

HIGHLAND REGIONAL COUNCIL



FIELD MONUMENTS

ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES AND MONUMENTS RECORD

1 SITE CODE		H N D 0 6 S E 0 1 0 A									
2 NGR		N D 0 7 0 4 6 1 9 2 C E									
3 QUAL											
4 DISTRICT		CAITHNESS									
5 PARISH		HALKIRK									
6 SITE NAME		T U L A C H / S I O N N A I C H *									
7 AREA STATUS		8 SITE STATUS		9 REGIONAL STATUS		10 GENERIC TYPE					
		SCHEDULED				BURIAL CAIRN, CHAMBERED+BURIALS, INHUMATIONS+BURIAL, CREMATION, URNED.					
11 CONCORDANCE		12 FORM		13 DIMENSIONS		14 PERIOD/DATE					
OS ND 06 SE 10		STANDING STRUCTURE		C 60.0m LONG		NE=BA					
15 DATING METHOD		16 RELATIONSHIP OF ELEMENTS					17 CONDITION				
TYP +C14 *		SECONDARY BA BEAKER CREMATION BURIAL IN NE MULTI-PHASE BURIAL CAIRN.					INCOMPLETE				
18 SHAPE		19 THREAT AND DATE					20 LAND USE				
"LONG"							ROUGH PASTURE				
21 GEOLOGY		22 SOILS					23 VEGETATION				
24 HYDROLOGY/DRAINAGE		25 RELIEF		26 ASPECT		27 ALTITUDE					
		LEVEL GROUND		360°		65=70m OD					
28 EXCAVATION (EXCAVATOR: DATE: EXTENT: QUALITY)											
1. CORCORAN:1961-63:PARTIAL:SCIENTIFIC.											
29 BIBLIOGRAPHY (AUTHOR: DATE: TITLE: JOURNAL OR PUBLISHER: VOLUME: DETAIL)											
1. ORDNANCE SURVEY:1975:1/10,000.											
2. CORCORAN J. & W.P.:1967 :PROC SOC ANT SCOT.:98:p1-75.											
3. HENSHALL A.S.:1972:CHAMBERED TOMBS OF SCOTLAND:2:pp281,549-552.											
4. HENSHALL A.S.:1963:CHAMBERED TOMBS OF SCOTLAND:1:p296-7, No 58.											
5. RCAHMS:1911:CAITHNESS INVENTORY:HMSO:p38-9, No 135.											
6. HMB(S.D.D.):1985:LIST OF SCHEDULED MONUMENTS.											
7. MERCER R.J.:1985:A.FIELD SURVEY IN N. SCOTLAND:EUP:VOL3:FOR No 253. (over).											
30 GROUND PLAN NO.					31 GROUND PHOTO NO.						
32 SLIDES NO.					33 HR. AP. NO.						
20041											
34 NMR. AP. NO.					35 OTHER AP. NO. : SOURCE						
36 ARCHIVE AND LOCATION											
37 GEOPHYSICAL SURVEY					38 SAMPLES						
39 PALYNOLOGY					40 NUMERICAL DATES: RANGE: LAB NO.						
41 SMALL FINDS					42 MUSEUM/LOCATION						
43 OTHER											
44 NAME & ADDRESS OF OWNER										45 ATTITUDE OF OWNER	
46 NAME & ADDRESS OF TENANT										47 ATTITUDE OF TENANT	
48 ACCESS & RESTRICTIONS											
49 NAME & ADDRESS OF FINDER/RECORDER: DATE						50 RECORDER: DATE		51 CHECK: DATE			
						SEM: 29.8.1985		DH: 18.9.1985			
52 TEXT											

"See continuation cards for text and plans."
 "See HND 06 SE 009A for map." (9).

"See HND 06 SE 009 A (2) INTRODUCTION;CONCLUSION;AND APPENDIX (FOR REPORT OF HUMAN REMAINS)

6. * Full Name: Tulach an t-Sionnaich." (1).
15. " * Tulach An't Sionnach: Radiocarbon Date.
- | | |
|--|--------------|
| GU 1330 Main fill of chamber (Animal bone) | 4210=60 b.p |
| GU 1331 Ditto (Animal bone) | 4055=70 b.p. |
| GU 1334 Main Burial. (Human bone). | 4685=60 b.p. |
- All dates from N. Sharples. All given as b.p.
- Notified by P.J. Ashmore 15.4.1981."
29. 8. ORDNANCE SURVEY:1906:25" MAP.
9. CORCORAN J.:1961:DISCOVERY AND EXCAVATION IN SCOTLAND:CBA(SCOTLAND):p52.

