

## II.

AN UNDERGROUND BUILDING AT MIDHOUSE, ORKNEY; TWO  
URNS FOUND AT LINTLAW, BERWICKSHIRE; AND THE EX-  
CAVATION OF A CAIRN AT DRUMELZIER, PEEBLES SHIRE.  
By J. HEWAT CRAW, SECRETARY.

### I. EARTH-HOUSE AT MIDHOUSE.

The farm of Midhouse is situated in the parish of Evie, and forms the northmost point of Mainland, Orkney. While staying at Evie in June and July 1930 I learned that an underground chamber had been found at Midhouse in the beginning of March. Mr Maxwell Horne of Midhouse kindly gave his consent to having the soil removed, and arranged with his byreman, Alexander Fowlis, to help me with the work. Accordingly, for six evenings, after having finished the day's work at the Broch of Aikerness, I went to Midhouse for a couple of hours to make the examination. The soil was not in a condition to pass through the meshes of a riddle, but was examined as it was removed. No relic of any kind, however, was found, and no trace of charcoal or bone, or of a darker stratum of soil could be seen.

The position of the structure is on the east shoulder of rising ground  $\frac{1}{4}$ -mile east-by-south of Midhouse farm steading, and just below the 100-foot contour.

The roof slabs lie some 15 inches beneath the surface, covering a chamber shaped like the letter P, the stem representing the entrance. It measures 11 feet by 8 feet, and the roof is 3 feet 3 inches above the floor, which is unpaved. The sides are quite devoid of building, and the slabs of the roof are supported by seven upright monoliths and one irregularly shaped block of stone, marked E on the plan (fig. 1), which shows the construction as seen from below. The largest of the monoliths, rectangular on plan, stands in the centre, supporting a large oval roofing slab. The

other six supports are flat slabs which project at right angles from the earthen wall of the chamber. Where necessary, smaller slabs have been laid on the top of the pillars to raise them to the required height. In all,

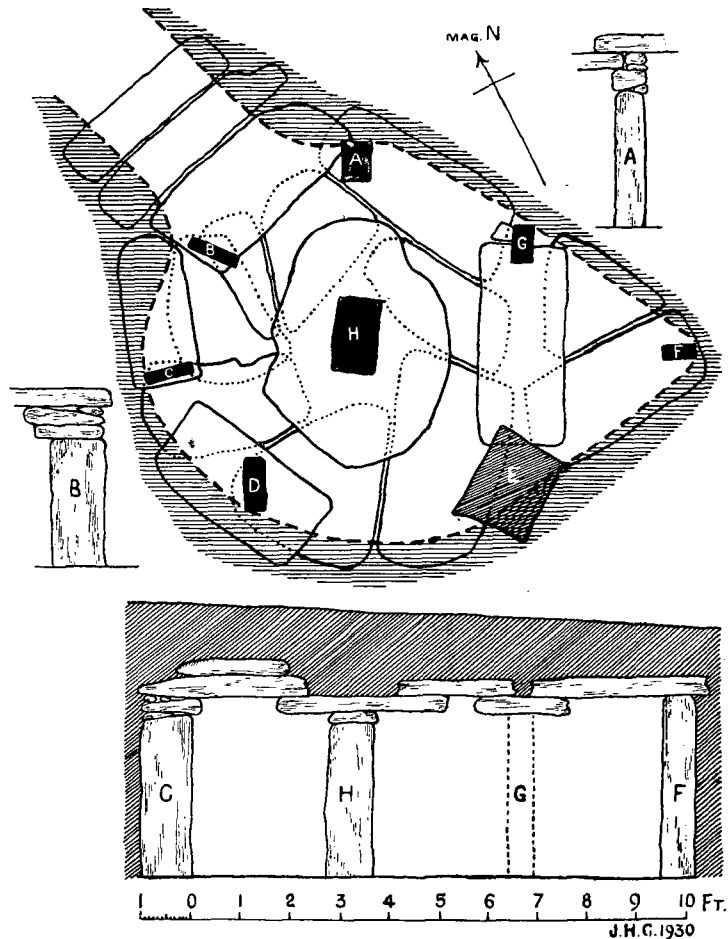


Fig. 1. Earth-house at Midhouse, Orkney.

fourteen slabs form the roof, and two narrow slabs had acted as lintels at the entrance; these, however, had been removed when the chamber was opened, and were taken to the edge of the field.

No relics having been found, there is no direct evidence of either the age or the purpose of this construction. Human occupation could hardly have failed to leave traces behind in the form of darkened soil, if not by relics; and one might expect even burials to leave some evidence,

unless the period was very remote. As a place of concealment, seldom in use, its barren condition might be more easily explained.

