

(Air photographs: N. McCord, University of Newcastle)

Composite photograph: High Knowes A and B

II.—EXCAVATIONS ON PALISADED SETTLEMENTS AND CAIRNFIELDS AT ALNHAM, NORTHUMBERLAND

1. Palisaded Settlements *George Jobey*
2. Cairnfields *George Jobey & John Tait*

Summary

The timber-built palisaded enclosures consisted of one substantial homestead and a larger settlement of some sixteen houses. Although no evidence of precise date was obtained from excavations, the enclosures were typical of the Early Iron Age. After a break in occupation on the larger settlement, a stone-built homestead of Romano-British type was constructed partly on the same site.

The excavated cairns consisted of three of Bronze Age and one of Iron Age date.

INTRODUCTION (fig. 1 and plate I)

The area immediately to the north-west of the reduced medieval village of Alnham, situated in the southern foothills of the Cheviots, has notable interest by virtue of the pattern of early settlement that is still to be observed on the ground.

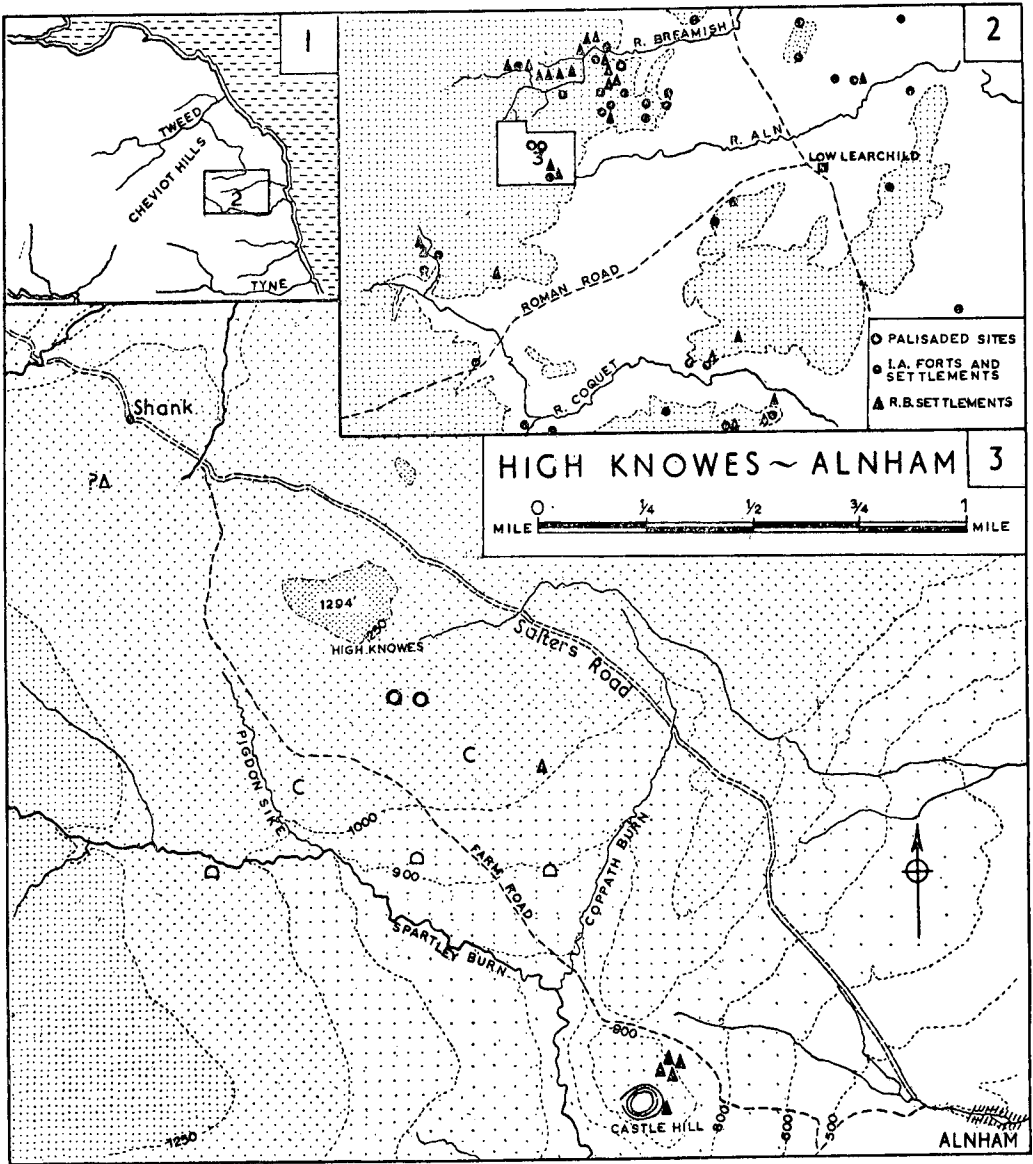
Early sepulchral monuments are represented by two cairnfields, the first extending across the small plateau on the east side of the Pigdon Burn and the second, almost completely destroyed, lying on the gentle slope between High Knowes and the Coppeth Burn. A similar burial area may have existed at one time towards the foot of Hazletonrig Hill on the west side of the Spartley Burn, but this is less certain.

The earliest visible habitation sites have been two palisaded enclosures containing circular timber-built houses. Both are at an altitude of about 1,200 feet, situated on a

slight plateau-spur beneath the eminence of High Knowes and overlooking the small drainage basin of the Spartley and Coppath Burns. The more elevated of the two, a substantial homestead, was previously shown on the Ordnance Survey maps as a "camp" (NT:971125), but the second, a larger settlement some one hundred yards to the east, has not been recorded hitherto.

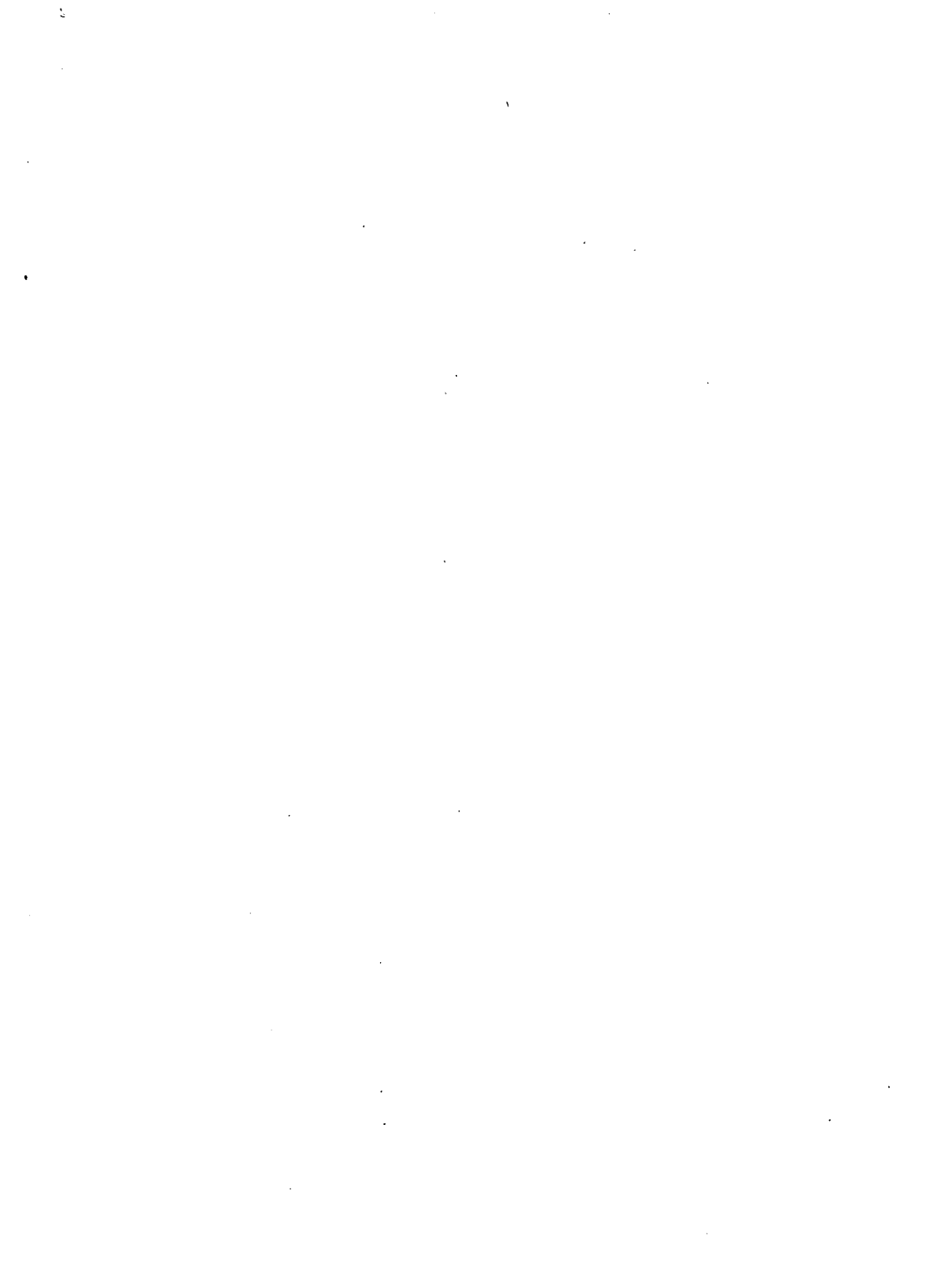
The final flourishing of the pre-Roman hill-forts of the Cheviots is represented here by the multivallate work on Alnham Castle Hill, approximately one mile to the south of the palisaded enclosures.¹ Although it is less elevated than the palisaded works, at just over 900 feet, it is located in a position of better natural defence and commands a wide view over the Vale of Whittingham and Upper Coquetdale to the south. As so often happens in the uplands between the Tyne and the Forth, enclosed settlements of round, stone-built huts, typical of the Roman period hereabouts, overlie and are adjacent to the defences of this hill-fort. These settlements are more extensive than shown in early plans of the fort and have extended for about two hundred yards on the eastern, lee side, though they are now largely destroyed by later ploughing. A similar unrecorded settlement, once again in a comparatively sheltered position, lies on the gentle slope midway between the palisaded settlements and the Coppath Burn (fig. 2). In addition, it was suspected from the original survey that yet another could have overlain the palisade trenches of the larger of the two timber-built enclosures, at a point where the natural contours offer some protection from the elements. Possibly in the same category is a poorly preserved enclosure some three hundred yards to the south-west of the present shepherd's house at Ewartley Shank. This site merits passing reference in that it is adjacent to the natural route leading into the Breamish valley, a short distance to the north, where such settlements are comparatively prolific and include the largest surviving

¹ For recent plan illustrating possible phases in defences see Jobey, G., *A.A.A.*, XLIII (1965) p. 24.