Tulach an t'Sionnaich, the Mound of the Fox, is a multi-period chambered cairn which was excavated by Corcoran in July and September 1961 and April 1963, in advance of the raising of the level of Loch Calder which would threaten the site.

Before excavation its general appearance was that of a long cairn, unhorned and possibly disturbed, but retaining most of its structural features. It was 200ft long, lying NNW-SSE and averaging 40ft in breadth with the higher and broader end, 6ft in maximum height, towards the south. A prominent feature was a 'trench' crossing the cairn about 50ft from the S end.

The excavation showed that the monument had originated as a minimal round cairn, measuring about 35ft in diameter, covering a passage grave consisting of a square chamber whose 7ft long passage had opened to the south, but was carefully blocked. The outer ends of the passage were bonded into a revetment wall which had bounded the cairn. Between the E side of the chamber and the revetment, an inner wall, roughly built but quite stable, was traceable for 18ft from where it was bonded into the E side of the passage to where it was lost in disturbance. After an independent, though possibly short existence, this cairn (which comparison with Vementry (HU 26 SE1) suggests may have stood on a heel-shaped platform) was enclosed within a heel-shaped cairn, the first to be identified on the mainland of Scotland, whose 'narrow' plan would place it early in the typological sequence of this class of monument. The facade, built across the entrance to the passage, was unbroken. Disturbance, both prehistoric and recent, prevented the recovery of the complete plan but it appeared to have measured about 53ft from facade to rear and 51ft across the chord of the facade. The north limit was in the area of the 'trench' where disturbed remains of drystone walling about 18ins high were identified.

After a time lapse sufficient to allow slip from the heel-shaped cairn to accrue to a depth of about 1ft in the forecourt, the whole structure was encapsulated in a long cairn whose straight S end ran across the chord of the facade of the heel-shaped cairn; and which was completely surrounded by a low revetment wall. The long cairn was straight-sided, 127ft long and tapered slightly from a width of 34ft across its pseudo-facade to 26ft at the slightly convex N end. It was aligned about 15° E of the axis of the heel-shaped cairn, presumably to use a natural ridge to enhance its height which, except at the S end, was nowhere more than 3ft. Selective cuts in the body of the cairn revealed cist-like arrangements of stones which however proved to be part of the cairn structure. Few finds were made but the pottery suggested to Corcoran that the heel-shaped cairn was in use during the period of undecorated Neolithic pottery; that it went out of use about the period of the local arrival of Beakers; and that the long cairn was complete before the deposition of a cinerary urn outside the revetment wall. Finds from the excavation are in the NMAS, donated by DoE.

253. Chambered cairn, 'Tulach an t'Sionnaich'. Not available for survey. (7)
Elevation: 225' OD.
ND 070619.
O.S. Card ND 06 SE 10.
Corcoran, J.X.W.P. (1967) 'Excavation of Three Chambered Cairns at Loch Calder', PSAS, XCVIII (1964-66), 5-22, 48-58, 66, 69-70, 71-75.
Henshall, A.S. (1963) The Chambered Tombs of Scotland, vol. 1, 296-7, No. 58.
Henshall, A.S. (1972) The Chambered Tombs of Scotland, vol. 2, 549-52. RCAHMS (1911) Caithness, 38-9, No. 135.

TULACH AN T-SIONNAICH ("Mound of the Fox")

(9)

GR: ND/07056192. Prior to excavation this appeared to be a long cairn, some 200 feet in length and orientated NNW.-SSE. with traces of an apparent trench cut across the cairn at approximately 65 feet from the southern end. Excavation showed that this was a complex structure consisting of a heel-shaped cairn similar to those in Shetland to which had been added an elongated structure of cairn material some 130 ft. long, trapezoidal in plan and apparently without internal chambers, cists or similar structures. The longitudinal walls bonding this structure were incorporated into walling joining the two structures and the priority of the heel-shaped cairn was demonstrated by the position of the enclosing wall of the whole structural complex overlying forecourt material of the heel-shaped cairn.

A short passage led from the crescentic face of the heel-shaped cairn into a small square chamber. Surrounding this were two inner concentric circular walls. The outer edge of this cairn was delimited by dry-walling except along the façade where large boulders had been laid on the original ground surface. Cairn material was built up against the inner circular structure and originally covered the chamber area.

