The Neolithic

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Introduction

A significant transformation occurred in the centuries around 4000 BC (6000 years ago). At this time the fringes of Western Europe, Britain and Ireland, came in contact with new ways of life associated with communities that practised the agricultural routines of crop-growing and animal husbandry. This period of prehistory is known as the Neolithic or New Stone Age and in Scotland, as in the rest Britain and Ireland, this era lasted for over 1500 years (4000–2500 BC, 6000–4500 years ago). The remains from this period left to us today include great burial mounds known as chambered cairns and stone axes used to clear woodland for crops and animal grazing. Lots of other sites and artefacts of the Neolithic, however, lie buried underground and through careful excavation much can be learned about this early period of human inhabitation of Scotland.

The Neolithic in Britain and Ireland is generally recognized as the period when domesticated animals and crops such as cattle, sheep and barley and new technologies such as pottery and stone axes were introduced. The Neolithic is not merely about the spread of new types of animals and technologies, but also documents the spread of new ideas about life, death and the world around. West central Scotland (here defined as the local authority areas of East Dunbartonshire, West Dunbartonshire, Glasgow, Inverclyde, North Lanarkshire, South Lanarkshire, Renfrewshire and East Renfrewshire) would undoubtedly have been an important area in the Neolithic. However, of all the regions of Scotland, west central Scotland has a Neolithic past that is one of the least researched and one of the least well known in the country. This is mainly a relic of the later history of this region as the location of one of the urban centres of Scotland and the consequent obscuring layers of history that have built up over the earlier, prehistoric origins. Within the more built-up districts it is difficult to recover traces of the Neolithic, but there are many hints that these locations were once vibrant areas for Neolithic settlement. Other parts of the study area have the potential to contain some of the richest records of Neolithic settlement, ritual and monumentality in all of Scotland.

The geographical context

Scotland can be divided into three main geographical zones: the Highlands and Islands, the Southern Uplands and the Central Lowlands. The study area lies to the north of the Southern Uplands and to the south of the Highland massif, in part of the Central Lowlands that now forms one of the main population centres in modern Scotland. The more upland areas of west central Scotland would have been significant barriers to movement and at this time the routeways across the landscape would have followed the major valley systems and rivers. The River Clyde would have been the most important conduit through the landscape and the river undoubtedly had an important role in Neolithic life. Today west central Scotland presents a landscape of contrasts, from the highly urbanized council areas of Glasgow and Renfrewshire to the comparatively more agricultural and rural landscapes of South Lanarkshire. All of these areas provide different challenges and opportunities for recovering evidence of their prehistoric past.

History of research

In the nineteenth and early twentieth century, Scotland formed an important arena for some of the pioneering research into the study of European prehistory, in particular the Neolithic period. Joseph Anderson was one of the most important figures in the development of Scottish archaeology; Anderson's accounts of the Neolithic in Scotland had an understandable western and northern focus, as it is in the Highlands and Islands that the most visible traces of the Neolithic, such as stone-built chambered burial cairns, are best preserved. Studies of the Neolithic in the twentieth century were dominated by the two Edinburgh professors Vere Gordon Childe and Stuart Piggott, who also relied on the well-preserved remains of the north in interpreting the Neolithic. Before the advent of radiocarbon dating and modern techniques and methods of discovery the Neolithic of the Central Lowlands was poorly recognized and represented largely by artefacts with little context, found during

Figure 1. Shields Road, Glasgow, where a Neolithic stone axe was discovered in 1871.

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Figure 2. A Neolithic eclogite axehead, found in 1780 in a logboat on the site of what is now St Enoch's Square, Glasgow, and now in the Collection of Glasgow Museums (A.1989.31).

agricultural activity. Hence west central Scotland played little part in the development in archaeological thought regarding the Neolithic of Scotland. In more recent decades techniques such as aerial photography and the increasing occurrence of pre-development archaeology has revealed a hitherto unidentified Neolithic consisting of sites and practices that do not always survive above ground, but reveal much evidence about Neolithic lifestyles.

Some of the earliest encounters with sites and artefacts from the Neolithic period occurred during the urbanization and rapid development which characterized post-medieval west central Scotland. The discovery of a Neolithic stone axe at Shields Road in 1871, for example, in what is now a highly urban part of Glasgow (fig. 1), tells of the changes that this part of Scotland has undergone in recent centuries and the former existence of evidence for Neolithic lifestyles in areas that are hard for us now to imagine were ever anything other than urban and highly developed. Many of these early discoveries of Neolithic objects still form important parts of the museum collections of west central Scotland today.