○ PALISADED SITES : C CAIRFIELDS : ▲ STONE-BUILT SETTLEMENTS : □ LATER FARMSTEADS

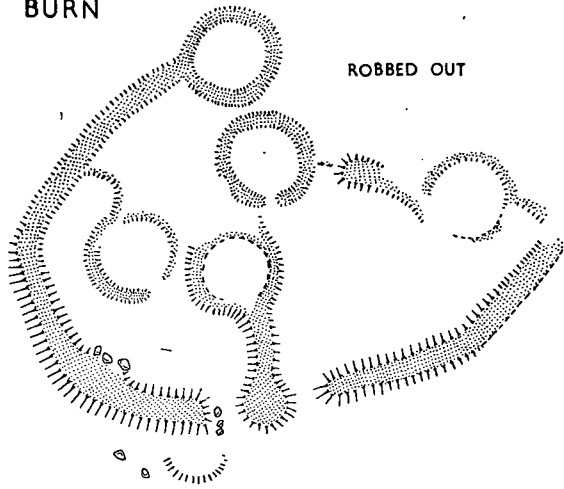
FIG. 1



COPPATH BURN



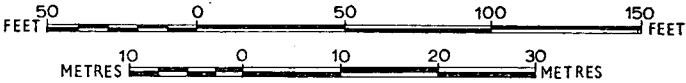
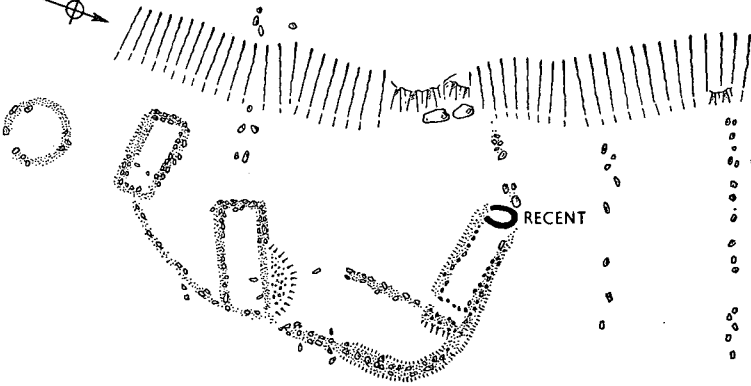
ROBBED OUT



SPARTLEY BURN



RECENT



GJ

FIG. 2

example of the type at Greaves Ash.² It was in this vicinity too, on Ewartley Stank, that the bronze cauldron of Battersea type was recovered before 1885 in the process of draining bogs.³

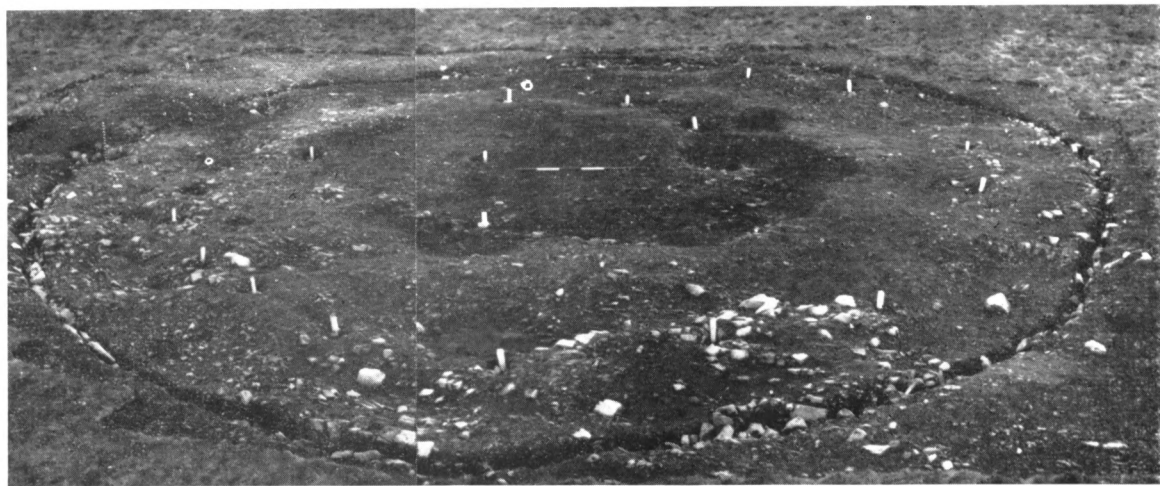
It has been noted elsewhere, that in the Cheviot uplands at altitudes approaching and over the one thousand foot contour, enclosed settlements of round, stone-built huts appear on present evidence to represent the last form of settlement for some time. Although it could be that some of them continued to be occupied into post-Roman times, the next type of farmstead to appear on the scene at these altitudes is, in most cases, clearly of new foundation and, from the surface remains of stone buildings, ostensibly of much later date. The area under consideration, where conditions favour the detection of later timber buildings had they existed, is no exception. The remains of just such a later stone-built farm, with its rectangular buildings and possible traces of in-by cultivation, is to be seen above the Spartley Burn (fig. 2).⁴ There are also the remains of similar farms underlying the modern store for winter fodder on the west of the present farm road leading to the Shank and the large ruinous sheep stell situated on a small knoll by the Coppeth Burn.⁵ To the east of them is the intermittent but still visible track known as the Salters Road, marking an old route through the Cheviots down to Alnham and the Vale of Whittingham. Although such farms are not of primary concern at this juncture, they have some interest as representatives of a later stage of rural expansion into the upland areas in a form more permanent than shielings. Some at

² Jobey, G., *A.A.*⁴, XLII (1964), 51.

³ Hardy, J., *Trans. Berwick Nat. Club*, XI (1885-6), 290; Piggott, S., *P.S.A.S.*, LXXXVII (1952-3), 40.

⁴ The circular extra-mural structure in this instance is possibly a drying kiln and does not have the appearance of having been a dwelling. Similar associations have been noted elsewhere.

⁵ It was conceivable that this could have been the provenance of the brooch of thirteenth or fourteenth century date, found when constructing a sheep enclosure in the vicinity in 1881 (*Trans. Berwick Nat. Club*, XI (1885-6), 501), but the stell is already shown on estate maps of the early nineteenth century (*Bell MSS.*, County Archives).



High Knowes A: House 1

least may have resulted from the growing population and the winning of new arable in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries.⁶

Immediate interest in the area, however, centred on the palisaded enclosures and the cairnfields. Whereas similar palisaded settlements are a feature of ground survey on both sides of the Border, and they are known from excavation to constitute the earliest phase on a number of Early Iron Age hill-fort sites, dateable and cultural material found in direct association with them has been somewhat limited north of Yorkshire. Exploration of the cairnfield was directed towards discovering the possible range in structural detail and types of burial that might exist in such collections of rather insignificant and frequently robbed monuments, and forms part of a wider survey still in progress.

Excavations were carried out during 1962 and 1963 with the ready co-operation of students from the Department of Extra-Mural Studies in the University of Newcastle upon Tyne, under the auspices of the University Committee for Archaeology. The report on the cairns has been written in conjunction with Mr. J. Tait who supervised the excavation of one of them.

Gratitude must be expressed to His Grace the Duke of Northumberland and to Mr. H. Sordy for permission to excavate, to the governors of Alnham School and the folks of *Yeldom* for accommodation and various kindnesses, and to Miss N. Black for unfailing help when needed.

PALISADED HOMESTEAD, HIGH KNOWES A (figs. 3 & 4)

The main features of this site are particularly clear from surface observation. The outlines of the constructional trenches are not only preserved in the vegetational mat that overlies the thin upland soils of the andesitic lavas, but are

⁶ e.g. Barrow, G. W. S., *Scottish Studies*, 6, ii (1962), 127. Others of course may represent an expansion into the uplands after the long spell of political disturbance on the Borders. Occasionally the surviving names for similar farmsteads such as Foul Shiels, near Elsdon, may indicate permanent settlement on the site of an earlier shieling.

also emphasised by the more verdant *fescue* growth which replaces the prevailing *nardus* over the disturbed areas. Two palisade trenches, placed ten feet apart, mark the perimeter of the homestead which has an internal diameter of one hundred and fifty feet. The upcast from the trenches forms a very slight medial mound and a break in both mound and trenches on the east marks the position of the entrance. In the interior are the sites of four, circular, timber-constructed buildings, the two larger marked by broad shallow "ring-ditches", some forty-eight feet in overall diameter, and the two smaller by narrow "ring-grooves" with diameters of some twenty-six feet.⁷ Faint depressions mark pathways leading from the two "ring-ditch" houses to the entrance. A possible arrangement of the buildings in pairs, as in this instance, is not a normal feature within the palisaded works so far recorded in the Tyne-Forth province, but a comparable combination of one large and one small hut has been seen occasionally in the stone-built settlements of Romano-British type,⁸ and a pairing of timber huts, perhaps fortuitous, has been noted in the hill-fort of Corsehope Rings, Midlothian.⁹ Although there is some lack of symmetry in the location of the buildings within the enclosed area, it is not such as to indicate any structural sequence. The whole of house 1, half of house 2, and the entrance to the enclosure were uncovered.

HOUSE 1 (fig. 4 and plate II)

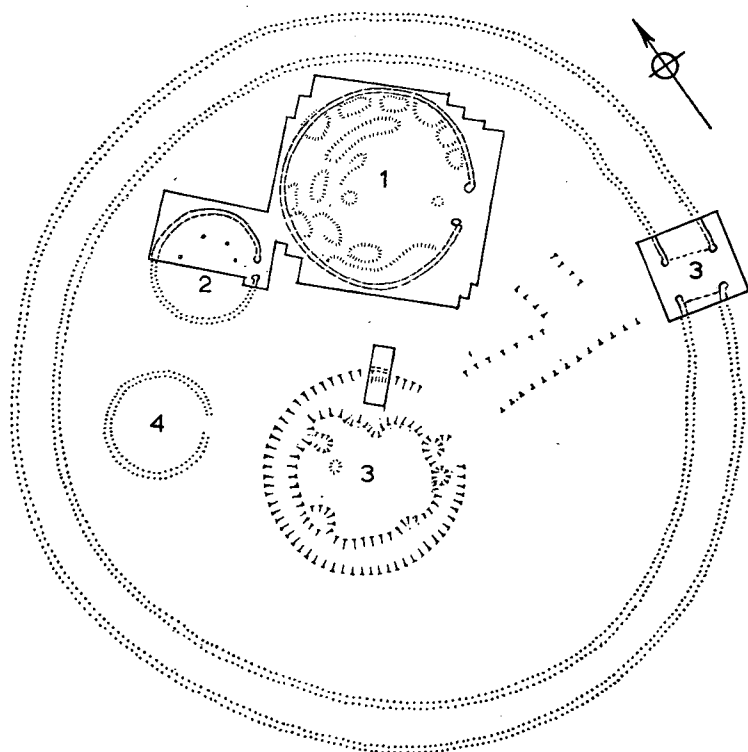
A narrow trench had been cut into the underlying brash and rock in order to take the wall timbers of a large round house, forty-eight feet in diameter. This trench was generally about fourteen inches wide and from twelve to eighteen inches deep, except in the southern arc where there had been considerable erosion of the rock surface. It lay on the outside edge of the so-called "ring-ditch", which may account

⁷ For definitions in general use see R.C.A.M. *Roxburgh* I, 19-20.

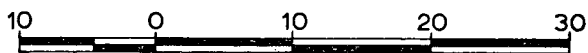
⁸ Jobey, G., *A.A.*, XXXVIII (1960), 10.

⁹ Stevenson, R. B. K., *P.S.A.S.*, LXXXIII (1948-9), 1; R.C.A.M. *Midlothian*, 108.

HIGH KNOWES A ~ ALNHAM



FEET



METRES

GJ
MP

FIG. 3

for the fact that it did not show as a distinct surface feature. As in the case of a comparable house at West Brandon, Durham,¹⁰ closely set timbers or even split timbers had formed the house wall and had been secured in position by water-worn stones collected from the nearest burns in addition to splinters detached from the parent rock. On either side of the doorway the trench terminated in two larger post-holes, but there was no provision for a porch, nor had there been any eaves posts or outside supports.¹¹ The "ditch" proved to be a dual series of connected scoops extending into the brash and rock to a maximum depth of twelve inches. The inner series of scoops were shallower than the outer and the deepest parts of individual scoops in the two series were generally aligned with each other on the centre of the house. An incomplete ring of post-holes was located on the low ridge of rock remaining between the two series of scoops, running concentrically at a distance of five feet within the wall-trench. These post-holes could not be traced in the eroded southern arc. A further series of five post-holes, with additional possibilities as illustrated, formed an oval setting twenty feet by sixteen feet on the comparatively flat central area. Slightly within this, on the west side, lay a shelving pit, three feet wide at the top and one foot deep, resembling the "pit-hearths" found for example at Hayhope Knowe, Roxburgh,¹² though no more than isolated smears of burnt wood remained amongst the earth filling to suggest such a function in this instance.

