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TWO BEAVER BURIALS FROM KEABOG PITDRICHIE, NEAR DRUMLITHIE,
KINCARDINE AND DEESIDE

LAN AS SHEPHERD AND MARGARET F BRUCE

KEABOG, P. TORICHIE

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SKELETAL REMAINS, PITDRICHIE, CIST 1

Margaret F Bruce

The remains are virtually complete and are in an excellent state of preservation, though the skull vault shows some damage; even the hyoid bone and an ossified part of the thyroid cartilage are preserved.

The sex of the individual was almost certainly male from the evidence of the complete pelvis (the ischio-pubic rami are everted, the ischial spines are markedly inverted, there are deeply 'hooked' sciatic notches and the acetabula are large). The general robusticity of muscle marking and the well developed mastoid processes and supra-orbital ridges confirm this finding.

An age of at least 35-45 years at death is indicated from the extent of the dorsal lipping of the pubic symphyseal surface; from the bony outgrowths into the obturator foramen and the state of closure of the cranial sutures; from the degree of dental attrition and from the ossification extending into the costal cartilages from both costal and sternal ends.

The non-metric features exhibited by the skeleton include asymmetry of the mandibular fossae, the right being considerably larger; the presence of an Inca bone in the occiput and multiple small perforations in the left lateral pterygoid plate; a six segment sacrum, the result of fusion of the first coccygeal segment.

It is possible that the damage to the skull vault in the region of the right coronal suture was pre-mortem in which case it may have been, or contributed to, the cause of death. There is evidence of a healed nasal fracture; the upper lateral incisors were lost some long time before death; there is very considerable tooth wear, with evidence of caries and of an abscess at the root of the first upper left molar. The vertebral bodies show very extensive lipping in the lower mid-thoracic region, in

the only cervical vertebra present and in the fifth lumbar vertebral body. Some degenerative change is also apparent in the superior aspect of the right and left acetabula.

The remains are those of a muscularly well developed adult male, about 174 cm tall, aged at least 35-45 years at death, with considerable vertebral and dental pathology and possibly a skull injury which may have been the cause of his death.

SKULL

	mm		mm
Maximum length	170	Binaxillary breadth	95
Maximum breadth	146	Bizygomatic breadth	139
* Basi-bregmatic height	128	Nasal height	46
Basi-nasion length	104	Nasal breadth	26
Basi-alveolare length	95	Palatal length	41
Upper facial height	69	palatal breadth	35
Minimum frontal breadth	97		
Orbital height (R)	33	(L)	33
Orbital width (R)	43	(L)	41

LIMBS

	(R) mm	(L) mm
Femoral maximum length	472	
Femoral oblique length	471	
Femoral Trochanteric length	452	
Minimum A P diameter	41	
Minimum transverse diameter	33	
Femoral bicondylar breadth	80	
Tibial maximum length	384	
Tibial A P diameter	37	35
Tibial transverse diameter	23	22
Tibial bicondylar breadth	78	76
Fibular length	*375	378
Humeral maximum length	*341	341
Humeral maximum diameter	24	23
Humeral minimum diameter	19	18

CRANIAL INDEX

146

— x 100 = 85.9 (markedly brachycephalic)

170

PLATYMERIC INDEX

33

— x 80.5 (platymeric)

41

PLATYCNEMIC INDEX

23

— x 62.2 (slightly platycnemic)

37

STATURE ESTIMATION

Using femoral and fibular lengths, according to Trotter & Gleser 1958:

$$1.31 (47.2 + 37.8) + 63.05 = 174.4 \pm 3.62 \text{ cm.}$$

* Estimated figures

SKELETAL REMAINS, PITDRICHIE, CIST 2

Margaret F Bruce

The remains are incomplete and in a poor state of preservation. The axial skeleton is represented by the skull, the left side of the vault of which is missing; a well preserved mandible with complete dentition and fragments of the sternum, ribs and bodies of cervical and thoracic vertebrae. The clavicles, fragments of both scapulae and humeri, of the right radius and several carpal and metacarpal bones represent the upper limb, while the lower limb consists of a proximal third and the distal thirds of both tibiae and possibly a part of the fibular shaft.