There are other even more remarkable accounts of discoveries during the urbanization and development of Glasgow in the post-medieval period. During the construction of St Enoch's Church in 1780 (demolished 1925), for example, in what is now part of St Enoch's Square at the bottom of Buchanan Street, Glasgow's busy shopping thoroughfare, workmen found a logboat around 7.5m below the surface and 150m north of the present Clyde riverbank. Inside the boat in the prow a Neolithic eclogite axehead was found (fig. 2). The source of eclogite axes was in the Italian Alps and these would have been highly prized prestige objects. The axe is today in the Collection of Glasgow Museums (A.1989.31) and is an emblem of the early encounters modern people in west central Scotland had with their prehistoric past (unfortunately there is no record of the fate of the boat) (Mowatt 1996).

A similar encounter is recorded in 1868. In the summer of this year another logboat was discovered further down the Clyde at Milton Island near Dumbarton. This boat was nearly 7m in length and inside was found six stone axeheads, a large piece of deer antler and an 'oaken club', which may have been a paddle (Mowatt 1996). Most people in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries would have had little concept of how old these objects were and their discovery must have been met with much incomprehension and marvel at the time. Today, these boats are a reminder of the importance of the Clyde to Neolithic travel across west central Scotland and objects like the eclogite axe are redolent of the long-distance contacts that Neolithic people in this region had, but at the time of discovery these facts would have been hard to fathom. These finds tell of a very different west central Scotland, both in the Neolithic period and in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

This theme of discovery by chance continued in later years through the work of early antiquarians and archaeologists such as JM Davidson and Ludovic Mann, who worked on the site of Knappers, West Dunbartonshire, after it was discovered by workmen at a sand and gravel quarry next to Great Western Road in Clydebank (fig. 3). Many Early Bronze Age burials were recorded here, but a number of Neolithic features and finds were also made. One of the most intriguing features found by Ludovic Mann was a timber setting consisting of a series of concentric stake-defined circles (fig. 4). This may have been the remains of a setting under a Bronze Age barrow, but the occurrence of this site amongst a series of Neolithic features might suggest that this was a Neolithic monument, perhaps a ceremonial enclosure

Figure 3. The amateur archaeologist Ludovic McLellan Mann at the site of Knappers, Dunbartonshire.

Courtesy of West Dunbartonshire Council

Above: Figure 4. Ludovic Mann and a replica of the 'sun altar' at Knappers, Dunbartonshire.

Below: Figure 5. Ludovic Mann's reconstruction of the Druid temple he believed to have been present at Knappers.

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Figure 6. A decorated stone found Knappers, now in the Collection of Glasgow Museums.

known as a henge (Ritchie and Adamson 1981). Mann interpreted the site in a rather elaborate and unfounded manner (fig. 5), describing the site as a druid temple that celebrated the victory of light over darkness. The showman side of Mann and his bizarre interpretations of the site raised the hackles of the then current academic establishment and the site never received the proper study it deserved. Now we only have a fragmented record of what was found at Knappers, but the site clearly included some interesting finds other than the stake-built enclosure. These included a Neolithic boulder-defined burial cist that contained cremated remains, a whole Neolithic pottery vessel and a flint knife. This can now be seen as a rare example of a Neolithic cist burial, of the type which has only rarely been encountered in recent years. Other finds included Later Neolithic Grooved Ware pottery and another rare burial cist, a Later Neolithic example that contained a flint adze imported from England and a decorated stone that had pecked circles and a U-shaped design on it (fig. 6). Unfortunately, the methods of excavation and recording used at the time and the only partial preservation of some of this material does not allow the sort of modern analysis found during the contemporary equivalents of the excavations at Knappers that can reveal so much about Neolithic burial and other activities.

Archaeology of recent decades has been characterized by the rapid development of major commercial archaeology projects that can now more fully deal with archaeological sites and material found during construction and industrial processes of the sort that led to the eventual destruction of the site at Knappers. It is within the context of pre-development archaeology that some of the major advances in our understanding of the Neolithic in west central Scotland have been made. For example, excavations along the route of the North-West Ethylene pipeline in the early 1990s produced evidence for a number of previously unknown Neolithic sites including a series of settlement features at Wellbrae (CFA 1991) (fig. 7). In 1985 a review by Ian Kinnes of the Neolithic archaeology of Scotland recorded only two research and one pre-development archaeological projects

Figure 7. Neolithic features at Wellbrae, South Lanarkshire.

