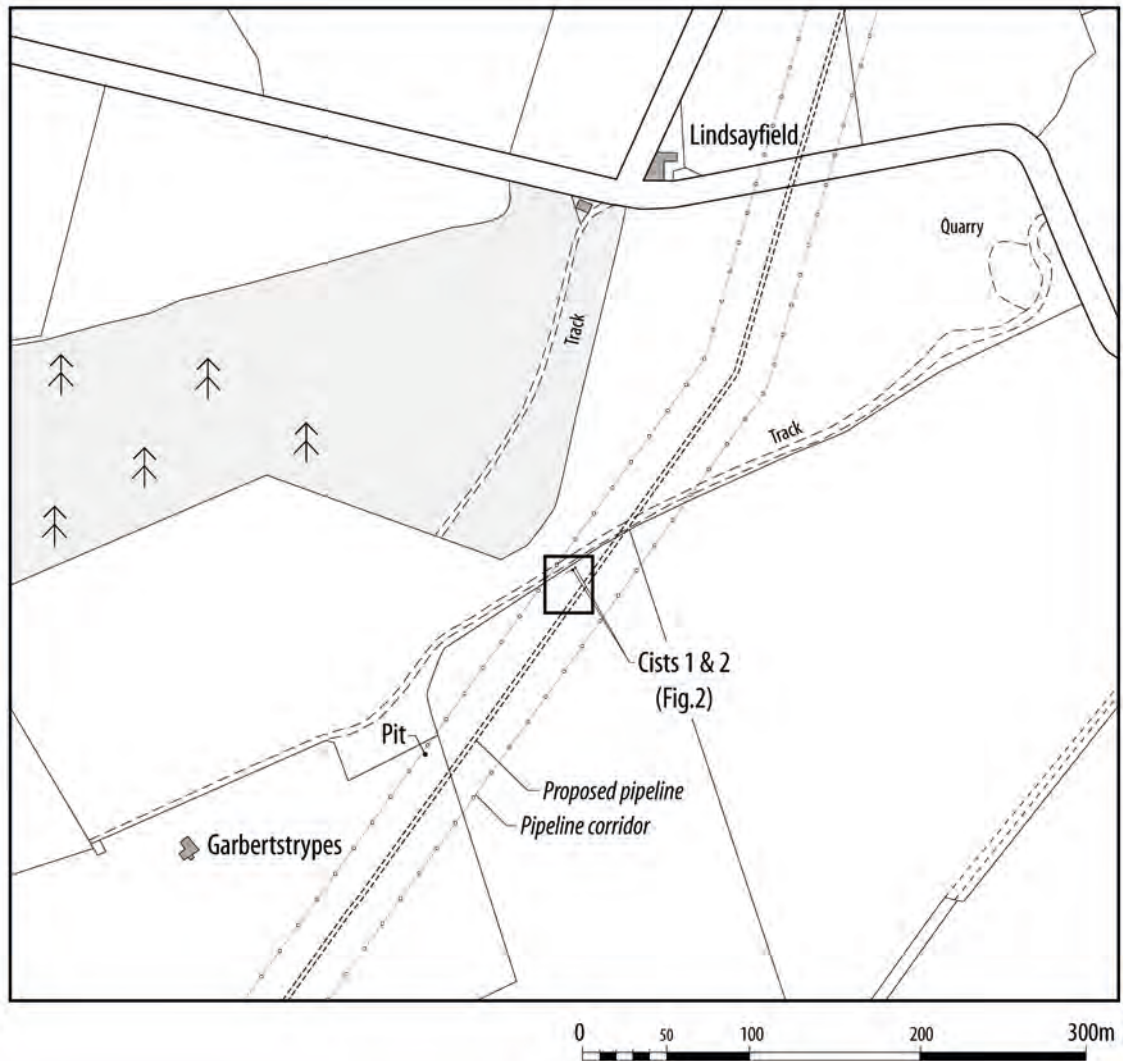
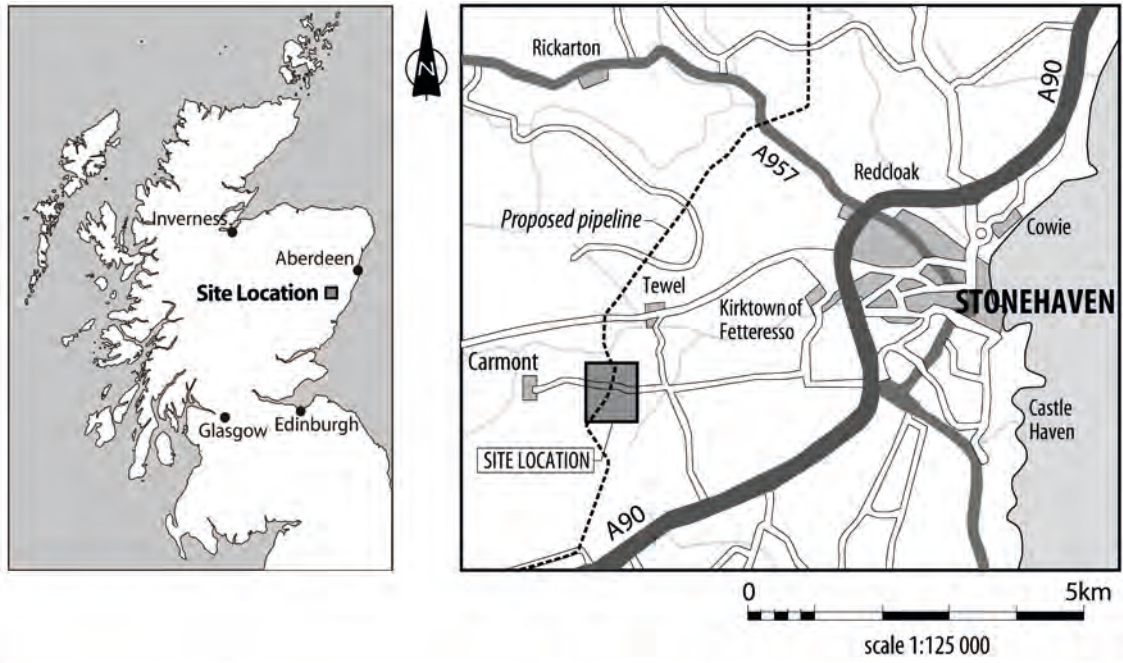
---

