Illus 21. Carse Farm 1 under excavation.

Illus 22. Carse Farm 1 under excavation.
Collared Urn from Carse Farm 1, Perthshire (A. Sheridan)


Shape and size: height 166mm; external rim diameter 128-134mm; base diameter 83mm; collar and neck height c 40 and c 35mm respectively; wall thickness 8.5-12mm; ratio max base diameter: max diameter 1.2. Overall form approximates to Longworth's Form IIIb. Rim simple and rounded, with vertical internal bevel around part of the circumference. Collar angled and slightly concave on exterior, more so on interior; neck straight and vertical; belly trunc-conic. Neck-belly junction gently curving; belly-base junction simple and rounded. Base flat internally and externally.

Colour, surface finish, inclusions: Colour variable throughout, with exterior mostly reddish-orange and much of the interior covered by a dark grey patch (almost certainly resulting from the firing of the pot in an inverted position; this is a common feature of Bronze Age urns). Surfaces uneven, with many grits protruding; probably wet-smoothed rather than slipped. Exterior surface abraded on one side. Inclusions abundant (c 35%), angular and sub-angular grits of a black crystalline mineral up to at least 11 x 7.5mm in size.

Decoration: on top of rim, series of jabs made with an irregular-ended tool, possibly a twig or straw, around 3mm in diameter and spaced 11-17mm apart. On collar and neck, crude incised designs featuring hatched triangles, made with a narrow, organic tool (straw?). On collar, design consists of running double chevrons, with upper triangles filled with 2-4 lines (mostly horizontal, but vertical and diagonal in two cases). On neck,
Illus 24. Margaret Stewart (standing near the left-hand side of the photograph) showing the public the excavation at Carse Farm.

triangles defined by a single running chevron, and lower triangles filled with 2-4 lines of oblique hatching. A single chevron on the belly appears to be a post-depositional feature, along with other scratches.

Discussion of pottery

Although found in a near-inverted position, this pot’s small size – too small to contain all the burnt bone found in the pit – indicates that its function was as an accessory vessel. The placing of a Collared Urn cremation burial within what may be a ‘four-poster’ monument finds a nearby parallel at Lundin Farm (Stewart 1966): here sherds from a larger vessel, with filled triangle decoration executed in plaited cord impressions, were found (Longworth 1984, no 1986).

Carse Farm 2 excavation

Dr Stewart had not prepared a report on the excavation of the second site at Carse Farm. Nor is there a site plan. There is, therefore, nothing to add to the Discovery and Excavation in Scotland entry prepared by Dr Stewart (1964, 40).

Discussion (G J Barclay)

Burl (1988) has summarised the limited information available on ‘four-posters’ – square or rectangular settings of four stones. Carse Farm lies in the midst of the densest concentration of these sites in Britain, in the glens of upland Perthshire. There is little hard evidence for the date of these sites – Burl (1988, 31) summarised the limited evidence of artefacts, suggesting a date in the Early Bronze Age. Only the recent excavation at Park of Tongland (McCullagh 1992) has provided radiocarbon dating, although the excavator suggested there was no evidence that all four stones had been standing at once. An urn-accompanied cremation burial was dated to 1530±50 BC uncal (1933–1686 BC cal (GU-2379)).

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Abstract

The excavation of seven burial and ceremonial sites in Perthshire is reported upon, together with associated finds of Beaker and Food Vessel pottery, and two disc-and-fusiform-bead jet/cannel coal necklaces.

Keywords: Bronze Age, burial, stone settings, Food Vessels, Beakers, necklaces