

THE LONG CAIRNS OF EASTERN SCOTLAND¹

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The Scottish long cairns have received surprisingly little attention. It is true that many are badly ruined, and at first sight their appearance is discouraging - great amorphous heaps of stone or shapeless heather-grown mounds. But planning long cairns is generally a rewarding operation, for unlike many English barrows they have seldom been affected by ploughing and their original outline can be traced with a fair degree of accuracy. The edges of the cairns generally become over-grown with vegetation, and stone-robbers have found it more convenient to attack the loose stones of the interior leaving the rim intact. Nor does stone-robbing usually penetrate as far as ground level, so that the plan of the interior structures should be recoverable by excavation. But besides mutilated sites it is now becoming apparent that sites formerly regarded as being badly robbed or disturbed are in fact intact, for marked disparity in the height of different parts of a mound, or hollows running across, may well be original features (Corcoran 1969a, 88; Corcoran 1969b, 13-4). All in all the study of these monuments no longer seems depressingly unrewarding, but stimulating and even alarming for the size and complexity of the sites, and the detailed information which is likely to be available from excavation.

On the map (fig. 1) all Scottish long cairns are plotted together with several in Northumberland, the symbols indicating what is known or not known of their contents. This paper is confined to the sixty-four cairns known in eastern Scotland, E of the main N-S water-shed. So we shall not be concerned with the Clyde cairns (Scott 1969, 175-222), nor the few long cairns in the Outer Hebrides.

In SE Scotland and N Northumberland the distribution is scattered and somewhat inland. There is then a gap until N Angus, N of which there is a thicker scatter with a more coastal distribution as far as the Moray Firth. In Easter Ross there are groups of long cairns in the Black Isle and between Alness and Tain, and again in Strath Ullie above Helmsdale, in the Yarrows district of E Caithness, and in N Caithness, but only a scatter of sites in Orkney. It may well be that the gap in the distribution in the Lothians, Fife, and Angus, and the thinness of the distribution in the whole area S of the Moray Firth, is misleading, due to several factors such as the more intense cultivation of these areas, the possibility that some monuments were of earth and not stone, and to the lack of thorough field-work.

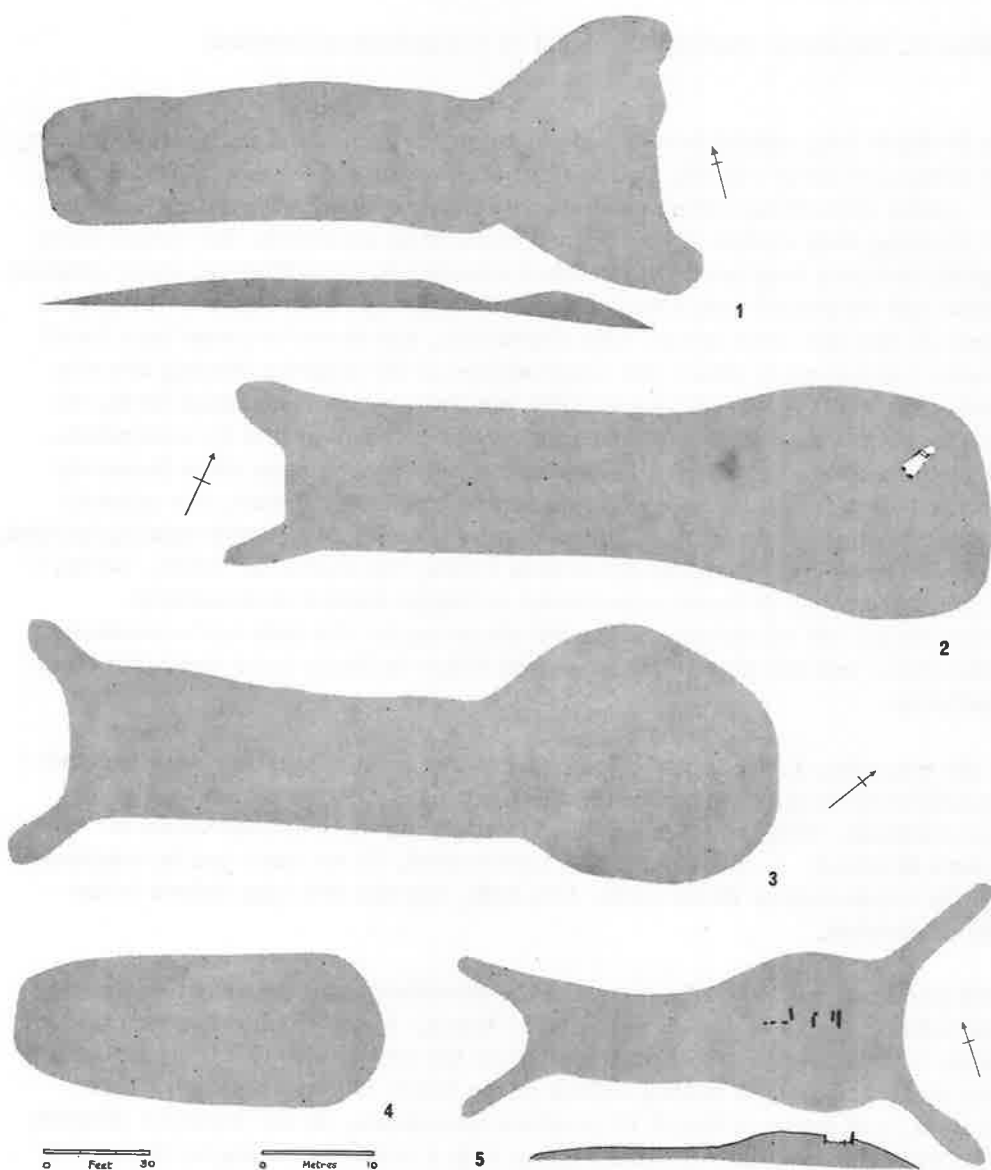


Figure 2. Plans of long cairns. 1, Balnagowan, ABN 1; 2, Tulach Buaile Assery, CAT 59; 3, Brawlbin Long, CAT 6; 4, Kilourman, SUT 32; 5, Head of Work, ORK 18.