Several more or less similar chambers occurring in Orkney were described in our *Proceedings*<sup>1</sup> last year by Mr Kirkness, some being roofed with slabs and others by corbelling. They have yielded little in the way of relics, but at Shapinsay one contained a gold ring of a ninth-century type. In the north of Scotland and in the Hebrides are found underground constructions having the roof slabs supported by slabs standing at right angles to the wall. These are recognised as having been used for human habitation.

## II. LINTLAW URNS.

While a field was being prepared for turnip-sowing at Lintlaw, in the parish of Bunkle, Berwickshire, on 8th May 1930, a large cinerary urn containing burnt bones was brought to light. Mr A. M. Calder, the farmer of Lintlaw, kindly sent a telephone message to me the same evening, and I went to Berwickshire the next day. The site of the find is in a field called the Fore Hill, 1150 yards west of Lintlaw school, and 650 yards north of the farm-steading of Easter Cruicksfield. It lies some 470 feet above sea-level on the east shoulder of a ridge which rises to 488 feet about 330 yards to the west. The distance from the wall at the west side of the field is 100 yards, and from that at the north side 190 yards.

Mr Calder having put a couple of men at my disposal for the afternoon, we first examined the spot where the urn was found, and then began to turn over the adjacent ground. At a distance of 43 feet to the south-south-west we found another urn broken into a large number of fragments, and a quantity of incinerated bones. Both urns had been placed in an inverted position, protected by stones set on edge, and lay close beneath the plough furrow; they had, in fact, been broken by the feet of the horses when the land was being ploughed. They had been placed on, or close to, an encircling belt of small boulders, some 9 to 15 inches in diameter; the belt, which was only traceable at parts, many of the stones having apparently been removed, was 5 to 6 feet in width, and had enclosed an area about 45 feet in diameter.

On 14th February 1931, with the help of members of the Edinburgh League of Prehistorians, a further examination of the ground was made, digging down to the red subsoil which lay at a depth varying from 6 to 12 inches from the surface. Midway between the spots at which the urns lay was found a cist with axis pointing north-east (63° east of magnetic north). It was well formed of four large slabs and a cover, which had evidently been brought from the Whitadder banks almost a mile to the

<sup>1</sup> Vol. lxiv. p. 222.

south-west. The cist measured 3 feet 10 inches in length by 2 feet 6 inches in width at the north-east end and 2 feet 2 inches at the south-west end. It was 2 feet 2 inches deep and was unpaved. The cover measured 5 feet 1 inch by 3 feet 1 inch by 4 inches. It lay 13 inches beneath the surface, and was covered by a couple of inches of the red subsoil. The latter fact suggests very strongly that the cist had not been opened since the time of burial; the subsoil was doubtless thrown from the original excava-

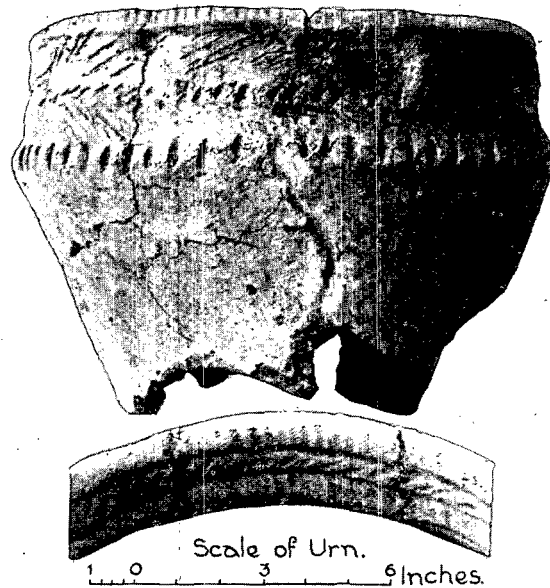


Fig. 2. Cinerary Urn from Lintlaw, Berwickshire.

tion, and could hardly be replaced after any subsequent opening without containing a large admixture of surface soil. Another fact suggesting the improbability of a previous disturbance was that the cover on being lifted fell into several pieces from its own weight.

The cist was filled with soil, which may have been introduced subsequent to the burial, as there were clear signs of moles having worked inside the cist. In the soil were found a wedge-shaped piece of iron measuring 2 inches by  $\frac{7}{16}$  inch by  $\frac{3}{16}$  inch, a fragment of flint  $\frac{7}{8}$  inch by  $\frac{3}{4}$  inch, showing slight traces of secondary working, another fragment  $\frac{3}{4}$  inch by  $\frac{1}{2}$  inch by  $\frac{1}{2}$  inch, showing the effects of heat, one small piece of calcined bone, and a few pieces of charcoal.

The examination of the area within the encircling belt was com-

pleted on 20th March, when Mr Calder kindly supplied a couple of men to help in digging over the ground. No further interments, however, were found.

