

XXIV.—FURTHER DISCOVERIES OF PRE-HISTORIC  
GRAVES, URNS, AND OTHER ANTIQUITIES, ON  
LILBURN HILL FARM, ON THE LILBURN TOWER  
ESTATE.

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NATURALISTS' CLUB.

[Read on the 30th October, 1889.]

IN a previous volume of the *Archaeologia Aeliana* (Vol. X., pp. 220-222) an account is given by Mr. James G. Moffatt of Lilburn Cottage, now deceased, of some remarkable pre-historic graves, disturbed by the plough on Mr. George Tait's farm at Lilburn Hill, in the last week of June, 1883.

Some years afterwards another discovery was made on the same farm, but in a different direction from the previous one, of urns found in rude graves, of which two were preserved and sent to me. Before they had reached me Mr. Moffatt had written, of date 1st May, 1886, stating that: 'Two cists, both containing bones, one a trace of iron, were dug out over 40 years ago in the North Cairnfold field, Lilburn Hill farm. Three cists were dug up on the 19th, 20th, and 21st April, 1886, containing bones and three urns; the two largest urns were broken all in pieces, the small urn is entire. The largest urn was about  $7\frac{1}{2}$  inches across at top, vase-shaped, string pattern. Number 2 was  $6\frac{3}{8}$  inches across the top, the upper parts outside covered with lozenge or rather fusil pattern. The small urn is entire,  $2\frac{1}{2}$  inches across, cup-shaped, with crescent or finger-nail indentations. All these were in the East Cairnfold field, Lilburn Hill farm. The three urns are of the most primitive description; the clay material of the urns having been most imperfectly burned with wood or peat.'<sup>1</sup> I had not the opportunity of visiting the place till June 4th, 1889, along with a friend. Mr. Tait was found occupied, but immedi-

<sup>1</sup> *History of Berwickshire Naturalists' Club*, Vol. XI., pp. 272-3, where there is an account of an inscribed stone supposed to have been a cist cover from Lilburn South Stead farm. Other notices of Antiquities may be found in the paper quoted: "On Urns and other Antiquities found round the Southern Skirts of the Cheviot Hills. By James Hardy."

ately disengaged himself, and went with us to the field, where the urns were come upon, called the 'Cairn-fauld's field,' lying on the N.E. part of the farm, mid-way between Lilburn Hill and Trickley (the ancient Tricklington) gamekeeper's cottage. The field was bearing a strong crop of oats. The upper part of the field is crossed by a low ridge, on which the plough, when the ground was last cultivated, was repeatedly interrupted by projecting portions of sandstone and others deeper seated in the soil. Mr. Tait told the man to stop and draw up the stones, and when he did so he found them standing upright, bounding an enclosed space. Mr. Tait showed the position of two of these short graves. One of them he said had a three-cornered compartment, he did not say where situated, with a great urn standing upright in the centre. This urn, which Mr. Tait states, was 15 inches high and 7 inches across the mouth, crumbled to pieces when handled. It contained bones and ashes, and among these lying at random sideways, the small cup-shaped urn (A). A second grave, not far distant to the N.E., showed when opened the food vessel (B), which was standing upright. Both graves had a sandy bottom, and when this last urn was removed a dimple was left where it stood in the sand. This grave was also enclosed by stones. At a considerable distance more to the N.E. an oblong short grave, lying oblique to the ridge, was come upon, with some bones in it, one a piece of a human elbow joint. The bottom was full of sand, along which lay the mark of a black substance. The subsoil of the field is naturally sandy. There was a sandstone slab on this grave  $4\frac{1}{2}$  feet by 3 feet. The graves were shallow, only 2 feet or so of soil remaining on the surface above them, owing to repeated culture carrying the loose earth to a lower position. There are other eminences on the ridge which Mr. Tait proposes to examine during the autumnal ploughing.