The external appearance of the long cairns

Most of the monuments, even those that are greatly ruined, can be classified into one of three categories: single-period mounds, two-period mounds, or multi-period mounds.

The single-period mounds, in which there is no evidence of a stone chamber, compare quite well with what is known of the external appearance of English barrows (e.g. fig. 2, 4). But the Scottish mounds are normally stone or an earth-and-stone mixture instead of being of earth or chalk, though rare earthen mounds are known in Scotland. In plan the mounds are normally wider at one end, with straight slightly converging sides and squared ends, i.e. they are trapezoidal, and it is unnecessary to enlarge on the similarity to the long barrows of southern England, and in general shape to the Yorkshire barrows (Manby 1970). The wider ends of all categories of long mounds normally face between NE and SE, sometimes varying as far as N or S, but none of the Scottish single-period mounds face the W half of the compass. In profile the Scottish single-period cairns, if relatively undisturbed, slope gently from the highest point at the E end. At some sites the E end is rounded in plan, and it is unknown whether this was the original form or whether it is due to a ritual blocking or to slip.

A minor variety of cairn, which may be of importance as it seems to reappear as part of other categories of cairns, seems to be parallel-sided, relatively narrow and low: an example occurs at Fortingall (PER 6). These cairns might be comparable with the very much longer bank barrows of Wessex (Crawford 1938; 228-32).

The second category of long cairns comprises monuments which are evidently of two periods. Their bipart structure can be seen in the groundplan where the sides swell out to a distinctly wider (generally eastern) end, and/or it can be seen in the profile for the wider end will rise sharply, or at well-preserved sites there may be a hollow between the E end and the body. The effect in plan and elevation is of a 'head' and 'tail'. The mound at the E end may be either round or heel-shaped. At certain two-period and at some multi-period sites the 'head' mounds, either round or heel-shaped, have regular round flat tops. This seems to be a deliberate and distinctive feature.

Tulach Buaille Assery (CAT 59) (fig. 2, 2) is a good example of a two-part cairn with a massive round mound, 75 ft. in diameter and 10 ft. high, and the low parallel-sided mound running from its SW side, 130 ft. long and 40 ft. wide.² Brawlbin Long (CAT 6) (fig. 2, 3) is an equally well preserved

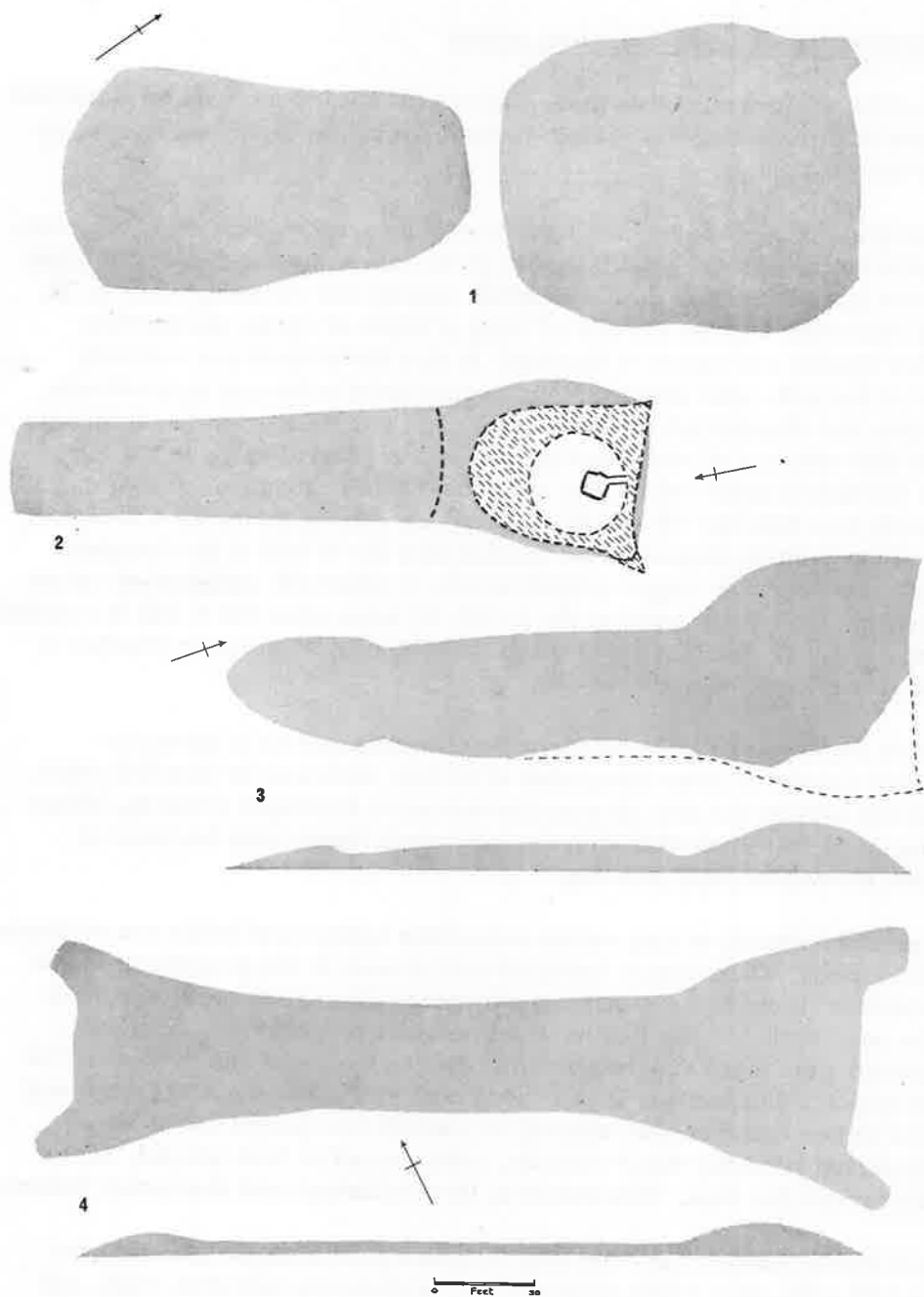


Figure 3. Plans of long cairns. 1, Kinbrace Hill, SUT 34; 2, Tulach an t'Sionnaich, CAT 58; 3, Longman Hill, BAN 2; 4, Na Tri Shean, CAT 41.