The first urn to be found is of reddish-brown clay (fig. 2). It measures 13 inches across the mouth, and is entire for a distance of 11 inches from the lip: the original height may have been about 15 inches. At a distance of  $3\frac{1}{2}$  inches below the lip is a raised moulding on which is a series of deep vertical incisions. Below the moulding the urn is plain. Above the moulding, about midway between it and the lip, is another series of impressions, somewhat shallower and slightly inclined. On either side of this band is a series of lightly scratched lines, those in the upper series being inclined in the opposite direction to those in the lower. Eight raised knobs surround the urn immediately below the lip. The lip has a broad inward bevel, and bears three twisted-cord impressions, separated by maggot impressions applied with the obliquity reversed in alternate rows. The deep vertical incisions are a very unusual feature on cinerary urns; they occur on an urn found on Rosebrough Moor, three miles south-west of Lucker, in Northumberland. This urn was found by Greenwell some sixty years ago in a cairn measuring 25 feet in diameter and 3 feet in height. It was inverted over burnt bones on the cover of a cist which was found to contain a beaker. The Rosebrough urn also has a design on the inside of the lip similar to that on the Lintlaw urn. Greenwell speaks of it as "a very remarkable specimen . . . the first that I have seen which has the peculiar but effective ornament seen upon the rim."<sup>1</sup> He gives rather a misleading figure of the urn, which is much better illustrated by Abercromby.<sup>2</sup>

The second urn (fig. 3) is yellowish-brown in colour, measuring  $15\frac{1}{4}$  inches in height,  $13\frac{1}{2}$  inches across the mouth, and 5 inches across the base. The rim is  $3\frac{1}{4}$  inches high, and is separated by a raised moulding from the neck, which is 4 inches in height. The rim bears the common form of ornament, consisting of alternate groups of horizontal and vertical impressions of a twisted cord. On the neck are looped-cord impressions forming a series of narrow inverted U's. Between the neck and the body of the urn is a series of finger-tip impressions. Vertical cord impressions cover the body or lower part of the urn. The lip is square in section, bearing alternate groups of finger-nail impressions in a herring-bone arrangement, and horse-shoe impressions made with a cord held beneath the finger-nail. This urn has been completely restored.

<sup>1</sup> *British Barrows*, p. 415, fig. 60 (p. 73).

<sup>2</sup> *Bronze Age Pottery of Great Britain and Ireland*, vol. ii. pl. lxxiii. No. 120; *Proc. Soc. Ant. Scot.*, vol. xli. p. 227, No. 10 (1906-7).

The fragments of bone were sent to Professor Bryce, to whom I am indebted for the following report:

The deposit from *Urn A* is very small, and none of the fragments are large enough, or distinctive enough, to determine either the age or the sex of the individual. *Urn B* contained a large and typical deposit of calcined bones. As no duplication of any distinctive fragment could be detected, it is to be concluded that the deposit represents a single individual, but whether



Fig. 3. Cinerary Urn from Lintlaw, Berwickshire.

a man or a woman it is not possible to say. Some entire phalanges with epiphyses united show that he or she has passed the twentieth year of life. This is confirmed by the fact that the dentition appears to have been complete. This is inferred from the condition of the sockets for the teeth in one-half of the lower jaw, which has partially escaped destruction. The individual was probably of full adult age at the time of death.

The charcoal was examined by Mr M. Y. Orr, who was able to distinguish two varieties of wood. One of these was oak, the other was either birch or hazel.

From the facts revealed by this excavation it would seem that the original burial, a cremated one, was made in the cist either in the beginning or middle of the Bronze Age, more probably the latter, with a cairn

some 45 feet in diameter covering it. Much later in the Bronze Age two burials of cremated bones, contained in large cinerary urns, were made at the edge of the cairn on opposite sides. How the small piece of iron came to be in the cist is not evident.

The urns have been presented to the National Museum of Antiquities by the Earl of Home. Our thanks are also due to Mr Calder for the facilities and help he has given in making a complete examination of the ground, and to the diggers for their enthusiastic work.

### III. DRUMELZIER CAIRN.

The site of the cairn is close to the right bank of the Tweed, less than  $1\frac{1}{2}$  mile above the village of Drumelzier and 150 yards south by east of the cottage known as the Ford House, where the old road from Peebles passed through the river on its way to the upper valley of the Tweed (A, fig. 4).

While walking past the spot on 21st April 1929 my attention was attracted by a mound of unusually symmetrical appearance (fig. 5). On examining the side next the river I found that the bank in the process of erosion had carried with it part of the mound, leaving exposed the corner of a cist, of which the slabs forming the cover, the end, and one side could be seen (fig. 6). The cairn had been placed on the top of a small knoll, 30 feet above the river, which is 20 yards distant to the south-west. Its apparent measurements were 55 feet in diameter and 5 feet in height, but excavation showed later that the cairn itself did not measure over 40 feet in diameter, and that the highest point was only 2 feet above the original surface of the knoll on which it was placed (fig. 7). There were evident signs of disturbance at the north-east side.