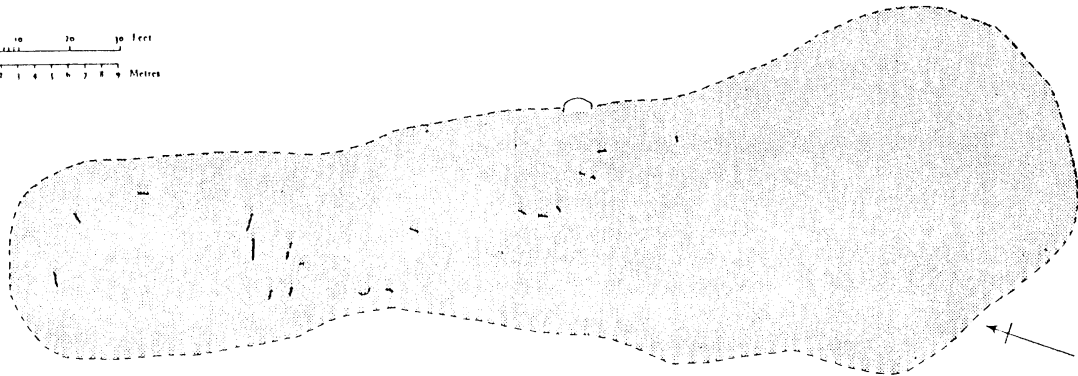
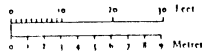
A considerable quantity of unburnt human and animal bone was found in the chamber and was sealed by a final cremated deposit. In the upper levels of the chamber sherds of Beaker provided a *terminus ante quem* for the heel-shaped cairn.

58 TULACH AN
T'SIONNAICH (long)
In the parish of
HALKIRK
Location at the N end of
LOCH CALDER
4½ m. SW of
THURSO
Map reference
ND/070619
Sheet X1; ND 06 SE
Inventory number 135
Reference
R. C. A. M. Inv. 38-39¹
Plan by A. S. H. and M. J. S.
(fig. 53)
Visited 14.8.56

*Description.** The cairn is situated by the shore of the loch, in rough pasture in the flat wide bottom of a shallow valley, between the 200 and 250 ft. contours. It has been considerably plundered and is now overgrown with grass and gorse and the edges are indefinite. It is orientated SE-NW; the length is about 205 ft., the width at the SE end about 60 to 70 ft. and at the NW end about 38 ft., though it is probable that the sides have been spread beyond their original limits, and a few flat slabs on end 4 to 9 ft. within the present edge and aligned along the axis may represent the remains of a peristalith. The SE end is rather higher, at present reaching a maximum of 6 ft. Behind this higher portion, at about 50 ft. from the SE end, an irregular hollow runs across the cairn; it is slight and does not approach ground level. Although Curle regarded it as being due to unrecorded excavation comparison with other sites suggests it may be an original feature. Near the mesial line of the cairn and towards the NW end there protrude a number of upright and apparently earth-fast slabs, mainly rather thin and slight but sometimes set two or three in a row, some of which at least are probably deliberately arranged. As the cairn itself is made of flat slabs and is so much disturbed it is difficult in its present state to distinguish the structural slabs, or to interpret their plan.

(4).

Tulach an t'Sionnaich



CAT 58

TULACH AN T'SIONNAICH
Excavation report now published,
P. S. A. S. xcvi (1964-6) 5-22,¹
48-58, 66, 69-70, 71-5
Plan after Corcoran¹
Excavation Corcoran 1961, 1963

Description. The site was described in volume 1 before the recent excavations. The following account summarises the excavation report.

The cairn was found to consist of two main elements, a heel-shaped cairn facing S, which formed the wider and higher S end of the structure, and a later long cairn running from its N end but also extended southwards to envelop the earlier cairn. The heel-shaped cairn was itself constructed in two phases, and covered a chamber.

The chamber was approximately square, 5 ft across, built of four thin orthostats, two of which had broken vertically. They were only slightly set into the subsoil, and were supported on their outer sides by rough dry-walling built against them. Inside, support was given to the N and S orthostats by 'buttress' stones 6 to 16 in. high. The chamber was paved by two heavy slabs 6 in. thick, and there was a large sill-stone in the entrance. The narrow space between these stones and the orthostats was packed by small vertical stones, this arrangement probably being partly designed as additional interior support for the orthostats. Two small stones had been set up in the chamber, resting on the paving and supported by other stones; one projected from the N side of the chamber, and the other, 2 ft 6 in. high, stood just within the entrance.

