

ART. II.—*Two Enlarged Food-Vessels from How Hill, Thursby, and notes on the distribution of Food Vessels in Cumberland, Westmorland and Lancashire North of the Sands.* By CLARE I. FELL, F.S.A.

Read at Keswick, April 1967.

ABOUT a mile west of Thursby lies the esker known as How Hill (NY(35)/315499) from which glacial sand and gravel is removed for commercial purposes. On 16 March 1964 Mr J. M. Harrison of Croftlands, Thursby, owner of the sandpit, found an Enlarged Food-Vessel which had fallen when the face of the pit collapsed. He immediately reported the discovery and presented the find to Carlisle Museum. Mr Robert Hogg visited the site and noted that the find-spot was on the east face of the northernmost lobe of the esker and about fifty yards south of its northern limits. One foot six inches of top-soil had been removed in preparation for sand and gravel digging and it appeared that the vessel had been deposited in the underlying sand, probably in an inverted position since no sand was found with the cremated human bones inside the pot. There was no indication of a cist or barrow connected with this burial. During May of the same year part of the rim and shoulder of a second Enlarged Food-Vessel was found at the same place and also presented to the Museum by Mr Harrison. It had unfortunately been broken by the grab and many sherds are missing.

Description.

Fig. 1, 1. No. 48. 1964. 1. Enlarged ridged Food-Vessel (enlarged from Abercromby type 2). Height 29 cms.; rim diameter 24 cms.; base diameter 11.9 cms.; average thickness of wall 1.3 cms. It is of coarse, heavily gritted, handmade ware, red-brown outer surface,

C

dark-brown inner surface and black in the fracture. It is ornamented with herring-bone stabbed decoration on the internal bevel of the rim and on part of the upper ridge, while the external moulding of the rim and the lower ridge have a single row of oblique incisions — all executed before firing. The herring-bone

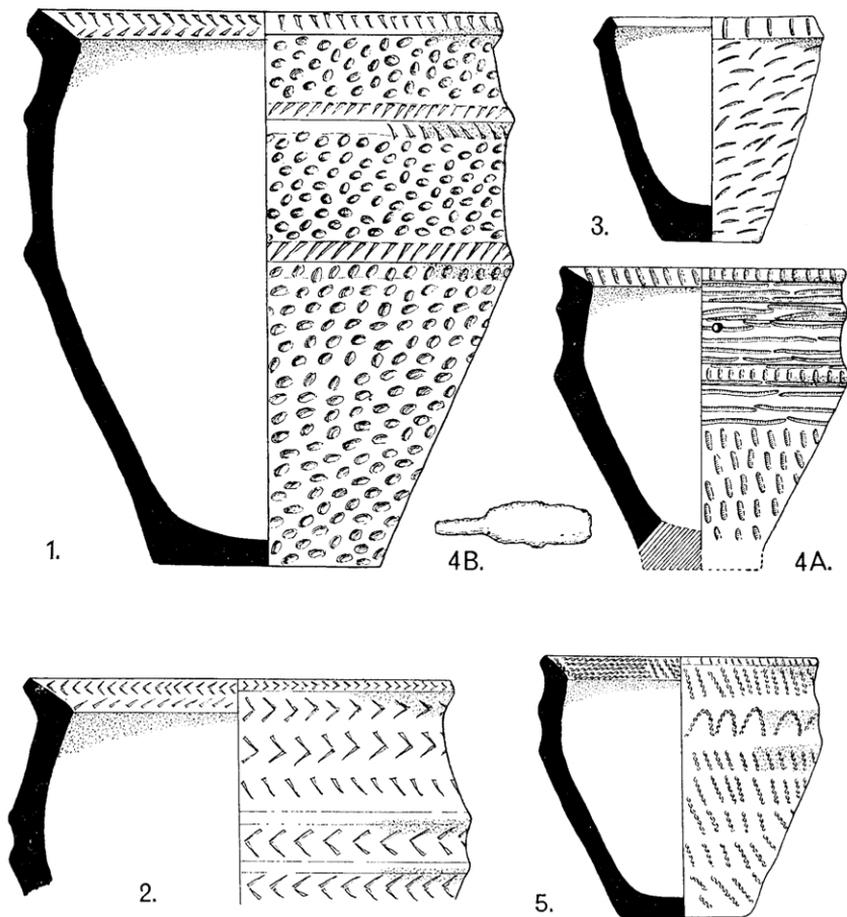


FIG. 1.—Enlarged Food-Vessels and Food Vessels (Scale $\frac{1}{4}$).
 1-2. How Hill, Thursby. 3. Ravenglass. 4a-4b. (?) Cumberland.
 5. Rickerby House, Carlisle.

design on the upper ridge is not complete for the whole circumference, part of its lower side being undecorated. The whole of the remainder of the outer surface is covered with shallow depressions made by a blunt bone or wooden instrument, giving a rusticated effect.