On the 22nd of April, having obtained permission to open the cairn from Mr W. J. W. Nicoll of Netherurd, the proprietor of Drumelzier Place, I began the work of examination along with Mr J. Deans Ritchie, and with the help of Mr A. Farquhar, gamekeeper, Drumelzier, and Mr J. Nelson, farm manager, Drumelzier Place. The cist (No. 4 on the plan, fig. 7) did not seem to have been disturbed, and was filled with yellowish sandy subsoil, which could not have entered by infiltration, the surrounding soil being of a dark colour. It measured 2 feet 3 inches in length by 1 foot 7 inches at the west end and 1 foot 4 inches at the east end; it was 1 foot 5 inches deep; the axis pointed east ( $108^\circ$  east of magnetic north),

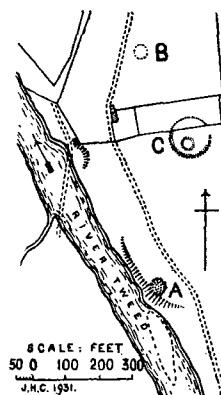


Fig. 4. Drumelzier Cairn: Map of locality.

and the cover, which measured 3 feet 2 inches by 1 foot 9 inches by 6 inches, lay 11 inches beneath the surface of the cairn. This cist was

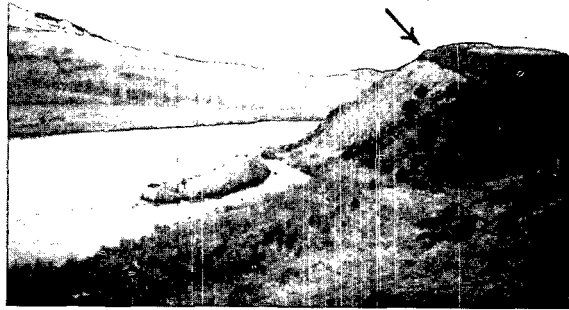


Fig. 5. View of Drumelzier Cairn.

unpaved, and contained no relic except a fragment of charcoal, the soil being carefully riddled.

For a few hours on the three following days I dug at the centre of

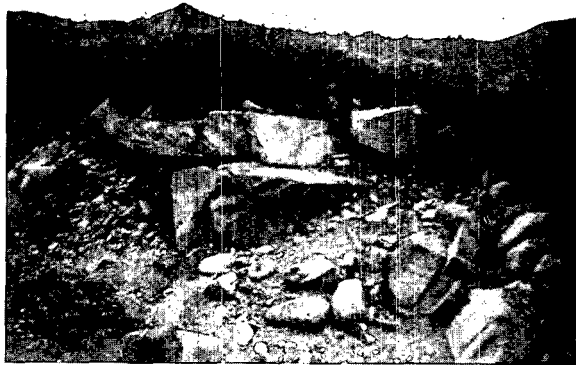


Fig. 6. Cist in Drumelzier Cairn.

the cairn, finding an oblong cist-like excavation, without slabs, cut to a depth of 3 feet below the top of the cairn. It measured 4 feet 6 inches by 2 feet 4 inches, the axis pointing north-east (about  $68^{\circ}$  east of magnetic north). No relics or bones were found, but in the west part of the grave was a circular area, 20 inches in diameter, containing charcoal, and extending 3 inches deeper into the subsoil than the floor of the cist.



The rest of the cairn was excavated with the help of members of the Edinburgh League of Prehistorians, five visits being paid to the spot, on 10th, 17th, and 19th May, 4th October, and 22nd December 1930. Including the discoveries already made, the cairn was found to contain no fewer than seven cists (three of which were unusually small in size), one cist-like excavation, and two small oval settings of stones, probably formed to protect cinerary urns. The relics were fragments of Neolithic

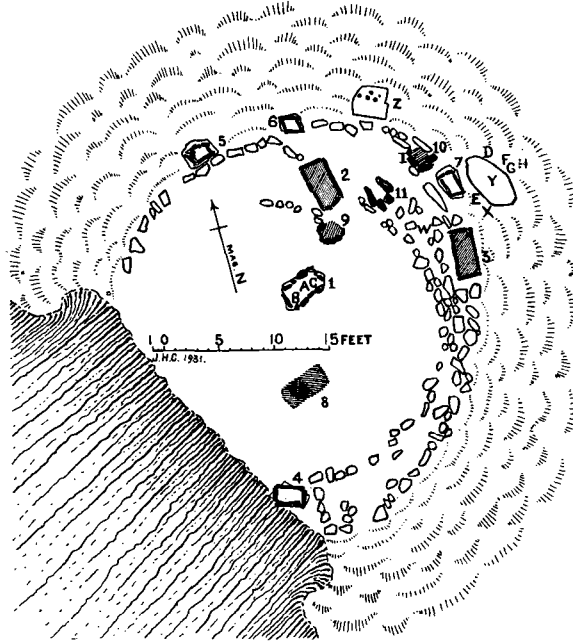


Fig. 7. Plan of Drumelzier Cairn.