1. Location map	1
2. Plan and profile of cists	3
3. Cist 1 (left) and Cist 2 (right) after excavation	4
4. Beads from the cists	5
5. Edge of Bead No. 1, showing the degree of polish. The slightly laminar texture of the stone is also visible in the sinuous hairline crack	5
6. Chipping to the borehole edge in No. 2	5
7. Chipping to the outer edge in No. 2 (on the opposite side of the bead from Illus 6)	5
8. Chipping to both the borehole edge and the outer edge of No. 1	6
9. Deep striations across the flat surface of No. 1; some of these are truncated by the subsequent chipping of the borehole edge during the drilling of the borehole	6
10. Flint artefacts from the cists	7
11. Pottery sherds from the pit	9

## LIST OF TABLES

---

1. Lithic artefacts from the cists	7
2. Radiocarbon dates (calibrated using OxCal 4.1)	8
3. Lithic artefacts from the pit	10



Illus 1 Location map

## 1. ABSTRACT

---

Two short cists of Early Bronze Age date, containing prehistoric flint artefacts and shale/cannel coal beads, were discovered during topsoiling operations for the Aberdeen to Lochside Natural Gas Pipeline, to the south of Lindsayfield, near Stonehaven, Aberdeenshire. Cremated human bone from one of the cists was radiocarbon dated to the first half of the 2nd millennium BC. A pit which contained broadly contemporary prehistoric flint artefacts and pottery was found nearby. The fieldwork and post-excavation work were funded by National Grid Transco.

## 2. INTRODUCTION

---

Two short cists were discovered to the south of Lindsayfield, near Stonehaven, Aberdeenshire (Illus 1), during a watching brief which took place between April and August 2004 (O'Connell 2005). The fieldwork was carried out by CFA Archaeology Ltd as part of the topsoiling operations for the Aberdeen to Lochside Natural Gas Pipeline, covering a 50km tract between Garlogie and Lochside in Aberdeenshire. The cists were 1.3m apart and lay at the edge of a field in farmland at 140m AOD (NGR: NO 8195 8412). Subsoil here was orange stony, sandy clays. A pit lay 140m to the south-west (NGR: NO 8185 8402) and was found to contain pottery and flint of prehistoric date. Archaeological remains discovered during the watching brief were subject to follow-on excavation. The fieldwork and post-excavation work were funded by National Grid Transco.

## 3. THE CISTS

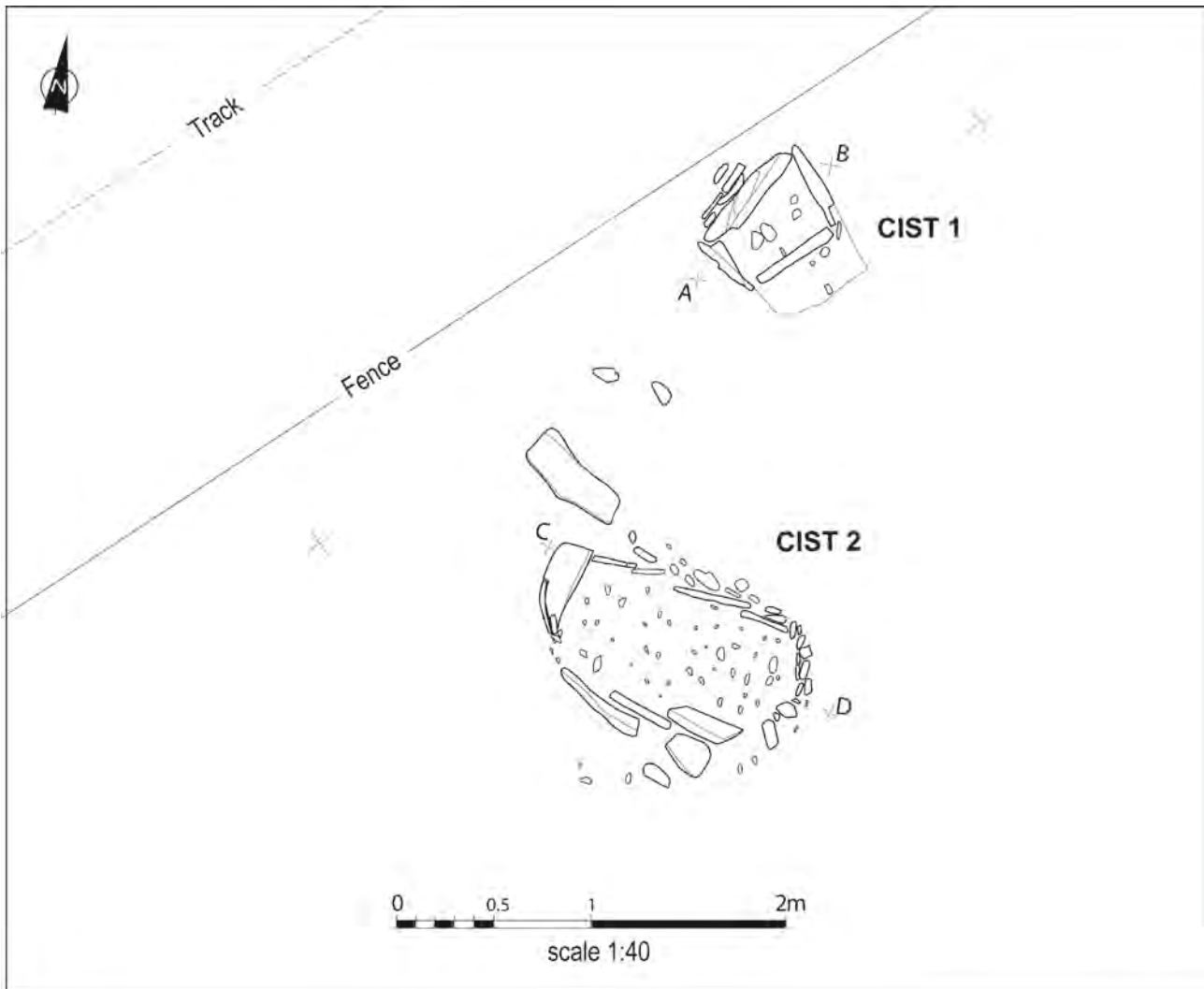
---

### 3.1 Site description

The two cists (Cists 1 and 2, Illus 2–3) did not have capstones; as they lay within arable land it is likely that these had been lost as a result of ploughing. In neither case was there good survival of human bone, although a small quantity of cremated human bone was recovered from Cist 1 (Anderson below). No further cists were identified within the pipeline wayleave to the south-east. Whilst it is possible that these were the only cists present at this location, there was a modern farm track to the north-west of the cists, terraced into the slope, which could have truncated any further cists in that area.

