

II.—A PREHISTORIC GRAVE AT HAUGH HEAD, WOOLER.

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I.—GENERAL ACCOUNT.

BY E. F. COLLINGWOOD.

The grave was discovered by Mr. P. Robson of Haugh Head on June 28th, 1946. He had known for some time of a large flat stone at the top of a prominent knoll which rises steeply at the back of Haugh Head farmhouse on the east side of the Wooler-Morpeth road, and had suggested to me that this might be the cover stone of a Bronze Age cist similar to that found at Lilburn South Steads on 2nd May, 1946. He therefore raised one half of the stone, which was found to be broken, when the cist was immediately seen. It was full of a light sandy soil, and on removal of a small quantity of this an earthenware vessel was found and recovered intact.

The vessel was embedded in the soil, but standing vertically in it with the top about six inches below the cover stone. It was filled with the same soil as the cist, but contained fragments of charcoal at the bottom. The cist was cleared the following day, the contents being passed through a $\frac{1}{4}$ -in. riddle. The filling proved to be a fairly uniform mixture of light sandy soil and medium gravel. Charcoal was widely distributed. The only traces of a skeleton were two very small fragments of bone, but whether these fragments are human cannot be established.

Six flints were found in the riddle of which one is of the dart or javelin head type, $2\frac{3}{4}$ ins. by $1\frac{1}{2}$ ins., one is an arrow-head, and the others are small fragments.

Description of the cist.

The line of the axis was approximately east and west. The dimensions were : length 3 ft. 5 ins. ; width 1 ft. 10 ins. at the west end, 2 ft. 2 ins. at the east end ; depth 2 ft. The sides were formed of four large flat slabs of local red sandstone, those at the ends being 6 ins. and the sides 10 ins. to 1 foot thick. The inner surfaces were smooth but did not appear to be weathered. The construction was of the usual type with the ends leaning inwards and supported at the top by the sides. The fit was fairly good, but there was a little making up with clay and stones at the bottom corners. The cover stone was of roughly elliptical outline, 4 ft. 10 ins. by 3 ft. by 10 ins. thick, and was broken roughly along the minor axis. The fracture was an old one and the two halves had fitted closely together when in position on the cist. The cover was of the same material as the sides and ends. There were no marks on any of the stones.

The vessel had been found in the north-east corner embedded in the soil about 1 foot above the floor level. The flints were found above the middle level.

II.—THE GRAVE GOODS.

BY J. D. COWEN.

The principal object contained in the grave was a food vessel. It is a fine example almost perfectly preserved, $4\frac{3}{4}$ ins. high by 6 ins. in diameter at the rim (fig. 1). It is a characteristic example of Abercromby type 2. The flattened rim and the whole of the exterior are covered with decoration. From the rim inclusive down to the shoulder this has been carried out entirely in the whipped-cord tech-

nique. Below the shoulder this technique is abandoned in favour of incised parallel lines made with a pointed implement. On the rim a cord, or cords, have been applied in an all-over scheme without following any particular pattern, except that the lines run approximately towards

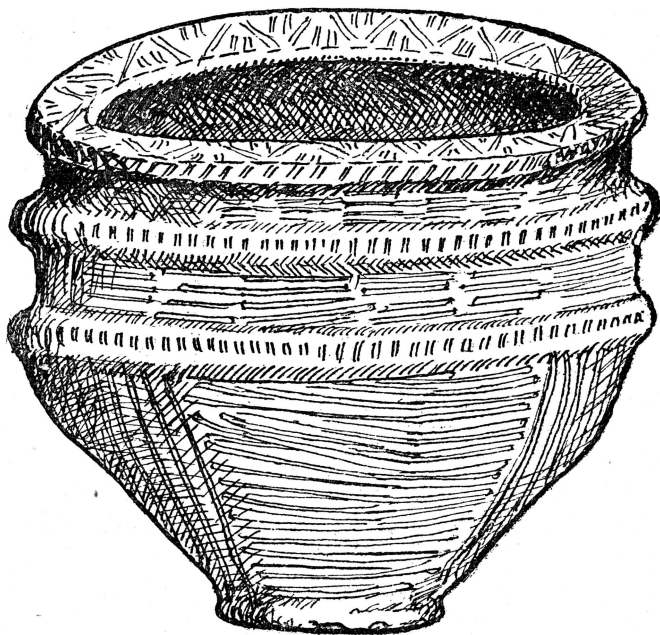


FIG.1. [1/2]