and distinctive site. These two cairns have a notably odd plan with horned forecourts at what would normally be regarded as the rear end, but lack such a feature at the front. This plan can be interpreted as a primary round mound to which a long cairn has been added; the long cairn has been as it were backed up against the SW side to keep the important NE side clear, and due to this arrangement the NE end of the long cairn which would normally have been wider with a facade and/or forecourt was inaccessible, so that the long cairn had to be turned round and the forecourt built at the SW end. A third cairn (CAT 18) is similar but with the opposite orientation. Other cairns with round 'heads' do not appear to have any forecourt arrangements. But at least one, Head of Work (ORK 18) (fig. 2, 5) has a cairn of the developed type with deep forecourts at both ends.

Balnagowan (ABN 1) (fig. 2, 1) is a clear example of a two-period mound with the presumed earlier monument a heel-shaped cairn. The two parts show well in the plan, and in section there is a considerable hollow between the 'head' and the 'tail', though in this example the 'tail' is the same height as the 'head' for much of its length.

Two intact cairns on Kinbrace Hill (SUT 34) (fig. 3, 1) are of particular interest in their spacial relationship. They are aligned on the same axis, and are similar to those just described except that they are not linked together. Again we have an indication that the heel-shaped (or perhaps in this case square cairn) is the earlier, for its horned forecourt faces NE up the slope. The rear cairn is trapezoidal in plan, its wider end significantly facing downhill to the SW, suggesting that being secondary its builders had to accept this unwelcome orientation, backing it up to the earlier cairn.

There is precise information on the structural history of one cairn of this bipart type, from Corcoran's excavations at Tulach an t'Sionnaich (CAT 58) (fig. 3, 2) (Corcoran 1966). When the long cairn was added to the monument the visible structure was a heel-shaped cairn. The narrow long cairn ended in a row of upright stones, but had been extended forwards to overlie the heel-shaped cairn. The axis of the heel-shaped cairn differed slightly from that of the long cairn, and the long cairn extension covered the heel-shaped cairn assymmetrically. The façade of the long cairn was slightly convex and lay in front of the façade of the heel-shaped cairn. Before excavation the hollow between the head and the tail had been visible and the ground plan had shown the swelling at the front end, though the fact that the earlier mound was heel-shaped was not evident (Henshall 1963, 297). It may be that some other apparently round mounds are in fact heel-shaped. . . //

The third category of long cairns comprises a variety of monuments which are of multi-period construction. Some of these cairns are very impressive for their size, up to 300 ft. long and up to 10 or 12 ft. high. Na Tri Shean (CAT 41) (fig. 3, 4, with an idealised section) appears to consist of two heel-shaped cairns placed back-to-back, the E cairn 10 ft. high, the W cairn 7 ft. high, and linked by a parallel-sided low cairn.

Longmanhill (BAN 2) (fig. 3, 3), damaged by quarrying, represents another variety of three-part mound, a heel-shaped mound at the E end, linked to a substantial long mound, with a presumably tertiary round mound at the W end.

The cairn on Essich Moor (INV 31), near Inverness, is an apparently unique version of the multi-period mound as all three parts appear to be trapezoidal; they are arranged end-to-end, linked by low banks of cairn material. The total length is 360 ft.

Internal structures

It must be plainly stated that there is no direct information in the region S of the Moray Firth regarding structures within long cairns or the other mounds with which they are associated, except for one cairn in Lanarkshire and three in W Perthshire which contain stone chambers probably outliers of the Clyde group of chambered cairns³. But there are indications that some sites do not contain stone chambers. For instance, a haphazard but fairly extensive excavation at The Mutiny Stones (BRW 1) (Craw 1925, 198-204), and work at Bellshiel Law in Northumberland (Newbigin 1936), failed to produce a chamber, and limited excavation at Cairnborrow (ABN 2) was equally negative. The very large multi-period cairn at Knapperty Hillock (ABN 5) had its 'head' destroyed about 1850: the destruction was observed by a local antiquary who described 'the stones of which it is built up being nearly reduced to sand by the action of fire. I never found any bones, but pieces of charred oak are plentifully mixed up with the stones.'

These facts might suggest that we are dealing with wooden or turf internal structures, and that we should expect the SE Scottish long cairns and their primary round or heel-shaped cairns to contain burial places comparable with the mortuary houses now identified under certain English long barrows due to meticulous excavations in the last twenty years; or the description of Knapperty Hillock might suggest at this site a cremation rite similar to that used in Yorkshire. Until at least one site, and preferably more, have been excavated, we are reduced to inference and speculation.