or Overlap pottery, one beaker urn and a fragment of another, parts of six cinerary urns, part of a jet armlet, a broken whetstone, a small fragment of iron, a flint saw, a number of other fragments of flint and chert, some of them showing secondary working, and a slab with ring markings carved on it.

The cairn had apparently been surrounded by a ring of boulders, 31 feet in diameter, marking its periphery. The ring had in parts been disturbed for later interments, and evidence of a second external ring partially surrounding the cairn was found at the north, east, and south sides. At the south-west side the ring had disappeared with that part of the cairn destroyed through erosion by the river.

The primary interment (cist. No. 1) lay near the centre of the original

ring of boulders. The cover, measuring 4 feet 4 inches by 2 feet 3 inches by 8 inches, lay about 10 inches below the original surface and 3 feet beneath the top of the cairn. The cist measured 3 feet 3 inches by 1 foot 8 inches by 1 foot 3 inches, the axis pointing north-east ( $67^\circ$  east of magnetic north). The sides were not formed of slabs, but of rounded or oblong boulders placed somewhat irregularly; the bottom was unpaved. It was full of soil, and contained a small beaker urn (A), which stood upright near the centre (fig. 8). A small piece of another beaker (fig. 9, B) and fragments of Neolithic or Overlap pottery (fig. 9, C) lay near the south side of the cist. Riddling revealed the presence of a flint saw,  $1\frac{1}{4}$  inch by  $\frac{1}{3}\frac{1}{2}$  inch, and thirteen flakes of flint and chert.<sup>1</sup>



Fig. 8. Beaker from Drumelzier Cairn.

Cist No. 2, which lay 6 feet to the north of No. 1, seemed to have caused some disturbance of the secondary ring. The sides were built up with two courses of stones. It measured 3 feet 10 inches by 1 foot 11 inches by 1 foot 8 inches, the axis pointing north-north-west ( $11^\circ$  west of magnetic north). There was no cover and the bottom was unpaved. The soil on being riddled was found to contain no relics.

Cist No. 3 lay just outside the original ring of boulders, at the east side of the cairn. It measured 4 feet 1 inch by 1 foot 8 inches by 1 foot 10 inches, the axis pointing approximately north ( $5^\circ$  east of magnetic north). This cist also was unpaved. There was no cover *in situ*, but a large slab (Y, fig. 7), 5 feet 2 inches by 2 feet 11 inches by 10 inches, which lay 4 feet to the north-east, had most probably covered the cist. The soil yielded only small fragments of charcoal and an unworked flint.

Close to the outside of the ring, at the north-west side, lay a small cist (No. 5), 1 foot 8 inches by 1 foot by 9 inches, with axis pointing east-north-east ( $72^\circ$  east of magnetic north). The cover measured 2 feet 4 inches by 2 feet 3 inches by 4 inches. This cist was paved with small stones towards the west and north-west, but contained no relics.

Seven feet to the east of this cist and also close to the outside of the

<sup>1</sup> Of flint: pointed flake, 1 inch by  $\frac{1}{16}$  inch, showing signs of use; pointed flake,  $\frac{5}{8}$  inch by  $\frac{3}{8}$  inch, with slight secondary working; flake,  $1\frac{1}{2}$  inch by 1 inch, with the bulb of percussion and signs of use; flake,  $1\frac{3}{4}$  inch by  $\frac{3}{4}$  inch, with signs of use; flake,  $1\frac{1}{4}$  inch by  $1\frac{1}{4}$  inch, with bulb of percussion, possibly a hollow scraper; flake,  $1\frac{1}{16}$  inch by  $\frac{1}{2}$  inch, with secondary working; flake,  $1\frac{1}{2}$  inch by  $\frac{5}{8}$  inch, showing flaking. Of chert: six flakes,  $\frac{1}{2}$  inch to  $1\frac{1}{2}$  inch in length, with no secondary working.

EXCAVATION OF A CAIRN AT DRUMELZIER, PEEBLES SHIRE. 367

ring lay No. 6, a small cist measuring about 1 foot 4 inches by 9 inches by 9 inches; the south and east slabs, however, had been somewhat displaced. The axis pointed east ( $105^{\circ}$  east of magnetic north). The cover measured 1 foot 7 inches by 1 foot 2 inches by 6 inches. In the soil in the interior was found the charred kernel of a hazel nut.