#### DESCRIPTION OF THE URNS.

**SMALL CUP-SHAPED URN (A).**—This is formed of a reddish porphyritic clay, such as may be found among the Cheviots, where the rock is in a state of decay, owing to the continuous percolation of moisture, and is full of minute gray gritty particles, apparently of porphyritic origin also. The lip is slightly bevelled inwards,  $\frac{1}{4}$  inch



J. P. Gibson, Photo.

ANCIENT BRITISH URNS.

A and B from Lilburn Hill Farm, Co. Northumberland, presented by James Hardy, Esq., Sec. Berw. Nat. Club.

III. From Colwell, Northumberland. All in the Museum of the Society.



thick; the outline of the sides is not quite regular, but they have been smoothed, and while still soft impressed with more or less bent, sub-upright bands of slender arched fore-nail impressions, 21 in all, the nail marks on each being in number from 12 to 13. The irregularity of the outline is partly owing to these bands, the impressions having been made while the substance was soft and pliable. A similar band of nail marks, about 70 in all, encircles the mouth-rim. Below these bands there is a free space for the hollow above the rim of the bottom of the vessel. The bottom is flat. There is an oblique black stain as if from smoke or ashes on one of the sides down to the base. The interior is very regularly hollowed out. The top is 3 inches in diameter; the height,  $2\frac{1}{2}$  inches; diameter of the bottom, 2 inches.

THE DRINKING VESSEL (B) has fewer gritty particles in its texture than A. Although of elegant shape it has been very rudely fashioned and sculptured. It has been smoothed by some implement before the application of the very rudimentary ornamentation. The design upon it is so crude that it cannot very well be described. The top of the projecting rim of the mouth, of a quarter of an inch in thickness, is obliquely notched, and sometimes crossed, by deepish impressions as if made by a flint knife, and its outside is encircled by a similar but closer series of nearly upright shorter notches, a quarter of an inch deep; it then contracts before it swells out in a concavity towards the narrow middle projecting band. Below the notched rim there follows an encircling band,  $\frac{3}{4}$  inch deep, of horizontal random lines or dashes; from four to six in number, according as there is space to fill; and beneath these an attempt has been made to form irregular lozenge patterns, mostly bounded with four lines, but where they meet with from five to eight in a cluster. Beneath the ill-drawn lozenges, and above the middle notched band, is placed a band of deep-cut zig-zig inartistically drawn lines (five or six). The middle band, about  $\frac{1}{4}$  inch, carries a series of cross notches more oblique and pronounced than those beneath the top rim. After this middle band the urn tapers towards the bottom. Following it is a band ( $\frac{3}{4}$  inch) similar to that below the brim of length-ways irregular lines (five or six); then a band of rude lozenges ( $1\frac{1}{2}$  inches), not always completed, bounded by four lines. The points of these line-bordered patterns cut

through the band of horizontal lines above them, and a narrower band ( $\frac{3}{4}$  inch) of similar but still hastier drawn lines where the bottom is set on. On the well-formed rim round the bottom ( $\frac{1}{4}$  inch thick) is a series of oblique notches. Part of the present base is artificial, and some of the redness of the urn is owing to the material employed in patching it up, for it came in a fragmentary condition to me, and a friend reconstructed what came of it.

[B.—This urn, Mr. Moffatt's No. 2, on being reconstructed, measured  $6\frac{9}{16}$  inches high;  $5\frac{6}{8}$  inches across the mouth; diameter at bottom,  $3\frac{1}{2}$  to  $3\frac{6}{8}$  inches.]