Yet when considering the nature of the large round mounds primary to the long cairns, there is one excavated site to which we can turn for information. Pitnacree, in Perthshire (Coles and Simpson 1965), produced Early Neolithic pottery and a radio-carbon date in the early third millennium. The mound was about 70 ft. in diameter and 9 ft. high, of rather complex construction partly cairn and partly of turves. In the centre was a rectangular enclosure measuring about 19 ft. by 4 ft., and approached at one end by a stone passage-like construction. The enclosure had been filled with a layer of stones. Beneath the stones were the post-holes of two very massive timbers which had been set 9 ft. apart, one at the end of the enclosure and one near the centre. The soil at Pitnacree was very acid, so it is not surprising that the inhumations, which the enclosure was presumably designed to receive, have not survived. Details of the interpretation of the central feature at Pitnacree are puzzling, but the excavators compared it with the familiar mortuary house at Wayland's Smithy, Berkshire (Atkinson 1965). Here also there had been massive posts, in this case linked by a bank of stones on each side, outside which was a stoneless gully bounded at its outer edge by cairn material. The gully was interpreted as the seating of timber walls shown to have been converging to a low ridge-pole, forming a tent-like structure. Crushed inhumations were recovered from the mortuary house.

When evidence is sought for burial structures intended for inhumations in other English long barrows (and it largely comes from old excavations) we meet difficulties of interpretation (Ashbee 1966, 44, 75-80; Simpson 1968). Mortuary houses, although having an overall unity of design and intention, undoubtedly varied considerably in size and construction. They were either of wood, or of turf and wood, the wooden parts having collapsed and totally decayed within the mound. The structures were rectangular, of long narrow proportions, almost certainly roofed, and characteristically with two or three pits in the floor either at the ends or the ends and the centre. These pits were sometimes for massive posts, as at Wayland's Smithy, sometimes were merely pits filled in before the burials were brought, and sometimes a mixture of the two at one site. At some sites the walls were pitched, and at some they were vertical, as indicated by the section of the Skendleby mortuary house (Phillips 1935a). It seems that the deposition of whole bodies and skeletal remains within the mortuary houses was a single act, for once completed the houses were not designed to be re-entered. *on below*

North of the Moray Firth we are in a different land as far as funerary monuments go, for this region is thick with passage-graves, and half the long cairns in the far North are known to be secondary to, or to contain, a passage-grave. But we need not suppose that all the long cairns in the N contain

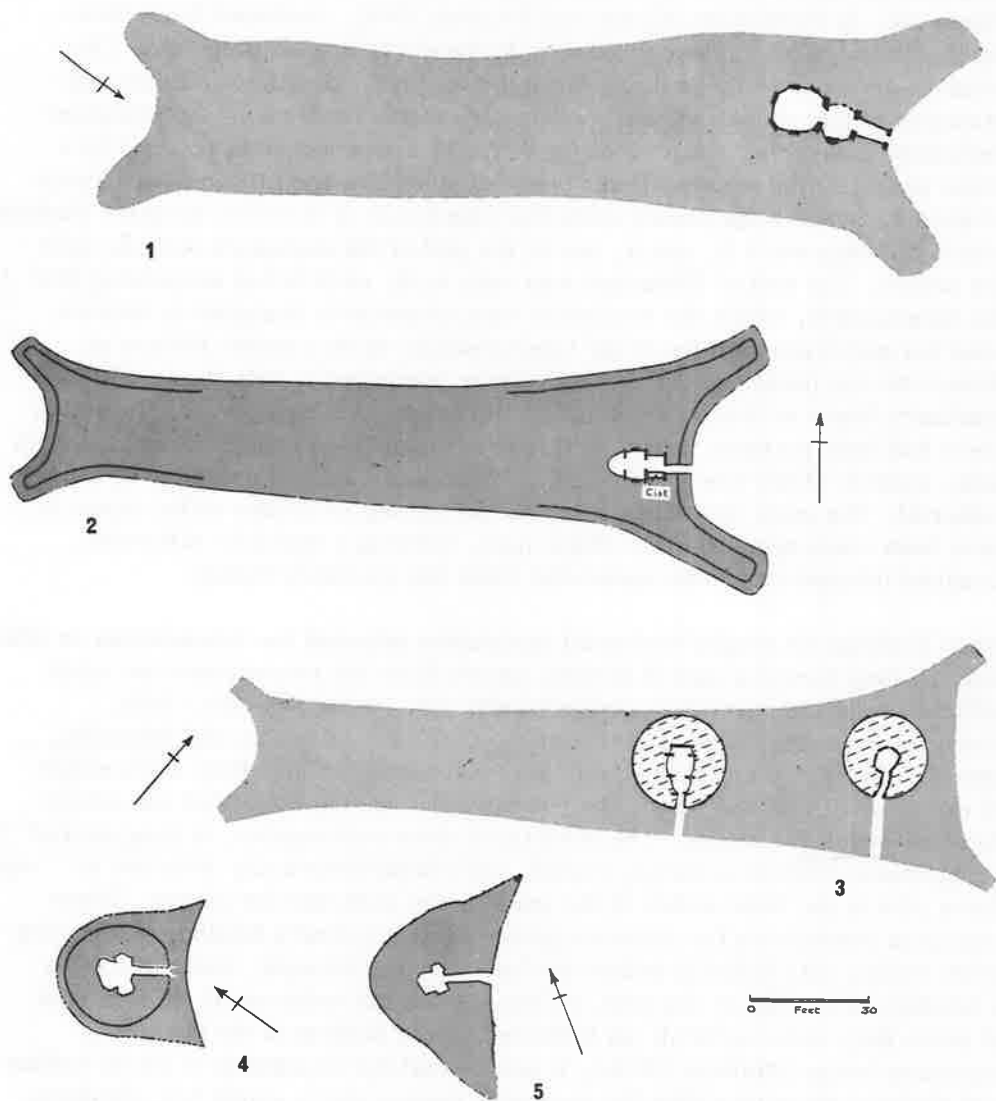


Figure 4. Plans of long and heel-shaped cairns. 1, Skelpick Long, SUT 53; 2, South Yarrows N, CAT 54; 3, Camster Long, CAT 12 (with hypothetical earlier cairns indicated); 4, Vementry, ZET 45; 5, Punds Water, ZET 33.

chambered tombs: I think it very likely that some sites do not. At Tulach Buaille Assery (fig. 2, 2), mentioned above, the axis of the partly visible chamber under the round mound lies at an angle of 45° to the long-cairn axis. At some sites the earlier mound is heel-shaped, and N of the Moray Firth this too is likely to contain a chambered cairn. At Tulach an t'Sionnaich (fig. 3, 2) the primary structure on the site was in fact a passage-grave in a round cairn, which had been completely sealed by the addition of the heel-shaped cairn⁴. This site shows the over-simplification to which we are liable without excavation, for we might have been perceptive enough to diagnose a two-period structure from its external appearance, but no one could have anticipated that the 'head' was itself of two distinct building phases.