None of the internal post-holes exceeded twelve inches in depth from the present rock surfaces. Even so, it is difficult to view the remains as other than those of a house constructed in a single phase, consisting of a solid timber wall with concentrically placed roof supports. The main complication lies in the occurrence of the so-called "ring-ditch" within the house wall. It has been assumed, mainly

¹⁰ Jobey, G., *A.A.*⁴, XL (1962), 11 ff.

¹¹ Cf. e.g. West Brandon, Durham, and Pimperne Down, Dorset (*Antiquity*, XXXVII (1963), 64).

¹² Piggott, M., *P.S.A.S.*, LXXXIII (1948-9), 59.

HIGH KNOWES A : HOUSE AREA I

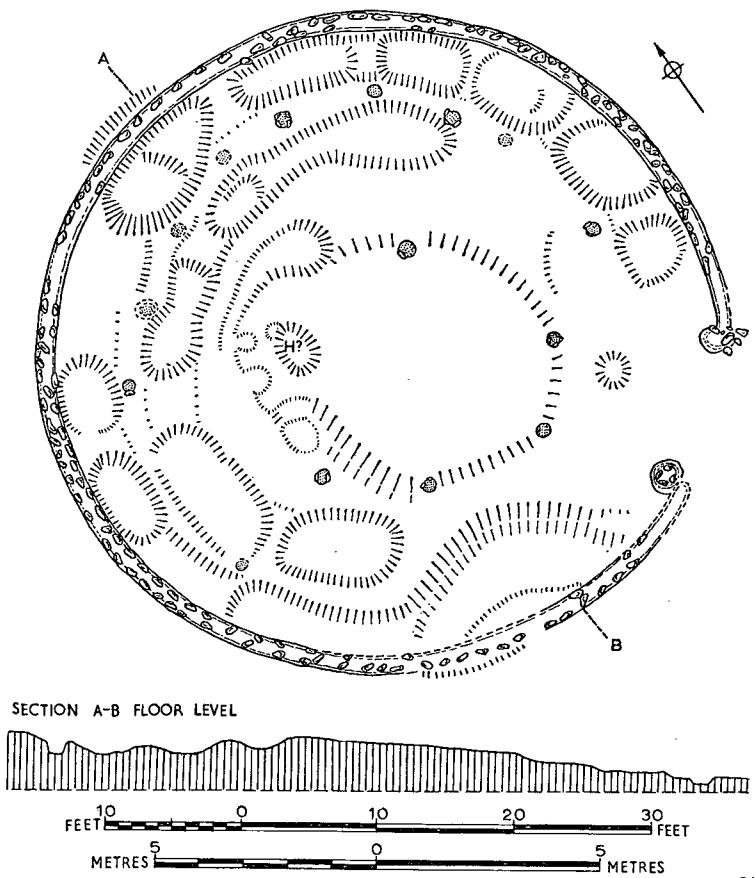


FIG. 4

G.I

on the evidence of excavations at Braidwood fort, Midlothian,¹³ that the *ring-ditch* type of house consisted of a timber framework of posts set in individual post-holes, lying within a broad shallow ditch.¹⁴ Subsequent ground survey has given no reason to doubt such a solution. However, if this were the case at High Knowes, then it would be necessary to envisage as many as three phases of house construction in order to account for the two series of scoops. For this there was no real evidence in excavation. Whilst the wall-trench and the outer series of scoops did not impinge upon one another, except for a slight scarping at one point on the northern arc, due to cattle scuff and erosion, the internal post-holes showed no signs of having been re-used. Frequent sections across the scoops in house 1 failed to reveal any clue as to their purpose. Apart from a dark, gritty soil containing smears of burnt wood in the bottoms of some of the hollows, the profiles above this consisted of the normal *mor* top with well developed humified, fermentation and litter layers. Although it happens that both Braidwood hill-fort and High Knowes homestead are situated on andesitic lavas, the distribution of "ring-ditch" houses bears no relationship to any particular subsoil and both "ring-ditch" and "ring-groove" houses may appear on the same site. Certainly the ditch at High Knowes, both on account of its design and position in relation to the natural levels, would not have served as an efficient drain. Perhaps some attempt to obtain additional room beneath the sloping roof either for storage, or for sleeping accommodation after the manner suggested by the compartments or bed-spaces of the Irish tales,¹⁵ could provide an answer as to the purpose of the hollows which in plan have a superficial resemblance to the bays of a wheel-house. Stalling of cattle within the wall and between the roof uprights, facing towards the centre, when combined with periodic "mucking-out", might also produce

¹³ Stevenson, R. B. K., *op. cit.*

¹⁴ R.C.A.M., *Roxburgh*, I, 19-20.

¹⁵ e.g. O'Curry, *Manners and Customs of the Ancient Irish* (1873), I.

such a pattern, but the present disposition of known "ring-ditch" structures would again give little conclusive support to such a theory.

A short cutting made across the perimeter of house 3 disclosed a wall-trench on the outside of the "ring-ditch", similar to that of house 1. This trench no doubt continued and appears as a faint surface feature on the south side of the presumed entrance to the house.

HOUSE 2 (fig. 3)

The position of the timber house wall was marked by a trench, some twelve inches wide and six inches deep, having a diameter of twenty-six feet. A semi-circle of four shallow post-holes, lying six feet within the wall-trench, indicated the position of a single concentric ring of roof supports of which the full complement probably would have been eight. The wall-trench terminated in a pair of more substantial post-holes at the doorway on the south-east.

ENTRANCE TO ENCLOSURE

At the entrance to the enclosure the double palisade trenches were some fifteen inches wide and up to twenty inches deep. As on similar sites elsewhere, they had been designed to support upright timbers some eight inches in diameter, fairly closely set. The trenches did not form continuous hairpin ends as on the settlement at Hayhope Knowe, but merely terminated in four post-holes as at West Brandon. However, two shallow transverse depressions on either side of the passageway probably marked the position of less substantial hurdles closing the gaps between the two lines of palisades. This being so, the manner in which that on the south side was set back may be taken to imply that the gate was originally pivoted on this side. No more than a low mound of clean upcast lay on the ten foot space between the palisades. Beneath this the natural brash was some three to four inches thicker than on the areas excavated within the

enclosure, giving some indication of the probable degree of wear and erosion elsewhere on the site.

FINDS

Although there were slight smears of burnt wood in the bottom of the thin loam overlying the floors of the houses, there were no clearly defined occupation levels. Moreover, there were no small finds from the 3,300 square feet of excavation, despite the fact that all areas were trowelled down to rock level and all post-holes and construction trenches emptied.

PALISADED SETTLEMENT, HIGH KNOWES B (fig. 5)

This settlement lies one hundred and twenty yards to the east of the homestead which overlooks it. Its perimeter, marked by a broad band of more verdant herbage, bears only occasional indications of the presence of palisade trenches. It appears to be pear-shaped in form but the southern stretches are rather indistinct because of later interference. Although the internal area is only 0.58 acres in extent, or 0.2 acres greater than that of the homestead, it encloses the probable sites of sixteen closely packed houses, marked either by "ring-grooves" or slightly hollowed floors. These houses range in internal diameter from twenty-four to thirty-eight feet, the largest being near to the centre of the enclosure. There is no discernible overlapping of the house positions to indicate different constructional phases. At the time of survey, remains of robbed out stonework appeared to overlie the assumed line of the entrance. Since it was conceivable that this was a later settlement of the type frequently found to overlie fort-hills in the area, it seemed desirable to attempt to resolve the relationship between the two occupations. The area indicated in fig. 6 was eventually uncovered.

EXCAVATED AREA

The double palisade trenches of the timber-built settle-

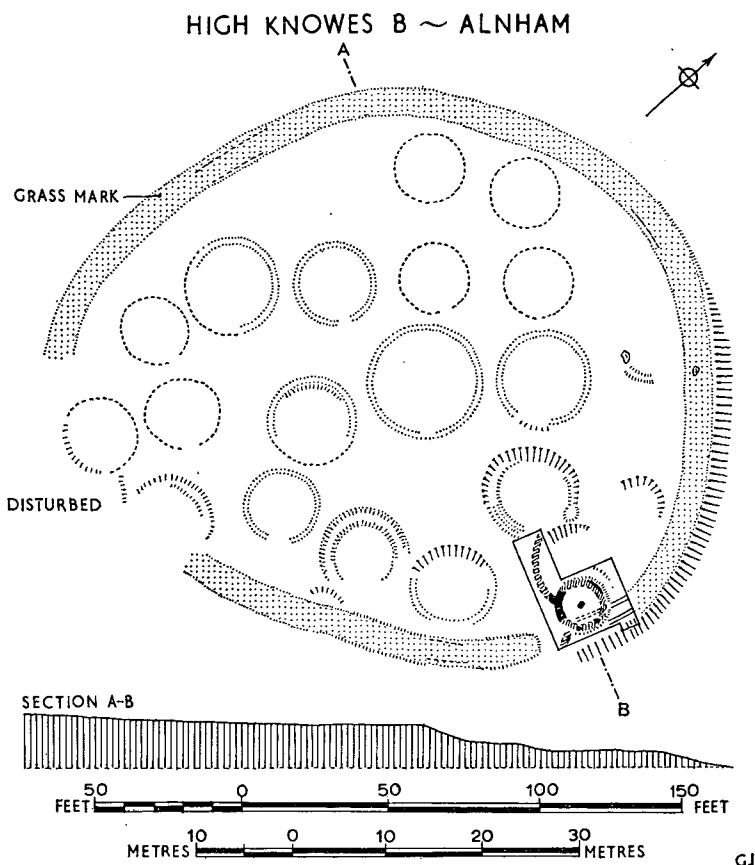


FIG. 5

ment, both eighteen inches wide and deep, were found to be five feet apart at this point. Overlying the line of the inner trench were the well-robbed remains of a stone founded hut, some fourteen feet in internal diameter and containing a well constructed central hearth. The position of the doorway was uncertain in this instance, but by analogy had probably lain in the arc east to south. Traces of two courtyard walls

butted onto the hut wall as shown in the plan. The wall running off to the west had originally enclosed an area, so hollowed on the uphill side, that it had removed a stretch of the "ring-groove" of one of the timber-built houses of the earlier settlement. The area occupied by the stone-built hut stood proud of the surrounding ground level, probably due to wear and erosion in the outside courtyard. However, the removal of a short section of the hut wall overlying the palisade trench revealed an intervening band of fibrous soil running over and dipping into the palisade trench. This had the appearance of an old turf line, the presence of which would point to an interval of time having elapsed between the abandonment of the palisades and the erection of the stone hut. Therefore, the physical relationship existing between the two settlements was probably fortuitous, the location having been selected in the second instance on account of the shelter which this particular area of the hillside affords. It is a matter for deep regret that a drastic reminder of the winter storms that can now descend upon the area occurred after the close of excavations in October 1962, when two shepherds perished a few hundred yards from the spot.