The chamber had been much disturbed. It is unlikely that the roofing had been by a capstone resting on the orthostats, as the height would have been only 4 ft. Probably there had been some corbelling, and stones which appeared to be collapsed corbel stones were found in the upper levels of the chamber. At this level also were fragments of animal bones. Below this was a deliberate blocking of small stones, in the S part of the chamber and inner part of the passage containing tightly packed deposits of charcoal and mollusca, and in the N part of the chamber containing intensely burnt animal bone, charcoal and burnt earth. Below this was a layer 1 ft 6 in. deep resting on the paving, consisting of thin flat stones with human and animal bones (not articulated), and limpet shells.

The passage was 7 ft long, 2 ft wide at the entrance widening to 3 ft wide at the inner end. The walls were of dry masonry, surviving to 3 ft 6 in. high at the maximum, probably the original height. On the floor was discontinuous paving, and a sill at the entrance. The entrance was blocked by carefully laid flat stones.

The outer ends of the passage walls were bonded into a wall-face which had reverted a cairn, presumably round, with a diameter of about 35 ft (about half of the circuit was exposed during the excavations). On the E side of the passage and chamber an 18 ft length of an inner wall-face was found, also bonded into the passage wall, which had faced an apparently oval core of cairn material. This inner structure was interpreted as a structural device to stabilise the thrust from the chamber. The cairn was built of small horizontal slabs amongst which there was little soil.

Across the front of the round cairn, and almost touching it at the entrance, was an unbroken setting of larger slabs in a gently concave line, the basal course of a built façade belonging to the heel-shaped cairn. The original height of the façade is unknown, for the upper courses were missing. The rest of the heel-shaped cairn was edged by a built wall-face remaining 1 ft to 1 ft 6 in. high (only partly exposed during the excavations). On the less disturbed E side an inner wall-face was traced, running nearly parallel and remaining 2 ft high. The corners of the façade were disturbed, but at each there lay a long slab which may have stood upright at the junctions of the

(3).

façade and revetment wall. The façade had measured about 51 ft across, and from the centre of the façade to the back of the cairn had measured 53 ft.

The long cairn had been laid out on an axis 15° E of that of the earlier structure. The S end of the long cairn was marked by a transverse row of low upright slabs placed about 13 ft from the back of the heel-shaped cairn. Similar rows of stones were found elsewhere in the long cairn, and probably none of them were intended to be seen. The long cairn was linked to the heel-shaped cairn both by walling along the sides and by a small amount of cairn material filling the gap between them, giving the monument a dip in its profile between the heel-shaped cairn and the long cairn proper. The long cairn measured 34 ft across at the S end behind the heel-shaped cairn, narrowing to 26 ft across at its square N end, and it had a length of 127 ft. The maximum height was 3 ft. It was edged by a rough wall-face up to four courses high, and this wall-face, generally reduced to one course, extended southwards to enclose the heel-shaped cairn, giving a total length of 190 ft. Because of the change in alignment this wall passed over the SW corner of the earlier façade, but ran some 7 ft outside the E side of the heel-shaped cairn. A subsidiary wall-face ran parallel to and inside this part of the wall of the long cairn, and another subsidiary wall-face connected the outer wall-face with the back of the heel-shaped cairn. These subsidiary wall-faces were thought to have been built to stabilise loose material slipping from the earlier cairn.

The straight S wall-face of the long cairn was built on slip 1 ft deep in front of the façade of the heel-shaped cairn. The wall-face remained three courses high, and at each junction with the side walls there was a small upright slab.

The long cairn was less carefully built than the earlier structures, the slabs being mainly vertical with many earth-filled gaps. Various cist-like arrangements of stones and rough transverse alignments were found, but were only part of the cairn structure. No burial place was found in the long cairn.

