"As described and planned by Corcoran; the excavation remains open. The water of the loch laps margins and has caused some damage."

"See continuation cards for text."

"See HND 06 SE 009A for map."

"See HND 06 SE 009 A (2) introduction; conclusion; and appendix (for report of human remains)"
15. "Tulloch of Assery B: Radiocarbon Date.
All dates ex. P.J. Ashmore via telephone 15.4.1981."
**ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES AND MONUMENTS RECORD**

**DISTRICT**

CAITHNESS

**Parish**

HALKIRK

**SITE CODE**

HND 06 SE 016 B

**NOS**

ND 067 6186 CE

**SITE NAME**

TU LOCH OF PASSERIE B

**GENERIC TYPE**

POTTERY, SHERDS + FLINT OBJECTS

**ARROWHEADS + BLADES + FLAKES**

**BONE OBJECT, WORKED**

**PERIOD/DATE**

NE

**DATING METHOD**

TYP

**EXCAVATION AND DATE**

5 EXCAVATION AND DATE

**EXCAVATION RECORD NO.**

16 EXCAVATION RECORD NO.

**LAND USE**

ROUGH PASTURE

**GEOLOGY**

DOVEGETATION

**SOILS**

21 HYDROLOGY/DRAINAGE

LEVEL GROUND

**RELIEF**

22 ASPECT

360°

24 ALTITUDE

65 = 70m OD

65 = 70m OD

**BIBLIOGRAPHY (AUTHOR/DATE/TITLE/JOURNAL OR PUBLISHER/VOLUME/DETAIL)**


**GROUND PLAN NO.**

28 GROUND PHOTO NO.

**SLIDES NO.**

30 HR. AP NO.

**ARCHIVE AND LOCATION**

OTHER AP NO.:

33 OTHER AP NO.:

SOURCE

**SAMPLE LOCATION**

34 GEOPHYSICAL SURVEY

35 SAMPLES

**PALYNOLOGY**

36 NUMERICAL DATES: RANGE: LAB NO.

37 OTHER

38 OTHER

**NAME & ADDRESS OF OWNER**

40 ATTITUDE OF OWNER

**NAME & ADDRESS OF TENANT**

42 ATTITUDE OF TENANT

**ACCESS & RESTRICTIONS**

**NAME & ADDRESS OF FINDER/RECODER/DATE**

46 RECORDER/DATE

HAR: 6.9.1985

45 CHECK/DAY

GS: 17.9.1785

**TEXT**

"See over card for text of (2)."
1. Rim sherd of a carinated bowl; finger-tip fluting outside and inside the rim; est. diam. 12 in., 0.3 in. thick; black ware with a few medium sized grits, burnished surface.

2. Rim sherd and another tiny sherd probably from the same pot, probably a carinated bowl; undecorated; 0.35 in. thick; similar ware but not burnished.

3. Similar rim sherd but friable, more heavily gritted ware, grey core, dark surface.

4. Sherd from the shoulder of a carinated bowl; light vertical grooves inside below the carination; 0.27 in. thick; ware similar to, but thinner than 3, possibly the same pot.

5. Sherd from the carination angle of a carinated bowl; ware similar to 1 but paler, not burnished.

6. Four small wall sherds; finger-tip fluting, on three sherd deeper than on 1, one sherd apparently also fluted inside; ware similar to 1 but dark brown.

7. Wall sherd from a straight-sided vessel with applied lug; 0.2-0.37 in. thick; sandy grey ware, black surface roughly tooled outside, tempered with pink granite grits.

8. Sherd from the neck of a large carinated bowl; 0.4 in. thick; sandy dark grey ware with white quartz grits.

9. Two tiny rim sherds from different bowls, probably from the edge of rims similar to 1 and 2, one highly burnished, black.

10. Rim sherd and wall sherd of bowl; est. diam. 6 in., 0.3-0.4 in. thick; sandy dull brown ware, slightly gritty texture, perforation below rim.

11. Small rim sherd; fragile grey ware heavily gritted with quartz and mica, black outer surface, inner surface broken away, broken along body ring.

