

ART. II.—*A food-vessel from Springfield, near Ainstable.*

By CLARE I. FELL, F.S.A., and ROBERT HOGG,
B.Sc.

Read at Kendal, April 7th, 1962.

PART I.

IN May 1961 workmen mechanically excavating sand and gravel in the Cumberland County Council's sandpit at Springfield, some $2\frac{1}{2}$ miles S.E. of Ainstable, unearthed a Bronze Age food-vessel which is the subject of this report.

Part of the side of the vessel was broken away by the mechanical grab and was lost, but the greater part of the vessel was recovered by Mr D. Dixon, one of the workmen, and kindly brought by him to Carlisle Museum where it has been fully restored (Museum Accession: 77-1961).

The site was visited and carefully examined a few days after the urn had been found, *i.e.* after further sand had been dug out. The pit is being dug in an extensive spread of Glacial Middle Sands and Gravels which rises as a low ridge at the confluence of the Croglin Water with Briggie Beck (Nat. Grid Ref. NY 548437). The face of the sandpit where the urn was found at a depth of some 3 ft. beneath the surface was carefully examined but no trace of a burial was found.

Miss Fell was invited to report on this extremely interesting vessel and she kindly visited the Museum and prepared the drawing and the account of it which follows.

PART II.

The urn from Springfield, near Ainstable, which Mr Hogg has asked me to describe, makes an interesting addition to the small number of food-vessels and enlarged

food-vessels known from this area. It is hoped to publish a full list of these in the report on a cairn recently excavated at Mecklin Park, Santon Bridge, where food-vessel sherds and other associated finds were discovered.

This urn, of which rather more than half the rim and upper part are missing, is a large example of Abercromby's type 3, or might equally well be described as a small enlarged food-vessel developed from type 3. It is $8\frac{1}{2}$ in. high (21.7 cms.), 8 in. in diameter at the rim (20.1 cms.), and $3\frac{5}{8}$ in. diameter at the flat base (9.1 cms.). The rim is internally bevelled and decorated with three parallel rows of twisted cord impression.

Its outer edge is moulded and bears a row of stamped impressions,  in form, probably executed with the end of a small bone. The short neck is slightly concave and ends in a raised moulding forming the shoulder, bordered on each side with irregularly placed stab marks made with the same instrument as those on the outer moulding of the rim. The neck is ornamented with alternate panels of haphazard jabbings of the same stamp and of roughly drawn lattice lines, lightly tooled with a blunt pointed tool.

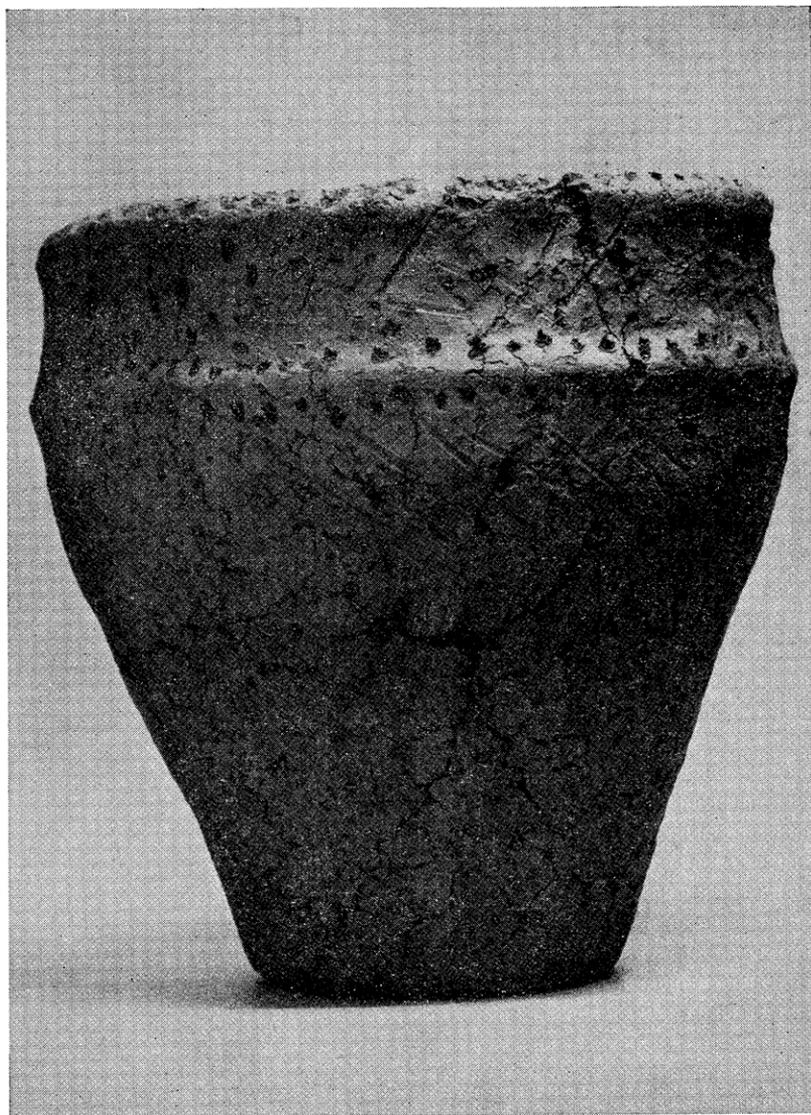
The lower part of the body is covered with similar shallow tooled lines arranged herring-bone fashion on the upper part, and rough lattice below. All the decoration was done before firing. The ware is very coarse, heavily gritted and of a light red-brown colour, poorly fired. The vessel is handmade and somewhat irregular in shape.

