

## I.

NOTES ON (1) A SHORT CIST CONTAINING A FOOD-VESSEL AT DARNHALL, PEEBLESSHIRE, AND (2) A CINERARY URN FROM OVER MIGVIE, KIRRIEMUIR, ANGUS. BY J. GRAHAM CALLANDER, F.S.A. SCOT., DIRECTOR OF THE NATIONAL MUSEUM OF ANTIQUITIES OF SCOTLAND.

## THE DARNHALL URN.

On the 5th June last (1929) a stone-lined grave containing an urn was discovered on Darnhall farm, in the parish of Eddleston, Peeblesshire, through a plough coming in contact with one of the cover stones. Major W. M. Sime, O.B.E., the proprietor, having reported the find to the Museum, I was able to visit the site a few days later and obtain details of the discovery.

The place where the grave was found lies about 350 yards south-south-west of the steading, on the southern shoulder of a slight ridge on the steep hillside which rises from the right bank of Eddleston Water, at an elevation of rather more than 800 feet above sea-level, and about 150 feet above the burn (O.S. 6-inch Map, Peeblesshire, IX, N.W.). The spot commands a fine view across the glen to the east and down towards the Tweed to the south. Lying on the crest of the ridge, the soil above the grave had gradually been removed by agricultural operations until only a depth of 6 inches remained above the two cover stones. One of these stones was raised after being struck by the plough, when a carefully built short cist, partly filled with soil, was revealed. The chamber was formed of six slabs, or flat boulders, set on edge, one at each end and two on each side. The main axis of the grave lay 10 degrees east of north magnetic, nearly due north and south. The two stones on the east side were set in a straight line, but the two on the west were placed obliquely outwards, meeting near the centre in an obtuse angle. The slabs on the east and the northern stone on the west being rather lower than the others, the vacant space between them and the two cover stones was made up by thin stones laid on the flat. There was no paving or causewaying on the floor, which was sunk into the hard pan. Internally the cist measured 2 feet 9 inches along the east side, 3 feet from the south-west to the north-west corner, 1 foot 1 inch in breadth at the south end, 1 foot 6 inches south of the middle, 1 foot 3 inches at the north end, and 1 foot 4 inches in depth.

An urn was found about the centre of the south end of the cist, lying on its mouth. There were no other relics, even in the form of burnt or unburnt bones.

The urn (fig. 1), which is hand made and of a warm brown colour, is of the food-vessel type, the wall showing a fairly regular curve from the rim to the base, with a very slight swelling out  $1\frac{1}{2}$  inch below the lip. It measures  $5\frac{3}{8}$  inches in height, from  $5\frac{7}{8}$  to 6 inches in external diameter at the mouth, 6 to  $6\frac{1}{8}$  inches at the widest part, and  $3\frac{3}{8}$  inches at the base; the wall is  $\frac{1}{2}$  inch in thickness. The decoration of the urn is very crude. Four



Fig. 1. Food-vessel from Darnhall, Peeblesshire.

lines, incised with a pointed instrument, roughly equidistant, encircle the upper part of the vessel, the higher being from  $\frac{1}{4}$  to  $\frac{1}{2}$  inch below the lip and the lower about  $1\frac{1}{2}$  inch farther down. Beneath these the wall is decorated with finger-nail marks inserted almost vertically, with the convexity towards the right, and irregularly placed. On the top of the rim, which is bevelled downwards towards the inside, are similar markings set radially.

This is the third, if not the fourth, record of ancient graves from this locality. The first of these is seen on the O.S. Map, published in 1859 (the survey having been made in 1856), where "Stone Coffin or Kistvaen found here" is noted. The site of this discovery lies near the north end of the Whitelaw Burn Park, about 800 yards slightly north of west of the recent

discovery, a short distance under the 900-foot contour line. During a second visit which I made to Darnhall, Mr John Sime located the exact spot in a small hollow on the summit of a slight ridge. The top of one of the slabs of the cist was seen peeping through the surface.