Courtesy of Derek Alexander © CFA Archaeology Ltd

having been undertaken in central west Scotland to that date (Kinnes 1985). Since 1985 at least 14 investigations have been carried out that have produced Neolithic material and while the number of excavations may still not be huge the quality of the information derived from most of these has made an important contribution to our understanding of the Neolithic of this region (Phillips and Bradley 2005; Brophy 2006). Many of these more recent investigations, such as that at Wellbrae, have been the result of developer-funded archaeology, but research projects continue to have a role in central west Scotland and community projects – a healthy strand of the archaeology of this region – have also begun to produce remarkable results.

Neolithic Archaeology in the West of Scotland

All of the finds and investigations into the Neolithic archaeology of west central Scotland are useful for beginning to piece together a picture of the first farming societies of this region. Every little piece of information helps build the picture, which will change with future discoveries. The Neolithic archaeology which has been identified to date has begun to reveal important information on the settlement patterns, lifestyles and building traditions of the Neolithic communities of west central Scotland. Some of this archaeology is easily visible even today and includes upstanding monuments and finds in museums. Other traces of the Neolithic remain buried below the ground and it is only through careful excavation and reconnaissance that these traces are revealed.

Death and monumentality

The most visible remains of the Neolithic in the Scottish landscape today are monuments for burial and ceremony. In the Earlier Neolithic period (4000–3300 BC) large stone-built chambered cairns were constructed. These were connected with the disposal, display and curation of the remains of dead members of communities. Occasionally, whole skeletons are found in these monuments, but more often scatters of disarticulated bones are found, and in well-preserved

Figure 8. East Cadder Henge, North Lanarkshire.