the centre and at right-angles to the line of the rim, though this is so irregularly carried out that they cross in many places. The outer lip of the rim is regularly notched at close intervals all the way round, the cord being impressed diagonally at an angle of about 45° . The same applies to both the lower ridges, except that on the shoulder-ridge the cord has been applied vertically. On the neck, and on the

space between the two ridges, the cord has been applied horizontally in lengths of about 1 in., and in groups of four, five, or six, forming a neat and fairly regular pattern. Below the shoulder the pot is entirely covered with incised lines running parallel to each other and close together, arranged in alternate panels horizontally and vertically. At the base a very slight projection all round marks the foot, and the diameter here is $2\frac{1}{2}$ ins.

The colour is pale buff outside, and a muddy grey on the inside, which is coarsely finished. The paste is rough and gritty at the core, so far as can be judged from the very slight damage which the pot has undergone. The faces have, however, been worked up with a fine slip, particularly on the outside, which has a regularity and smoothness of finish as good as the average beaker-ware in this part of the country.

What gives this food vessel a special interest is that, on the outside, half-way up the body, there is an elliptical cavity which seems very probably to have been caused by a seed of grain. This merits and will receive specialized examination. In the meantime we will only note that this is a phenomenon long since observed in Scandinavia, but only recently studied in this country, where occurrences are few. The importance of such evidence in the determination of cereals cultivated in the Bronze Age needs no further emphasis here.

The flints also are of more than usual interest. The largest (fig. 2), already referred to by Dr. Collingwood, is a finely finished implement of an opaque whitish chert. It is of lanceolate form, $2\frac{3}{4}$ ins. long, and has all the appearance of a spear-head. In section, on the other hand, it is markedly asymmetric, one edge being worked in steep flaking, while the other is very thin. This might suggest that another explanation of its purpose should be sought, but I hardly think that is necessary, and indeed the very carefully worked point can scarcely be explained in any other way. Flint spear-heads in Bronze Age burials are

far from common. Greenwell in his excavations found only one, also from Northumberland, and that was from the material of the barrow and not in strict association with a grave. It came from the second barrow at Broomhill, Ford, opened by him in 1858, and in size and general appearance

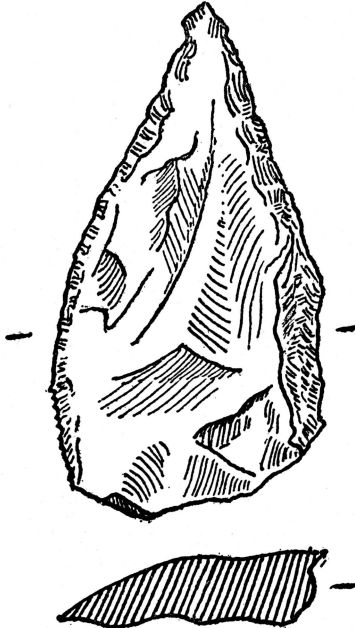


FIG. 2.

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is not unlike ours, though the section of his is symmetrical.¹ In fact this is the only spear-head mentioned by him in his schedule of the contents of 220 barrows, all other flints being classified as knives, scrapers, or arrow-heads. Mortimer² mentions and illustrates several spear-heads from

¹ *British Barrows*, CLXXXVIII, and fig. 157.

² *Forty Years Researches*, *passim*.

his diggings on the Yorkshire Wolds, but with one exception none bear much resemblance to ours. The one exception was actually found by Lord Londesborough in 1851, associated with a food vessel, again of type 2, close beside the primary burial in the famous Kelleythorpe barrow near Driffield.³ This is a very similar implement to ours, and in particular has the asymmetric section and steep flaking along one edge which are the leading features of that under discussion.