In our *Proceedings*, vol. x. p. 43, is an account of the discovery of a food-vessel which was found in the middle one of three stone coffins dug up in a gravel pit in the "Skim Park," on the Darnhall estate, two or three years previous to 1872. This urn is said to have contained "some dust and fragments of bone," but no other relics were recovered. The vessel (fig. 2) was presented to the National Museum by Lord Elibank, and is exhibited along with our other food-vessels. It is a particularly interesting example of this class of pottery, being of uncommon form and bearing unusual decoration. Formed of brown clay, it is more ovoid in shape than the generality of our food-vessels; its decoration, taking the form of hollow vertical panels round the widest part, is not seen on any other Scottish food-vessels. It measures  $5\frac{1}{4}$  inches in height, 5 inches in external diameter at the mouth,  $5\frac{3}{8}$  inches at the widest part, and  $3\frac{3}{8}$  inches across the base. The top of its flattish lip and the whole of the wall are covered with impressions of a toothed stamp. The decoration consists of radial straight lines on the top of the brim, these being carried about  $\frac{1}{4}$  inch down the wall; under these the neck is encircled by six transverse lines, and three horizontal rows of impressed triangles, the two upper rows having the apex at the top and the lower one having it reversed. Round the body of the vessel are long vertical sunk panels, the space between them and the base being occupied with another row of triangular impressions and five rows of horizontal lines.

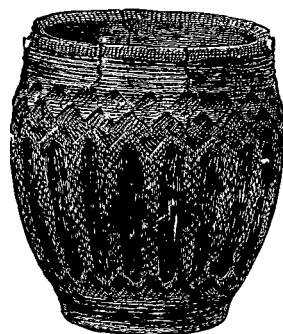


Fig. 2. Food-vessel from Darnhall, Peeblesshire.

In the 1908 edition of the O.S. Map there appears the record of an old discovery which was not entered in the 1859 edition. About 550 yards south-west of the latest discovered grave is the entry "Stone coffin containing an urn 1846." As I am informed by Major Sime that the name of the field in which the site lies is the Skim Park, the question arises whether some mistake in the date when the urn presented to the Museum in 1872 was found may not have been made. However, it is quite certain that stone cists, two containing food-vessels of the Bronze Age, have been found within a very small area on Darnhall.

The thanks of the Society are due to Major Sime for so kindly presenting his urn to the National Museum.

## THE OVER MIGVIE URN.

In the first week of November of this year (1929) a Bronze Age cinerary urn was discovered on the farm of Over Migvie, Kirriemuir, Angus, through a plough dislodging a small slab which, at a depth of only 9 inches or so beneath the surface of the ground, formed the cover of what might be termed a small cist (O.S. 6-inch Map, Angus, XXXII, S.E.). At the same time the base of the urn, which was placed in an inverted position, was crushed to powder. Thinking that the hole thus exposed was a rabbit's burrow, the ploughman contented himself with inserting his hand and removing some burnt bones and a small bone ornament that lay amongst them. He took the latter object to the stable at "lowsing" time, when the grieve, Mr George Marnoch, realising that it was of importance, handed it over to Mrs Cowpar and her son Mr Kenneth Cowpar, who farm the land. Instructions were given that the urn was not to be disturbed until someone who had some knowledge of such things could be present to see it excavated, and a short notice of the discovery appeared in the press. On seeing this I wrote Mr John Hunter, one of our Fellows, who was living about 15 miles away, and he got into communication with Mrs Cowpar, who very kindly arranged that I should go with him and excavate the grave. This we did on the 13th November.

The site lies on the summit of a flat ridge which rises with a gentle slope towards the south-west, about 250 yards north-west by north of the farmhouse, and only 3 feet 6 inches from the drystone dyke on the south side of the road running from Kirriemuir towards Shielhill Bridge. The elevation is about 530 feet above sea-level. There is an extensive view to the east and north-east over Strathmore and the Braes of Angus, but it is curtailed to the west and north by the foot-hills of the Grampians, which sweep up in steep slopes about a mile away.