Cist 1 was rectangular in plan, on a north-east/south-west alignment, and measured 0.68m × 0.48m × 0.37m deep. Vertical stone edge-set slabs formed its four sides; the base was not stone-lined but formed by an irregular cut into the natural. The lining slabs varied in size from the largest (L: 0.61m; W: 0.28m; Th: 0.07m) to the smallest (L: 0.33m; W: 0.24m; Th: 0.03m). The upper fill was a mid-brown silty-sand with sub-angular stones which contained small fragments of human bone concentrated in the centre of the fill (Anderson below). The lower fill was a light reddish-brown silty sand. Upon removal of the slabs, the cut was found to be straight-sided and measured 0.78m × 0.7m × 0.37m deep; it was larger than the cist itself, particularly on the south-east side, with the stones forming the cist squashed into the north-western end of the cut. Two small disc beads were recovered from the upper fill (Sheridan below), and a flint flake was found on the surface (Ballin below). Samples of cremated human bone were radiocarbon dated (see below).

Cist 2 was rectangular in plan, and measured 1.5m × 0.92m × 0.42m deep. Aligned approximately west/east, it was vertical-sided and flat-based and had stone lining around all sides but was not paved with slabs on its base. The lining consisted of seven edge-set slabs, set vertically along the north, south and west edges of the cist, with smaller stones as packing in-between. The east edge of the cist was lined with a band of smaller rounded stones, and had no vertical slabs. The lining slabs varied in size from the largest (L: 0.71m; W: 0.31m; Th: 0.03m) to the smallest (L: 0.29m; W: 0.23m; Th: 0.04m). There were two fills: the upper fill was a moderately compact dark reddish-brown sandy silt containing small rounded and angular stones, while the lower fill was similar but darker in colour and more compact. There were also patches of re-deposited



SE-facing profile of Cist 1



SW-facing profile of Cist 2

**Illus 2** Plan and profile of cists

natural sands within the lower fill. Upon removal of the slabs, the cut was straight-sided and measured 1.72m × 1.23m × 0.42m deep. An assemblage of flint flakes and chips was recovered from a bulk sample taken from the lower fill of the cist, but is thought to be residual in this context (Ballin below).

The slabs and rounded stones forming the cists were discarded after excavation was completed.

### 3.2 Burnt bone

*Sue Anderson*

The upper fill of Cist 1 contained 25 fragments (6g) of human bone, not heavily calcined (pale buff) but possibly cremated. The small assemblage includes skull and long-bone fragments, possibly adult, although the skull fragment is thin. The only other identifiable fragment was a piece of mandibular condyle.



**Illus 3** Cist 1 (left) and Cist 2 (right) after excavation

### 3.3 Beads

*Alison Sheridan*

Two disc beads (Illus 4) were recovered from Cist 1, both from within the upper fill of the cist. As detailed in the Catalogue below, one is slightly smaller than the other (6.2mm vs 8.5mm diameter); their thickness (2mm and 2.5mm respectively) gives them a slightly ‘chunky’ appearance. They are both made of a black, compact, slightly laminar non-jet stone, as described below; the outer edge had been polished to a medium sheen (Illus 5). In both beads there is minor chipping to the boreholes that will have occurred as the perforation was drilled (Illus 6); the drilling was done mostly from one side of each bead, with a ‘starter hole’ having been drilled on the other side to minimise the danger of chipping. There are also tiny chips from the outer edge of both beads (Illus 7 & 8).

Bead No. 1 has deep grinding striations across one flat face (Illus 9). There are no obvious traces of thread wear or of bead-on-bead wear, although disc beads tend to show wear less than other types of bead made of jet and jet-like materials. The slightly laminar nature of the raw material is clear from diagonal hairline cracks visible on the outer edge of both beads.

The composition of the raw material was analysed by Maureen Young, using Historic Scotland’s portable X-ray fluorescence (XRF) equipment (a Thermo Scientific NITON XL3t Gold+ machine,

using ‘soils’ and ‘mining’ settings). Reference samples of Inverbrora oil shale, Ayrshire cannel coal and Whitby jet were also analysed for comparison. The results confirmed that the material is indeed not jet, but neither did it match the cannel coal or oil shale samples, even though its high iron content and texture indicates that it is most likely to be either a cannel coal or a shale. Despite the presence of (possibly) cremated bone in the cist, the beads show no sign of heat damage, so if they had been associated with the individual in question, they had been kept apart from the pyre and reunited with the human remains at the point of burial.

The beads will originally have formed part of a necklace, probably consisting solely of disc beads subtly graded in diameter, with an organic thread and a fastener. Because of the prior disturbance of the cist (which had resulted in the loss of the capstone) it cannot be determined whether the whole necklace had originally been present in the cist, although this is a possibility. Choker-like disc-bead necklaces comprising beads generally over 5mm in diameter, and graded in size with the larger examples at the front, are of Early Bronze Age date and are almost exclusively from northern Britain. Over 30 examples are known from Scotland (Sheridan & Davis 2002: fig 8 bottom left), with that from Barbush Quarry, Dunblane, Stirling, providing a good example of a complete necklace, with 124 disc beads (Sheridan & Davis 2002: fig 5, and see Sheridan & Davis 2001). Other necklaces (and indeed, in one case,