Another complication faces us in this northern region, in the long cairns which externally appear to be of one period and which contain chambers aligned on the main axis and accessible from the centre of the forecourt, as for instance Skelpick (SUT 53) and South Yarrows (CAT 54, 55) (fig. 4, 1, 2). There are in fact indications at several sites that the chambers were earlier structures, for instance at Skelpick and Coille na Borgie South (SUT 23) the axis of the chamber is considerably askew to that of the cairn. It is very unlikely that any of these chambers were built as a unit with the long cairn which now covers them.

The explanation seems to be that the chambered cairn was small enough⁵, and the resources of the long-cairn-builders great enough, to build a long cairn to encompass the earlier structure without affecting the ground-plan of the long cairn, to which was added a continued desire for access to the chamber (which was not the case at Tulach an t'Sionnaich). The multi-period history of sites of this type is perhaps most convincing at Camster Long (Corcoran 1969a, 104; Corcoran 1969b, 14), though the lay-out of the site is exceptional (fig. 4, 3). The long cairn is unaffected in plan by the chambers within, but the chambers are almost certainly earlier structures in their own small round cairns, the front edges of these hypothetical cairns being indicated by the change in direction of the extension of the E passage, and the differing masonry of the two parts of the W passage⁶. The long cairn is little robbed, and in profile rises over the chambers with the familiar hollows between, and rises again a third time at the W end where there are indications of a third chamber. The situation is of course analogous to that in certain Clyde-type tombs where small chambers in small round or oval cairns have been incorporated into long cairns, as at Mid Gleniron (WIG 1, 2).

Façades and forecourts

Consideration of the plans of the wide ends of long cairns can provide further comparisons with English barrows. But there are two difficulties of which we have to be aware amongst the Scottish cairns. Firstly only two sites in our area have orthostatic façades, so that without excavation the precise edge of the cairns is not defined, and may be obscured by blocking or tumble; and secondly, at unexcavated two-period or multi-period sites we may be observing the front of a heel-shaped cairn, not of the long cairn. Among the English barrows we are restricted to observations at excavated sites. Four English plans of bedding trenches for wooden façades, at East Heslerton (Vatcher 1965), Skendleby (Phillips 1935a), Willerby Wold (Manby 1963), and Fussell's Lodge (Ashbee 1966), give us three ground plans, straight with out-turned tips, gently concave, gently convex. These all find parallels at Scottish sites. For instance, the first compares well with Camster (CAT 12) or the much larger Na Tri Shean (CAT 41). Gently concave ends are apparent at Caen Burn (SUT 15) or Salscraggie (SUT 51). Gently convex ends can be seen at The Mutiny Stones (BRW 1) and are proved by excavation at Tulach an t'Sionnaich (CAT 58)⁷.

Another matter which has to be considered is broken and blind façades. In most cases we have no information on this point, but both forms occur in N Scotland, and in this region it was of course related to the use or disuse of the chamber: if a chamber on the main axis was to remain in use a broken façade was necessary to allow access, but if the chamber was not to be used the façade was unbroken or blind. At Camster there is another variation, for the chambers are accessible from the side of the cairn, and again the façade is blind. In England there was a broken façade at Fussell's Lodge where the mortuary house was on the axis at the E end, but a blind façade where the burials were not, at Skendleby; and also apparently at Willerby Wold where the lay-out otherwise resembles Fussell's Lodge but with a different burial rite. At Kilham we now know of a façade broken in the centre and at the corner to allow entry to a kind of courtyard (Manby 1970).

Two-period and multi-period barrows elsewhere

Pursuing comparisons between Scottish and English sites, it is difficult to find barrows with the external appearance of a two-period or multi-period history, partly perhaps because many sites have been greatly ploughed down. But amongst the Lincolnshire long barrows published by Phillips (Phillips 1932) there are single-period mounds, and what appear to be two-period mounds; he also records one three-part monument with a familiar round flat-topped 'head', and two trapezoidal mounds behind, aligned not quite on the same axis.

Further N, at Bradley Moor in the W Riding, is a site which would be at home in Scotland, again with the head-and-tail plan and a hollow between the two parts, and in this case not a barrow. Excavation produced an odd cist-like structure in the 'head' end. However, a new plan of the site raises the possibility that the 'head' is in fact a round cairn secondary to the long cairn. Such a sequence has been proved by excavation at Garton Slack (Brewster 1966) and Kemp Howe (Manby 1970) in the same county, and at Bishop's Cannings in Wiltshire (Smith 1965, 132). These sites warn us that N of the border at unexcavated sites with round 'heads' and without the indications discussed on page 33 the sequence round mound/long mound cannot necessarily be assumed.

In the E Riding the site of East Heselton was ploughed flat before excavation, but the bedding trenches which held the timbers revetting the edges show the typically two-part ground-plan with the narrow body and expansion for the wider 'head'. In the narrow body part there was evidence of two construction periods in the two systems of bedding trenches, but these could not be related to the much more massively built E end. The E end appears to belong to another building phase. The excavators considered that the E end was secondary to the thin body, presumably because it lacks a back revetment trench and therefore appears to have been built up against the tail part. But the evidence from Scotland suggests that the opposite sequence has at least to be considered, and it may be pointed out that the link between the two parts was revetted by the same light fence that bounded the narrow part of the monument. If the E end is in fact the earlier structure, might its square form with façade be related to the Scottish heel-shaped cairns?

