

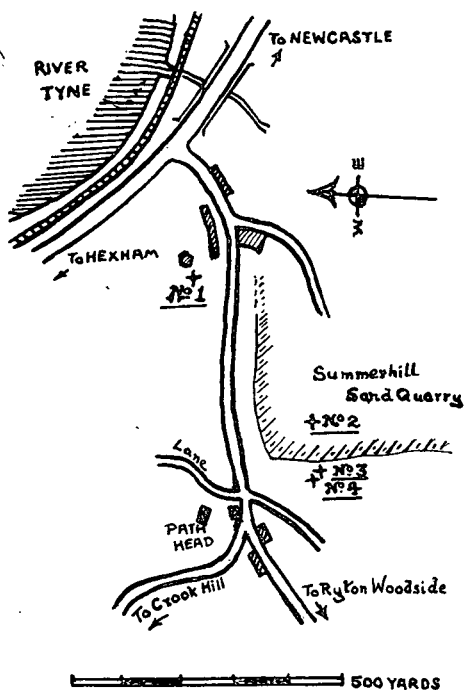
XIV.—A NOTE ON TWO MORE CISTS AT SUMMERHILL, BLAYDON.

BY WILLIAM BULMER.

[Read on January 25th 1939.]

Two cists having been previously discovered at Summerhill,¹ it will be convenient to refer to the two discussed

here as numbers three and four. They were discovered, as was number two, in the sand exposed when turf was being removed above the face of the Summerhill sand quarry; number three on November 11th and number four on November 23rd 1938. Number three was 40 yards from the Blaydon-Greenside road, opposite a point 20 yards east of the lane which crosses that road at Path Head. Number four was some 5 yards north-

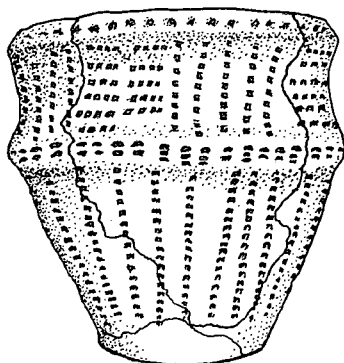


west of number three, which, in turn, was about 20 yards WSW. of the site of number two.

¹ No. 1, unpublished, re-erected in the Hancock museum. No. 2, AA⁴ xv, 218.

Number three cist was formed of four slabs of local sandstone forming a rectangular chamber² with its longer axis 20° E. of N. and the top stone some 12 inches below the present ground surface. The gaps formed at the corners of the chamber by the irregularities of the stone slabs were packed by small stones or covered by thin slabs placed against the outer sides of the large stones. The cover stone was much broken and portions had fallen into the cist before the sand which filled it had accumulated; other portions of the cover stone remained supported upon this sand. A number of small fragments of charcoal and burnt bone were found in the sand above the broken portions of cover stone. At the bottom of the cist were a number of thin irregular sandstone slabs forming a rough but level floor; on this were the poorly preserved remains of an adult skeleton lying on its left side in a contracted position with the face to the south-east. Near the skull was a food vessel badly broken, as was the skull, by the falling of a large piece of cover stone.

The food vessel³ is of light buff fabric, with dark grey core, decorated by the stick and cord method in close vertical lines on the body. This is repeated on the neck in groups of six lines each, arranged alternately horizontally and vertically, and again, diagonally, on the inside of the rim.



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It is a good example of Abercromby's type 3, several examples of which have been found in Northumberland.⁴

² Inside dimensions c. 2' 0" x 3' 4" x 2' 3" deep.

³ 5 $\frac{7}{8}$ " high, 6 $\frac{1}{2}$ " diameter at rim and 3 $\frac{1}{2}$ " at base.

⁴ e.g. nos. 10 and 17 in the Alnwick castle collection from Cathough and Bulls Bush, from Hawkhill, Lesbury in the Black Gate museum and from Amble, Abercromby no. 212, in the British museum.

Number four cist differed from the other three in being covered by numbers of rounded water-worn stones from 6 to 12 inches in length packed in the surrounding sand and forming a roughly circular heap some 5 or 6 feet in diameter.⁵ This did not project above the present ground level and does not appear to have risen more than 18 inches above the top of the cist.

The cist, of the same local sandstone, was more carefully made than the others; the joints of the large stones were not only packed with small stones, or covered with thin slabs on the outside, but were, at several points, also packed on the inside with clay. The same clay packing was used in several places between the sides and the cover stone. The slabs forming the cist were also larger and much thicker than those used in cists two and three, but the size of the chamber was similar;⁶ the long axis was 7° N. of E.

The cover stone, which was some 2 feet 3 inches below the present surface, was also much larger and thicker than those of the other two cists, measuring 5 feet 6 inches by 3 feet and being 4 inches thick. Although it was much broken in the plane of the bedding, the lower portions were intact and were supported by the sand which filled the chambers. This sand appears to have been deliberately placed in the cist and not to be due to infiltration as numbers of pebbles, up to 2 inches or more in length, were found in its upper levels. In view of the intact cover stone and the carefully packed corners of the chamber these pebbles would appear to have been introduced, and the sand with them, before the cover stone was placed in position. Occasional small fragments of charcoal and burnt bone were also found among the sand.

The floor of the chamber consisted of three slabs of sandstone about 1 inch thick carefully fitted together, and on

⁵ Cf. Early Bronze Age burial at Pyle, Glamorgan, *Arch. Camb.*, 7th series, vol. 8, p. 333.

⁶ Inside dimensions 3' 6" × 2' 0" × 1' 6" deep.

this was an adult skeleton lying on its left side, contracted and facing south. The left hand was before the face, but the right arm was reflexed, with the hand behind the body.

In the north-east corner of the cist, standing upright on a small slab of stone on the floor, was a beaker, intact except for a piece broken from the rim. It is of the type called by Abercromby "variant B/C," and parallels to it can be quoted from Northumberland; in particular one of the three beakers found by the late J. P. Gibson at Dilston Park in 1905,⁷ and now in the Black Gate museum. The fabric is moderately thin, about quarter of an inch, with dark buff surface and grey-black core.⁸ The whole outer surface is decorated; the neck with five incised horizontal lines and the body with horizontal bands of chevrons, saltires, horizontal or diagonal lines all formed of small impressions, 1 to 1½ mm. across. Similar dots are impressed into the bottoms of the incised lines on the neck.



As in the case of cist number two it is owing to Mr. J. E. Armstrong, the owner of the Summerhill sand quarry, that these two burials have been excavated and recorded. When they were found he telephoned the information to the Hancock museum and Mr. T. Russell Goddard, the curator, and Miss Scott, his assistant, excavated the cists with exemplary care and thoroughness. Mr. G. Temperley, hon. sec. of the Natural History Society, joined them in the excavation, and it is owing to his kindness in informing me of the discovery that I was able to be present and so to make this record for the information of our society.

⁷ AA³ II, 141, no. 4.

⁸ 7½" high, maximum diameter 6¼", diameters of rim and base 6" and 3¼".