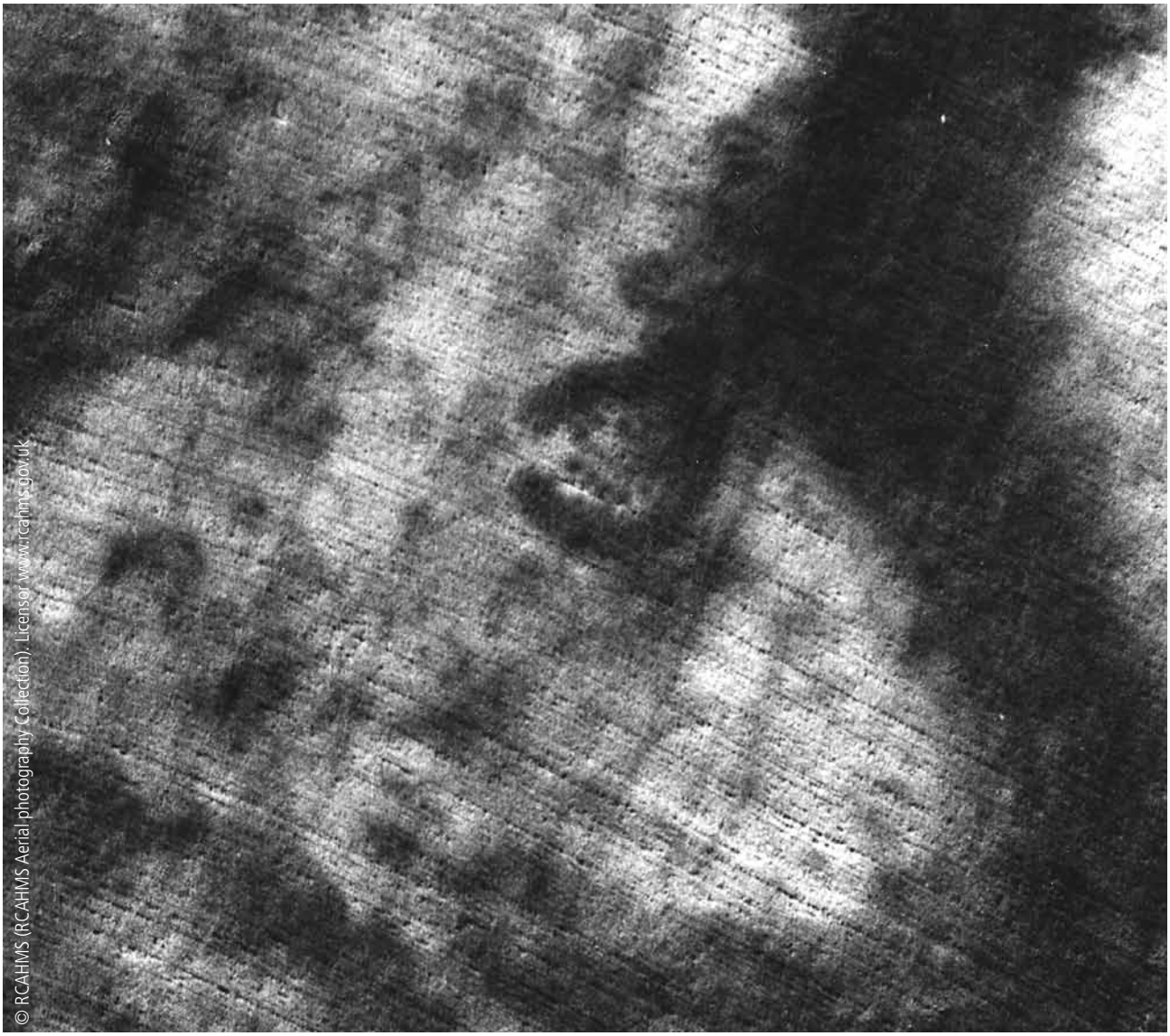

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Figure 9. A henge and timber structure, showing as a cropmark at Brownsbank Farm, South Lanarkshire.

tombs it is clear that human remains were sorted into groups according to body part, age and gender, and possibly other categories such as status, which we are less certain of interpreting. Only a handful of chambered cairns survive in west central Scotland. These include four in Dunbartonshire and one in South Lanarkshire. However, more may yet turn up. Excavations at Biggar Common in South Lanarkshire unexpectedly revealed a long cairn which had been built over a Mesolithic hunter-gatherer timber structure (Johnston 1997). Discoveries like these have great potential to alter the known distribution of these early burial monuments. None of the chambered cairns in west central Scotland has been excavated to modern standards and most are in a poor condition. The Lang Cairn in Dunbartonshire is one of the more impressive monuments: this has two chambers and is classified as a Clyde-style chambered cairn as it shares similarities with monuments found most commonly elsewhere along the Clyde and on the islands and mainland around the Firth of Clyde. These monuments also share characteristics with a style of chambered cairn known as Court Cairns found in Ireland. The architectural styles in this way give some indication of the longer-distance connections that occurred in the Neolithic period.

Many of the identifiable monuments of west central Scotland belong to the Middle to Later Neolithic (c. 3300–2500 BC) and include forms that may extend into the Chalcolithic to Early Bronze Age (2500–1800 BC). These include a series of henge monuments in South Lanarkshire. Henges are enclosures that were used for ceremonial communal gathering and feasting or for enclosing sites of earlier significance; they are defined by ditches and banks that sometimes contain or contained timber or stone circles within the interior. A tiny example has been identified by aerial photography at East Cadder in North Lanarkshire, which comprises a ditch only around 6m in diameter with an internal setting of 12 pits, which probably mark the former position of timber posts (fig. 8). In west central Scotland, South Lanarkshire dominates the known distribution of monuments, and in particular the Upper Clyde Valley contains one of the densest concentrations of Neolithic to Bronze Age monumentality known in Scotland (Noble 2006, 148). In the valley and the routes leading to the valley seven henge monuments have been identified. These include upstanding monuments such as Normangill (RCHAMS 1978, no. 169) and cropmark sites such as Hillend which are not visible on the ground but are identifiable from the air due to differences in crop growth caused by the different moisture content found over buried archaeological features (see *Aerial Reconnaissance for Archaeology* in this series). Other henges or possible henges have been located at Westside, Craigie Burn, Weston and Balwaiste. A seventh was found during a recent research excavation by the Department of Archaeology, University of Glasgow, at Brownsbank Farm, just north of Biggar. Here a ditched enclosure surrounded a number of postholes, the remains of a rectangular timber structure that had once stood within the centre of the enclosure (fig. 9). Few finds were made apart from a small arrowhead in one of

the postholes, but parallels from elsewhere suggest that this was a Later Neolithic ceremonial structure, built to resemble an earlier tradition of large timber halls, perhaps a symbolic house for the ancestors.

