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EXCAVATIONS AT STANDINGSTONE

remains of a second cremation (F259), buried at a slightly shallower depth.

A number of other small pits and post-holes were found in the vicinity: F243 (0.65m in diameter) yielded two spalls of coarse pottery (sf 43, 44), whilst F254 yielded a cobble tool (sf 64). An irregular gully F270 cutting the second cremation appeared to be a burrow, but contained charred cereal, which may derive from a disturbed feature. A sherd of flat-rimmed ware (sf 61) came from the spoil-heap nearby.

The cinerary urns – Alison Sheridan

Pot 1, which consisted mostly or exclusively of sherds from the uppermost part of the vessel, had been buried inverted; Pot 2, represented by its base and a few fragments from the lower body, had been buried upright. Cremated bone was associated with both vessels.

POT 1

This vessel (sf 35) is represented by its rim and the top 71mm of its body, the constituent sherds having been refitted and gap-filled to form an unbroken, slightly oval and uneven circuit some 210–220mm in diameter (Figure 4.6). A further eleven small sherds and 16 fragments are also present. The original height of the vessel can be estimated at 270–320mm.

The rim is gently pointed and has a steeply-sloping, concave internal bevel 16.5–20mm deep. The exterior below the rim slopes out gently and is slightly convex; it is decorated with a design of broad (up to 2.5mm) but shallow impressions of loosely-twisted cord, arranged as upwardly-sloping diagonal lines framed top and bottom by horizontal lines. The wall probably tapered in below this point, and although this top section of the vessel is collar-like, it would not be correct to describe the vessel as a Collared Urn, for reasons given below. Wall thickness varies from 10mm at the bottom of the surviving ‘collar’ to 16.5mm at the bottom of the rim bevel.

The surfaces of the pot are a reddish and orange-brown colour, now darkened by the application of consolidant; the core matches the surface colour over parts of the circumference, and elsewhere has a blackish band of variable width, indicating where the organic material in the clay had been incompletely burnt out during the rapid firing. The fabric is slightly gritty and these stone inclusions protrude through the surfaces, despite attempts to achieve a smooth finish (which probably involved wet-smoothing of the surfaces). The inclusions comprise small fragments, mostly under 5mm...
in their maximum dimension, and mostly angular and sub-angular in shape; their overall density is 10–15%. They mostly consist of a hard black stone, which may contain a black shiny mineral; there are also fragments of a speckled crystalline stone, reddish, white and black, and discrete fragments of the constituent black shiny mineral. Occasional fragments of a very fine-grained speckled stone, and occasional quartz grains are present. It is likely that some of these inclusions were present naturally in the clay, while others represent deliberately crushed filler. The stone types have not been identified to their probable source.

**POT 2**

This comprises a complete base and part of the lower body (sf 37, found *in situ*; sf 1 from topsoil), together with one sizeable detached lower body sherd (sf 60) and two further, smaller body sherds (sf 2, 38) all found in topsoil nearby, with a few additional small sherds, fragments and crumbs. The base, 112–120mm in diameter, is pedestalled and has a slightly concave outer surface and markedly convex interior (Figure 4.6). The wall splay at a variable angle and variable degree of curvature, giving the vessel a markedly lopsided profile. Wall thickness, at the lower belly, is c. 12mm; the maximum basal thickness is 31mm. The exterior surface at the base is fairly soft; brush marks from the pot cleaning process are visible. The exterior is a mottled buff and pale pink colour; the core, blackish-grey; and the interior varies from pale grey to grey-brown and dark grey. An attempt had been made to achieve a smooth surface and, to judge from the detached belly sherd, the pot had probably been coated with a thin slip; but numerous lithic inclusions protrude nevertheless. Again, these inclusions comprise a variety of types, shapes, and sizes and represent a mixture of naturally-present and deliberately-added material. Fragments are angular to rounded, up to 6.5 × 4mm in size, and at a density of 10–15%; some of the same rock types as seen in Pot 1...
are present (notably the shiny black mineral, speckled red-white-black stone, occasional quartz grains, and hard black stone). Brown sandstone and speckled sandstone are also present, and since sandstone is abundantly available locally, it is likely that this pot was made locally.