Three feet to the north of No. 3 lay cist No. 7, a small cist 1 foot 9 inches by 11 inches by 8 inches, with axis pointing north-north-west

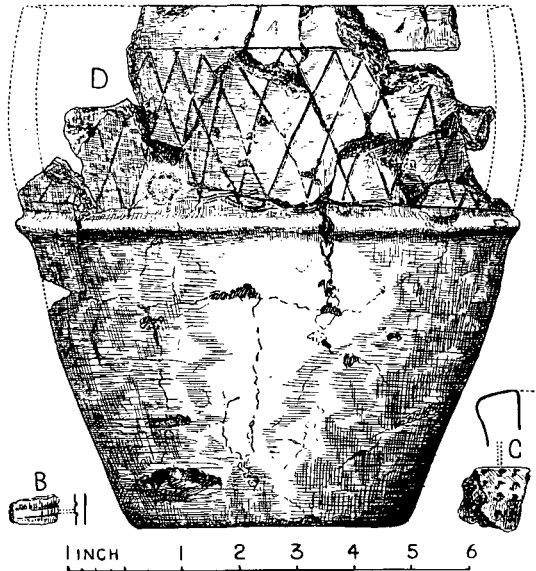


Fig. 9. Urn fragments from Drumelzier Cairn.

( $13^{\circ}$  west of magnetic north). The cover measured 2 feet 4 inches by 1 foot 3 inches by 5 inches. No relics were found.

Between cists 1 and 2 was a setting of stones, 1 foot 11 inches in diameter, on the original surface of the ground (No. 9). In the middle was a flat stone set as paving, on which was a small fragment of iron. A somewhat similar stone setting (No. 10) lay 2 feet to the north-west of cist No. 7. It was 1 foot 6 inches in diameter, and contained fragments of a cinerary urn (fig. 10, I). Midway between these two settings was an unusual setting of stones, which at first suggested a flue, but which had been partially destroyed, rendering its original purpose obscure.

As is shown on the plan (fig. 7) the secondary cists at the edge of the cairn have all been placed with their axes parallel to the adjacent periphery. An unusual feature is that most of the secondary interments have been made at the north side of the cairn, the south side being that

usually chosen. This may be due to the fact that the north and north-east part was farthest from the river.

*The Relics.*—Urn A (fig. 8), the beaker from cist 1, is of reddish-brown clay,  $4\frac{1}{4}$  inches in height,  $3\frac{3}{8}$  inches in diameter at the mouth, and 2 inches at the base. It has a high, almost perpendicular rim, and bears the impression of a twisted cord, which has been wound round it thirty-one times. Two similar urns have been found at Bathgate in Linlithgowshire and another in Aberdeenshire. These, however, are all larger in size. The closest resemblance to it is an urn from Drenthe<sup>1</sup> in Holland, which is almost identical in size, form, and decoration. An urn (fig. 9, B) is represented by a small fragment,  $\frac{1}{4}$  inch thick, of another beaker, with two parallel, horizontal, incised lines. It was found in cist No. 1, at the

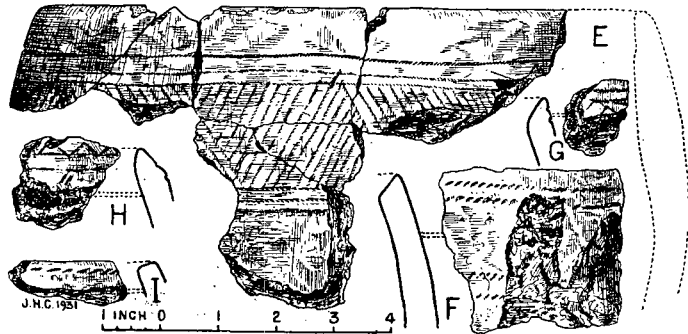


Fig. 10. Urn fragments from Drumelzier Cairn.

south side. Another (fig. 9, C) is represented by several fragments of coarse pottery, also found at the south side of cist No. 1. It is  $\frac{5}{8}$  inch thick, slightly protruding outwards at the lip, where the thickness is  $\frac{7}{8}$  inch. It is decorated with a dotted, somewhat Z-shaped impression. The type was described and figured by Mr Callander from Glenluce and Hedderwick, with the suggestion that it belonged to the late Neolithic or Overlap period.<sup>2</sup> Its occurrence here, associated with a beaker of early type, is in accordance with this suggestion.