Fig. 1, 2. No. 48. 1964. 2. Part of an Enlarged Food-Vessel of similar type to the last, but with the ridges placed more closely together. Rim diameter 22 cms.; average thickness of walls 1.5 cms. The ware is even more heavily gritted than the last, but similar in other respects. The internal bevel of the rim, the lip, neck and shoulder are decorated with oblique incisions arranged in herring-bone fashion. A few undecorated sherds belonging to this pot suggest that the lower part was undecorated. It is closely paralleled in form and decoration by the upper part of an Enlarged Food-Vessel in the Netherhall collection, Maryport.¹

These Enlarged Food-Vessels are likely to date from the close of the Early Bronze Age or from the first phase of the Middle Bronze Age — somewhere between 1450-1200 B.C.

Discussion.

Dr Ian Longworth drew my attention to the frequent absence of decoration by corded techniques on ridged Food-Vessels (Abercromby types 2 and 2a) and on their enlarged forms, and also pointed out the usual practice of confining ornament in this type to the rim and ridges.² The rustication of the surface in Fig. 1, 1 is paralleled in this district on the fragmentary Enlarged Food-Vessel in the Netherhall Collection³ and on the neck of part of a Collared Urn from Garlands.⁴ Indeed there seems to have been a fashion in north and west Cumberland for Enlarged Food-Vessels and the earlier Collared Urns — for instance, Papcastle⁵ — to retain the characteristic of overall decoration inherited from their Late Neolithic ancestry. The small vessel from Ravenglass⁶ (Carlisle Museum, O.M.257) is hard to classify, but probably belongs to the Food-Vessel series. The irregular thumb-nail

impressions on rim and body may reflect some connection with the Sandhills wares of Northern Ireland⁷ (Fig. 1, 3).

It is also probable that the decorative fashions of Irish Food-Vessels influenced contemporary pottery on the eastern shores of the Irish Sea. The unprovenanced ridged Food-Vessel (Abercromby type 2), once in Crosthwaite's Museum, Keswick, and bought by the British Museum in 1870 (Fig. 1, 4a) bears a close resemblance in form to Fig. 1, 1 from How Hill, while the whipped-cord decoration covering the outer surface and inner bevel of the rim was frequently used on Irish Food-Vessels. Inside this pot, when bought in 1870, were burnt bones and a small bronze blade, probably a Class 1b razor, a type sometimes found in Collared Urns (Fig. 1, 4b). Both have been discussed by Dr Isobel Smith.⁸ Much of the contents of Crosthwaite's Museum was of local origin and in all probability this Food Vessel came from Cumbria, though there are no records to prove its certain association with the bronze blade.

I am indebted to Miss K. S. Hodgson for the details and drawing of a Food Vessel (Abercromby type 2), almost certainly from a field north of Rickerby House, Carlisle, presumably found in 1863 at the point marked in the 6-inch O.S. maps. It is decorated entirely with twisted cord impressions, arranged in horse-shoe fashion round the neck, in short diagonal lines on the body and in alternating zones of horizontal and diagonal lines on the inner bevel of the rim (Fig. 1, 5). The ware is greyish and finely gritted. It was for many years in possession of the MacInnes family and was given to the Eden School, Rickerby House, by Miss J. E. MacInnes in 1950. The slight uncertainty about the provenance of this vessel is probably responsible for it remaining so long unpublished. The comparative rarity of horse-shoe ornament on Food-Vessel pottery was noted by Mortimer when describing Barrow 42, Garrowby Wold, East Yorkshire.⁹