FINDS

Finds were limited to numerous sherds of coarse, hand-built pottery. The surfaces are buff coloured, in places bearing grass impressions, and the cores, which are grey, contain large grits. The sherds are fragmentary and no restoration of individual vessels is possible, though it is probable that no more than three vessels are represented. Five sherds came from an extremely thin and intermittent occupation level, containing smears of burnt wood, near to the hearth on the floor of the stone-built hut. A further twenty fragments, including an incurving rim (fig. 7, 1) and a heavy base (fig. 7, 3), were recovered from amongst the robbed stonework of the hut wall in positions which suggested that all were more likely to have come from the

HIGH KNOWES B
AREA 1 ~

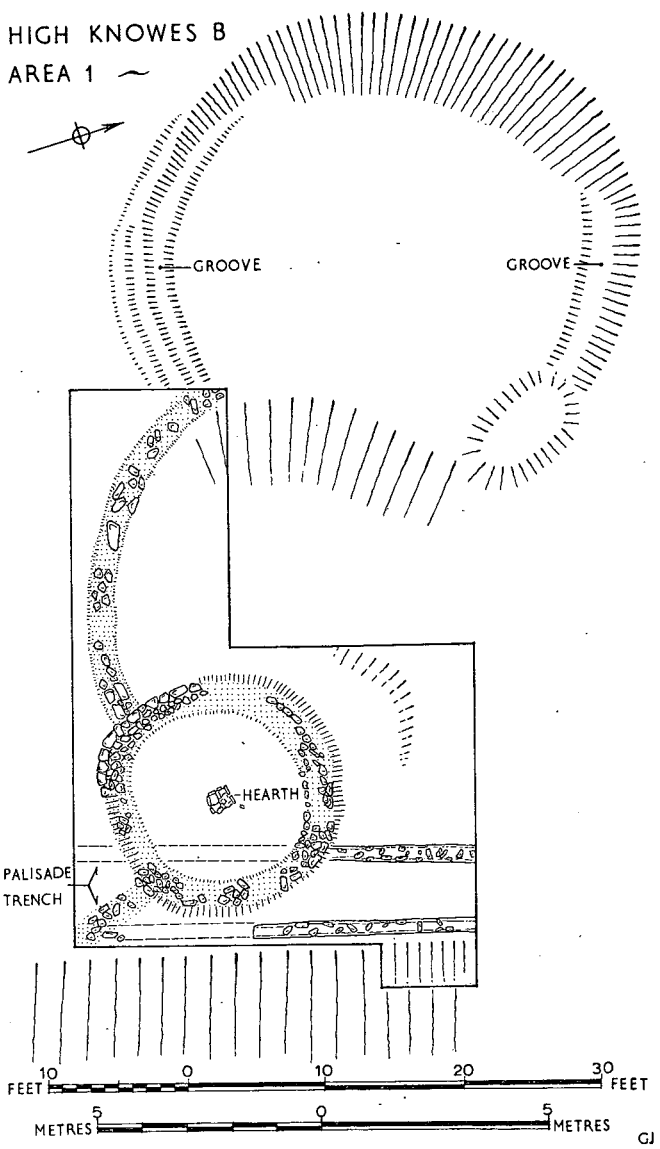


FIG. 6

occupation of the stone-built settlement itself rather than from the scrapings from an earlier occupation incorporated into the hut wall. This is partly confirmed by the fact that a join exists between one of these fragments and a sherd from the internal occupation level. A second rim fragment (fig. 7, 2), unstratified, came from immediately beneath the turf level outside the hut wall and between the two palisade trenches. Such vessels with incurving rims, often bearing



FIG. 7 (4)

a carbon deposit on the outside surface for a distance of one or two inches below the lip, have been recovered from the later phases of hill-fort sites such as Hownam Rings¹⁶ as well as from Romano-British settlements in the area.¹⁷ In this instance it is probable that all the sherds are to be associated with the later settlement.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

Whereas palisaded settlements similar to those at High Knowes are to be seen to belong in general to the Early Iron Age of the second half of the first millenium B.C., the lack of finds denies any precise dating in this instance. In the case of the larger settlement, High Knowes B, it would appear that some time had elapsed between its abandonment and the construction on the same spot of a stone-built settlement typical of the Romano-British period. This site provides one of only two known instances in the Tyne-Forth province where a settlement of stone-built huts overlies a palisaded

¹⁶ Piggott, C.M., *P.S.A.S.*, LXXXII (1947-8), 193 ff.

¹⁷ Jobey, G., *A.A.*⁴, XXXVIII (1960), 28.

settlement without the presence of intervening phases of univallate or multivallate defence.¹⁸ On the other hand, such stone-built settlements are frequently found to overlie more substantially defended pre-Roman settlements and hill-forts, which themselves on occasions are known to have superseded palisaded works.¹⁹ It may be inferred that palisaded settlements of this order had, by and large, already ceased to exist as a structural form by the time of the Roman advance into the north and perhaps some generations before this. It is true that in particular cases the closing stage on palisaded sites has been related tentatively to the years immediately preceding the Roman conquest of the north. At Braidwood, Midlothian, where the multivallate defences in process of replacing a palisaded enclosure were unfinished, it was thought that the situation might have arisen through an abortive attempt at fortification against Roman attack.²⁰ But, at the same time, it was recognised that there could have been earlier occasions responsible for the phenomenon. At Alnham Castle Hill there appear to be at least two phases in the development of the defences of the hill-fort before abandonment and the subsequent growth of undefended settlements of stone-built huts. It is not beyond possibility that this site, which offers a better defensive location, was developed at the expense of the High Knowes palisaded settlements.

The topographical relationship of the two palisaded sites prompts thoughts of possible social implications. The larger settlement, High Knowes B, is of a type which, it has been suggested, could represent in social terms a carry through from the Bronze Age, whereas the single substantial

¹⁸ When the excavation was carried out and the report read, High Knowes was the only settlement known to the writer where this phenomenon occurred. I am indebted to the officers of the Royal Commission on Ancient Monuments (Scotland) for bringing to my notice the palisaded settlement and overlying stone-built settlement at Hillside Knowe, Peeblesshire. (R.C.A.M. *Peeblesshire* forthcoming).

¹⁹ e.g. in S.E. Scotland see R.C.A.M. *Roxburgh and Berwickshire*; in Northumberland, Jobey, G., *A.A.*⁴, XLIII (1965). It is possible that a ready supply of stone could have been the attraction in some instances.

²⁰ Piggott, S., *P.S.A.S.*, XCI (1957-8), 66.

homestead, into which category High Knowes A might fall, could indicate a different social system, possibly intrusive.²¹ Whereas the dichotomy of homestead and larger settlement is well attested in the known palisaded settlements of the area, the close geographical relationship such as exists at High Knowes is difficult to parallel hereabouts.²² The lack of finds from High Knowes A discouraged the original idea of pursuing such a line of enquiry by extensive excavations in High Knowes B.

In the study of the construction of timber-built houses of the area there is some support for the view that huts of *small* diameter, with individual post-hole construction, central roof support and off-centre hearth, may be Bronze Age in character. At West Brandon, Durham, a *large* house of individual post-hole construction with concentrically placed roof supports and central hearth, lying within a double palisade, was found to be later than a hut of the type just mentioned, and a like situation was found to exist at West Plean, Stirling.²³ At Brandon, the large house was in turn superseded by a house of similar size and plan but having a wall-trench in place of individual post-holes. Such a "wall-trench" is presumably similar to the "ring-grooves" observable on the surface within many upland sites. This slight technical advance at West Brandon, which here resulted in a solid or split-timber wall for the house, probably occurred when the enclosing palisades were replaced by a mound and ditch, though elsewhere the "ring-groove" type of house occurs within both palisaded and embanked settlements or hill-forts. Any sequence that may exist between the "ring-groove" and the "ring-ditch" type of house as first excavated at Braidwood, Midlothian, has been difficult to establish from surface observation. At Craik Moor, Roxburghshire, a "ring-groove" house, lying within a palisaded

²¹ Piggott, S., C.B.A. Conference, Iron Age in N. Britain (*Antiquity*, XXXVI (1962), 24).

²² Though one is reminded of the situation at the better known Woodbury and Little Woodbury sites in Wessex (*P.P.S.* VI (1940), 30-37).

²³ Steer, K. A., *P.S.A.S.*, LXXXIX (1955-6), 227 ff.



Fig. 1. High Knowes A: Palisade Trenches

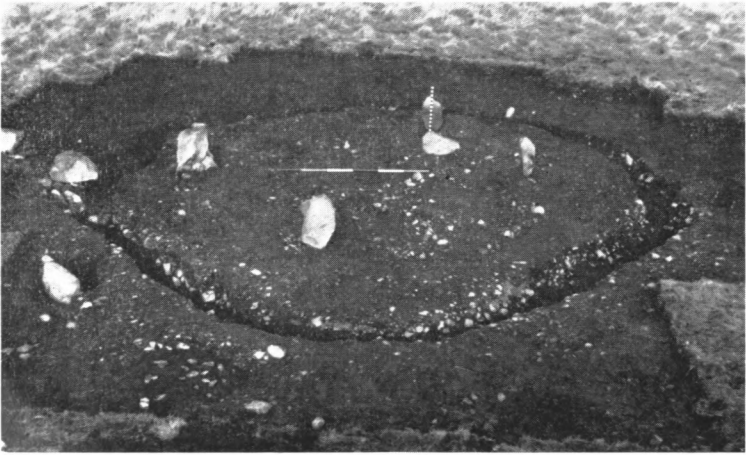


Fig. 2. High Knowes: Cairn 1

enclosure, appeared to precede "ring-ditch" houses within a stone-walled fort.²⁴ On the other hand, the reverse appears to be the case at Castle Hill, Horsburgh Castle Farm, Peeblesshire, where "ring-groove" houses enclosed by a bank and ditch overlie a palisaded settlement containing "ring-ditch" houses.²⁵ On this evidence the two types of houses might appear to overlap. However, from the structural evidence at High Knowes A, any distinction between the construction of a "ring-ditch" and a "ring-groove" hut is in this instance minimal, since the "ring-ditch" or series of scoops lies within and is apparently contemporary with the wall-trench. Whether or not the series of scoops can be related to some specific domestic economy remains to be discovered (p. 14 above).

The Cairnfields and Burials

CAIRNFIELD A (fig. 8)

This cairnfield lies at an altitude of just over 1,000 feet on a comparatively flat area three hundred yards to the west of the palisaded homestead. The position is not a prominent one and is overlooked from the homestead. By comparison with some of the extensive cairnfields on the Fell Sandstone ridges further to the east, this cairnfield is small. However, its proximity to the palisaded settlements lent interest. There are remains of twenty-two simple stone-built cairns which have no structural features showing except an occasional kerb-stone. They vary in diameter from ten to eighteen feet and are between one and three feet in height. Almost all of them show clear indications of robbing. In addition, there are traces of six circular ditched enclosures averaging twenty feet in diameter, within which there are few if any traces of a cairn or mound, though the extent to

²⁴ R.C.A.M., *Roxburgh*, II, 331 f.

²⁵ I am indebted for this information to the *Royal Commission on Ancient Monuments* (Scotland) in advance of the forthcoming volume on *Peeblesshire*.