When the long narrow parallel-sided 'tails' found at some of the Scottish sites are recalled, we may feel convinced that the suggestion made by several writers regarding the so-called 'banks' attached to certain neolithic mounds are specialised forms of long cairn (Piggott 1954, 268-9; Corcoran 1966, 19-20; Hayes 1967, 32-3). A particularly strange Yorkshire site, Great Ayton Moor, had a primary mound containing what is best interpreted as a stone version of the pitched mortuary house. Two other diverse sites with appended 'banks' are Bryn yr Hen Bobl (ANG 8), an aberrant chambered tomb in Anglesey, and Long Low in Staffordshire with multiple burials in a 'cist' (Bateman 1861, 121, 144-7). These long narrow low banks are inexplicable in functional terms, and in each case are attached to a neolithic (or presumably neolithic at Long Low) burial place.

The relationship of long cairns/barrows with their internal structures

In some cases in the N of Scotland we can be sure that the passage-graves were independent earlier structures, and it is likely that this was so in all cases. Corcoran has already suggested comparing the layout of laterally chambered chamber-tombs with that of the long barrow at Skendleby (Corcoran 1969a, 76). The only known laterally chambered cairn in the N is Camster Long. At both Skendleby and Camster the mound has a blind façade, the plan is strictly trapezoidal, and in both the burial places lie transversely to the axis. The inference is that similar circumstances produced a similar problem which was solved in the same way: that in both cases the burial places are earlier structures orientated in a direction which did not allow the long-mound-builders to incorporate them on the axis of the later structure: at Skendleby because the favoured easterly direction was desired for the façade of the long barrow, at Camster because the long cairn had to run along a ridge and the passage-graves had already been built across it. That the burial place at Skendleby did in fact consist of a walled structure is indicated in the published sections by a vertical break in the strata of the mound, as I am not the first to observe.

At three other long barrows the burials were askew to the axis of the mound, at Rudstone in Yorkshire (Manby 1963, 193), Therfield Heath in Hertfordshire (Phillips 1935b, 101-7), and at Holdenhurst in Hampshire (Piggott 1937), and this layout is comparable to such a northern site as Tulach Buaille Assery (CAT 59) with its skew chamber. At two other Yorkshire sites the burials were on the axis but at the rear end of the mound (Manby 1963, 193).

These facts suggest that in these cases the mounds are secondary to the mortuary houses. But in what sense are they secondary? The plans could be interpreted as a change in the original design during protracted building operations. Or they could result from a real dichotomy between mortuary house and long barrow. When considering the continental origins of the British long barrows Piggott pointed out that the parallels to the barrow form do not provide parallels for the collective burial rite in mortuary houses (Piggott 1966, 388-91). Seeing the problem of long cairns and long barrows from a Scottish viewpoint one is impressed by the way they are associated with earlier monuments, in the far N clearly belonging to a different cultural tradition. Further, there is the actual treatment of the passage-graves, the long cairns not merely being additions, but in some instances sealing the chamber. Another significant point is that at Tulach an t'Sionnach, the only site where the long cairn itself has been examined, no burial place was found in the long cairn. What, then, is the purpose of

the long cairns if they do not themselves contain burials, and yet seal the pre-existing burial place? In this puzzling situation all that can be said is that they appear to be ritual monuments into which it was an advantage to incorporate an existing burial structure. In support of this view there are now two totally excavated barrows in Wiltshire in which there was no mortuary house or other form of burial place⁸ (Smith and Evans 1968). Only scattered animal bones were found, and traces of hurdling which had divided the interior into bays, the purpose probably being to divide up the interior between gangs of workmen. Hurdling is known at other sites, and may provide a further link with Tulach an t'Sionnaich where upright slabs set roughly in rows may be the stone version of the same device.

But in Yorkshire seven barrows have their burial places on the main axis at the E end (Manby 1963, 193), and there is one more certain example of this arrangement at Fussell's Lodge. The whole appears to be a unitary design, and in one case, at Willerby Wold, and probably also at Fussell's Lodge, excavation has shown that it quite certainly is so. To compare this layout with the chambered long cairns where there is also the appearance of a unitary design, as at South Yarrows, is misleading. For we have seen at Tulach an t'Sionnaich that the long-cairn-builders were quite capable of incorporating a sealed earlier chamber on the axis and at the front end of the long cairn, behind a blind façade. The plan of South Yarrows (CAT 54, 55), where access from the forecourt to the chamber was allowed for, may turn out to be unusual, there being only two or three other certain examples, and judging by the developed forms of the cairns they are likely to be late in date⁹. Two tentative observations follow from this. Firstly, though a mortuary house lies on the axis at the wide end of a barrow it should not be assumed that the whole structure is a unitary design. Secondly, those sites shown to be unitary, Willerby Wold and probably Fussell's Lodge, may turn out not to be the normal but rather a specialised development: they may represent the fusion of the two elements, the burial structure and the barrow. A similar situation can be observed in the Clyde group of chambered tombs, where chambers under small round or oval cairns had trapezoidal cairns imposed on them, sometimes sealing the chamber, sometimes incorporating the chamber into the E end and allowing access, and later producing monuments where the two separate elements have fused to produce the classic Clyde tomb built in one with its long cairn.