With the assistance of Mr Cowpar, Mr Hunter, and two of the farm men, a deep trench was dug round the urn for about two-thirds of its circumference and about 18 inches distant from it. There was a depth of about 2 feet of soil at this place, but a good many large stones were encountered. The soil encircling the vessel having been removed, it was seen to be enclosed by a small roughly-square chamber or cist formed of four rough slabs about 18 inches square and about 3 inches thick. These stones were placed vertically close to, but not touching, the urn at its widest part. The mouth of the vessel rested on another flat stone. The space between the urn and the walls of the cist was packed with soil which had found its way in through the vacancies between the stones.

Most of the incinerated bones had been taken out of the vessel at the time of its discovery, but a considerable quantity was recovered and

A CINERARY URN FROM OVER MIGVIE, KIRRIEMUIR. 29

some more were found when the urn was lifted. Two small heaps were also found outside the mouth of the vessel, as if they had fallen out when it was being tilted into its inverted position. Professor Thomas H. Bryce, F.S.A.Scot., who examined the bones, stated that they were those of an adult, but that it was impossible to say what was the sex.

When the urn was finally laid bare it was found to be very badly cracked, with roots of plants in many of the fissures. The removal of the



Fig. 3. Cinerary Urn from Over Migvie, Angus.

vessel without its collapsing in the process presented some difficulty, especially as it was very damp. This was got over, however, by wrapping it round with a long rope of cocoanut fibre, and I was able to bring it to the Museum without further damage. Since then we have been able to strengthen the wall and restore the base.

As now completed, the urn (fig. 3), which is hand made and of a brownish clay containing an admixture of crushed stones, is  $17\frac{1}{4}$  inches in height. It is a particularly fine large example of the cinerary type with a heavy overhanging rim, a concave neck, and a prominent shoulder, below which it tapers in a slight curve to a base about 5 inches in dia-

meter. Externally it measures  $13\frac{1}{2}$  inches in diameter at the mouth,  $14\frac{1}{2}$  inches at the base of the rim,  $13\frac{3}{8}$  inches in the bottom of the concavity at the neck, and 14 inches at the shoulder. The lip, which is rounded on the top, is  $\frac{1}{16}$  inch in thickness, the rim being  $2\frac{3}{4}$  inches in breadth, and the concave neck  $3\frac{1}{4}$  inches. The overhanging rim is decorated with seven panels, from  $2\frac{3}{8}$  inches to  $3\frac{3}{4}$  inches in length, containing horizontal impressions of a twisted cord of two strands, which alternate with a similar number of panels, from  $1\frac{1}{4}$  inch to  $3\frac{5}{8}$  inches in length, containing vertical impressions of a similar character. The impressions on the horizontally decorated panels vary from seven to nine and on the vertically decorated panels from seven to sixteen. They are placed roughly parallel and from  $\frac{3}{16}$  inch to  $\frac{3}{8}$  inch apart. The concavity at the neck is ornamented with impressions of a loop of a twisted cord, some forming upright zigzag designs, others small crosses, and a number only small depressions. From the shoulder to the base there is no decoration.

The ornamentation on the outside of the overhanging rim of this vessel, a series of panels alternately filled with vertical and horizontal lines, is not very commonly met with on our Scottish cinerary urns. Still, among the very large number of this class of urn in the National Museum, we have six others which show this peculiarity.<sup>1</sup> Single examples came from the Bronze Age cemetery at Kirkpark, Musselburgh, Midlothian, from Windy Goul, Arthur's Seat, Edinburgh, from Inverkeithing, Fife, from Graham's Firth, Kinnaird, Angus, and two, represented only by rim fragments, from unknown localities. All of these vessels, except the Windy Goul specimen, are of fairly large size and have broad overhanging rims with a distinct neck usually vertical between the bottom of the rim and the moulding at the shoulder. Lord Abercrombie in *Bronze Age Pottery*, vol. ii., has figured sixteen English examples—two from Dorset (5d and 389a), four from Northamptonshire (25, 69, 82, and 87), two from Derbyshire (78 and 81), seven from Yorkshire (107a, 107c, 111, 126, 132, 148, and 162), and one from Cumberland (113d). These, like the Scottish urns, have broad rims and a distinct neck.