DISCUSSION

Despite the fact that only a small part of each vessel is present, enough survives to provide pointers to the type of pottery represented. A radiocarbon date of 1680–1490 cal bc (SUERC-11893; Table 9.2) on cremated human long bone from Pot 1 and the fact that Pot 2 was buried upright provide further clues. It will be assumed that the proximity of the two vessels to each other indicates that they are broadly contemporary and broadly of the same type of pottery.

Pot 1’s internally-bevelled rim, slightly convex and inclined collar-like neck and simple, cord- impressed decorative scheme are all features of the Cordoned Urn tradition (for a discussion of the tradition, see Waddell 1995; Sheridan 2003; 2007). If one assumes that Pot 1’s lower body was of the same basic shape as that of Pot 2, then both urns may well have been simple bipartite vessels (with or without a cordon at the bottom of the ‘collar’). Such vessels can be regarded as an intermediate form between the more globular and sometimes multi-ribbed Cordoned Urns that reflect this tradition’s origins in the Collared Urn tradition (as shown, for example, at Stobshiel, East Lothian: Waddell 1995, fig. 11.1.10) and simple Bucket Urns. Other, similarly ‘transitional’ urns are known from elsewhere in Scotland, as at Ardeer (Stevenston) Sands, South Ayrshire (Mann 1906; Morrison 1968) and Limefield, South Lanarkshire (Maclaren 1984). Such urns are found in both inverted and upright positions, like the Standingstone examples. Cremated bone from one such vessel from Ardeer Sands (Mann’s urn 15) has produced a radiocarbon date of 1740–1520 cal bc (GR-A-34770, 3350 ± 35 BP; Sheridan and Bradley 2007, 220), very similar to the date for Standingstone Pot 1. Closer to Standingstone, both geographically and in terms of shape and decoration, is a bipartite urn from a Bronze Age cemetery at Eweford, East Lothian (MacGregor 2007, fig. 5.11, urn 5). Found empty and on its side, this vessel may well represent a cenotaph or special offering; its decoration is identical to that of Standingstone Pot 1. Although the Eweford vessel was not directly dated, it is likely to have been buried within the time range 1750–1675 bc (Sheridan unpublished) – slightly earlier than the Standingstone urns.

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The simple shapes and decorative schemes of these ‘intermediate Cordoned-to-Bucket Urns’ and their Bucket Urn successors are paralleled among contemporary domestic pottery from southern Scotland and northern Britain, as found for example in unenclosed platform settlements such as Green Knowe, Borders (Jobey 1980) and Lintshie Gutter, South Lanarkshire (Terry 1995). This kind of pottery has been defined and discussed by Colin Burgess (1995). An East Lothian example of a bucket-shaped vessel with a similar decorative scheme to that of Standingstone Pot 1 was recently found at the Howmuir Farm settlement (Innes 2007, fig. 6.3). Five radiocarbon dates for Howmuir range from 1910–1690 cal bc (GU-13318, 3490 ± 35 BP) to 1610–1410 cal bc (GU-13319, 3210 ± 35 BP), overlapping with the date obtained for Standingstone Pot 1.

These two graves at Standingstone are likely to represent the last surviving remnants of a Bronze Age cemetery. Their location on a local rise is wholly typical for Bronze Age graves. There is abundant evidence in East Lothian for funerary activity from most parts of the Bronze Age: the A1 excavations at Eweford produced an entire cemetery with urned and un-urned cremated remains spanning the second millennium bc (MacGregor 2007).

The cremated remains – Charlotte Henderson

Pot 1 was excavated in the Conservation Laboratory at Durham University, by Grant Lock. The fill was removed in separate quadrants in four spits of c. 20mm each, the remains being photographed and drawn at each stage; the soil was then washed through a 500μm sieve and the residue sorted. A total of 236g of cremated bone was recovered from within the urn; 2.8g came from outside it and 0.2g beneath it. The bone was extremely fragmented and very little was identifiable; only 53% of fragments were larger than 10mm, the largest measuring 46 × 22 × 4mm (max).

The only identifiable remains came from within the urn. Several pieces of skull were found (12.9g), together with long bone fragments (21.9g), including a piece possibly from the neck of a femur and a piece of humerus or tibia (which was radiocarbon dated). An articular surface and two possible rib fragments (5.7g) were also recovered. The only more accurately identified remains (2.7g) were several probable molar roots; an incisor root and a possible pre-molar were also present. The tooth roots resembled stage H development (El-Nofely and Iscan 1989, 248–9), which indicated that the individual(s) was at least 9