Since Abercromby wrote his classification of food-vessels in 1912¹ a number of papers has been published showing the regional specialisation of the various types, and their preponderance in Fox's Highland Zone,² while other writers have emphasised that their development was not altogether insular as originally supposed, but owed some debt to Continental pottery styles,³ the effect of

¹ *Bronze Age Pottery* i 93 ff.

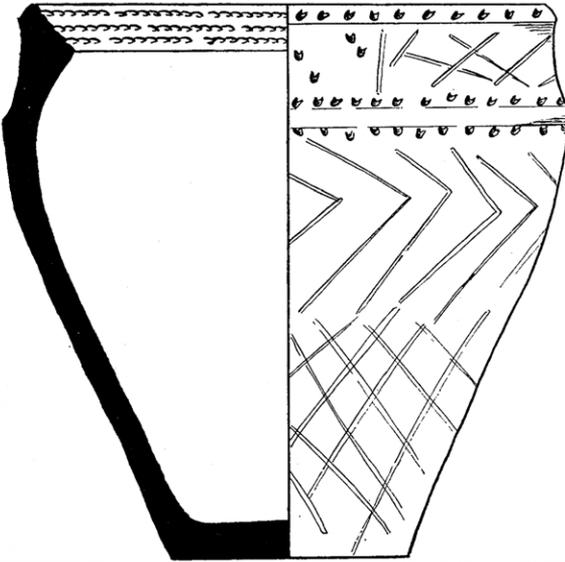
² Fox, *Personality of Britain* (4th ed.), pl. iv.

³ Sir Lindsay Scott in *Proc. Preh. Soc.* xvii, pt. 1 (1951), 16-82.



Bronze Age urn from Springfield near Ainstable. Carlisle Museum Collection, 1961.

continuing contacts by the Atlantic route. The present state of knowledge is conveniently summarised in Dr H. N. Savory's recent paper on food-vessels and enlarged food-vessels of Wales.⁴ Abercromby's types 1 and 2 and those of type 3 derived therefrom, have become known as the Yorkshire food-vase in distinction from the Irish food-bowl (Abercromby's types A-E) of the Hiberno-Scottish region, and it is to the former group that our district is most closely allied.



The punched and incised decoration and the twisted cord impressions inside the rim of the Springfield urn can be paralleled in a number of Yorkshire burials — for instance, Painsthorpe Wold,⁵ Garton Slack,⁶ Huggate Wold,⁷ and on a handled food-vessel from Garrowby

⁴ *Bulletin of the Board of Celtic Studies* xvii, pt. 3, 196-233.

⁵ Mortimer, *Forty Years Researches, etc.*, 130-132, barrow 98, pl. xli, fig. 338.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 221-222, barrow 74, pl. lxxvi, fig. 568.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 301-302, barrow 225, pl. cxv, fig. 904 (Abercromby, vol. 1, pl. xxxiii, no. 95).

Wold.⁸ Further afield, a fragmentary vessel from Ffridd-y-garreg-wen, Whitford (Flints.) and another from Bryn Bugerlyn, Glyn Treaan (Denbigh.)⁹ have close resemblances to our urn. Other parallels can be quoted from Scotland and Northumberland.

From our own area, the two fragments from the Netherhall collection, illustrated by Miss Hodgson,¹⁰ are enlarged food-vessels developed from Abercromby's types 1 and 2 and are decorated with stabbed and slashed ornament, her Fig. 1(2) being an incipient Encrusted Urn. A third example was found many years ago near Rickerby and is still unpublished, though I understand it has close similarities with the vessel under discussion.

The lack of associated finds, or knowledge whether the Springfield vessel accompanied a burial by inhumation, or by cremation as its size might imply, makes close dating impossible. The development of the Food-vessel Culture of the northern area is roughly parallel in time with the Wessex Culture — 1550-1350 B.C. — and falls within the Early Bronze Age of most writers.

Enlarged food-vessels, adapted in size to meet the need of the cremation rite which was universally adopted by the Middle Bronze Age, are known to have persisted in use after 1350 B.C. An enlarged food-vessel of Abercromby's type 3 recently found in the primary burial cist at the "Druid's Circle", Penmaenmawr, has tentatively been dated 1450-1400 B.C. by W. E. Griffiths.¹¹ It may not be far wrong to suggest a similar date for the Springfield urn.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 134-136, barrow 104, pl. xliii, fig. 353.

⁹ *Bulletin of the Board of Celtic Studies* xvii, pt. 1, 204 and figs.

¹⁰ CW2 lvi 3-4, fig. 1, 1-2.

¹¹ *Proc. Preh. Soc.* xxvi (1960), 303-339.