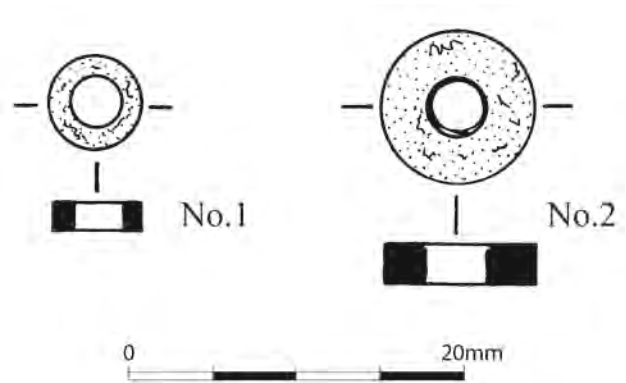




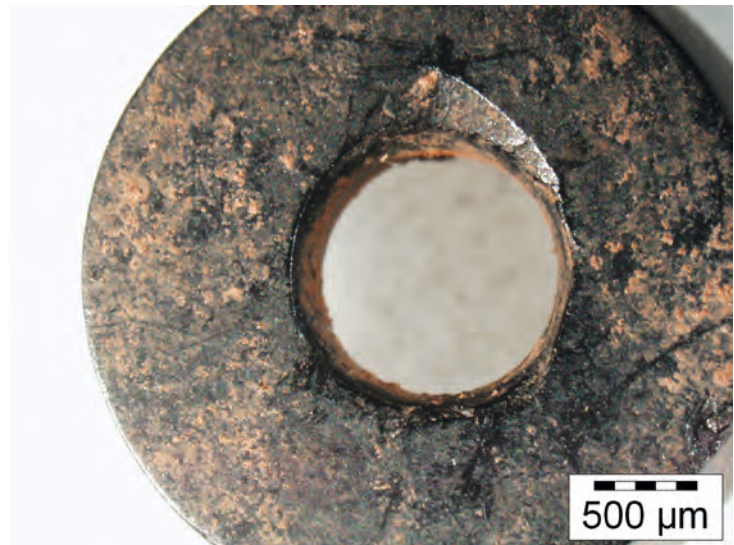
**Illus 5** Edge of Bead No. 1, showing the degree of polish. The slightly laminar texture of the stone is also visible in the sinuous hairline crack. Microscope photograph by Alison Sheridan.

a belt) containing disc beads in addition to other kinds of bead, and/or containing tiny disc beads under 5mm in diameter, are also known but will not be discussed here (see Sheridan & Davis 2002).

The Scottish distribution of this particular kind of necklace shows several clusters, with one around the Cromarty Firth, one in Tayside and Fife and another in the former counties of Peeblesshire and Lanarkshire, with others in west and south-west Scotland and three examples from Caithness and Orkney. Aberdeenshire lies between two of those clusters, and has only one other example in addition to Lindsayfield: an old find from a cist at Farrochie, near Stonehaven (Anon 1864: 14). The necklaces have almost all been found in cist graves, usually with unburnt human remains but occasionally with cremated remains. Where the remains have been reliably sexed (for example at Cist 4, Barns Farm, Dalgety, Fife; Watkins 1982), they have been female. The numbers of beads found in presumably complete necklaces vary from 124 at Barbush Quarry (Sheridan & Davis 2002: fig 5) to 259 at Balfarg (Cist A), Glenrothes, Fife (Barclay



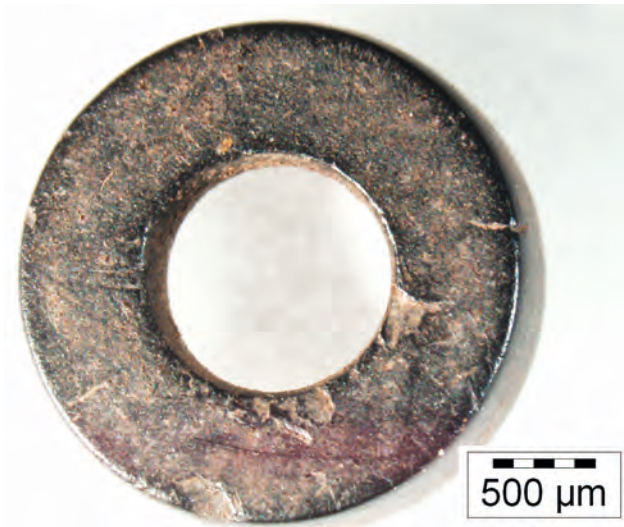
**Illus 4** Beads from the cists



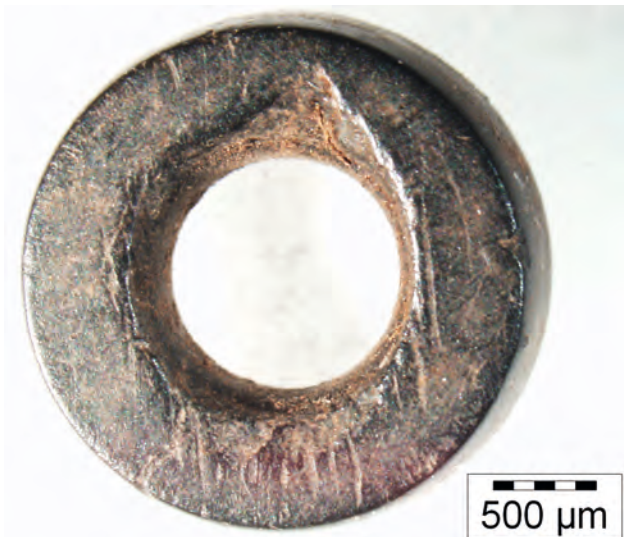
**Illus 6** Chipping to the borehole edge in No. 2. Microscope photograph by Alison Sheridan.



**Illus 7** Chipping to the outer edge in No. 2 (on the opposite side of the bead from Illus 6). Microscope photograph by Alison Sheridan.



**Illus 8** Chipping to both the borehole edge and the outer edge of No. 1. Microscope photograph by Alison Sheridan.



**Illus 9** Deep striations across the flat surface of No. 1; some of these are truncated by the subsequent chipping of the borehole edge during the drilling of the borehole. Microscope photograph by Alison Sheridan.

& Russell-White 1993); the example from Harehope Cairn, Peeblesshire, Scottish Borders, contained 127 beads (Jobey 1980), while that from Burial G at North Mains, Strathallan, Perth & Kinross, contained 136 (Barclay 1983), and that from Cist 4 at Barns Farm, Dalgety, Fife, contained 210 beads (Watkins 1982).

In terms of thickness, the Lindsayfield beads lie towards the 'thick' end of the range: by comparison, the beads from Cloburn Quarry, Cairngryffe Hill, South Lanarkshire, ranged between 1mm and 2.75mm thick (Lelong & Pollard 1998), while those from Balfarg between 1.75mm and 2.75mm (Shepherd in Barclay & Russell-White 1993: 140).