FINDS. *Human remains.*

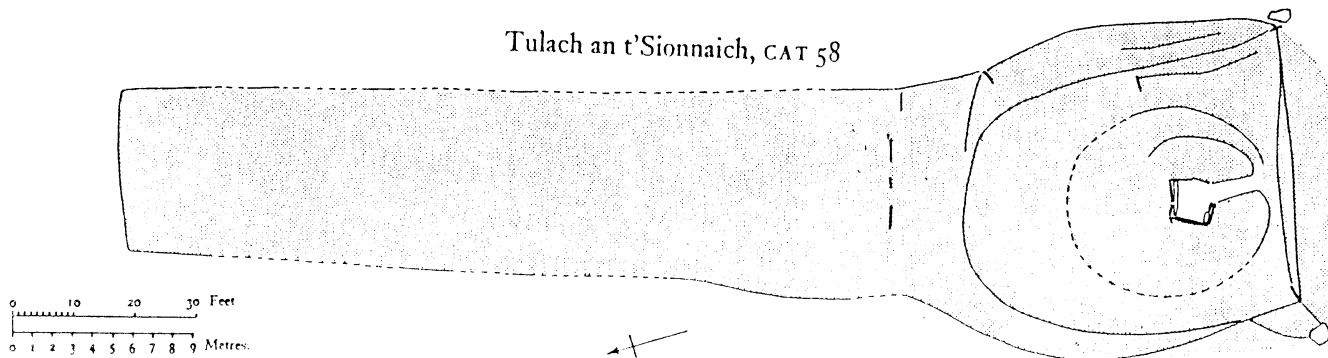
From the burial deposit in the chamber, bones mainly of two individuals, one probably male in early thirties, the other probably female in late teens, also fragment of mandible of third relatively old person, and fragments possibly of an infant.

Secondary cremation in Cinerary Urn, in cairn slip immediately outside wall-face at S end of cairn; one individual, probably female, possibly adult.

FINDS. *Animal remains.*

Bones, mainly fragments, of domesticated cattle and red deer, also fragments probably from birds and fish, all from burial deposit in chamber and passage, or from adjacent cairn and presumably derived from earlier disturbance of chamber. The greater part of a mature dog, and part of a young dog, from the burial deposit in the chamber. Unidentified animal bone, some burnt, in blocking material in the chamber, and above this. Limpet shells in the burial layer, deposits of mollusca (common land snail, limpet, and other marine mollusca) in the chamber blocking.

Tulach an t'Sionnaich, CAT 58



(2)