Also within the Upper Clyde Valley stands what would have been one of the most spectacular monuments ever constructed in the Neolithic period in Britain. The enormous enclosure at Blackshouse Burn lies in an upland area that is cradled in a broad bend of the Clyde (Lelong and Pollard 1998) (fig. 10). Excavation has shown that the monument originally comprised two parallel rings of massive oak tree trunks with a stone bank between them. It was built around 2750 BC and enclosed an area almost 300m in diameter, the approximate size of the better preserved henge at Avebury in southern England. What these enormous spaces were used for is uncertain, but they certainly represent the gathering of large numbers of Neolithic people who came to construct elaborate stone and wood monuments. The monumental architecture may have marked places that had long had significance as areas for communal gathering, perhaps for bringing animals to graze or for particular feasts and ceremonies at particular times of the year.

While the upstanding monuments such as some of the henges of South Lanarkshire are impressive, there are even more potential sites in this rich landscape. In the centre of the Clyde Valley aerial photography has identified an enclosure which abuts the Clyde at West Lindsaylands (fig. 11). Judging by parallels from

Figure 10. The Later Neolithic enclosure at Blackshouse Burn, South Lanarkshire. Annotation added by the author.

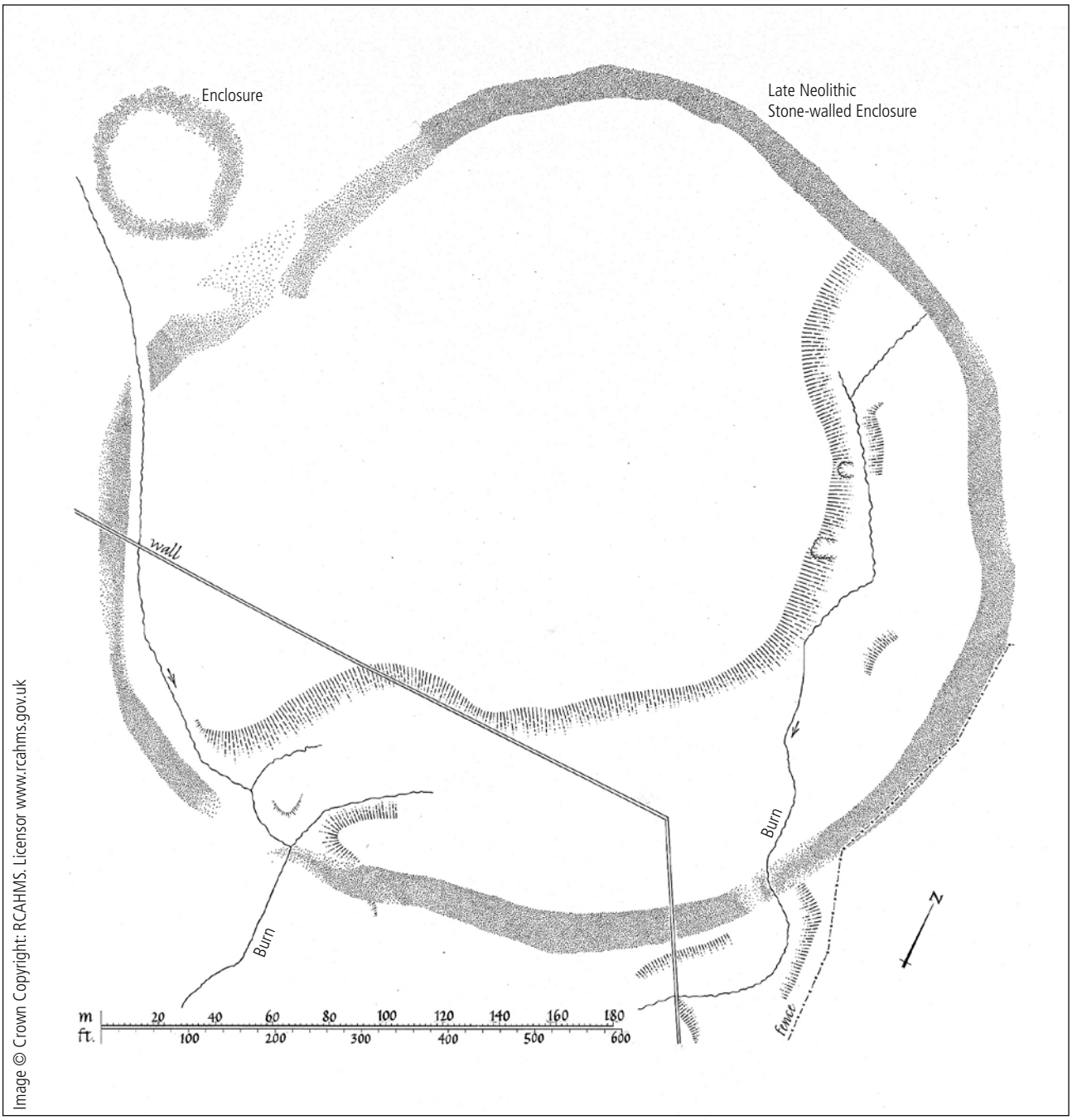

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Figure 11. A possible Neolithic causewayed enclosure monument at West Lindsaylands, South Lanarkshire.

elsewhere, and the possible nearby occurrence of a timber cursus monument (a long linear enclosure), this could well be an Earlier Neolithic monument known as a causewayed enclosure, a form of ceremonial enclosure most common in southern England. All of these monuments require further investigation before we can interpret their function and significance. Techniques such as aerial photography will continue to add to the record of known Neolithic sites, but excavation will be necessary to test the date and nature of the sites identified from the air.

Settlement Patterns

Settlements belonging to the Neolithic period in west central Scotland are harder to identify than some of the monumental structures built by the Neolithic communities which still survive to be visited today. Finding the sites where people lived and worked is much more difficult and requires careful fieldwork, including fieldwalking (searching for stone tools in ploughed land) and excavation. The type of settlement remains encountered most often in west central Scotland are pits which contain Neolithic pottery and stone tools and spreads of stone tools lying on ploughed fields known as lithic scatters. These most probably derive from the disturbance of buried features such as pits by modern agricultural practices. Stone axes – tools used by Neolithic people to clear woodland – have also been a common find in the agricultural fields of west central Scotland over the years. In terms of the occurrence