As regards the raw material used for these necklaces, a long-term programme of analysis by National Museums Scotland has confirmed that in virtually every case it is cannel coal or shale, rather than jet, even though the fastener may be of jet, as was the case at Barbush Quarry (Sheridan & Davis 2001). Ceramic associations are with Food Vessels (as at Embo, near Dornoch, Sutherland; Henshall & Wallace 1963) and late Beakers (as at Barns Farm; Watkins 1982). Where disc beads have been associated with other types of pot, this has been as individual beads in cinerary urns.

*Catalogue (Illus 4)*

► **No. 1.** Complete disc bead (SF69). Circular, nearly parallel-sided, with central perpendicular perforation and flat outer edge. Diam: 6.2mm; Th: 2mm; Perf. Diam: 2.9mm. Small chip to borehole plus small chip from edge on one side; one large and two smaller chips around perforation on other side. Grinding striations across latter side. Short stretch of short diagonal striations on one side of edge. In this instance these were probably preparatory incisions made before splitting off the bead from the parent roughout. Edge polished to medium sheen. Hairline diagonal lamination visible on edge.

► **No. 2.** Complete disc bead (SF70). Circular, parallel-sided, with central perpendicular perforation and flat outer edge. Diam: 8.5mm; Th: 2.5mm; Perf. Diam: 2.95mm. Minor chipping to edges of perforation, and to outer edge, on both sides. Edge polished to medium sheen. Hairline diagonal lamination visible on edge.

### 3.4 Lithic artefacts

Torben Ballin

The assemblage comprises 46 lithic artefacts, 45 of which are in fine-grained or fine- to medium-grained flint, with one small chip being in either light chert or chalcedony. All but two were recovered from the lower fill of Cist 2; one piece (Illus 10, CAT 2) was from the surface of Cist 1 and one was a surface find. A full catalogue is deposited with the site archive.

Eight of the objects larger than 10mm have abraded cortex, suggesting procurement from a pebble source – most likely the nearby shores of the North Sea. However, the presence of unworked rounded pebbles (> 4mm) and granules (< 4mm) is slightly enigmatic in connection with a Scottish inland site. The exceedingly small nodules indicate either the presence of an (as yet unknown) inland gravel source, such as the more northerly Buchan Ridge Gravels at Peterhead (Bridgland et al 1997; Saville 2005), or procurement in the form of ‘scooping up’ unsorted gravel from coastal resources, which would appear to be a rather wasteful approach in terms of energy investment. No burnt pieces were recovered. The composition of the assemblage is shown in Table 1.

Four pieces have use-wear along one lateral or distal edge, probably from cutting. The bipolar core is a large flat core worked from two perpendicular directions; the notched piece is a short bipolar blade with what is thought to be a proximal ‘hafting-notch’; the truncated piece is the fragment of an indeterminate microblade with curved distal

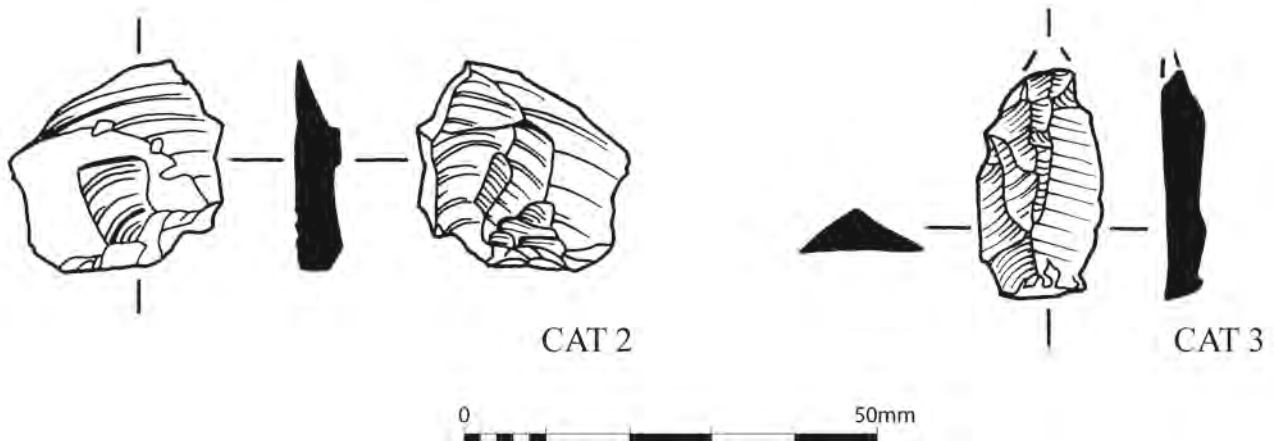
blunting; and the edge-retouched piece (Illus 10, CAT 3) is a hard-hammer flake with probable ‘hafting-retouch’ at the proximal end. All definable pieces of debitage and blanks were produced by the application of either hard percussion or bipolar technique.

**Table 1** Lithic artefacts from the cists

Type	No.
Chips/micro-chips	30
Flakes	10
Microblades	1
Indeterminate pieces	1
Bipolar cores	1
Notched pieces	1
Truncated pieces	1
Pieces with edge-retouch	1
Total	46

The finds do not include any strictly diagnostic material, but the inclusion of elongated, although plain, flakes and blades, in conjunction with evidence of blank production from regular single-platform cores, indicates a date in the earlier part of later prehistory (cf Pitts & Jacobi 1979), that is, in either the Late Neolithic or Early Bronze Age periods (cf Ballin 2002; 2011).

The collection is best described as general production waste, embracing abandoned debitage, a spent core, and expedient modified/unmodified tools, as well as micro-debitage from primary or secondary production. An artefact composition such



**Illus 10** Flint artefacts from the cists

as this would usually be expected from domestic rather than ritual or burial contexts, and the assemblage is thought to be residual in relation to the two cists. This suggests a date in, or prior to, the Early Bronze Age period.

### 3.5 Archaeobotany

Mhairi Hastie

Soil samples were taken from the fills of the cists. Each sample was subjected to a system of flotation and wet sieving. The floating debris (flot) was collected in a 300µm sieve and, once dry, scanned using a low-powered binocular microscope. The material remaining in the flotation tank was then washed through a 1mm mesh and any material of archaeological significance removed.