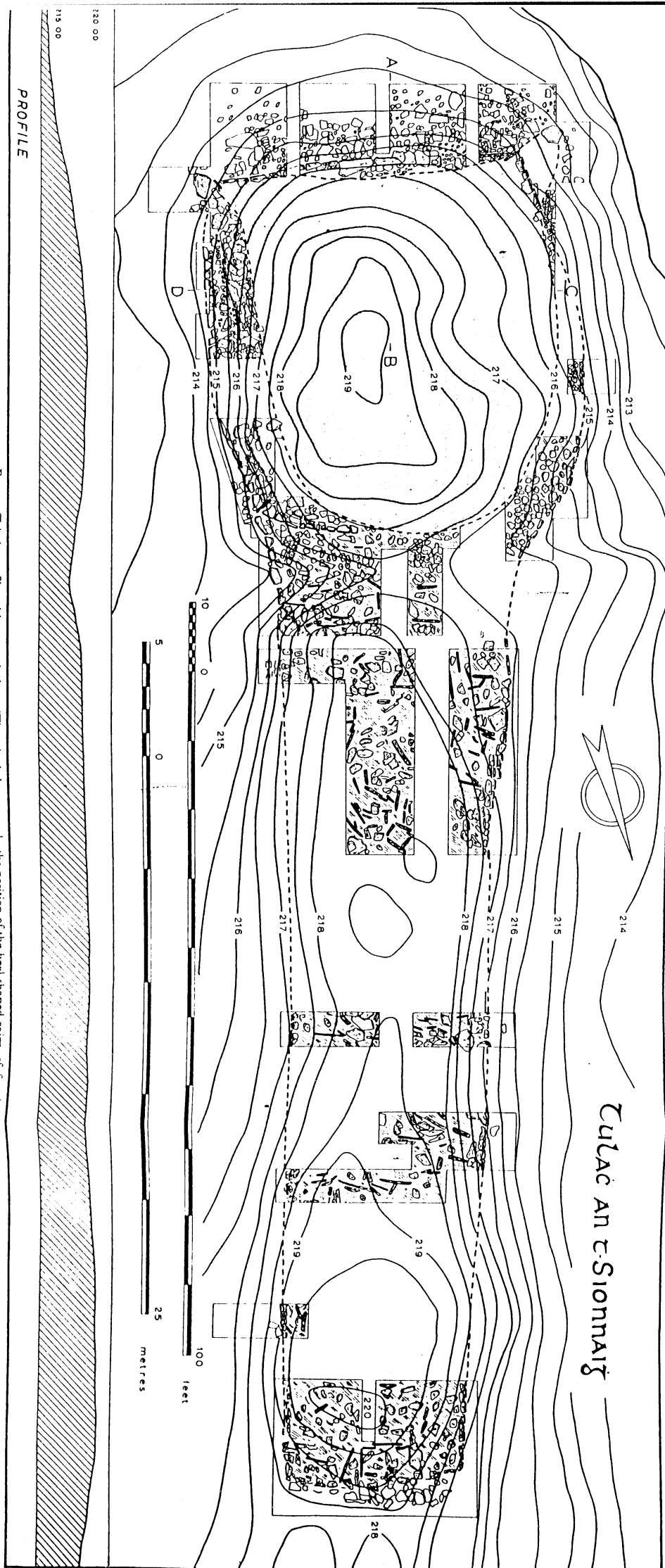


FIG. 3. Tulach an t-Sionnaigh: general plan. (The stippled area marks the position of the hee-shaped cairn. cf. fig. 4)



ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES AND MONUMENTS RECORD

4 DISTRICT CAITHNESS		5 PARISH HALKIRK		1 SITE CODE H N D O 6 S E O 1 O B	
8 CONCORDANCE ND 06 SE 10		9 MUSEUM/LOCATION OF FIND(S) NMR		10 ACCESSION NO.	
13 FIND CIRCUMSTANCES		14 CONDITION		15 EXCAVATOR AND DATE	
17 LAND USE ROUGH PASTURE		18 GEOLOGY		16 EXCAVATION RECORD NO.	
19 SOILS		20 VEGETATION		21 HYDROLOGY/DRAINAGE	
22 RELIEF LEVEL GROUND		23 ASPECT 360		24 ALTITUDE 65=70m OD	
25 DETAILED DESCRIPTION/DIMENSIONS					
26 BIBLIOGRAPHY (AUTHOR: DATE: TITLE: JOURNAL OR PUBLISHER: VOLUME: DETAIL)					
1. HENSHALL A.S.:1972:CHAMBERED TOMBS OF SCOTLAND. 2. NMAS:1976-77:23d ANNUAL REPORT (DONATIONS). 3. CORCORAN, J & W.P.:1967:PROC.SOC.ANT.SCOT.:98:pp14-15					
27 GROUND PLAN NO.			28 GROUND PHOTO NO.		
29 SLIDES NO.			30 HR. AP. NO.		
31 NMR. AP. NO.			32 OTHER AP. NO. : SOURCE		
33 ARCHIVE AND LOCATION					
34 GEOPHYSICAL SURVEY			35 SAMPLES		
36 PALYNOLOGY			37 NUMERICAL DATES: RANGE: LAB NO.		
38 OTHER					
39 NAME & ADDRESS OF OWNER					40 ATTITUDE OF OWNER
41 NAME & ADDRESS OF TENANT					42 ATTITUDE OF TENANT
43 ACCESS & RESTRICTIONS					
44 NAME & ADDRESS OF FINDER/RECORDER: DATE				45 RECORDER: DATE HAR: 6.9.1985	
47 TEXT				46 CHECK: DATE DM: 18.9.1985	

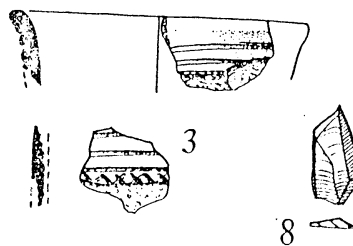
"See over card for text."

6. * Full Name: Tulach an t-Sionnaich.

FINDS. *Artifacts*. In N.M.A. (ill. p. 310).