The bone ornament found in the urn among the incinerated remains is also burnt, and it is slightly cracked and contorted (fig. 4). It is of hollow barrel shape, open at the ends, which are encircled by a small moulding. It measures 1 inch in length and  $\frac{1}{16}$  inch in diameter at the ends. At the centre the cross diameters are  $\frac{1}{8}$  inch and 1 inch. In the centre of one side is a perforation, measuring  $\frac{1}{4}$  inch and  $\frac{5}{16}$  inch in cross diameters, and opposite it on the exterior of the other side is a small, neatly made loop, the perforation of which is only  $\frac{3}{32}$  inch in diameter.

<sup>1</sup> A food-vessel in the Museum from Hatton cairn, Inverarity, Angus, is ornamented in similar fashion.

With its heavy overhanging rim and distinctly concave neck, the urn shows a strong resemblance to one found in the remains of a cairn at Gourlaw, Midlothian, and to another found in a cairn near Milngavie, New Kilpatrick, Dumbartonshire. Both of these are fine large vessels, but their body shows a greater convexity from the shoulder to the base.

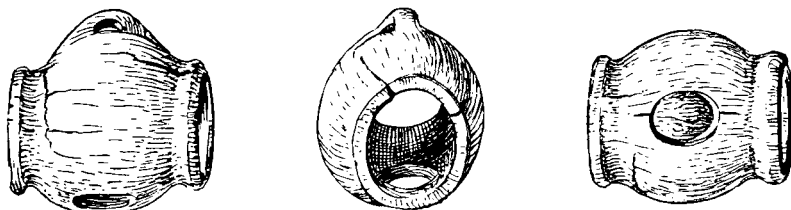


Fig. 4. Bone Bead from Over Migvie, Angus. (†.)

Strange to say, burnt bone ornaments were found in both of them. A small cinerary urn was also found in the Gourlaw cairn and another large one in the Milngavie monument. It is not unlikely that other vessels would have been found in these mounds had they been properly examined, but the first had almost entirely been cleared away many years before the urns were discovered, and the second was only partially excavated.

One bone ornament in the form of a small rectangular plate, pierced by four holes, three placed triangularly and the fourth above the apex (fig. 5), was found in the Gourlaw urn.<sup>1</sup>

Three bone beads and half of another, as well as one leaf-shaped and four barbed flint arrow-heads, all calcined, were found in the Milngavie urn (fig. 6).<sup>2</sup> Two of the complete beads were simply tubular, with a longitudinal perforation; so was the third, but in addition it was perforated transversely through both sides. Of the incomplete bead only half remained, but it had a perforation in the side also; whether there had been a corresponding hole on the opposite side can never be ascertained.

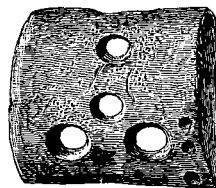


Fig. 5. Bone Ornament from Gourlaw, Midlothian. (†.)

A closer parallel to the Over Migvie ornament, however, is seen in a burnt bone bead which was found with seven clay objects (fig. 7) amongst the bones in a cinerary urn of the cordoned variety discovered at Seggiecrook, Kennethmont, Aberdeenshire.<sup>3</sup>

There is still another Scottish record of a calcined barrel-shaped

<sup>1</sup> *Proc. Soc. Ant. Scot.*, vol. xxxix. p. 411.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, vol. xlii. p. 218.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, vol. xlii. p. 212.

bead having been found in a cinerary urn, but it had two perforations placed closely together on one side (fig. 8). This urn was found in a Bronze Age cemetery, in an inverted position, at Dalmore, Alness, Ross-shire.<sup>1</sup>