12. Sherds of a bowl apparently with very slight carination and vestigial lug; 0.25 in. thick; sandy grey ware with sparse white quartz grits, black outer surface with remains of burnishing on upper part, inner surface tending to break away.

13. Sherds from similar vessel including vestigial lug; 0.25-0.3 in. thick; ware similar but more heavily gritted.

14. Sherds from bowl with gentle shoulder and slightly concave neck; 0.22-0.5 in. thick; buff-grey sandy ware, gritted with pinkish quartz, slight burnishing of dark outer surface; other burnt sherds possibly from the base of this pot.

15. Sherds of fine sandy ware including gentle shoulder and concave neck, from at least two different pots.

16. Fine wall sherds, from at least two vessels; 0.3 in. thick; very fine hard dark ware, one with a buff surface.

17. Various other wall sherds probably belonging to the pots listed above.

18. At least nineteen pots are represented, ten of them having carinations or slight shoulders.

19. Two points made on flakes of white flint, steeply trimmed to a sharp tip.

20. Damaged base of a leaf-shaped arrowhead, burnt.

21. Top of a cheek arrowhead.

22. Scraper made of split pebble of white flint, yellow cortex remaining.

23. Split pebble of light brown flint, slightly trimmed as a scraper.

24. Worn and burnt piece of flint, one edge trimmed, possibly used as a scraper.

25-27. Blades, edges utilised, buff and white cherry flint, 0.95, 1.6, 2 in. long.

28. Two tiny fragments of burnt flint, finely flaked surfaces, probably from arrowheads.

29-30. Flakes of grey and buff flint, edges utilised, 1.2, 1.05 in. long.

31. Many flint flakes.

32. Part of a long bone, searched, one end cut obliquely and smoothed. 

1-17 apparently from one strata pre-dating the tomb, mostly from below the paving in all parts of the chamber, some sherds recovered from below the chamber walls, a few sherds from the passage below the fallen orthostate, joining sherds of 1 came from the inner and the outer compartment, and joining sherds of 1 came from under the wall and from the floor of the central compartment. 18-20, 22-27, 29-31 with the pottery or from the body of the cairn; 21 embedded in a vertebra of one of the burials; 28 from the chamber. 16, 17, 25-31 not illustrated.
Description. Before excavation the monument was a large featureless grass-grown mound about 110 ft in diameter and over 12 ft high. Excavation revealed a chamber set eccentrically within the mound. The following account is taken from the excavation report: 1

The entrance passage ran from the SE side of the mound. Except for dry-stone walling at the entrance and a short stretch at the inner end of the s side, it was built of thin orthostats, two of which had fallen flat on the passage floor. The passage was 26 ft long, 1 ft 9 in. wide at the entrance, but with an average width of 3 ft, narrowing to 2 ft at the entrance to the chamber. The passage was set out on three alignments, the masonry walling and first pair of orthostats at the entrance aligned with the centre of the cairn, the centre section 14 ft long, was backed 18°, and the innermost section and the axis of the chamber backed a further 15°. The orthostats were of varying size, some set overlapping, the outermost backed by a rough but strong wall 3 ft thick, and some were steadied by stones in their sockets. Two roofing slabs survived at the inner end, at a height of 4 ft, probably somewhat displaced, but partly resting on the tops of the orthostats. The passage roof had probably risen from the entrance inwards: the outermost orthostats were about 2 ft 9 in. high, the innermost about 6 ft high. The entrance was blocked by four courses of thin slabs, their inner edges sloping down into a shallow pit. Outside the entrance was a flat sill-stone.

The large chamber measured 18 ft long by 9 ft in maximum width. It was entered between a pair of orthostats, and was divided into three compartments by two pairs of similar stones. The back-slab was a gabled stone 7 ft 6 in. high. The sides were of dry-built masonry. The orthostats were set in sockets cut in the subsoil and tightly packed with large stones. Each side wall was built in a single section, and rested against the outer edges of the orthostats. The walls were tending to collapse, as were also the dry-built benches which seemed to have existed along the walls between the orthostats. Only the bench at the inner end of the s side was fairly complete, 1 ft 6 in. high and possibly once higher.