1. Small wall sherd, finger-tip fluting on outer surface; 0.3 in. thick; fine dark grey ware.
 2. Thirteen small wall sherds, one from immediately below rim with faint almost vertical grooves; 0.3 in. thick; sandy corky dark grey ware, buff inner surface.
 3. Rim sherd and wall sherd of a Beaker, horizontal lines below rim, part of a zone of lattice, both by comb-impressions but dragged on horizontal lines; rim diam. 4.5 in., rather uneven brown gritty ware.
 4. Sherds of the lower part of a Cinerary Urn.
 5. Wall sherd, wheel-made, probably medieval or later.
 6. Ten flint flakes, one utilised, one burnt.
 7. Two flint chips, and a third perhaps used as a scraper.
 8. Small pitchstone blade, one end pointed, no secondary working but one edge utilised.
- 1 from burial deposit in chamber; 2 from between the façade and s wall of the long cairn; 3 from disturbed upper levels of the cairn N of chamber; 4 from s of the s wall of the long cairn; 5 from above the same wall; 6, three from chamber, two from passage, four in forecourt, one in body of cairn; 7 found in 4; 8 in chamber, 3 in. above floor. 1, 2, 4-7 not illustrated.

Tulach an t'Sionnaich, CAT 58



(1) Pottery

(a) One small, dark grey, featureless sherd was found in the main burial deposit in the chamber, immediately below the layer of mollusca, burnt bone and charcoal (cf. p. 6). The sherd is too small to allow any identification to be made of the type of pot to which it belonged. Its fine sandy texture, use of small pieces of quartz as filling, and smooth outer and inner faces compare closely with the finer sherds from Tulloch of Assery B, which belong to undecorated Neolithic pottery (cf. p. 42).

(3)

(b) Thirteen sherds and several small fragments were found with animal bones to the E. of the entrance, between the façade of the heel-shaped cairn proper and the later enclosing wall built across the forecourt. The sherds, all apparently belonging to a single pot, lay below the basal level of the enclosing wall a few inches above former ground level, and were sealed below cairn slip. The sherds vary in length between 3.5 and 13 mm., and in thickness between 6 and 8 mm. The texture is sandy with a filling, largely organic, the disintegration of which has given a somewhat 'corky' appearance to the surface. Both surfaces are smooth, but lack evidence of burnishing. The outer surface is generally dark grey in colour and the inner fawn-coloured. None of the sherds preserves any features which might allow a reconstruction of the pot, but the general texture, apart from the filling of organic material, compares with some of the coarser sherds of undecorated Neolithic pottery from Tulloch of Assery B.

(c) Two sherds of a Bell Beaker were found immediately to the north of the northern orthostat of the chamber in the upper, disturbed levels of the chamber area (fig. 7a and b). Both sherds appear to have belonged to the upper part of the same pot. One is a rim sherd; the rim is out-turned, rounded, but not thickened. From this sherd it is possible to reconstruct the diameter, which was 4½ in. The average thickness of the wall of the pot in the surviving sherd is 7 mm. The fabric is hard and well made, having a fawn-coloured surface and a hard, grey-fawn coloured core, with a filling of very small pieces of quartz, rarely exceeding 2 mm. in greatest extent. Decoration consists of at least three, but more probably five, horizontal grooves, apparently produced by a blunt-toothed implement. Each groove measures approximately 2 mm. in width and the grooves are spaced approximately 4 mm. apart. The top-most groove lies 1 cm. below the rim. Below the lower-most, at a distance of 1.5 mm. from it is a row of deep diagonal impressions, some of which appear to overlie a lighter series of diagonal impressions arranged at right angles to the first and so producing an imperfect line of X-shaped impressions. Sherds of this Beaker have not survived below this point.

(d) Remains of a cinerary urn were found enclosing the secondary cremation to the S. of the heel-shaped cairn and S. of the later enclosing wall (cf. p. 12). The surviving sherds are fragile and it is apparent that the pot was imperfectly fired. When discovered it was thought to be a container of some perishable substance, as in moist conditions the fabric was quite plastic. The outer surface was completely abraded, and there is no indication of decoration. The upper part of the urn did not survive and it is therefore unknown whether it had a collar. Sufficient remained to show that the urn had been deposited upright. The greatest surviving diameter was approximately 6 in.

The inner surface was relatively smooth. The fabric is medium brown in colour, sandy in texture, and has a filling of small pieces of mica and quartz. Surviving sherds have an average thickness of approximately 7 mm.

(e) A sherd consisting of part of the straight wall and flat base of a large, heavy, apparently wheel-made, pot with a basal diameter of approximately 8 in., was found lying immediately above the enclosing wall built across the forecourt to the SE. of the entrance. The fabric is hard, compact, with a filling of quartz. Its outer surface is brick-coloured and appears to have been glazed; the inner surface is black. The average surviving thickness of the wall is 13.5 mm. and of the base, 19 mm.