The sample contents consisted primarily of small fragments of wood charcoal, unidentifiable to species. Occasional fungi sclerotia were observed in the flots from Cist 2; these were not charred and represent modern soil-inhabiting fungi.

### 3.6 Radiocarbon dating

Radiocarbon assays were carried out on two samples of cremated bone from the fill of Cist 1. Radiocarbon determinations were carried out at University of Groningen, the Netherlands, and have been calibrated using OxCal v4.1. The results are presented in Table 2. The dates place the burial in the Early Bronze Age, a date consistent with both the form of the cist and the presence of the beads.

## 4. THE PIT

### 4.1 Site description

A solitary pit was excavated further to the south-west (Illus 1). It measured 0.43m across and 0.2m deep. The pit was filled with a moderately compacted dark brown silt, with sub-angular and rounded pebbles and

cobbles. Pottery, flint and burnt bone were retrieved from the fill of the pit. No material suitable for radiocarbon dating was present.

### 4.2 Pottery

Melanie Johnson

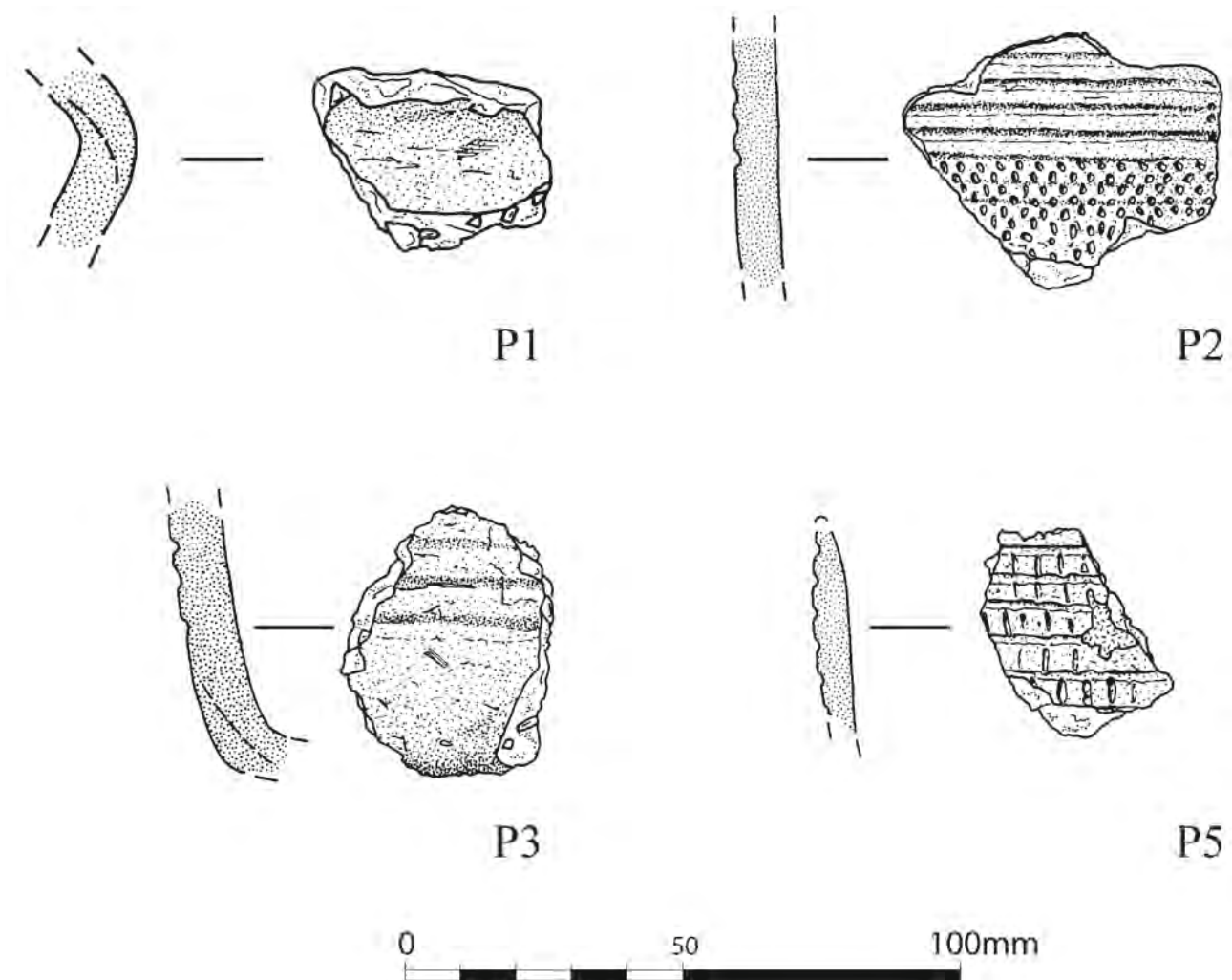
Seven sherds of prehistoric pottery, weighing 110g in total, were recovered. The sherds were sorted into sherd families and catalogued according to dimensions, fabric, surface finish, decoration, and morphology. A maximum of five individual vessels (P1–P5) are present, all of which are represented by only one or two sherds. Two of the sherds, P1 and P2, have a very similar fabric and may be from the same vessel. Much of the pottery is abraded, few of the sherds have substantial portions of their profiles surviving, and it has not been possible to measure rim diameters. The fabrics are generally coarse with quartz, mica and granite inclusions. There is no evidence for organic inclusions and the presence of mica is minimal.

A full catalogue has been prepared for the site archive. Summary descriptions of the sherds are presented below.

- ▶ **P1** Neck sherd from everted rim, undecorated (Illus 11).
- ▶ **P2** Two body sherds. Decorated with parallel grooved lines and a pattern of regular small, closely-spaced stabs (Illus 11).
- ▶ **P3** Base sherd. Decorated with three parallel horizontal grooves (Illus 11).
- ▶ **P4** Body sherd. An impressed pattern on the exterior gives a rough finish, may not be deliberate.
- ▶ **P5** Two body sherds. Decorated with incised parallel lines divided by short vertical stabs to create a ladder motif (Illus 11).