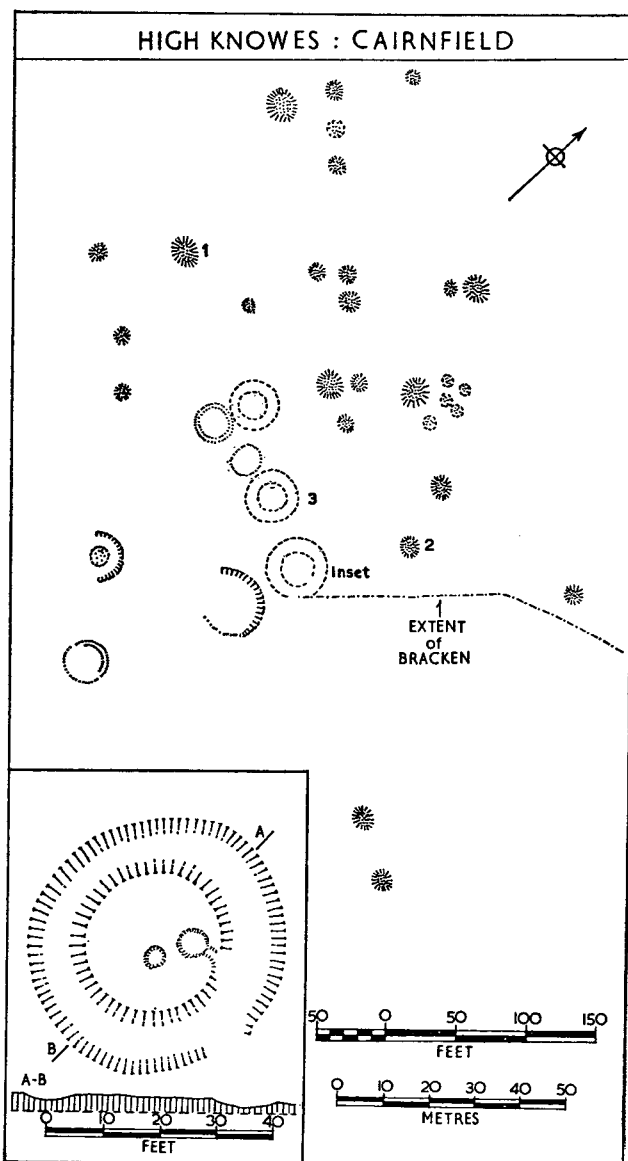


FIG. 8

which this could have been due to total robbing was not certain. One of these enclosures (fig. 8, inset), contains two small depressions, probably indicative of cremation pits. Two cairns and two ditched enclosures, one in Cairnfield B, were selected for excavation.

CAIRN NO. 1 (figs. 9 & 10, plate III)

This cairn, which was found to be covering a surface cremation, did not appear to have been robbed. Its surface

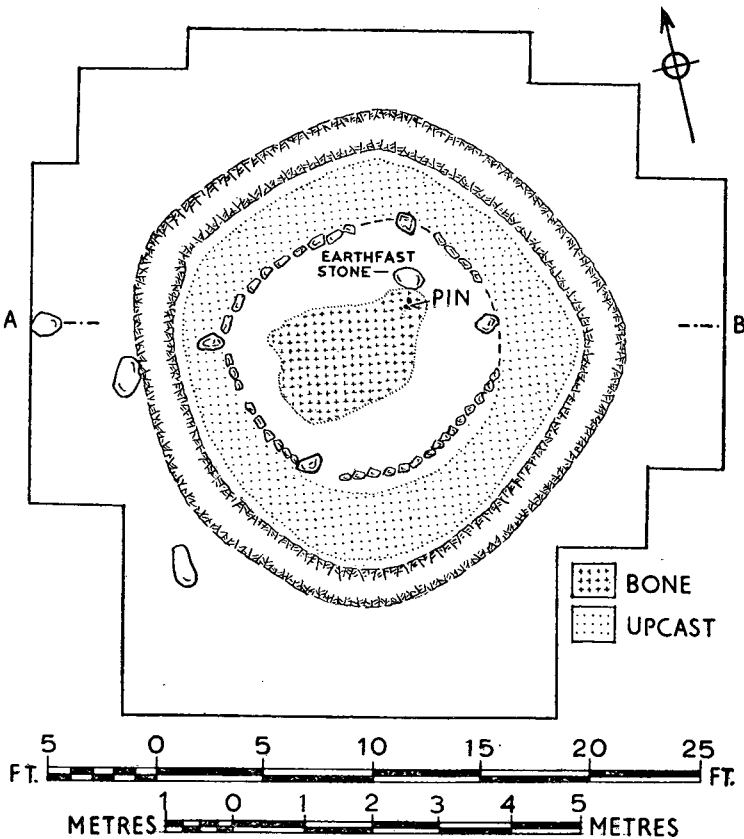


FIG. 9. CAIRN NO. 1

diameter was approximately sixteen feet and its height at the centre two and a half feet above the present surface. On excavation the stone mound proved to have been girt by a rock-cut trench which was approximately eighteen feet in diameter, at most two feet wide at the top, and reducing slightly in width towards the irregularly formed bottom at a depth of between one and one and a half feet. If the intention had been to form a circle this was not fully achieved, as the plan shows (fig. 9). The trench was barely visible in the broken andesitic rock surface and appeared to have been packed to the top. The filling in the northern arc consisted of some water-worn and weathered stones together with andesite fragments and earth, all tightly packed, whereas in the southern arc there were fewer stones amongst the compact andesitic brash and earth. No post-holes were showing in the fill and the larger stones were not arranged in a manner comparable with packing for large timber uprights. However, the erection of smaller stakes cannot be discounted entirely, since the trench was well cut after the manner of those designed to hold the walls of timber-built houses and some foreign stones had been introduced. A low mound of earth and brash, about two feet wide, lay within the inside lip of the trench, and was formed from some of the material taken from the trench. Except for a limited space close to the inner lip of the trench, this upcast covered a grey band of leached earth overlying brash and bed-rock which, being common to the whole of the internal area, must have formed part of the original surface (fig. 10). The inside limit of the low mound was marked by an intermittent but distinct kerb of small stones, set into the original surface and enclosing an area approximately thirteen feet in diameter. These stones were not large enough to have acted as a satisfactory retaining kerb for the stone burial mound and are best seen, in conjunction with the trench, as serving to demarcate the cremation area. In addition, the manner in which the upcast mound from the trench appeared to pile up against the kerb suggested that the placing of the stones had taken place

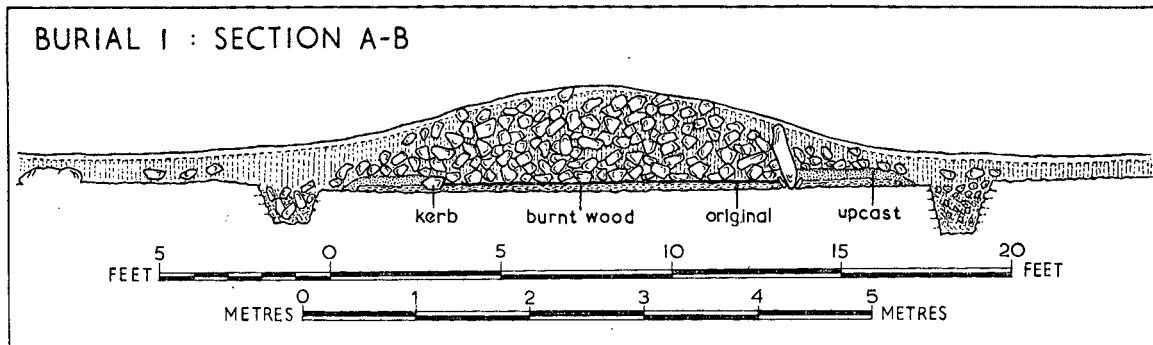


FIG. 10

before the cutting of the trench. Four small orthostats, no more than two feet high, had been incorporated into the line of the kerb. Three of them, carefully packed at the base, were still standing upright, but the fourth had fallen outwards, doubtless during the piling up of the covering mound of small stones. In themselves the four large stones formed a roughly rectangular setting, orientated east and west, but this could have been fortuitous. On the other hand, if their erection had formed the first phase of construction then this might account for the lack of a strictly circular form in the other features. Over the whole of the area enclosed by the kerb was a thick layer of carbonised wood from the burning of fairly substantial logs (*Appendix A*, Mrs. H. H. Clark). Small flakes of flint were scattered throughout the extent of this level and, within the limits marked on the plan, small fragments of burnt bone were recovered (*Appendix B*, Professor Tonge). Near to the eastern extent of the spread of bone a bronze ring-headed pin was recovered in two pieces, the stem lying four inches away from the decorative head, but both in the same level. The layer of burnt material did not extend beneath the kerb or upcast material from the trench, but there were smears of burnt wood on the top of this mound and in the top of the trench. It must be assumed then that the area had been so demarcated before the cremation had taken place within it. The amount of burnt wood, together with the confined area in which the bone fragments were found also supports the contention of a cremation pyre on the spot, rather than cremation elsewhere and the subsequent scattering of remains within the circle. The flint flakes were not noticeably calcined and may have formed a ritual scattering after the pyre was almost spent but before the erection of the covering cairn. Two small flakes were found beneath the low upcast mound in the north-west quadrant, but this does not invalidate the proposed sequence in an area where similar rites took place from time to time.

Experiments elsewhere have shown that a large pyre was

not necessary in order to carry out a cremation.²⁶ The original pile of wood could have been accommodated quite happily within the demarcated area and the spread of burnt material would not extend much beyond this. On the other hand, there was no evidence to support a deliberate burning of a hut or mortuary house.²⁷ The cairn had not been disturbed after its erection.

THE RING-HEADED PIN (fig. 11)

The pin had been cast in bronze and was most probably annealed and broken during the actual cremation (*Appendix C*, Dr. R. Tylecote). Its provenance at one extremity of the cremated remains suggests that it may have been used as a head ornament, or in a headdress, in a fashion similar to the Kilham pin from Danes Graves in Yorkshire.²⁸ The stem which has been broken near to the shoulder and somewhat distorted may also lack the lower portion. Some corrosion has taken place and the edges of the socket designed to hold the enamel studs are ragged. There are rivet holes for two such studs and, from the shape of the socket, it must be assumed that the upper stud was elongated. The original length of the pin was probably c. 4 in. (10 cm.) and the greatest width across the head to the edge of the socket 0.7 in. (1.7 cm.) The ring opening is circular, lying towards the rear of the head. A slight, finely executed moulding spirals round from the base of the ring opening between two bands of decorative milling. There is a suggestion of moulding having been present towards the end of the stem, possibly though not certainly part of a decorative terminal. However, there is no indication of the chevron pattern found on Irish pins of similar type.

DISCUSSION

In type the pin approaches most closely to some of the

²⁶ e.g. Klindt-Jensen, O., *Denmark before the Vikings* (1957), 83. For other aspects of cremation see Wells, C., *Antiquity*, XXXIV (1960), 29 ff.

²⁷ Klindt-Jensen, *op. cit.*

²⁸ Stillingfleet, A., *York. Vol. Arch. Inst.* (1846).

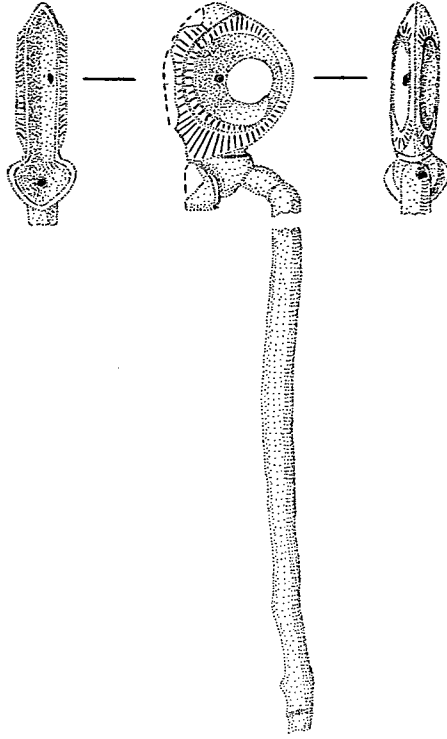


FIG. 11. RING-HEADED PIN (1:1)

pins in the Irish series, in particular those from Roscavy (McAlear collection) and Lisnacrogghera (Grainger collection).²⁹ These Irish pins, evolved from the British ring-headed pin, represent a well developed stage. They have been seen recently as characteristic of Irish workmanship of the first or second century A.D., complementary to the Irish series of brooches and with Ulster as their probable home.³⁰ A number of Irish pins possess terminal mouldings on the stem and spindle ends, for which Roman affinities have been

²⁹ Seaby, W. A., *Ulster Journ. Arch.*, XXVII (1964), 67 ff.