The sherd has no known prehistoric parallels and appears to be late medieval or early modern in date.

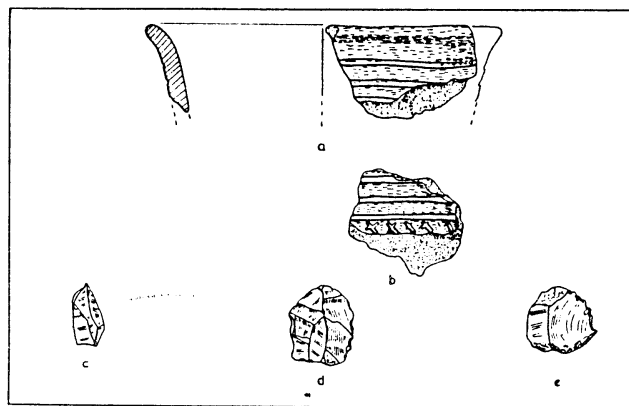


Fig. 7. Tulach an t-Sionnaich: a, b, Beaker sherds; c, Arran pitchstone; d, e, flint (1)

(2) Flint

Thirteen pieces of flint were found, three in the chamber, two in the passage, four in the forecourt and one in the body of the cairn. Seven of these are unworked, although one blade-like flake may have been utilised. One fragment, associated with bone, some of it burnt, and found in the chamber, was similarly burnt. A piece of water-rolled beach pebble flint found in the body of the cairn appears to have been used as a side scraper (fig. 7d).

The three remaining flints were found inside, and near the base of, the cinerary urn in the forecourt. Two are small, unworked fragments. The third is a crudely worked thumb-nail scraper (fig. 7e).

(3) Arran Pitchstone

One small worked point of Arran pitchstone was found 3 in. above the floor of the chamber. It is 2 cm. long, its greatest width is 1 cm. and is 2 mm. thick. It is not possible to cite close parallels for this artifact, apart from two flint points of similar shape and proportions found in Tulloch of Assery B (cf. p. 44). The pitchstone point, however, lacks the secondary working around the edges of the flint points but, like them, was struck from a slightly curved flake which retained its bulb of percussion. The opposed face is worked (fig. 7c).

CREMATION, URNED.

TULACH AN T-SIONNAICH ('The Mound of the Fox')¹

(2)

Before excavation this appeared to be a mound orientated NNW.-SSE., measuring approximately 200 ft. in length, with the higher and broader end towards the south. Its greatest height was approximately 6 ft., and its average width 40 ft. A 'trench', referred to in the *Inventory*,² and believed to have been excavated across the cairn at about 50 feet from the southern end, was a prominent feature. The general appearance was that of a long cairn, possibly disturbed and without evidence of horns, but retaining most of its structural features. Surface indications suggested that the principal chambered structure would lie at the S. end, and initial cuttings were made in that area. It is convenient to describe the heel-shaped cairn and the northern structure separately, followed by a general discussion of the cairn as a whole.

*Heel-Shaped Cairn**Chamber (Pl. I)*

Excavation revealed a Passage Grave (figs. 4 and 5). The axis of the passage was aligned some 15° to the W. of the longitudinal axis of the long cairn. The chamber was approximately square in plan, measured 5 ft. across, and was built of four orthostats. Two of the latter were already broken at the time of excavation, that on the E. side being considerably disturbed. As the orthostats were not deeply set in the subsoil, on account of outcrops, alternative support was necessary. This was achieved partially by the use of 'buttress' stones and partially by dry-stone walling built against the outer sides of the orthostats. The N. wall of the chamber was supported along its whole length by a heavy buttress stone, some 6 in. thick (Pl. II, 2). In the NE. corner the buttress stone rose to a height of 16 in. above the paving of the chamber, and also gave some support to the E. wall. This buttress stone was placed in position before the erection of the western orthostat, as its western extremity underlies the latter. The floor of the chamber was paved with two slabs, both measuring more than 6 in. in thickness. The western covered approximately three-quarters of the floor area and the eastern covered most of the remainder. It is probable that these two heavy floor slabs, together with the heavy sill at the entrance to the chamber, were chosen, not merely for paving, but also as partial support for

¹ N.G.R. ND 07056192.² R.C.A.H.M. (Scotland), Caithness, No. 135 (pp. 38-39)