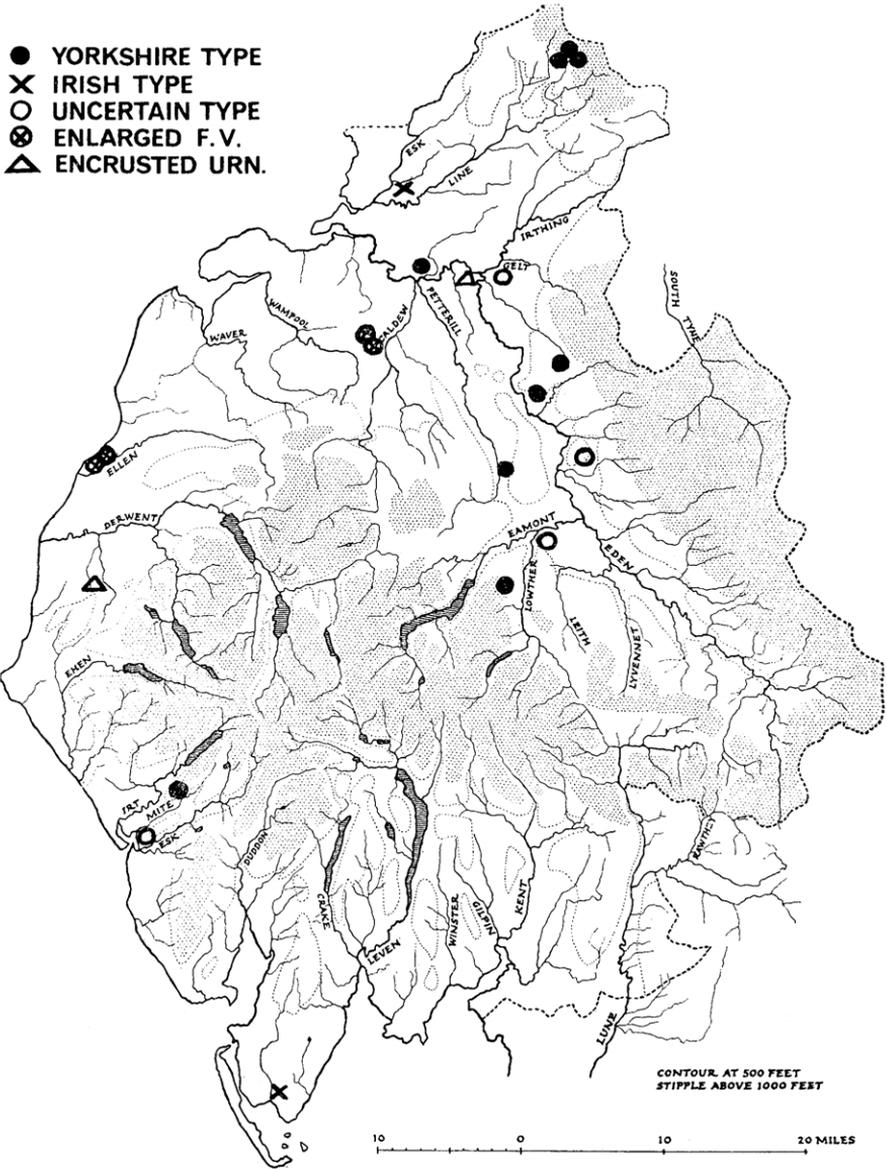


FIG. 2.—Distribution of Food Vessels, Enlarged Food-Vessels and Encrusted Urns.

The distribution of Food Vessels of the Early Bronze Age and their later development in the form of Enlarged Food-Vessels, and also of Encrusted Urns,¹⁰ is concentrated in our district in the valley of the Eden and its tributaries, and in north-west Cumberland (Fig. 2). The discovery of a disturbed Food-Vessel burial at Mecklin Park, Santon Bridge, in 1958, is still unpublished. There pottery of Yorkshire "vase" type was associated with grave goods including disc and other jet beads, flint knife and tanged and barbed flint arrowhead.¹¹ All the surviving pottery, with the exception of an Irish "bowl", once at Netherby Hall and probably local¹² and a small ribbed incense cup from Roose, near Barrow-in-Furness,¹³ possibly derived from Food Vessels of Abercromby type C, is of Yorkshire "vase" type. A similar distribution is recorded for jet beads, buttons and ornaments, for rock engravings — often referred to as cup-and-ring marks — and for plano-convex flint knives, all of which have known associations with Food-Vessel pottery.¹⁴ No settlement sites have been identified with certainty, unless the hut-circle at Woodhead, near Bewcastle, may be claimed for that culture,¹⁵ or the sandhills sites at Walney, Eskmeals and Drigg. That agriculture was practised as well as herding and hunting is shown by the identification of impressions of hulled barley on a Food Vessel of Abercromby type 1a from Plumpton, near Penrith.¹⁶

There seems little doubt that the culture mainly reached our area from Yorkshire and Northumberland, using the passes over the Pennines, connecting the Ure with the Eden, by Stainmore or by the Tyne/Irthing Gap, the routes used by Beaker prospectors and perhaps by Middle and Late Neolithic traders in stone axes from the factories of the central Lake District hills. In a converse direction, Irish contact is apparent not only in trade in bronze implements,¹⁷ but also in rock engravings and decorative characteristics shown on some of our pottery.