³⁰ *Ibid.*

seen in the moulded ends of surgical instruments. Although in general the stage of development of this type of pin within the whole series of ring-headed pins is not in question, it is pertinent to ask whether the Alnham pin must be seen as a product of the Irish context, or of a stage already arrived at in the evolution of the type some time before this in the north of England. Whereas pins with the projecting ring-head at right angles to the stem, a North British development for which inspiration has been sought in involuted and sun-flower pins, come through into the Roman period and have been found on Roman military sites in the area,³¹ cast ring-headed pins of the type under consideration have yet to appear in this firm context. In his study of the swan's neck and ring-headed pins, Dunning suggested that the cast ring-headed and coral-mounted pins as from Kilham and Hammersmith could be equated with the coral-mounted brooches of the late La Tene I and La Tene II type.³²

The English pin to which at present the Alnham pin approaches most closely is that from Danes Graves at Kilham, Yorkshire.³³ This pin which contains a three limbed wheel within the ring, also bears some resemblance to the Irish pin with the triskele ornament from the O'Laverty collection.³⁴ Although the Alnham pin is more "plastic" in concept than the Kilham pin and has a smaller ring-opening situated towards the rear of the head, technically it is not too far removed. The leading edge of the head of the Kilham pin is already open or grooved to take the coral inlay and requires only the addition of the conjoined "cup" for an enamel stud in place of the coral stud already present on the shoulder. The milling or decoration of close-set grooves, a feature of the Alnham pin, repeated on one of the Lisnacrogher pins (Knowles Collection), is also present on

³¹ Stevenson, R. B. K., *P.P.S.*, XXI (1955) 282 ff.

³² Dunning, G., *Arch. Journ.*, XCI (1935), 269 ff.

³³ Mortimer, *Burial Mounds of East Yorkshire* has the best illustration, fig. 1023.

³⁴ Seaby, W. A., *op. cit.*, 69 fig. 2.

the head of the Kilham pin. If a moulded terminal of some form has in fact been present on the Alnham pin, then it might be possible to look to the terminals of the involuted pins from Cold Kitchen Hill or Meare,³⁵ or the pins of the penannular brooches of types *A* and *Aa* from Sawdon and Bridlington, seen now in a Second Iron B context,³⁶ rather than to seek Roman affinities in this instance. There is at least a case for regarding the Alnham pin in a context earlier than the Irish pins alone might allow and for seeking an origin in Yorkshire, emanating from Eastern Second B, possibly by the first century B.C.

The suggestion of earlier Bronze Age traditions embodied in the encircling trench and scattering of flint is of interest, but it must be admitted that the method of burial, in the context in which it is seen, is difficult to parallel. In the well known Yorkshire Iron B burials to the south, the prevailing practice would appear to be that of inhumation and, though the low covering mounds are comparable, any distinction between encircling "trenches" and ditches is obscured.³⁷ To the north also, in Scotland, the few recorded burials of the period are inhumations,³⁸ sometimes in large cists comparable with those in the south-west of England. In Northumberland itself, apart from certain burials inferred as being of Early Iron Age date on the most doubtful basis of a lack of grave goods, there is only one other burial for which such a context has been claimed. This is represented

³⁵ Dunning, G., *op. cit.*, 279 fig. 5.

³⁶ Fowler, E., *P.P.S.*, XXVI (1960), 149 ff. For "Second B" period in North Britain see Thomas, C., *Arch. J.*, CXVIII (1963), 16 ff. and fig. 2.

³⁷ Greenwell, *Archæologia*, LX (1906), 251 ff.

³⁸ e.g. Burnmouth, Berwickshire, with two bronze "spoons" (*P.S.A.S.*, LVIII (1923-4) 143); Moredun, Midlothian in short cist with La Tene IC brooch, penannular brooch and ring-headed pin (*P.S.A.S.*, XXXVIII (1903-4), 427 & *P.P.S.* XXVI (1960), 171); Craigie, Angus, in large cist with penannular brooch (*P.S.A.S.*, XXXVII (1902-3), 233); Blackness Castle, W. Lothian with bronze armlet only possibly Early Iron Age (*P.S.A.S.*, LIX (1924-5), 116); Gullane, E. Lothian, six inhumations in cairn with iron knife and spiral bronze ring (*P.S.A.S.*, XXXVI, 654 and XLII (1907-8), 131); and possibly though not certainly Kippit Hill, Peeblesshire (*P.S.A.S.*, LV (1920-21), 45). In addition there are earlier burials such as secondary deposits in recumbent stone circle at Loanhead (*P.S.A.S.*, LXIX (1934-5), 168).

by the secondary insertion of a hybrid pot into a cairn which covered an Urn burial at Spital Hill, Rothbury.³⁹

CAIRN NO. 2 (fig. 12)

This cairn appeared on the surface as a low, grass-grown mound of stone, ten feet in overall diameter and some two feet high at the centre. On removing the first quadrant in the south-east it was evident that there had been previous interference and, as the excavation progressed, it was found

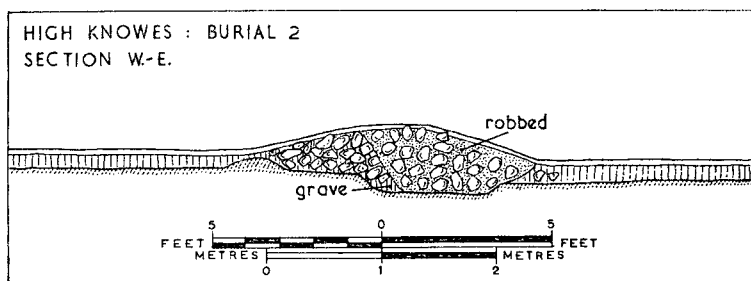


FIG. 12

that only a small sector of the cairn had escaped disturbance. Even so, the whole area was examined down to the rock surface. No encircling ditch, trench or stake-holes were found, but slightly to the south-east of the centre of the existing cairn were the remains of a shallow grave, much disturbed by robbing. Originally the grave must have been some three and a half to four feet long from east to west, two and a half feet wide and one and a half feet deep. A portion of the original brush upcast from the grave remained beneath the covering stone mound on the west side. Although no bone was recovered the grave had doubtlessly contained an inhumation.

Eight small spalls of flint were recovered from the area, some from beneath the cairn where it had not been disturbed.

³⁹ Richmond, I. A., *A.A.*⁴, XX (1942), 131; Dixon, D. D., *Upper Coquetdale*, 138.

In addition, a small flint barbed and tanged arrowhead, the broken point of a second, a small scraper and two sherds of Beaker pottery came from the disturbed part of the grave (fig. 13).

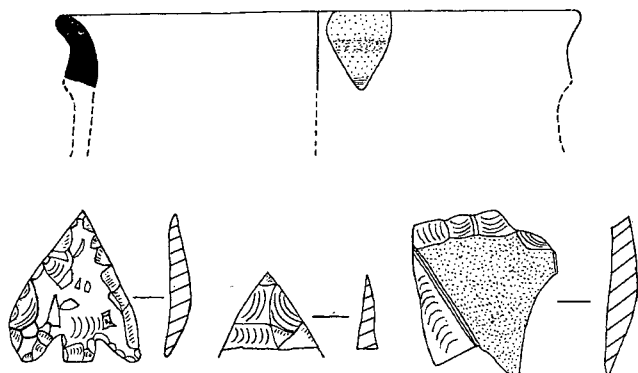
THE BEAKER (fig. 13)

The vessel presumably had been broken during the robbing of the cairn. Although only one rim and one body sherd survive, both in the same reddish brown fabric, the form of the vessel is most probably that of a Bell Beaker, and possibly of the sub-type originally defined by Fox as his *B1β*.⁴⁰ The *B1β* sub-type was seen to have a more angular outline than the normal Bell Beaker with its flowing curves. The rim of the Alnham vessel is slightly everted and collared in the manner of Longworth's form 3,⁴¹ rather than merely cordoned below the rim. Neither sherd is decorated, but it sometimes happens on Beakers with collars or cordons below the rim that the decoration starts below this point, and the body fragment is small enough to have fallen entirely within a plain zone in a decorative scheme.

The present find from Alnham with its attendant small barbed and tanged arrowheads makes a welcome addition to the known group of collared and cordoned Bell Beakers from burials (see provisional list). Though few in number they have a wide distribution. Most of the vessels have a well defined body angle where this can be determined, similar to the original *B1β* classification. The decoration, usually notch-stamped, may also be executed in stab impression, or cord as in the two instances from Forglen, Banffshire and Wards Hill, Northumberland. At Court Hill, Dalry, the notch-stamped decoration is also on the inside of the rim, a feature of Cord-Zoned Beaker decoration. Burial in most cases has been in pits or shallow graves, as with the normal run of Bell Beakers. This custom, so far as can be ascertained, would also apply to the north-east of England and

⁴⁰ Fox, C., *Archæologia*, LXXXIX (1943), 101.

⁴¹ Longworth, I. H., *P.P.S.*, XXVII (1961), 263 ff.

FIG. 13. BEAKER ($\frac{1}{2}$); FLINTS (1:1)

Scotland, where the predominant though not entirely exclusive method of burial with Necked Beakers is in cists. Of the exceptions, the fragmentary vessels from Glecknabae, Bute, came from a chamber in a cairn, another chamber in which contained Lyles Hill ware, whilst those from Egton, Yorkshire, and Olchon Valley, Hertfordshire, were found in cists, the former with three fragments of ?copper/bronze now lost. The incidence of association of the burials with small barbed and tanged arrowheads is comparatively high and could be higher, since at Talbenny, Pembrokeshire, there is an unfinished example of an arrowhead and at Dalry, Ayrshire, though the cairn was disturbed during the building of a later tumulus, an arrowhead was found at ground level near to this primary cairn. Moreover, one of the unaccompanied burials, that from Sutton Courtenay, was, in any event, a female burial.

Although the true collar is apparently rare on continental vessels, Beakers with cordons below the rim occur in the Netherlands and Rhineland⁴² and both cordoned and some collared vessels are found on our own coastal settlement sites

⁴² Van der Waals, J. D., and Glasbergen, W., *Palaeohistoria* IV (1955), 1 ff. Sangmeister, E., *Die Jungsteinzeit in Nordmeinschen Hessen III, Die Glockenbecherkulture und die Becherkulturen*.

where they form part of the domestic assemblages. These coastal sites often produce a variety of Beaker types, amongst them a high proportion of Cord-Zoned Bell Beakers, which in themselves may emphasise an early connection with the continent, though their range may spread from the early part of the Continental Reflux Movement into the second part of the Reinecke A Bronze Age.⁴³ Cord decorated vessels with cordons below the rim come from settlement sites at Crosby Warren and Risby Warren in north Lincolnshire,⁴⁴ North Berwick in East Lothian,⁴⁵ Luce Bay in Wigtownshire,⁴⁶ Ross Links in Northumberland⁴⁷ and Anglesey.⁴⁸ Collared rims, though not frequent, may be plain as from Crosby Warren, or with finger nail impressions or cord decoration as from Ross Links. Away from settlement sites of this order a small number of cordoned vessels also come from apparently early contexts such as at the Sanctuary, Overton Hill,⁴⁹ at Whitehawk, Brighton,⁵⁰ and perhaps at Church Hill, Findon, Sussex.⁵¹ On the other hand, there are the cist burials from Egton and Olchon Valley which could denote a later context for such vessels. Perhaps the best known of the Bell Beakers with a collar is that from Radley in Berkshire, found with four barbed and tanged arrowheads and a pair of gold ear-rings. The latter have their counterpart in the local find from Kirkhaugh, Alston,⁵² where a Cord-Zoned Beaker, a small barbed and tanged arrowhead and a single gold ear-ring were recovered from a grave beneath a barrow. It has been demonstrated that such ear-rings would extend the range of Cord-Zoned Beakers, and also the vessels under discussion,

⁴³ Piggott, S., in *Culture and Environment* (ed. Forster and Alcock, 1963), 66.