and discovery of features such as these, South Lanarkshire once again dominates the evidence in contrast to the less well-known and investigated evidence from the other local authorities of west central Scotland. This is partly to do with the less urban nature of South Lanarkshire, but it is also because of the excellent work carried out by local societies such as the Biggar Museum Archaeology Group (www.biggararchaeology.org.uk) whose members regularly fieldwalk areas in South Lanarkshire that have been recently ploughed. The activities of the Biggar Museum Archaeology Group have been successful in locating sites such as those on Biggar Common, where excavations following fieldwalking revealed a series of Neolithic pits and postholes that may represent some form of settlement structure of uncertain form (Johnston 1997). Similar techniques have found smaller sites such as a series of pits at Brownsbank Farm which contained Earlier Neolithic pottery and stone tools including fragments of stone axeheads sourced from the Langdales. The testing of fieldwalking finds, such as has occurred at these sites, will form an important means of assessing the nature of Neolithic settlement in the area. There is no doubt that South Lanarkshire represents a rich area for such studies, but similar activities could be successfully undertaken elsewhere. This should be a community initiative as people with a local knowledge of these landscapes and the agricultural calendar will be able to more successfully tackle an activity that is reliant on knowing the right time to walk fields and the right places to look.

At present we have only a very basic understanding of

the settlement patterns and economy of the Neolithic in west central Scotland. Assessments are hampered by the generally acidic nature of soils in Scotland, which is detrimental to the survival of bone – accounts of everyday aspects of the Neolithic can at present remain only at very general level. From the little evidence we have from west central Scotland and elsewhere, it is clear that, to a certain degree, an agricultural lifestyle was present from the early centuries of the fourth millennium BC (4000–3000 BC). The emphasis may have been on herding cattle with cereal farming probably undertaken as part of small-scale garden agriculture. The Neolithic period has long been assumed to have been accompanied by a sedentary lifestyle, yet in west central Scotland and in much of lowland Scotland generally we only have sporadic occurrences of what could be interpreted as Neolithic houses. It has been suggested by some Neolithic archaeologists that Neolithic people may have retained a large degree of settlement mobility, despite the uptake of agriculture. In this respect, there may have been a continuation of some of the lifestyles and settlement practices that occurred in the Mesolithic. It is only through more concentrated and extensive field work, testing lithic scatters and chance discovery by contract archaeology over the coming years that we will be able to more fully investigate the settlement patterns of the Neolithic in this area.