**Table 2** Radiocarbon dates (calibrated using OxCal 4.1)

Lab code	Sample material	Lab age BP	Calibrated dates	
			1σ	2σ
GrA-30965	Cremated human bone	3335 ± 40	1683–1536 BC	1736–1518 BC
GrA-30968	Cremated human bone	3410 ± 40	1752–1639 BC	1877–1613 BC



**Illus 11** Pottery sherds from the pit

The pottery assemblage is small and, although many of the sherds are too small to allow a reconstruction of the vessel profile, their form, fabric and decoration provide indicators for their period of use. Although there are no rim sherds, the presence of flat bases and impressed and incised decoration indicates that they most probably date to the late 3rd or early 2nd millennium BC and belong in the Beaker tradition.

The various decorative motifs can be paralleled among contemporary excavated cist sites which also contain Beaker vessels, although there is no suggestion that this pit was a grave or that the pottery it contained came from the nearby cists. Small assemblages of mixed Beaker sherds found in pits with a probable domestic function are known from a number of sites across Scotland such as Broxburn (Johnson 2010) and Portree (Johnson 2013).

The presence of parallel horizontal grooves and incised motifs is common on Beakers and can form part of panels or metopes across the body. An indication of panels is provided on P2, where incised lines are adjacent to impressed dots. A ladder motif similar to that on P5 is seen on a Beaker (Pot 2) from Balblair, near Beaully, Inverness (Hanley & Sheridan 1994), and other parallels are provided at Mains of Balnagowan, near Ardersier, Inverness (Shepherd et al 1984) and Lochend, near Inverness (MacDougall 1944; Clarke 1970: no. 1667).

However, the sherds are too small to determine the overall vessel shape or decorative scheme and so they cannot be readily related to any of the Beaker typologies (for example Clarke 1970; Lanting & Waals 1972; Shepherd 1986; Needham 2005) or dated with any degree of precision.

### 4.3 Lithic artefacts

*Torben Ballin*

Ten flint artefacts were found, nine of which are of fine-grained flint, with one small chip being of medium-grained flint. Six have abraded cortex suggesting procurement from a pebble source, most likely the shores of the North Sea, although procurement from the nearby Buchan Ridge Gravels cannot be ruled out (Bridgland et al 1997; Saville 2005). Half of the assemblage is burnt, displaying white discolouration and fire-crazing but not vitrification. The composition of the assemblage is shown in Table 3.

**Table 3** Lithic artefacts from the pit

Type	No.
Chips	1
Hard-hammer flakes	3
Bipolar flakes	2
Indeterminate flakes or flake fragments	2
Bipolar cores	1
Pieces with sporadic retouch	1
Total	10

One flake has use-wear along one side, probably from cutting. The bipolar core is a slender, almost cylindrical, core, with minute traces of cortex surviving along one side. The retouched piece is based on a bipolar blade. The finds do not include any strictly diagnostic material, but the prominent use of bipolar technique, in conjunction with an almost unschematic production of flakes from irregular multi-platform cores, is consistent with a later prehistoric date (cf Ballin 2002; 2011). Proper blades are absent. Most probably the assemblage was manufactured in the Early or Later Bronze Age.

The collection is best described as general production waste, embracing abandoned debitage, a spent core, and expedient modified/unmodified tools. An artefact composition such as this would usually be expected from domestic rather than ritual or burial contexts. The level of burning is relatively low, as would be experienced in connection with lithic objects accidentally falling into a domestic hearth, whereas pieces burnt in connection with funeral pyres frequently display vitrification (the partial melting of the surfaces ('glazing') due to the direct

exposure to high temperatures). Based on the above considerations, it seems most likely that the pit was a simple rubbish-pit for the disposal of domestic litter (including flint, pottery and burnt bone).

### 4.4 Burnt bone

*Sue Anderson*

Two small fragments (<1g) of heavily abraded, calcined (white) skull were found. The species is uncertain but not human.

## 5. DISCUSSION

The cists belong to the typological class of short cist as described by McAdam in Watkins (1982), consisting of a grave-cut lined with stone and capped with a capstone, but lacking a stone base. Dimensions of short cists vary, but unlike long cists where the inhumation may be fully extended, a short cist is of a size that will only take a crouched inhumation or a cremation burial. Given the size of the two cists at Lindsayfield, it is likely that Cist 1 was only big enough to take a small child or possibly a cremation, while Cist 2 would have been large enough to hold a crouched inhumation. The bone preservation within Cist 1 was poor, yielding only fragmentary remains of a cremated unsexed possible adult from the upper fill, while no bone survived at all within Cist 2. The bone fragments from Cist 1 could easily represent a token deposit or redeposited material, given their position in the fill, with the primary burial having been that of a child which has since disappeared.

It has been noted that fewer than 45% of cists occur in isolation (Watkins 1982). Most, therefore, occur in cist cemeteries. The Lindsayfield cists may be all that remain from a once larger group, particularly as they were found at the edge of the field, beyond which was a track which had been cut into the slope, perhaps removing any other cists when it was built.

The two disc beads of cannel coal or shale that were found in Cist 1 are presumed to be the remnants of a disc bead necklace deposited with the body, the rest of the necklace having probably been destroyed after the capstone was removed, almost certainly through ploughing. This type of necklace is well known from Early Bronze Age cists

in northern Britain but although several examples are known from Tayside and Fife to the south, and around the Cromarty Firth to the north, this is only the second example to have been found in Aberdeenshire. Associations of such necklaces elsewhere suggest that the occupant of Cist 1 had probably been a female. As for the other objects – chipped stone artefacts – that were found in the cists (mostly in Cist 2), these are most likely to be residual from earlier activity, rather than deliberate grave goods, even though they may not have been very old when they became incorporated into the cist fill. The presence of minute pieces of charcoal, unidentifiable to species, provides no additional information.