From the well developed supraorbital ridges and mastoid process and the generally robust appearance of the few long bones there are, it is likely the sex was male.

The age of the individual at death was probably around the mid-twenties from the presence of some enamel polishing on the fully erupted third molars; the basisphenoid synchondrosis is closed, some closure of the sagittal suture is evident ectocranially and while the epiphyses of the long bones are closed there is still a trace of the epiphyseal line of the head of the radius and the sternal end of the clavicle.

A very tentative estimate of the stature of approximately 169 cm can be made from the humeral length.

Other features of the skeleton include a depressed nasal root, porous bone texture over the brow ridges, shallow pituitary fossa, shallow slope of clivus, pronounced bilateral prominences on the chin, pits on the endocranial aspect of the frontal bosses.

There is evidence of a healed skull fracture, some 5 cm in extent, behind the right parietal eminence. The asymmetry of the lowest thoracic vertebral bodies and the presence of lipping suggest a possible crush fracture in this region. Both clavicles show lesions at the site of attachment of the costo-clavicular ligaments, possibly the result of habitual stress at the sterno-clavicular articulation.

The remains are those of a young male adult, who had suffered from a skull fracture and possibly a fracture of the thoracic spine some time before his death.

SKULL

	mm		mm
Maximum length	185	Bimaxillary width	95
* Maximum breadth	156	* Bizygomatic width	133
Basi-bregmatic length	130	Palatal length	46
Basi-nasion length	105	Palatal breadth	41
Nasion-alveolare length	69	Basi-opisthion length	37
Nasal length	51	Foramen magnum width	32
Nasal width	27	Bicondylar mandibular width	126
Orbital height (L)	32	Bigonial width	99
Orbital width (L)	41	Symphysial height	32
Minimum frontal width	104		

LIMBS

	(R)	(L)
Clavicle	160	164
* Humerus		316
Femur bicondylar width	76	76

CRANIAL INDEX

$$\frac{156}{185} \times 100 = 84 \text{ (brachycranic)}$$

185

STATURE ESTIMATION

Using humeral length, according to Trotter & Gleaser 1958:

$$2.89 \times 31.6 + 78.10 = 169.2 \pm 4.6 \text{ cm.}$$

* Estimated figures

THE BEAKER, PITDRICHIE, CIST 1

Ian A G Shepherd

This pot is represented by the lower three-quarters of a well made, evenly fired beaker, 105mm in diameter at the fracture, whose belly diameter is 120 mm and whose basal diameter is c 79 mm. The wall varies in thickness from 5 to 7 mm. The rim and virtually all the neck are missing; the pot survives to a height of 123 mm.

The beaker is covered with an even, cream- or buff-coloured slip which in the undecorated zones has been burnished. The base is flat, with a very slightly raised area on its interior. A small eroded patch on the upper belly suggests that the pot may have been lying at an angle, or on its side, in contact with part of the cist fill.

The decoration was in three broad zones around the neck, belly and foot. The neck decoration is of course entirely absent. The belly zone is fringed with shallow triangles which have been deeply impressed with a short comb. They represent Clarke's motif 17 (1970, 426). Between these fringes are eight panels each of which is different (although there are three pairs which vary only in details such as filling or orientation). They represent the following motifs in Clarke's 'Panels and Motopes' group: 3511, 3711, 381, a combination of 3511 and 38111, 371, a combination of 3511 and 3711, a combination of 3511 and 371 and a variant of 381 (*ibid*, 428). They have been executed in a combination of incision and comb.

The basal zone consists of three bands of vertical comb impressions between horizontal lines, which represent motif 5 in Clarke's Basic European Motif Group (*ibid*, 424-5).

This beaker belongs in Clarke's Late Northern (N3) group (1970), step 5 of the scheme of Lanting and Van der Waals (1972) and may be compared with such Aberdeenshire beakers as those from Strichen and Old Machar (Clarke 1970, figs 605 & 622).