In order to understand Neolithic lifestyles we also have to integrate our understanding of settlement patterns with the evidence for monumental building. Monuments were such an important part of the Neolithic and it is only by understanding the ways in which these sites fitted with the cycles of everyday life will we understand more fully the significance of these elaborate ceremonial structures. One such project has been carried out on a small scale. A programme of fieldwalking, geophysical survey and excavation in the vicinity of Blackshouse Burn identified a number of new sites in the vicinity of the massive enclosure here (Lelong et al. 2005). More projects like this, and on a larger scale, are needed in order to bring out some of the relationships between monuments, landscape and settlement in west central Scotland. There are some tantalizing contrasts to be drawn out. For example, at Brownsbank Farm the abundant finds from the pits found can be contrasted with the almost total absence of finds at the henge and timber structure nearby excavated by the University of Glasgow. It obviously was not appropriate at places like the Brownsbank henge to deposit everyday items. Contrasts like these will illuminate the significance and role of these enigmatic sites in Neolithic life.

Recommendations for Future Research

The geographical spread of recent projects has not been even in west central Scotland, with most of the recent investigations and discoveries of Neolithic sites having taken place in South Lanarkshire. This is of course partly because this area is relatively undeveloped compared to the other council areas of west central Scotland, but real opportunities exist in these other local authorities to address the nature of Neolithic settlement and monumentality. Lithic scatters have, for example, been found in a variety of council areas other than South Lanarkshire. The investigation of these, possibly through the encouragement of local-interest groups, would be a profitable undertaking. More needs to be done also with existing collections of field material. Fieldwalking, while a useful undertaking, is a destructive process that removes the original pattern of a stone tool distribution: as much as possible must be done to accurately record the position of artefacts recovered and more targeted excavations should be undertaken to characterize the nature of these scatters of material. Older museum collections can also be profitably more fully investigated, although there can often be problems in obtaining accurate provenances and find spots for this material.

The study area has also not profited greatly from archaeological survey. The Royal Commission, which undertakes field survey of archaeological monuments in Scotland, has not targeted west central Scotland in the last 20 years to any great extent. Aerial photography is a similarly underdeveloped technique in the region. The RCAHMS aerial survey programme commenced in 1975 and has seen an explosion of cropmark site across Scotland. However, there have been major biases in the areas surveyed and flights over west central Scotland have not been common. Given that this is one of the most common forms of detecting archaeological sites that lie buried underground, this is a situation that has led to a less developed understanding of the Neolithic in this region compared to other parts of Scotland (see *Aerial Reconnaissance for Archaeology* in this series). The Upper Clyde Valley project directed by the University of Glasgow has shown the potential for sustained bouts of archaeological reconnaissance. The techniques used in this project, combining aerial survey with geophysical survey and excavation, have also highlighted the importance of combining different forms of archaeology in order to better understand the archaeological resource.

In terms of the landscape and environment of the Neolithic, we also only have a very basic understanding of this in west central Scotland. In the Neolithic it is important to realize that much of the landscape at this time would have been covered with trees and that despite the introduction of farming Neolithic people were a forest people whose everyday lives were surrounded by woodland (see Tipping in this series). Their lives would have included creating clearances in the forest with stone axes for cattle and sheep to graze, obtaining firewood for domestic fires and buildings and also hunting or gathering in the woods much like Mesolithic people had done for