The second flint (fig. 3) is a superb and intact example

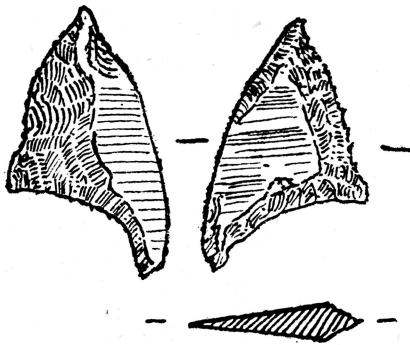
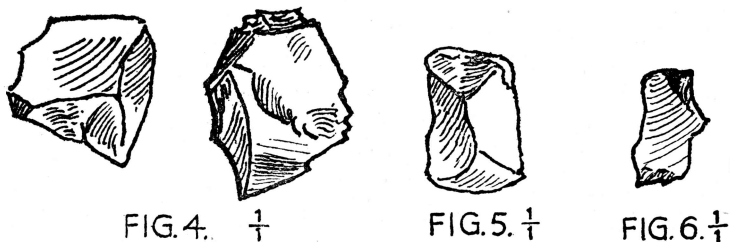


FIG. 3. $\frac{1}{4}$

of a single-barbed arrow-head, $1\frac{3}{8}$ ins. long. It is of a fine translucent dark grey-brown flint, and is formed from a thin flake retouched by pressure-flaking. It is the first of its kind to be found in the county. As the type is not uncommon among surface finds from the Yorkshire Wolds, and is also known from many other areas both to the north and south of us, it is a little surprising that it has not appeared here previously. Of much greater consequence, however, is the fact that, so far as I am aware, this is the first occasion on which the type has ever been discovered in this country in a closed find. When the late Reginald

³ *Ibid.*, pp. 271-3, figs. 737 and 738.

Smith reviewed the whole available evidence from Great Britain for the dating of flint arrow-heads,⁴ the single-barbed variety was conspicuous by its absence, and I know of no other case of association which has come to light since.⁵ On the evidence, therefore, of the Haugh Head burial we may now provisionally assign the developed type of the single-barbed arrow-head to the food vessel period. This is no more than might have been expected. The "lop-sided" arrow from which the single-barb derives is ultimately of mesolithic origin with its roots in the *petit tranchet*. In the form in which we now have it, however, it has clearly been strongly modified under the influence



of the "beaker" type of double-barbed and tanged arrow. The result is the form now under discussion, and its derivation is precisely parallel to that of the food vessel—a long established sub-mesolithic (Peterborough) tradition, worked upon by strong influences from the invading beaker folk to produce a new product completely native to this country. It is, indeed, appropriate that they should at last have been found in association.

Of the remaining fragments (figs. 4-6), two of a whitish grey flint fit together to form part of what seems to have been a simple scraper. The fracture looks like a recent one, but the implement, if such it was, cannot have been a

⁴ *Archæologia*, LXXVI (1927), 81-105.

⁵ Clark's valuable paper in *Arch. Journ.*, XCI (1934), does not help except for the general evolution of the type. The examples with which he is concerned, even the most advanced variety, his class I (pp. 55-57, fig. 12, no. 46), are less developed than our Lilburn arrow-head.

very finished product. A tiny fragment of translucent reddish flint, $\frac{3}{4}$ in. long, is rectangular on plan, and of no obvious form. Two intersecting planes of fracture have, however, left a very sharp curved cutting edge, and a steeply struck blow at either side has reduced it to a neat shape. Held between the finger and the thumb it would form a very effective little knife, though a small one. The remaining fragment is a piece of waste of grey flint with a crust on one side, and calls for no further description.

The burial as a whole must be assigned to the local Middle Bronze Age. The food vessel itself is interesting as preserving the all-over decoration of the beaker wares, while the vertical and horizontal lines in alternate panels already foreshadow a common motif of the cinerary urn.

The quality of the flints is well above the average level of local finds, and the occurrence of the single-barbed arrow-head in a closed deposit is of significance in a much wider context. On this point alone the group merits further study, and it is particularly to be hoped that an examination of the grain-cavity may yield positive results.

III.—ORGANIC REMAINS.

Dr. K. B. Blackburn of King's College, Newcastle, reports that the pieces of charcoal found in the grave were very small and difficult to identify. The pieces from the grave were cherry and oak with a very small fragment which may have been hazel. The pieces in the urn were all cherry with a very small piece of hazel.

Professor R. B. Green of The Medical School, King's College, reports that the fragments of burnt bone were so disintegrated as to be quite impossible of diagnosis in their powdered state and it was not possible to say whether they were human or not.