⁴⁴ Riley, D. N., *P.P.S.*, XXIII (1957), 40 ff.

⁴⁵ Cree, J. E., *P.S.A.S.*, XLII (1907-8), 253 ff.

⁴⁶ Davidson, J. M., *P.S.A.S.*, LXXXVI (1951-2), 43 ff.

⁴⁷ Brewis, P., *A.A.*⁴, V (1928), 13 ff. Tait, J., *Beakers from Northumberland* (Museum of Antiquities, Newcastle upon Tyne), 1965.

⁴⁸ *T.A.A.S.*, 1956, 2 ff.

⁴⁹ *Wilts. Arch. Magazine*, XLV, pl. VII.

⁵⁰ *Ant. J.*, XIV (1934), p. 111 ff.

⁵¹ Curwen, E. L., *Arch. of Sussex* (1954), pl. II.

⁵² Maryon, H., *A.A.*⁴, XIII (1936), 207 ff.

from their early connections down into the later part of Reinecke A Bronze Age.⁵³ Whereas the two radio carbon dates available at the moment for Bell Beakers in this country are c. 1800 B.C., it is only within the more general span accorded to such vessels that this Alnham burial can be seen to fall.

BURIAL NO. 3 (fig. 14)

Faint traces of a circular ditch, interrupted on the north and the south, and a very low external mound, marked the position of this site. Although later robbing was anticipated, the structural form clearly differed from that of the cairns already excavated and of burial No. 4 (below). The four quadrants were eventually cleaned down to bed-rock. The shallow ditch was three feet wide, eighteen feet in internal diameter, and nowhere more than one foot deep, with gently shelving sides. It contained a little silt but there were few stones and only a small amount of rock brash amongst this. A scatter of loose stones and a thin covering of disturbed brash in patches were all that remained of a covering mound or cairn in the interior. It proved impossible to determine the function of the low spread of brash and earth, some six inches high on the outer edge of the ditch. Likewise the nature of the burial or burials must remain unknown. There were no grave pits in the interior. Burial could have been by inhumation on ground level or by cremation above ground, but the few fragments of charcoal recovered were hardly significant in the circumstances.

FINDS (fig. 15)

There were only two small finds, both lying on the disturbed brash surface above bed-rock and within the area enclosed by the ditch. The first is a large well-made scraper of grey flint and the second a fragment of jet, finished like a rim but with the remaining edges broken. The surface of the jet object is smooth and polished on the outside but on the

⁵³ Piggott, S., *op. cit.* Butler, J. J., *Palæohistoria*, V (1956), 67.

Collared and Cordoned Bell Beakers with Burials

Provenance	Type of Beaker and Burial	Association	Reference
Alnham, Northumberland	Collared Shallow grave beneath cairn	B & T Arrowhead	Present Report
Brighton, Sussex	Cordoned No information ,	B & T Arrowhead	E. C. Curwen, <i>Arch. of Sussex</i> (1954), pl. XI.
Church Hill, Findon, Sussex	Cordoned		E. C. Curwen, <i>Arch. of Sussex</i> (1954), pl. XI.
Court Hill, Dalry, Ayrshire	Collared In pit beneath small primary cairn	? Arrowhead	<i>P.S.A.S.</i> , X (1872-4), 281.
Forglen, Banffshire	Collared Primary grave pit in large barrow. Two other S.N. Beaker burials	B & T Arrowhead	<i>P.S.A.S.</i> , XL (1905-6), 279.
Glecknabae, Bute	Collared Chamber in cairn ? two vessels		<i>P.S.A.S.</i> , XXXVIII (1903-4), 49 & LXIII (1928-9), 94.
Great Clacton, Essex	Collared No information		Abercromby, <i>Bronze Age Pottery</i> , I no. 85.
Middleton, East Yorkshire	Grave in Sand Pit	Flint Dagger V. Jet Button	<i>P.S.A.L.</i> , XXXII (1919-20). 10.

Provenance	Type of Beaker and Burial	Association	Reference
Olchon Valley, Hertfordshire	Collared Cist	B & T Arrowhead	<i>Trans. Woolhope Field Club</i> (1930-32), 147.
Orchard Hills, Egton, North Yorks.	Cordoned From cist	3 fragments copper/bronze	<i>Arch. J.</i> , XXII (1865), 261.
Pant Y waen, Brecknockshire	Collared No clear traces of burial		<i>P.P.S.</i> , 23 (1957), 71, fig. 6, no. 5.
Radley, Berkshire	Collared Pit below ditched barrow	4 B & T Arrowheads 2 Gold Ear-rings	<i>Oxoniensia</i> XIII (1948), 1 <i>Inv. Arch.</i> , I (1955), G.B.2.
South Hill, Talbenny, Pembrokeshire	Collared Primary pit grave in composite barrow	? Arrowhead	<i>Arch. J.</i> , XCIX (1942), 1 ff. <i>P.P.S.</i> , 23 (1957), fig. 6, no. 3.
Sutton Courtney, Berkshire	Collared Contracted female burial		<i>Ant. J.</i> , XIV (1934), 267.
Sutton, Glamorganshire	Collared In rock-cut pit within primary barrow of composite barrow	7 B & T Arrowheads	<i>Arch.</i> , LXXXIX (1943), 89.
Wards Hill, Northumberland	Cordoned From cairn	? B & T Arrowhead	<i>P.S.A.N.</i> , ⁴ VIII (1937-8), 66.

In addition there are the fragments of cordoned Beaker from the chambered cairn, Cairnholy II (*P.S.A.S.*, LXXXIII (1948-9), 128, pl. XXXI).

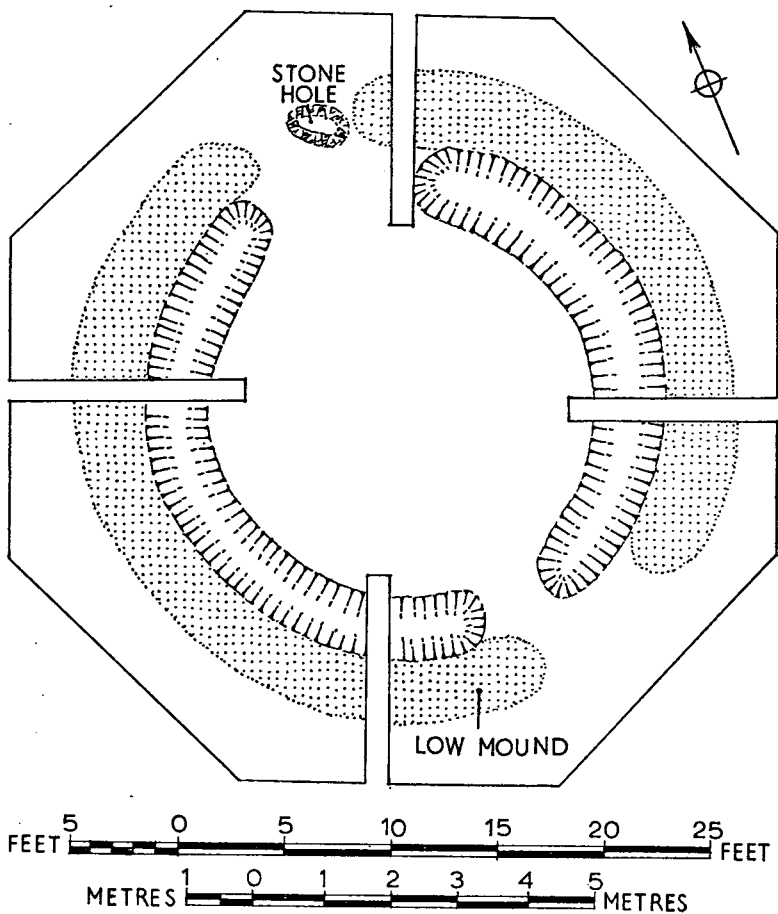


FIG. 14. BURIAL NO. 3

GJ

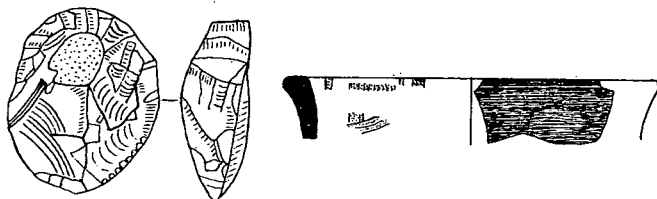


FIG. 15. FLINT ($\frac{1}{2}$); JET FRAGMENT ($\frac{1}{2}$)

inside there remain a series of small shallow gouges, as if the surface had been pared by a sharp instrument at some stage of manufacture. Although the fragment is only one and a half inches long it is clear that the edge is slightly everted and, if it had formed a complete circle, would have had an overall diameter approaching four inches (c. 10 cm.) and an internal diameter of three and a half inches (c. 9 cm.).

DISCUSSION

It is difficult to place the jet object in a functional context. A bracelet of any known variety seems to be out of the question. At one stage it was thought that it could have been part of a jet ring of a type somewhat similar in profile to a modern napkin ring with a constricted waist, such as have been illustrated from Yarrow Kirk, Selkirkshire,⁵⁴ and the Stevenston Sands, Ayrshire.⁵⁵ However, closer examination of a number of these rings denies such a parallel.⁵⁶ On the other hand, the probable diameter and form of the piece is not inconsistent with that of the upper part of a cup. Whereas there are the well known Bronze Age cups of amber and shale, these are taken to be an individual product of the Wessex Culture with a distribution confined to the south and south-west of the country.⁵⁷ Even so, it is not without interest that this is not the first occasion on which such a derivation has been tentatively considered for certain jet objects from Northumberland. In discussing the small Rogerson collection some years ago Miss N. Newbiggin drew attention to a rim fragment of jet cup or armet and a possible miniature jet cup of a form then paralleled with the well known "vase-support".⁵⁸ Although a number of jet beads in the same collection undoubtedly came from Greenwell's

⁵⁴ Hardy, J., *Trans. Berwick Nat. Club*, X, 405.

⁵⁵ Callander, J. G., *P.S.A.S.*, LXVII (1932-3), 30.

⁵⁶ I am grateful to Professor Piggott for bringing to my attention additional examples in the National Museum of Antiquities, Edinburgh and to Mr. R. B. K. Stevenson for permission to examine these.

⁵⁷ Piggott S., *P.P.S.*, IV (1938), 52 ff. Newall, R. S., *Wilts. Arch. Mag.*, XLIV (1927-29) 111 ff.

⁵⁸ Newbiggin, A. J., *A.A.A.*, XIX (1941), 104 ff.

barrow CC at Blawearie,⁵⁹ the exact provenance of the objects in question was not known, except that most probably they came from the Hebburn Moor area above the Till Valley, in Northumberland.⁶⁰ Mention of the French "vase-supports" and the Wessex Culture also brings to mind the well known "Aldbourne" incense cups and with them, a less well known incense cup from Low Moralee Farm near to Haydon Bridge in south-west Northumberland.⁶¹ This vessel, now in the Museum of Antiquities, Newcastle upon Tyne, bears a number of decorative and formative traits characteristic of the Wessex incense cups.⁶² The jet fragment from Alnham, though itself not certainly from a cup, nevertheless serves to remind us of the significance of other objects from the county when seeking such points of contact.