No roofing survived, and the side walls only stood 4 ft high. However, at about 4 ft above ground the outer edges of the orthostats tapered inwards, and it seemed likely that the walls were corbelled in and rested on the upper edges of the orthostats to form a barrel vault. The orthostats forming the portal were 5 ft 6 in. high, and the inner pair were 7 ft 6 in. high. Slabs suitable for corbeling were found in the filling of the chamber.

On the floor was a discontinuous layer of flat slabs, one of which underlay the n side wall. The paving lay on a layer of burnt material which extended beyond the chamber, and thus pre-dated the structure of the tomb.

Across the entrance to the chamber, and immediately w of the portal stones, was a shallow trench, partly edged by small stones, probably the socket of an upright stone.

The lower part of the chamber, and the passage, were filled with slabs. There was no evidence that this represented a deliberate filling, but it was probably collapsed walling, roofing and cairn material. The main part of the burial deposit was a heap of bones placed on slabs in the inner compartment, but some bones were found in the rest of the chamber and in the passage. Animal bones also were found in the chamber and passage, a few below the paving, and a few burnt fragments in the underlying burnt layer.

The cairn was examined in a number of cuttings. An outer wall-face of good quality masonry was almost circular with a diameter of 66 ft, and survived to a maximum height of 3 ft. An inner wall-face was oval in plan, measuring about 60 by 45 ft, surrounding the chamber. Where examined on the s side of the chamber it was massively built, standing 5 ft high, with a marked inward batter. About 12 ft S of the end-stone of the chamber there was a break in the wall where it had been built against vertical slabs. The wall-face could be only partly examined elsewhere, but its alignment changed, and on the e side it abutted a large vertical stone which projected in front of it. This wall-face edged a carefully constructed core of horizontal slabs, though in the upper levels vertical slabs were placed amongst the horizontal material, probably intended to give stability. The area between the inner and outer wall-faces included many large vertical slabs, presumed to be 'butresses' to minimise slipping of cairn material. A carefully laid final capping of small stones covered the whole cairn, to give the rounded profile to the mound. There was little stone outside the kerb, and no evidence of laid extra-revetment material.
Before excavation, 'B' was a large, circular, grass-covered mound, about 110ft in diameter and over 12ft high, with no visible evidence of a chamber. The excavation showed that the entrance, in the SSE, gave onto a passage more than 26ft long which in turn led into a large, tripartite, sub-rectangular chamber. The passage walls were generally of thin orthostats, but the chamber walls were of dry-stone walling, though the back was a gabled slab 7ft 6ins high. There were indications that the roof had been barrel-vaulted. The chamber was enclosed by a carefully constructed core, of mainly horizontal slabs, which was edged by a massive wall about 6ft high, with a marked inward batter, enclosing an area about 60ft by 45ft. The outer wall-face of the cairn was of good quality masonry enclosing an almost circular area 96ft in diameter and surviving to a maximum height of 3ft. The cairn material between the two walls contained many large vertical slabs presumably intended to minimise 'slip'. A carefully laid final capping of small stones covered the whole cairn, giving a rounded profile to the mound.

Corcoran regarded the cairn as being all one build, but Miss Henshall is of the opinion that the markedly eccentric position of the chamber and its surrounding structure within the body of the cairn, and the awkward alignment of the passage, suggest the possibility that the outer round cairn was not part of the original plan.

The chamber-forms indicate that 'B' is later than 'A' and that both are later than Tulach an t'Sionnaich (ND 06 SE 10) which lies about 275 yds to the E.

Finds from the excavation are in the N M A S, donated by DoE.

TULLOCH OF ASSERY B

GR : 06766187. This was a large circular cairn 96 feet in diameter and over 12 feet in height. In plan it closely resembled the circular cairn at Camster although it was both larger and less well planned. The passage and chamber, for example, were not accurately aligned towards the centre of the cairn.

The entrance was from the south-east along a narrow passage built of thin orthostats. This led into a chamber 18 feet in total length, 10 feet wide at its widest point and sub-rectangular in plan. Its side walls were built of dry-stone walling in such a manner that the lower courses projected to form 'benches' reminiscent of those in stalled cairns. The chamber was divided into three segments by massive orthostats, the largest more than seven feet in height.