The use on the Pitdrichie beaker of a band of complex panels and motifs is of considerable interest in view of the links that can be adduced from them with continental beaker groups. David Clarke held that certain panels and motifs were an early introduction to Britain from Germany, coming with Wessex/Middle Rhine, Northern /Middle Rhine and Northern/North Rhine beakers (1970, 177). (See, for example, the N-NR/step 4 beakers from Aldro 54, Yorkshire and Bridge of Allan, Perthshire (*ibid*, figs 284 & 287.) However, the strictures of Lanting and Van der Waals regarding the lack of a 'centre of gravity' in Europe for the last two groups (1972, 28) must be borne in mind. Of more importance is Clarke's observation that panels and motifs are usually found on the necks of British beakers, echoing the German usage, whereas the Dutch fashion was to use these motifs as a bridge between the belly and the waist or between the belly and the foot (1970, 177). (The different usages are demonstrated in Van der Waals and Glasbergen 1955, 36, fig 15.) Although this distinction may to some extent be overdrawn, the Pitdrichie beaker, with its broad zone of panels occupying the central area of the pot, is surely a fine example of the kind of 'intergroup contact' that Lanting and Van der Waals thought such motifs represented (1972, 27).

THE BEAKER, PITDRICHIE, CIST 2

Ian A G Shepherd

This beaker is represented by two large fragments of the rim and belly of a tall, long-necked pot, estimated height 195mm. The rim diameter is 142 mm externally and 129 mm internally, the external diameter of the belly is estimated at 147 mm and the thickness of the wall varies from 7 mm at the neck to 10 mm at the belly.

The fabric differs from that of the beaker from the first cist in being a more reddish brown in colour and unslipped. In addition, substantial inclusions of mica show through on both surfaces.

The neck is proportionately long and slightly cup-shaped while the belly is high and full. The rim is well finished and bears a slight internal bevel.

All the decoration has been executed in thick, square comb impressions (barring the single line of double diagonal impressions on the carination) and is arranged in two zones of horizontal bands on the neck and a single zone on the belly. The care with which the decoration has been applied varies, the upper zone on the neck being considerably more regular than the one below. The motifs in the upper zone on the neck are Clarke's Basic European motif number 2, his Late Northern motif number 22 and number 2 again, while the lower neck bears two versions of motif number 7. The belly zone consists of narrow bands of (in descending order) motifs 2, 7, 5, 7 and 2.

The long neck, rounded belly and combination of Basic European and Late Northern motifs place this beaker as a long-necked variant of Clarke's Late Northern group (M3(L)), which would belong in step 6 of the scheme of Leating and Van der Waas (1972). It may be compared with the M3/step 6 beakers from Gullane, East Lothian (Clarke 1970, fig 706), Parkhill, Aberdeenshire (*ibid*, fig 485) and Cookston, Airlie, Angus (Coutts 1971,

48). The internal rim bevel is found more commonly on Late Northern beakers than on any other type (Clarke 1970, 176). The similarities with certain vessels in Clarke's Southern tradition should also be noted, principally Garton Slack, Yorkshire 75 (*ibid*, fig 763) Harrowden, Bedfordshire (*ibid*, figs 781, 782 & 785) and Doddington, Cambridgeshire (*ibid*, fig 766), although the strong reservations of Lanting and Van der Waale about the integrity of this tradition must be recalled (1972, 26). In any event this beaker stands near the end of the beaker phenomenon in Grampian (Case 1977, 82).

FLINT

Ian A G Shepherd

A secondary flake of grey flint, sub-triangular in form and with a patch of cortication on its dorsal surface. Some attempt has been made to remove the cortication through ripple flaking immediately below the platform. The right and left edges have been retouched very precisely with neat, narrow flakes which produce a denticulated edge.

Its maximum dimensions are: 65 mm long,
60 mm wide,
9 mm thick.

It is unusually large in a Scottish beaker context, although the triangular flint knife found in the rich N4/step 5 beaker cist at Newlands, Oyne, Aberdeenshire (Low 1936, 330; Clarke 1970, fig 721; Shepherd 1986, illus 13) provides a good parallel. It may also be compared with one of the flints from the N2/step 4 'archer's burial' from Cruden, Aberdeenshire (Clarke 1970, figs 551-2).