The urn D (fig. 9), is reddish-brown in colour, and like the urns remaining to be described is a cinerary urn of the cordoned type belonging to the close of the Bronze Age. It measures 9 inches in height, the diameter at the mouth being  $8\frac{1}{2}$  inches and at the base  $4\frac{3}{4}$  inches. Above the cordon, which is placed  $3\frac{3}{4}$  inches below the lip, is a diaper pattern of incised lines, edged with an incised line above and below. There is no ornamentation below the cordon. The urn lay on its side close to the

<sup>1</sup> Abercromby, *op. cit.*, vol. i. pl. i.

<sup>2</sup> *Proc. Soc. Ant. Scot.*, vol. lxiii. p. 90, fig. 55 (1928-29).

north of the large slab Y. The under side had completely disintegrated, and the upper side was so fragile that it had to be lifted with a large ball of earth beneath and packed into a box. After lying for some days to dry it was specially treated to harden it. By fitting the detached pieces into their places it was found possible to build up almost half of the urn.

The fragments of urn E (fig. 10) lay close to the west side of the slab Y, near the south-east corner of the small cist No. 7. It is of reddish-brown clay, and has been much larger than urn D, measuring 10½ inches across the mouth. The whole of the lower part is wanting, but enough remains to show the form and design above the cordon, which is placed 3½ inches below the lip. The decoration consists of a band formed of groups of twisted-cord impressions sloping alternately to right and left; the band is edged above and below by a double line, and above the upper

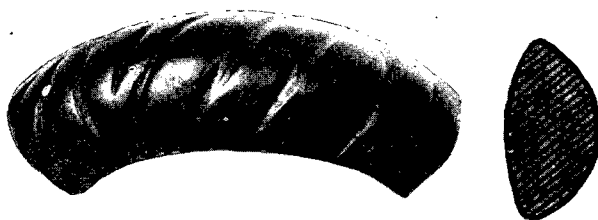


Fig. 11. Jet Armlet from Drumelzier Cairn. (†.)

pair is a single impression of a thicker cord, placed with the twist in the opposite direction to that of the two below.

Of the urn F (fig. 10) enough remains to show a double row of cord impressions immediately below the lip, and another double row 1¼ inch lower. The clay is coarse and reddish-brown. This urn was found with the fragments of the next two (G and H), mixed together close to the east side of the slab Y.

The urn G (fig. 10) is represented by a small fragment of rim with an inward bevel. Two incised lines run close to the lip, with apparently a chevron design below.

The urn H (fig. 10) shows an outward and an inward bevel of the lip. On the outward bevel are two incised horizontal lines, with a zig-zag above and an arrangement of sloping lines below.

The urn I (fig. 10) also is represented by only a small fragment of rim, square in section, with a twisted-cord impression close to the lip. The fragment was found within the small setting of stones, No. 10.

The fragment of a jet armlet (fig. 11) was found at X, close to urn E.

It is D-shaped in section, measuring  $2\frac{1}{2}$  inches in length,  $\frac{7}{8}$  inch in width, and  $\frac{1}{2}$  inch in thickness. It retains a fine polish, and is ornamented with a series of grooves cut obliquely across it, apparently to suggest a cable design. At one end it is pierced by a small rivet-hole. The internal diameter has been  $2\frac{1}{4}$  inches. Ornamented rings or armlets of jet are of great rarity. One was found in the fort at Castle Law, Abernethy,<sup>1</sup> having a cable design. It was of exactly the same diameter, but much smaller in section. A jet ring with a similar design but with an internal diameter of less than an inch was found at Traprain Law<sup>2</sup> in the second level. An armlet of the same type is recorded from a Romano-British site in Wiltshire.<sup>3</sup> The whetstone measures  $3\frac{1}{4}$  inches by  $\frac{7}{8}$  inch in breadth and  $\frac{3}{4}$  inch in thickness. It has been broken across and is much worn by use, being only  $\frac{3}{8}$  inch thick at the broken end.

The ring-marked slab (fig. 12) measures 3 feet by 2 feet by 6 inches. It lay at the north side of the cairn (Z, fig. 7), outside the encircling ring, but may originally have been the cover of cist No. 2. On the upper side are five shallow ring-markings, four being double and one single. The former measure 3 inches to 4 inches in diameter, and the latter  $1\frac{3}{4}$  inch. The figures are thus much smaller than in typical cup- and ring-marked stones, and the lines are only  $\frac{1}{4}$  inch in width. The only similar markings known to me are on a slab which I found a number of years ago near the site of several former cairns and forts at Harelawside near Grant's House, Berwickshire. The stone is now in our Museum. Mr Callander informs me of another, not *in situ*, which has come to his notice on Ruthven Hill near Perth. Beneath the slab was a flake of calcined flint. So far as I know the only other example of cup- and ring-markings in Peeblesshire is on a large boulder at the side of the road in the valley of the Manor.