In the innermost (western) segment a considerable quantity of unburnt human bone was found arranged in a heap and other smaller deposits were found in the other segments. A discontinuous paving of small slabs covered the floor under which was a layer of charcoal and very small fragments of burnt bone. This deposit continued under the side walls and also contained sherd of underdecorated Western Neolithic pottery, including rims, lugs and carinated sherds.

Surrounding the central area was a massively built oval dry-stone wall to support the thrust of the large chamber. Large flat slabs were built up against this inner wall and smaller stones capped the whole structure which was defined by a low circular retaining wall also of dry-stone construction.
Finds

It has been shown that the cairn had been extensively disturbed in and around both the passage and chamber, but it appears that collapse of the roofing of both passage and chamber preceded any robbing of the cairn for building material. Artifacts other than those of prehistoric date were not found. The lower part of the chamber was filled with flagstone. There was no evidence to suggest that this represented the result of deliberate infilling by the original users of the tomb. It may best be interpreted as the remains of collapsed walling, roofing and cairn material. As most of the roofing of the passage had been robbed, the loose stone found there is similarly best interpreted as the result of collapse and disturbance.

The larger part of the burial deposit was found lying on a layer of flat stones in the innermost segment of the chamber. The bones of this deposit were not articulated, but were heaped together in the centre of the segment and were surrounded by an almost complete, but shattered, cranium. Human bone was also found in the other two segments and in the passage. With the exception of part of the mandible of a newly born child or foetus, a single bone of what appears to have been a child’s foot, and one molar attributable to a young adult, the human bone may be attributed to two adults only. The nature of the burial deposit suggests that the remains were interred as a single act. Lack of articulation further suggests that the bodies were
inner segment, may originally have been parts of artifacts, possibly broken from the face of a leaf-shaped arrowhead. A very small fragment of flint, 15 mm. long, appears to have been worked into a point with a rudimentary tang. It was found in the outer segment.

(3) Crystal and Quartz:
Three pieces of rock crystal were found in the outer segment. Two rounded quartz pebbles were found with animal bone near the S. wall of the outer segment.

(4) Bone
Part of a long bone found in the innermost segment, possibly the distal end of the femur of an ungulate, appears to have been worked. The bone, which was scorched, seems to have been cut transversely, and edges of the cut smoothed, either deliberately, or as the result of wear. If this was an artifact, its purpose is obscure. It might have been used as a scoop or scraper. It would have served as the handle of a composite tool, but if so, there are no visible abrasions in the interior which might be expected to have been caused by jamming into it an object such as a flint blade. Its greatest length is 44 in. (Fig. 16).
Tulloch of Assery B

Prior to excavation Tulloch of Assery B was a large, circular, grass-covered mound, measuring approximately 110 ft. in diameter and over 12 ft. in height (fig. 13). Although it had been recorded on earlier editions of Ordnance Survey 6-in. maps as a broch, and lay hidden under the anonymous designation of 'mound' on the most recent edition, it had the appearance of a burial mound. There was no visible evidence of a chamber. Surface indications on the summit suggested later activity, possibly associated with the insertion of secondary cists, but this interpretation was shown to be incorrect. Although there were several small depressions in the surface of the mound, there was little external evidence of extensive disturbance. This interpretation was also incorrect.

On account of the size of the mound, the primary aim of the excavation was the location and excavation of any chamber and its contents, and any secondary structures. If possible, within the time available, it was also hoped to recover some evidence of the method of construction of the cairn. These aims were largely achieved and rather more than a quarter of the area of the cairn was examined.

Passage and Chamber (figs. 13 and 14, Pls. XI and XII)

Entrance was from the SE. The passage measured a little over 26 ft. in length and, with the exception of dry-stone walling at the entrance and a short stretch of

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1 Anderson, J., P.E.A., vii (1867-8), 40a.
2 N.G.R. ND 65765675.

Fig. 13. Tulloch of Assery B: general plan