Although the great CINERARY URN (C), which contained the cup-shaped one, is in a very imperfect and fragmentary condition, there is sufficient left of it to allow of a description of its appearance and pattern, when its constituent parts were in combination. It is a very rude example of primitive fictile art, formed out of badly kneaded, unsifted, gritty, and untenacious clay; but is fully as valuable as a representative relic of an early age, as the more finished productions of a more cultivated period, and to be prized accordingly. Mr. Moffatt, who saw it in a more entire state, says it was vase-shaped. Apparently it has had two divisions, an upper ornamented section of wider dimensions than the under, commencing at the mouth-rim and terminating with a narrow-raised ridge, beneath which, after a sudden concave contraction, the lower division originates. This is smoothed and unadorned, and without a dividing line, with a flat bottom. The material is of reddish porphyritic clay containing angular porphyritic fragments, conspicuous from their size, especially on the bottom. The thickness of the sides of the urn is about 4-16ths of an inch, of which about 2-16ths, separating like a crust or bark, is red, and the remainder in the interior black and burned and smoked. The thickness of the bottom is 11-16ths of an inch. The inside has been smoothed, but not finely. It is thinned and slopes outwards at the mouth to form a sort of inner lip, which on the inward slope is irregularly marked by two encircling plaited-thong or string impressions; the rim or upper edge of the lip is divided by a central encircling, plaited-thong, impressed line. There is no ornament outside the lip, only a free space to which the ornament of the upper division reaches without being bounded by an encircling line. The ornament consists




of a series of triangles or V-shaped designs, placed zig-zagwise, with oblique strongly plaited-thong marked lines placed in two different directions, in nines or tens, to fill up the spaces. The intervals between these lines are about 4-16ths of an inch in breadth. These rough lines and flat intervals resemble a piece of very broad-striped corduroy. The lines all terminate above an encircling plaited-thong marked line, which runs above a rudely unornamented ridge, beneath which the lower division commences. It appears to have been convex, and then to have taken a sub-conical shape on whose apex the flat bottom with little definable separation was moulded. The diameter of the bottom, for it is much broken, may have been 4 inches. The sides of the under division are not very shapely, and show depressions and dimples. The urn, from some slender lines on its surfaces, appears to have been laid on wiry grass to dry.

A packet of bones found among the fragments of urns and ashes—I am not told where obtained or in what graves—accompanies the urns.

Mr. Tait agrees with me that the proper place for the preservation of antiquities from Northumberland is the Museum of the Society of Antiquaries of Newcastle-upon-Tyne, and to the society I beg leave to present these urns.

My visit to Lilburn Hill brought other antiquities to light, but I would require to go back to finish the inquiry. On other parts of the farm there have been found a stone hammer, perforated for a handle (not at hand at the period of my visit); a bullet of pale porphyrite, somewhat cellular in its composition, six inches in circumference, which I brought away; and a beautiful thumb flint or scraper. This is of a pale grey semi-transparent flint, and has been struck off at one blow. It is truncate at the thickened end; as if by a skilled stroke. The back is slightly raised, and the sharpened edge for cutting has been neatly chipped.

On a wall top, near a gate not far from the Cairn-fauld's field, lies a detached stone, supposed to have come from a cairn, with three circles and a hollow central cup incised on it, which no one seems to care for. Quern stones have also been turned up in the fields. After crossing two fields in an easterly direction, we came to a field of old grass on Chillingham Newtown ground, backed by a fir plantation. This is in view of Chillingham. This field appeared to have many

flat rocks exposed to the day, with incised circles and other analogous markings dispersed upon their faces. There was no time to examine more than the first we reached. One mark was thus: ; another was: ; and a third: . This last had been picked out by some pointed metallic implement. Some of the inscriptions were worn with the weather and the passage of the harrows when the field had been cultivated. There are numerous British camps among the Fowberry plantations, never yet surveyed and little known: these are adjacent to Trickley, and reach to Whitsunbank Hill.

The sculptured rocks described by Mr. William Gunn, F.G.S., in the *Berwickshire Naturalists' Club's Proceedings*, 1886, Vol. XI., pp. 401-402 (and figured Plates I., II., III.) are probably a continuation of this fresh series, as they are said to be a third of a mile from Trickley. The disadvantage of a snatch visit is that objects are not seen in their full bearings, and the knowledge obtained is fragmentary. It would have required an hour here instead of a few minutes.