When considering the structural remains, it is worth noting that although the slight mound remaining on the outside of the ditch could have resulted from robbing of the interior, the presence of the two causeways through the ditch, gives the whole a resemblance in plan to a small-scale Class II "henge". The extent to which the causeways in this instance, or in the case of burial 4 (below) may derive from the "henge" ritual of the late Neolithic and Early Bronze Age is again uncertain, but the practice occurs in one form or another in barrow ditches further afield. Although recorded structural features from barrows and cairns in the Border counties is slender, attention may be drawn in passing to possible similarities existing with the "saucer barrows" recorded at Whitfield, Roxburgh,⁶³ where in some cases a low circular mound is surrounded by bank and ditch.

⁵⁹ *British Barrows* (1877), 418.

⁶⁰ The collection was in the possession of Mrs. Rogerson of New Hall Farm, Fowberry. The farm is now derelict and the family dispersed. Unfortunately the collection has not been traced as yet.

⁶¹ *P.S.A.N.*⁴, I (1923), 10.

⁶² Piggott, S., *P.P.S.*, IV (1938), 71 ff.

⁶³ *R.C.A.M. Roxburgh* No. 259.

CAIRNFIELD B

BURIAL 4 (fig. 16)

The destroyed burials at the foot of the hillside to the south of the palisaded settlements would most probably have escaped notice but for the faint traces of this circular ditch, some thirty-three feet in overall diameter. An old

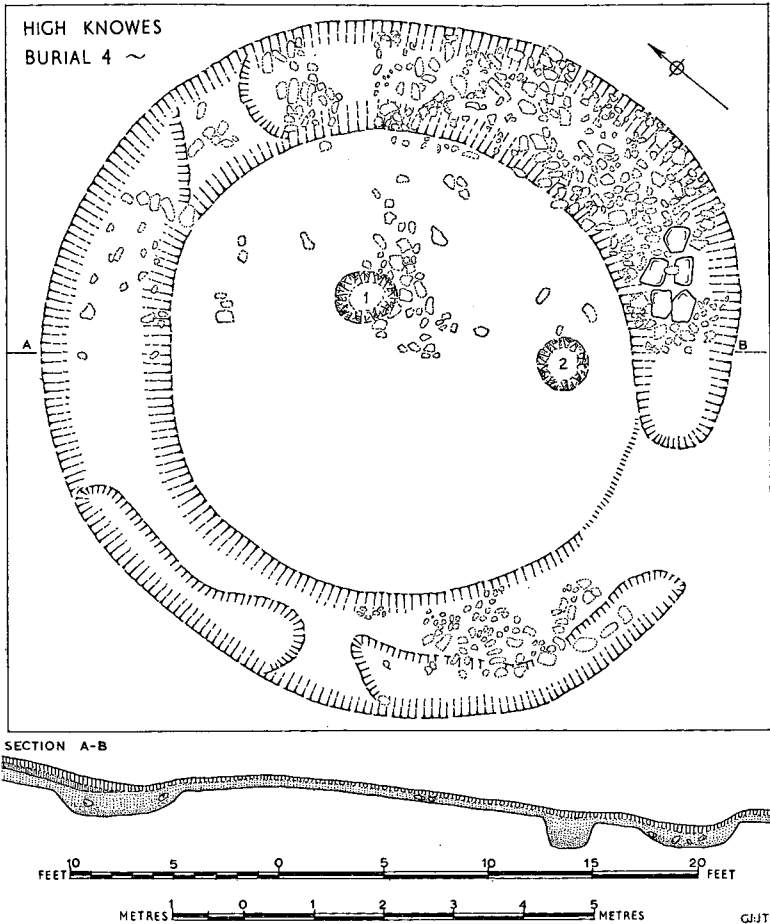


FIG. 16

robber trench appeared to lead from the southern arc of the ditch towards the centre of the enclosed area where there were surface indications of a low, well spread tump.

On excavation it was evident that there had been almost total robbing of the area. An irregularly formed circular ditch, six feet wide, had been cut into the andesitic brash and rock to a depth of between one and two feet. There was a six foot wide break in this ditch on the south side. Upcast from the ditch had presumably gone towards forming part of a covering mound but no more than a few small patches of this remained in the interior. The builders also had recourse to the use of more substantial land-stones and water-worn stones, since many of these, together with the brash, were thrown into the top of the eastern and southern arcs of the ditch by the later robbers. As the ditch bottom was free from stones it must be assumed that the original covering mound had been confined to the internal area and had probably been of no great height, leaving the ditch open to collect silt. A lack of heavier stones in the top of the ditch fill on the north and west would also point to a low central mound rather than a roughly constructed ring of stone after the manner of some so-called enclosed cremation cemeteries. Two pits had been sunk into the internal area, as shown in the plan. No. 1 was approximately two and a half feet and No. 2 two feet in diameter, both reducing to a bottom diameter of one and a half feet at a depth of two feet. Although robbed of their contents, traces of burnt wood and bone indicated original cremations. Five comparatively large and weathered slabs of stone, thrown into the top of the ditch to the south-east of pit No. 2, could have been used as cover stones for this pit or have formed originally a small box-cist of the kind sometimes found in association with Bronze Age cremations.⁶⁴ The similarity in plan between this burial and that in Cairnfield A (fig. 8, inset) is evident

⁶⁴ e.g. locally, High Buston (*A.A.*⁴, XXXV (1957), 169); Spital Hill (*A.A.*², XV (1892) 239); Bradford House (*N.C.H.* I, 294).

and one must assume that the latter also has been totally robbed.

FINDS (fig. 17)

Seventeen flints were recovered from the excavated area, only two of them being finished artefacts and the remainder small flakes or cores. A small side scraper came from the ditch fill in the north-east quadrant but is not necessarily associated with the burials. A second scraper or small knife of grey chert was found in emptying the disturbed contents of pit No. 2.

Three fragments of pottery were recovered from the robbed internal area and adjacent to pit No. 2, apparently belonging to two different vessels. The first fragment, in reddish brown fabric with a grey core, is thought to be from a small Tripartite Urn (fig. 17, 1). There is no decoration showing on the sherd, but undecorated urns are not unusual. Two conjoined wall fragments in a different fabric bear a

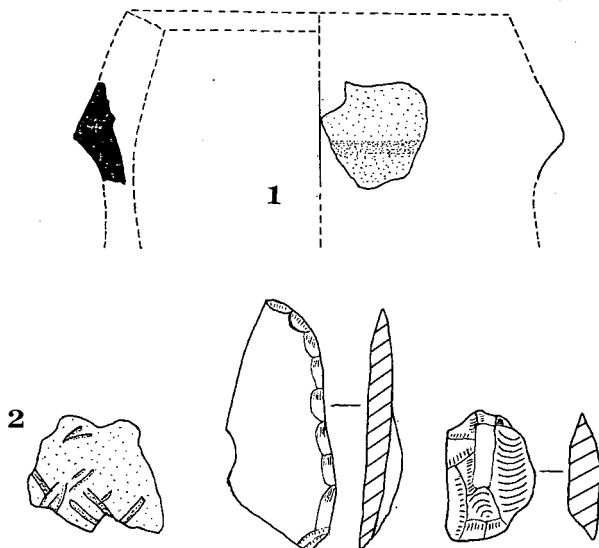


FIG. 17. POTTERY ($\frac{1}{2}$); FLINTS (1:1)

decoration of some form consisting of plain grooves and incisions (fig. 17, 2). The type of vessel is uncertain, but an urn of the Overhanging Rim variety would not be out of place. The precise relationship of the vessels to the pits is uncertain, as indeed is that of the pits to each other.

In addition to the above, there were several small wall fragments of pottery from the top of the grey silt in the ditch in the north-east quadrant. Although again no restoration of a vessel is possible, the sherds themselves are almost certainly of the type of pottery found on immediately pre-Roman and Roman Iron Age settlements of the area.

GENERAL

Although there is little recorded evidence relating to the structure of individual Bronze Age barrows or cairns within the county, the present excavations show that variety does exist and this is confirmed by a more recent survey of cairn-fields still in progress. As already indicated, little is known about Iron Age burials in the area. But the inclusion in the present instance of at least one such burial within a cairnfield, which is otherwise probably predominantly Bronze Age in context and character, serves as a reminder of the frequent instances in the county where presumed Iron Age sites occur in proximity to such cairnfields. The latter no doubt offered the convenience and attraction of traditional cemeteries. Although there is no proof of direct association at Alnham, it is reasonable to see the cremation with the Iron Age pin as the resting place of one of the inhabitants from the palisaded settlements, or from the hill-fort in the more troublesome times towards the close of the first millenium B.C. The setting would have been both visible and long honoured in the memory. At the same time however, the situation at Alnham, so favourable for the detection of settlement sites, illustrates the failure of field work to produce at the moment any distinctive and assured Bronze Age settlement sites within striking distance of the cairn-fields. Whereas it has been suggested on structural evidence

that the earliest phases on some palisaded sites may be Late Bronze Age in character,⁶⁵ the matter is not resolved. Even the unenclosed platform settlements recently detected in Peeblesshire, for one of which a context in Period I of the North British Iron Age is tentatively suggested,⁶⁶ have yet to reveal themselves in this form in Northumberland. At present, so far as Bronze Age settlements in the county are concerned, we are left with the early coastal settlement site at Ross Links, Budle Bay, and the possibility of a small palisaded homestead on the river terrace beneath the Flavian fort at Corbridge.⁶⁷

APPENDIX A

REPORT ON A SAMPLE OF BURNT WOOD FROM A CREMATION PYRE

Helena H. Clark M.Sc.

Except for two pieces of hazel (*corylus avellana*) the sample consisted of approximately equal quantities of oak (*Quercus sp.*) and birch (*Betula verrucosa* = *B. alba*).

The oak fragments distinguished by the characteristic ring-porous structure and broad, compound medullary rays, were apparently derived from trees of some size. In the largest piece, the twelve evenly-spaced annual rings showed practically no trace of curvature and it is probable, therefore, that it had once been part of the peripheral region of a comparatively large trunk.

Birch could be recognised by the diffuse structure of the wood and the lack of distinct medullary rays. The curvature of the growth rings indicated that the greater number of fragments had been derived from branches approximately 5 cms. in diameter.

The two pieces of hazel, easily identified by the conspicuous radially arranged lines of wood vessels and the presence of well-

⁶⁵ e.g. West Brandon (above); Glenachan Rig, Peeblesshire (Feachem, R. W., *P.S.A.S.*, XCII (1958-9), 15 ff.

⁶⁶ Feachem, R. W., *P.S.A.S.*, XCIV (1960-61), 79 ff.

⁶⁷ Richmond, I. A. and Gillam, J. P., *A.A.*, XXXIII (1955), 118 ff. In addition fragments of Bronze Age pottery have been recovered during the last few years.

marked aggregate rays, were from branches of different sizes. The larger was a complete cross-section of a twig about 2 cms. diameter in which nine annual rings could be counted. Although it could be deduced from the straightness of the five growth-rings of the smaller piece, that it had been part of a much larger branch, it was impossible to estimate its original size.

APPENDIX B

SKELETAL REMAINS

Professor C. H. Tonge, T.D., D.D.Sc., M.B.B.S., B.D.S.

These are fragmented skeletal remains which have been cremated. There is no evidence of any bones other than human, and no evidence of more than one individual. The pieces represent all parts of the body except the facial skeletal and there are no tooth fragments. The skull fragments indicate that this was an adult and probably between the ages of 25 and 40 years. There is no evidence as to sex.

APPENDIX C

BRONZE PIN

R. F. Tylecote, M.A., M.Sc., Ph.D.

This has a coarse-grained equiaxed structure which has been worked and annealed. The equivalent tin content appears to be about 8-10% and there is little slag and no lead present. The hardness is 58 HV5. This pin is too soft to have been used as a pin and there is every possibility that it has been heated unintentionally after manufacture, perhaps during cremation. In any case the temperature must have been well above 500°C.