Professor Bryce's report on the bones found beside the cinerary urns is as follows:—

All the deposits are of small size and the bones are reduced to fragments too minute to yield data regarding age and sex. In one deposit only, that from urn D, could any evidence regarding the state of ossification of the skeleton be recovered. In this one entire phalanx was found, and as the epiphysis is united, it can be concluded that the individual had passed the twentieth year before death, and had probably reached full adult age.

Professor Wright Smith reports that all the charcoal found was that of the oak tree.

It is clear that the site of this cairn had been used as a place of burial very early in the Bronze Age, and also at a time near its close. Some of the cists may represent an intermediate period, but being devoid of relics

<sup>1</sup> *Proc. Soc. Ant. Scot.*, vol. xxxiii. p. 30 (1898-99).

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, vol. lviii. p. 271, fig. 15, No. 37, p. 259 (1923-24).

<sup>3</sup> *Wilt. Arch. Mag.*, vol. xxxv. p. 406, fig. 27.

## EXCAVATION OF A CAIRN AT DRUMELZIER, PEEBLES SHIRE. 371

their period cannot be affirmed. The finding of a fragment of iron and of the jet armlet, an ornament usually attributed to the Early Iron Age, may indicate the transition period. The iron, on the other hand, may have been introduced at the time of the disturbance, of which there was surface evidence; but it is less likely that the armlet was left at such a time. It may be that the peculiar type of ring-markings is a decadent form dating from the transition period.

Traces of other early remains lie close to the site of this cairn. On a knoll 120 yards to the north are the remains of a low rampart of stones, 10 feet wide and only about 1 foot in height, enclosing an area measuring

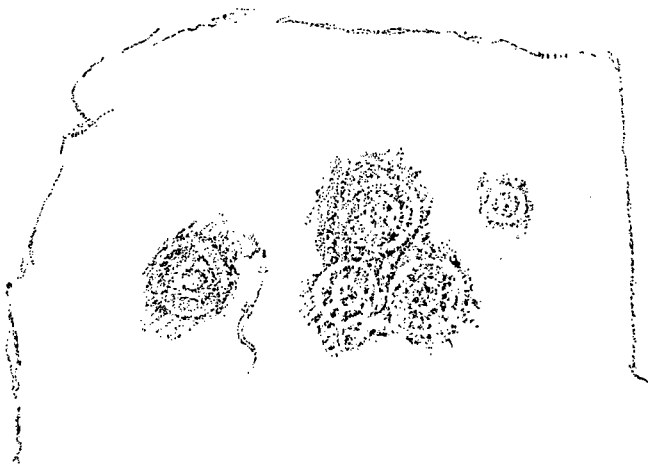


Fig. 12. Ring-marked Slab, Drumelzier Cairn ( $\frac{1}{16}$ ).

120 feet north and south by 110 feet east and west, the northern part of which lies within a modern rectangular sheepfold (C, fig. 4). Within this enclosure, near its south side, is a circular mound 30 feet in diameter formed of soil thrown from a surrounding trench 2 feet in depth, above the bottom of which the mound rises from 3 to 4 feet. Still farther to the north, outside the sheepfold and 50 yards north-north-east of the cottage, is a circular area (B, fig. 4) 42 feet in diameter, from which a cairn has evidently been removed.

On the occasion of my visit to plan the site on 18th February 1931 my attention was drawn by Mr Farquhar to a short trench which lies 5 yards to the left of the road some 350 yards before it reaches the ford. This trench measures 54 feet in length by 10 feet in width and 2 feet in depth, and is surrounded by a low mound, which curves neatly round either end. This is evidently a flax dam, formerly used for *retting* flax or "lint." No water-supply was apparent, but Mr Farquhar informed me that a copious

supply from a spring called Pickers' Well lies some 340 yards to the east-north-east, at a higher level on the hillside. This name is shown on the 6-inch Ordnance Survey Map, and proves the purpose of the trench, for which it undoubtedly supplied the water needed by the lint-pickers. It is less than a hundred years since the growing of flax as part of the "hinds' gains," or farm-servants' payments in kind, completely died out in the Borders, although the custom was being discontinued towards the end of the eighteenth century.<sup>1</sup>

By the kindness of Mr W. J. W. Nicol of Netherurd all the relics from the cairn, including the ring-marked stone, have been presented to the National Museum of Antiquities of Scotland.

I have to express my indebtedness to those already mentioned and to the following for help in the work of excavation: Messrs W. D. MacColl, W. W. T. Hannah, P. Kennedy, T. Mitchell, A. G. Jackson, G. R. Gair, F. M'Govern, L. Maclaren, H. A. Craw, W. A. Craw, Professor Hannah, Lieut.-Colonel L. M. Davies, and Misses I. R. Henderson, M. E. C. Mitchell, M. E. Simpson, A. Smith, and A. Blackie.

<sup>1</sup> See Gibson's *An Old Berwickshire Town*, p. 216.