Just as we can find the long barrow without a mortuary house, so of course we can find mortuary houses and cremation trenches of Yorkshire type apart from long barrows, under round barrows in Yorkshire (Manby 1963, 195-7) and Co. Durham (Trechmann 1914, 123-30), and under a barrow/cairn at

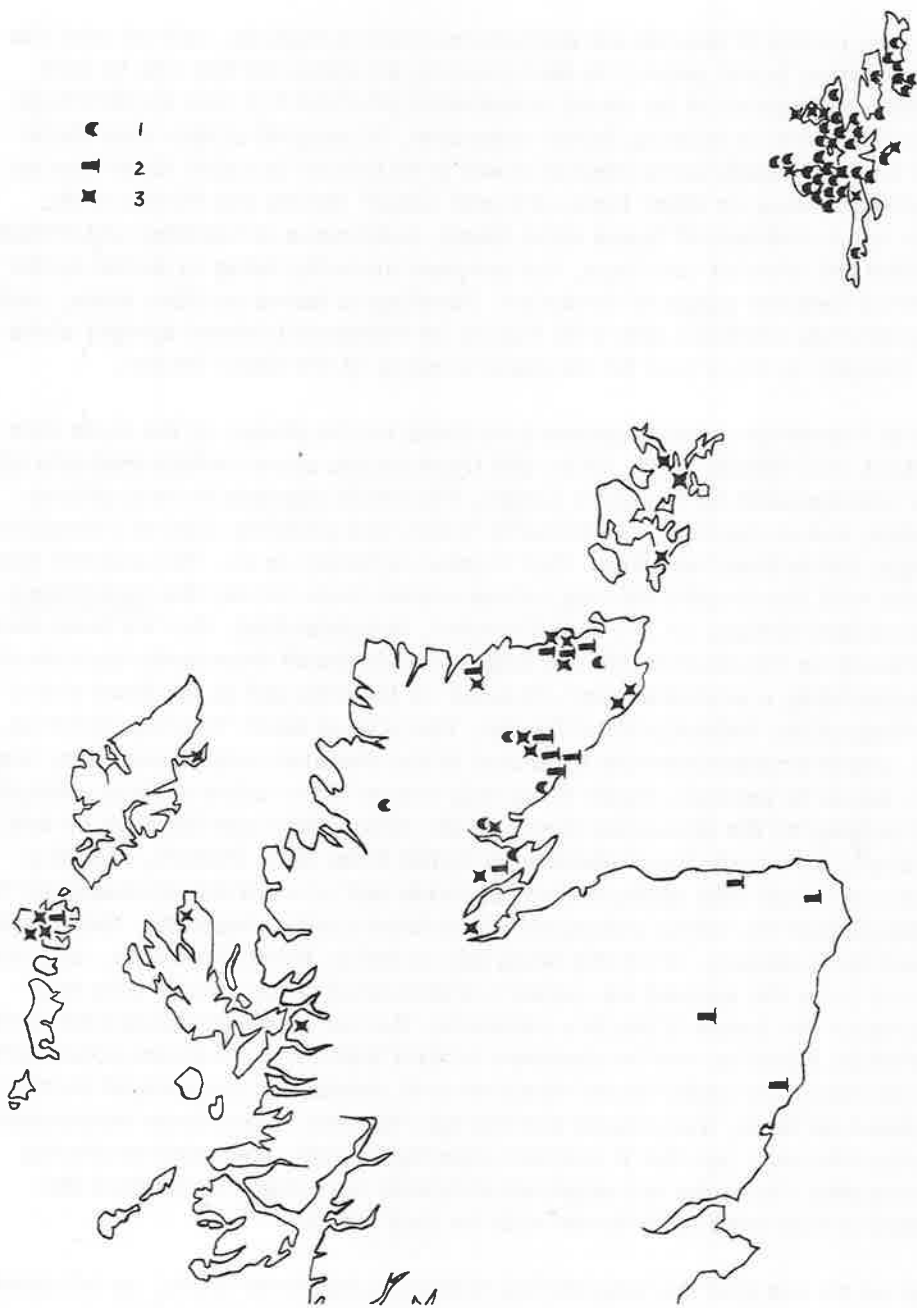


Figure 5. The distribution of heel-shaped, square and short-horned cairns. 1, Heel-shaped cairns, isolated; 2, Heel-shaped cairns attached to long cairns; 3, Square and short-horned cairns.

Pitnacree. One reason the independent status of mortuary houses and cremation trenches is less obvious than in the case of chambered tombs is that they were not designed for re-entry. If we regard the long cairn and barrow as a separate form of monument imposed on the existing burial places which may vary from area to area, then we are freed from the expectation that monuments which have a similar external appearance should have similar internal structures, and we are not tempted to argue, for instance, that cremation trenches are just burnt mortuary houses of Wayland's Smithy type. It is to be expected that a mortuary house will eventually be found isolated without a barrow at all, only covered and surrounded by its bank of turves or capping of stone or flints. In decay a monument of this type would be so slight that only chance would bring it to light. Such a chance did in fact happen in Denmark, for at Konens Høj a grave very similar to the Wayland's Smithy mortuary house but without a barrow or cairn, was found during the excavation of a habitation site (Stürup 1965).

Heel-shaped cairns

This peculiar cairn form is apparently only known in NE and N Scotland, and Shetland (fig. 5). Heel-shaped cairns on the mainland are chiefly known as the 'head' part of long cairns, but there are also a few independent heel-shaped cairns, for instance Kyleoag (SUT 37) on the N side of the Dornoch Firth which has recently been re-planned¹⁰. Heel-shaped cairns can be difficult to recognise, either at ruined sites or as parts of long cairns, and it may be expected in time the distribution will thicken considerably. Square cairns and short-horned cairns are also plotted on the assumption that they are developed forms of heel-shaped cairns. Their distribution is similar though the numbers are smaller, but they appear also in Orkney, and extend to the Outer Isles.