References.

- ¹ CW2 lvi 3-4, fig. 1, 1.
- ² Proc. Prehist. Soc. xxvii (1961) 284-285 and letter of 30.4.65.
- ³ CW2 lvi 4, fig. 1, 2.
- ⁴ *Ibid.* 12, fig. 6, 12 (the description of this sherd is wrongly numbered 15).
- ⁵ Abercromby, *Bronze-Age Pottery*, vol. ii, fig. 122. Now in British Museum, formerly in Crosthwaite's Museum, Keswick.
- ⁶ CW2 xl 111.
- ⁷ Proc. Prehist. Soc. xxvii (1961) 191, fig. 15, 1.
- ⁸ University of London Institute of Archaeology, 12th Annual Report (1956) 52; British Museum registration 70, 10-13, 3-4; Abercromby, *Bronze-Age Pottery*, vol. ii, pl. xcvi, 488.
- ⁹ Mortimer, *Forty Years' Researches, etc.* 143-144 and footnote, pl. xlvii, 384.
- ¹⁰ University of London Institute of Archaeology, 12th Annual Report (1956) 46-47.
- ¹¹ Nicholas Thomas, *A Guide to Prehistoric England* (1960) 62, gives a passing reference to the find.
- ¹² Pennant, *A Tour of Scotland and Voyage to the Hebrides* (1772), pl. vii; CW2 xlix 193; Trans. Anglesey Ant. Soc., 1956, 6-7.
- ¹³ Barrow Nat. Field Club (OS) xi 96-97.
- ¹⁴ CW2 xlix 192-193.
- ¹⁵ CW2 xl 162-166, figs. 7-9 and 11.
- ¹⁶ K. Jessen and H. Helbaek, *Cereals in Great Britain and Ireland in Prehistoric and Early Historic times*. British Museum registration 04.12-19.1.
- ¹⁷ CW2 xl 118-130. Recent work has added greatly to the knowledge of the Irish bronze trade. e.g. Ulster Journ. Arch. 17 (1954) 66-75; Proc. Prehist. Soc. xxv (1959) 168-180, map. 4.

APPENDIX.

A. Food-Vessel Pottery.

- (i) *Yorkshire Vases* (Abercromby types 1, 2 and 3).
1. Moor Divock, Askham. Type 1a. Greenwell, *British Barrows* (1877), 400-401. Barrow 183 with cremation. British Museum 1879, 12.9.1377.
 2. Plumpton, near Penrith. Type 1a. British Museum '04, 12-19.1.
 3. Croglin. Type 1a. *Arch. Ael.* (4th series) v 24; CW2 xl 114. Blackgate Museum, Newcastle upon Tyne.
 - 4-6. Shield Knowe, Woodhead, near Bewcastle. Two type 1a, one type 2. CW2 xl 154-161. Carlisle Museum.
 7. Springfield, near Ainstable. Type 3. CW2 lxii 27-30. Carlisle Museum.
 8. Rickerby House, Carlisle. Type 2. Fig. 1, 5 of this paper. Eden School, Rickerby House, Carlisle.
 9. ? Cumberland. Type 2. Abercromby, *Bronze-Age Pottery*, vol. ii, pl. xcvi, 488. Fig. 1, 4a of this paper. British Museum 1870, 10-13.3.
 10. Mecklin Park, Santon Bridge. Unpublished.

(ii) *Irish Bowls.*

1. Netherby ?. Type C. Pennant, *Tour of Scotland and Voyage to the Hebrides* (1772), pl. vii; Proc. Prehist. Soc. i (1935) 83, pl. vi; Trans. Anglesey Ant. Soc, 1956, 6-7. Cambridge University Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology.
2. Roose, near Barrow-in-Furness. ? derived from type C. Barrow Nat. Field Club o.s. xi 96-97. Barrow-in-Furness Museum.