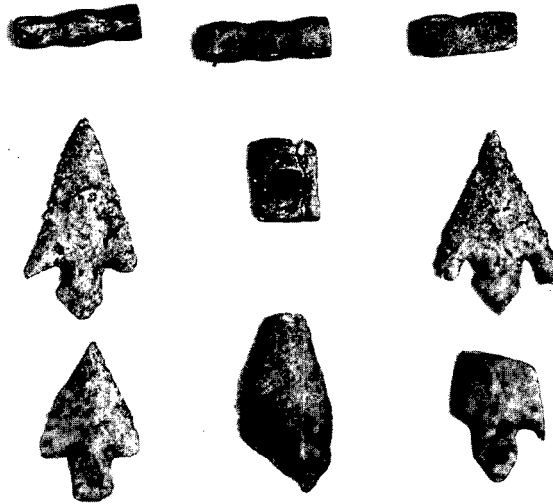


Fig. 6. Bone Beads and Flint Arrow-heads from Milngavie, Dumbartonshire. (3.)

The occurrence of bone beads with more than one perforation in association with burnt human remains in cinerary urns has thus been recorded from four widely separated Scottish sites—from Ross-shire,

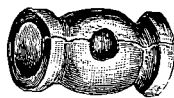


Fig. 7. Bone Bead from Seggie-crook, Aberdeenshire. (1.)

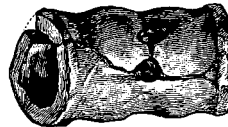


Fig. 8. Bone Bead from Dalmore, Ross-shire. (1.)

Aberdeenshire, Angus, and Dumbartonshire. It is very probable that these objects are the sole remaining parts of a more elaborate and composite ornament, such as our jet necklaces, and that they had been placed on the pyre while the body was being cremated; the other parts, perhaps composed of jet beads, would perish in the flames.

<sup>1</sup> *Proc. Soc. Ant. Scot.*, vol. xiii. p. 256.



There are a few more records of small calcined bone objects having been recovered from Scottish cinerary urns, but the total number is small. No doubt others have been brought to light, but their presence amongst other calcined matter of similar colour is easily overlooked. A small thin flat plate of burnt bone with two perforations was found at Murthly, Perthshire<sup>1</sup> (fig. 9), and another at Garvock, Dunning, in the same county<sup>2</sup>; a third came from Balnabraid, Campbeltown, Argyll<sup>3</sup> (fig. 10). With the last, fragments of thin sheet bronze were noted. A pin of bone and a barbed arrow-head of flint, both calcined, were discovered with a cinerary urn at Foulford, Deskford, Banffshire,<sup>4</sup> and a calcined crutch-shaped object of bone, a quoit-shaped bead of bluish



Fig. 9. Bone Bead from Murthly, Perthshire. (3.)



Fig. 10. Bone Bead from Balnabraid, Kintyre, Argyll. (3.)

vitreous paste, and a bronze chisel, with a cinerary urn, at Balneil, New Luce, Wigtownshire.<sup>5</sup>

A bone pin, a bronze awl, and an incense-cup were discovered in a cinerary urn at Marchhouse, Muirkirk, Ayrshire,<sup>6</sup> but in this case neither the pin nor the awl were burnt.

Mrs Cowpar and Mr Kenneth Cowpar have presented the urn and the bone ornament to the National Museum, and to them the thanks of the Society are due for their generous gift. At the same time, I think we should recognise the admirable restraint of everyone connected with the discovery of this burial deposit, in refraining from disturbing it until a representative from the Museum could be present to see it excavated.

<sup>1</sup> *Proc. Soc. Ant. Scot.*, vol. ix. p. 269.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, vol. xli. p. 10.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, vol. liv. p. 179. The two jet beads shown in fig. 10 were found in a different burial deposit from that in which the bone bead was found.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, vol. xxxi. p. 216.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, vol. l. p. 303.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, vol. lviii. p. 333.