The only excavated example of a heel-shaped cairn on the mainland is once more provided by Corcoran's work at Tulach an t'Sionnaich. The following points should be noted: that the heel-shaped cairn was added to an earlier monument, an early type of passage-grave, but the time-gap between the two is unknown⁴; that the heel-shaped cairn had a slightly concave blind façade so that access to the tomb was no longer intended; that the heel-shaped cairn was itself enveloped in a long cairn with a blind façade, after the elapse of some time as the long-cairn façade overlay slip in front of the heel-shaped façade.

Vementry (ZET 45) (fig. 4,4) is an excellent example of a typical Shetland passage-grave with the trefoil chamber set in a round cairn, around which

has been built a heel-shaped cairn, or more correctly a heel-shaped platform, with a concave blind façade blocking the passage entrance. The unbroken façade is 3 or 4 ft. high and completely obscures the low passage. A contrasting plan is provided by Punds Water (ZET 33) (fig. 4, 5) where a similar chamber lies behind a broken façade.

The evidence at present available regarding heel-shaped cairns provides the following data: their distribution is similar to that of the eastern long cairns as far as the mainland goes (both being absent, with a single exception, from the NW though there are passage-graves in this region), but heel-shaped cairns are also found in quantity in Shetland; that they are frequently physically associated with long cairns but do occur independently, and this fact is emphasized in the case of Shetland where there are no long cairns; that, like long cairns, they are later additions to chambered tombs; the façades of heel-shaped and long cairns are similar in plan, and may be blind or broken, sealing the earlier tomb or leaving it accessible. At one time I assumed that heel-shaped cairns derived from passage grave builders adopting the façade idea from long cairns. But we now know that heel-shaped cairns are earlier than long cairns, so this explanation is unacceptable. These statements are based on the northern cairns where their relationship with passage-graves can be observed, but S of the Moray Firth we are ignorant of their contents.

It seems evident that the heel-shaped cairns and long cairns are two distinct but cognate types of monument. If the long cairns find counterparts amongst the English long barrows, it is in the same areas and in similar cultural contexts that counterparts to the heel-shaped cairns should first be sought.

At the present time there are admittedly only two sites which seem to provide the features we are seeking, both in Yorkshire, Warter and Heslerton Wold VI (Mortimer 1905, 320-1; Greenwell 1877, 142-5; Manby 1963, 196-7)¹¹ They are both old and misunderstood excavations, but both provide a round neolithic barrow with a façade bedding trench similar to those of the long barrows. The barrow at Warter was dug by Mortimer. Its size is not known. At the E side was the bedding trench of a wooden façade, and at two points pieces of neolithic pot were found. At right angles to the centre of the façade was an oval hollow in which were remains of burnt wood, burnt soil and bones. This could be interpreted as vestiges of a burnt mortuary house. Three secondary inhumations were accompanied by Beakers. The extension of the barrow in front of the façade may be an addition at the time of the Beaker burials, and similar mounds of stones can be observed in front of the façades in Shetland, presumably intended to convert the heel-shaped

cairn to a round one (Henshall 1963, 149).

If the viewpoint of this paper has seemed an eccentric one, a not very lofty peak in Caithness perhaps, with the foreground strewn with unexcavated mounds, I am not really apologetic. For even at this early stage in the investigation of the Scottish long cairns the special circumstances of the far north (the facts that we are studying stone-built monuments and that we can observe the relationship of long cairns with burial structures of different origins, the passage-graves) provide matter for consideration which may have a bearing on the wider study of long cairns and barrows, and chambered tombs, in various parts of the British Isles. And this preliminary survey of the situation in Scotland shows that we must appreciate the results obtained from recent work on English long barrows if, as has been assumed, it has direct relevance to the long cairns and barrows S of the Moray Firth (perhaps the least known major class of monument in Scotland), and in a more general way to all our long cairns.

Notes

1. The code system of references to chambered tombs and long cairns initiated in Megalithic Enquiries in the West of Britain (1969), XIX-XXI, is used here. The county code letters are followed by a serial number, which relates to the inventories of sites forming Appendices A-C in the same work, or in Henshall, A.S., The Chambered Tombs of Scotland, I (1963) and the forthcoming vol. II of the same work; these sources give full references to the sites. The county abbreviations appearing in this paper are ABN Aberdeenshire, ANG Anglesey, BAN Banffshire, BRW Berwickshire, CAT Caithness, INV Inverness-shire, LNK Lanarkshire, ORK Orkney, PER Perthshire, SUT Sutherland, WIG Wigtownshire, ZET Shetland.
2. The plan is published here without the horns at the E end as after two visits to the site these are still not evident to me and I doubt their existence.
3. Burngrange, LNK 2, and PER 1-3.
4. My interpretation; the excavator leaves it an open question whether the passage-grave and heel-shaped cairn were designed as a unit or were built in two distinct phases.
5. It is argued in Henshall, A.S., forthcoming, that early passage-graves were built centrally within relatively small cairns, and in many cases where the existing round cairn is large this is due to later additions.

6. The back of the circular wall-face shown surrounding the W chamber on Anderson's original plan has been examined during recent excavations [D. & E. (1967), 56] and shown to be no more than slabs fortuitously aligned. The original round cairn was larger than Anderson shows and behind the chamber it must have been partly demolished by the long cairn builders. This site is more fully discussed in Henshall, A.S., II, forthcoming.
7. Plans of SUT 15, 51, BRW 1 to be published in Henshall, A.S., II, forthcoming.
8. The Windmill Hill long barrow was probably also without burials, Ashbee, P. and Smith, I. F. (1958).
9. Point of Cott, ORK 14; Carn Liath, Loedebest, CAT 15; Skelpick Long, SUT 53.
10. To be published in Henshall, A.S., II, forthcoming.
11. Kemp Howe, apparently similar, has proved on excavation to be a long barrow.

Bibliography

See joint bibliography for this article and 'Long Barrows of Northern England; Structural and Dating Evidence' by T.G. Manby on page 24.