(iii) *Uncertain Types.*

1. Ravenglass. Fig. 1, 3 of this paper. Carlisle Museum.
2. Brougham with a Beaker. *Archaeologia* lxxv 412; *Early Cultures of North-West Europe* (1950) 45. Now lost.
3. Edmond Castle Lodge, near Castle Carrock. CW1 vi 470; *Arch. Ael.* (4th series) viii (1931) 163. Broken up.
4. Little Meg, Addingham (sometimes called the Maughanby Circle). Proc. Soc. Ant. Scot. (2nd series) iii 211-213; CW2 ii 381-382. With a cremation. Lost. Drawing in manuscript notebooks of John Thompson, *Old Penrith and Environs*, vol. ii, now in Penrith Public Library, suggests this pot may have been a cordoned Beaker, known in our district from Sizergh Fell, Levens and Broomrigg Plantation, near Ainstable, though the measurements he gives are somewhat large to support this identification.

(iv) *Enlarged Food-Vessels.*

- 1-2. Netherhall Collection, Maryport. CW2 lvi 3-4, fig. 1, 1-2.
3-4. How Hill, Thursby. This paper. Fig. 1, 1-2. Carlisle Museum.

(v) *Encrusted Urns.*

1. Aglionby. CW2 xl 126-127, pl. iv, 2; CW2 lvi 17, fig. 8, 5. Carlisle Museum.
2. Branthwaite. Abercromby. *Bronze-Age Pottery*, vol. ii 54, pl. xcvi, 498; *Antiquaries Journal* vii, pt. 2 (1927), pl. xx, 4. Cambridge University Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology.

B. *Jet ornaments, buttons and beads.*

1. Dale Moor, Crosby Ravensworth. Proc. Soc. Ant. (2nd series) vii (1878) 214. Disc. beads; pottery accompanying them is lost. British Museum.
2. Broomrigg, Ainstable. Disc beads. CW2 l 35, pl. iv, 2. Carlisle Museum.

3. Mecklin Park, Santon Bridge. Disc and other jet beads. Unpublished.
4. Woodhead, Bewcastle. V bored button and "pulley-ring". CW2 xl 162-166, fig. 11. Carlisle Museum.
5. Broomrigg, Ainstable. V bored button. CW2 l 40, pl. iv, 2. Carlisle Museum.
6. Moor Divock, Askham. V bored button. CW2 xl 113. Carlisle Museum.
7. Hackthorpe Hall. Broken jet ornament, not illustrated. CW1 ii 11-13. Private possession.
8. Crosby Garrett. Spacer bead. Greenwell, *British Barrows*, 392; Barrow 176. British Museum.
9. ? Cumberland. Spacer bead and biconical bead formerly in Crosthwaite's Museum, Keswick. British Museum 1870.10.14.
10. Hesket Newmarket. Barrel bead from a barrow excavated 1794. Probably that known as the Druid's Grove. CW2 xxiii 241. It is possible that the beads listed in 9 above are from the same place. Carlisle Museum.

C. *Plano-convex knives* (flint).

1. Castle Carrock with a cremation. Greenwell, *British Barrows*, 379-380, Barrow 164, fig. 153. British Museum.
2. Hawkshead Moor, Lancs., with a cremation. CW1 ix 202; CW2 lxiv 1-5, fig. 2. Lancaster Museum.
3. Drigg. CW2 lxxv 66-85, fig. 1, 10, fig. 5, 29. Private Possession.
4. Barrow-in-Furness. CW2 liv 8, fig. 2, 4. Barrow-in-Furness Museum.

D. *Rock engravings*.

(See discussion in *The Prehistoric Peoples of Scotland* (1962), edited Piggott, 92).

References are given in CW1 xiii 389-399 to nine known examples in this area, i.e. Old Parks, Kirkoswald; Long Meg, Addingham; Little Meg, Addingham; Shap Avenue; Redhills, Stainton, Penrith; Giant's Grave, Kirksanton; Beckfoot, Maryport; Beacon Hill, Aspatria; and Hugill, Staveley. Since 1894 the following additional examples have been recorded:

- (i) On two stones of a circle surrounding a cairn at Grayson Lands, Glassonby. CW2 i 295; CW2 ii 382.
- (ii) On a stone ploughed up at Dean. CW2 xxiii 34.
- (iii) On a stone found at Honeydots, Edenhall, near Penrith. CW2 x 507-508.