A number of other cists of the same period have been discovered in the vicinity of Lindsayfield. Many of these were recorded in the mid 19th century in the Name Books and are recorded in the National Monuments Record of Scotland. They include a short cist to the north-east of Carmont which contained a decorated urn (described as being ‘ornamented by cross lines’) and human teeth (NMRS no. NO88SW 1); a cairn on top of Carmont Hill which was found to contain a short cist and a ‘small’ urn (NMRS no. NO88SW 16); a short cist found to the ENE of Garbertstrypes which contained an urn (described as being similar to that found north-east of Carmont, previously described) and, unusually, an antler (NMRS no. NO88SW 2); and, at Garbertstrypes (NMRS no. NO88SW 14), a cist, a grave beneath a cairn and a pit with cremated remains contained within one pot and accompanied by a second pot. (Regarding these pots, the Canmore entry states that the former was possibly a Beaker and the latter, an accessory vessel, but accessory vessels are never found with Beakers, and if the

second pot was indeed an accessory vessel, this implies that the other pot had been a cinerary urn.) The descriptions of the ‘urns’, as found at the sites noted above, do not allow the pottery type to be identified with any certainty, as the word ‘urn’ could be applied in antiquarian accounts to a variety of vessel types of different periods, including cinerary urns containing human remains and vessels placed within graves as an accompaniment.

The cists attest to the presence of Early Bronze Age activity in this area, and the pit found near the cists may also be of this date. As discussed above, to judge from its contents, it may well be a rubbish pit relating to settlement activity in the area, rather than another grave.

## 6. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

---

The author would like to thank National Grid Transco, Entrepouse Industrial Services Environmental Team and the Aberdeenshire Council Archaeology Service. The watching brief was conducted by Samantha Hickman, Magnus Kirby, Leonard McKinney and Chris O’Connell. The excavations were directed by Melanie Johnson. Illustrations were produced by Kevin Hicks and Alan Braby. Earlier drafts of this report were commented on by Andrew Dunwell and Bruce Mann. Dating samples were identified by Sue Anderson. While thanks are due to the above, responsibility for the final form and content lies with CFA Archaeology Ltd and the authors.

The site archive has been deposited with the National Monuments Record of Scotland. The finds assemblage will be disposed of through Treasure Trove procedures.

## 7. REFERENCES

- Anonymous 1864 'Donations to the Museum and Library', *Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland* 5: 9–19
- Ballin, T B 2002 'Later Bronze Age flint technology: a presentation and discussion of post-barrow debitage from monuments in the Raunds area, Northamptonshire', *Lithics* 23: 3–28.
- Ballin, T B 2011 'Lithic artefacts', in I Suddaby & T Ballin, 'Late Neolithic and Late Bronze Age lithic assemblages associated with a cairn and other prehistoric features at Stoneyhill Farm, Longhaven, Peterhead, Aberdeenshire, 2002–03'. *Scottish Archaeological Internet Reports* 45 (<http://www.sair.org.uk/sair45>).
- Barclay, G J 1983 'Sites of the third millennium BC to the first millennium AD at North Mains, Strathallan, Perthshire', *Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland* 113: 122–281.
- Barclay, G J & Russell-White, C J 1993 'Excavations in the ceremonial complex of the fourth to second millennium BC at Balfarg/Balbirnie, Glenrothes, Fife', *Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland* 123: 43–210.
- Bridgland, D R, Saville, A & Sinclair, J M 1997 'New evidence for the origin of the Buchan Ridge Gravel, Aberdeenshire', *Scottish Journal of Geology* 33(1): 43–50 (<http://dx.doi.org/10.1144/sjg33010043>).
- Clarke, D L 1970 *Beaker Pottery of Great Britain and Ireland*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Hanley, R & Sheridan, A 1994 'A Beaker cist from Balblair, near Beaully, Inverness District', *Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland* 124: 129–39.
- Henshall, A S & Wallace, J C 1963 'The Excavation of a Chambered Cairn at Embo, Sutherland', *Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland* 96: 9–36.
- Jobey, G 1980 'Green Knowe unenclosed platform settlement and Harehope cairn, Peeblesshire', *Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland* 110: 72–113.
- Johnson, M 2010 'Pottery', in P Moore, Broxburn to Humble Farm Reinforcement Pipeline (Phase I & II), Broxburn, West Lothian Post-Excavation Archive Report. Unpublished CFA Report No. 1734.
- Johnson M 2013 'Prehistoric pottery', in I Suddaby 'Excavation of Post-built Roundhouses and a Circular Ditched Enclosure at Kiltaraglen, Portree, Isle of Skye, 2006–7'. *Scottish Archaeological Internet Reports* 54 (<http://www.sair.org.uk/sair54>).
- Lanting, J N & Waals, J D van der 1972 'British beakers as seen from the Continent', *Helinium* 12: 20–46.
- Lelong, O & Pollard, T 1998 'Excavation of a Bronze Age ring cairn at Cloburn Quarry, Cairngryffe Hill, Lanarkshire', *Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland* 28: 105–42.
- MacDougall, M O 1944 'Report on short cist found at Lochend, Inverness-shire', *Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland* 78: 106–7.
- Needham, S 2005 'Transforming Beaker culture in north-west Europe; processes of fusion and fission', *Proceedings of the Prehistoric Society* 71: 171–217.
- O'Connell, C 2005 Aberdeen to Lochside Natural Gas Pipeline. Archaeological Watching Brief and Excavations of Isolated Features. Unpublished CFA Report no. 951.
- Pitts, M W & Jacobi, R M 1979 'Some aspects of change in flaked stone industries of the Mesolithic and Neolithic in Southern Britain', *Journal of Archaeological Science* 6: 163–77. ([http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/0305-4403\(79\)90060-8](http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/0305-4403(79)90060-8)).
- Saville, A 2005 'Prehistoric quarrying of a secondary flint source: evidence from North-East Scotland', in P Topping & M Lynott (eds) *The Cultural Landscape of Prehistoric Mines*, 1–13. Oxford: Oxbow Books.
- Shepherd, I A G 1986 *Powerful Pots: Beakers in North-East Prehistory*. Aberdeen: University of Aberdeen.
- Shepherd, I A G, Shepherd, A N & Bruce, M F 1984 'A beaker burial at Mains of Balnagowan, Ardersier, Inverness District', *Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland* 114: 560–6.
- Sheridan, J A & Davis, M 2001 'The disc-bead necklace from Cist 1', in T Holden & J A Sheridan, 'Three cists and a possible Roman road at Barbush Quarry, Dunblane, Perthshire',



- Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland* 131: 93–5.
- Sheridan, J A & Davis, M 2002 ‘Investigating jet and jet-like artefacts from prehistoric Scotland: the National Museums of Scotland project’, *Antiquity* 76: 812–25.
- Watkins, T 1982 ‘The Excavation of an Early Bronze Age Cemetery at Barns Farm, Dalgety, Fife’, *Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland* 112: 48–141.