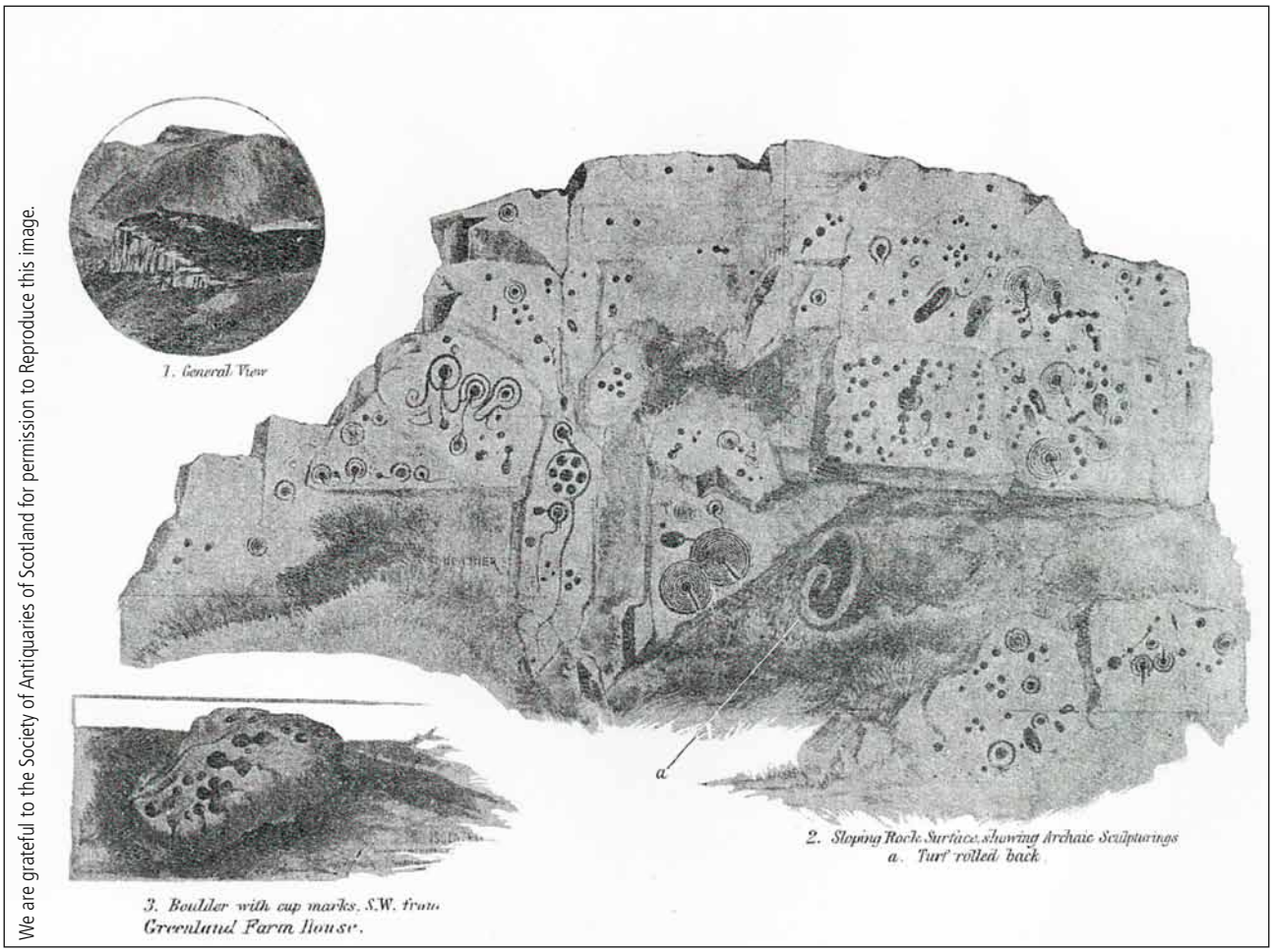

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Figure 12. The rock art panel at Cochno, West Dunbartonshire.
(Illustration for the article 'Notice of Remarkable Groups of Archaic Sculpturings in Dumbartonshire and Stirlingshire' by John Bruce, published in *Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland*, Volume XXX, 1895–6.)

millennia. Evidence for settlement and monumental building needs to be related in more detail to the available environmental evidence for the region as a means of more fully understanding the way in which Neolithic people interacted with and understood their environment. Pollen analysis at Blackshouse Burn (Ramsay 1998), for example, has shown the extent to which this was already an open landscape prior even to any monumental building in this location. It is important to investigate the ways in which particular types of landscape were utilized for different purposes in the Neolithic.

There are also many aspects of the Neolithic in west central Scotland that are even less well understood. The area includes some good example of Neolithic rock art – spirals, circles and other abstract designs carved on rock outcrops and boulders. Rock art of the type found in the study area is probably a Later Neolithic phenomenon and the type of designs found on rock outcrops in the region are also found in chambered tombs and on Neolithic artefacts found elsewhere. These designs are important indicator of the contacts between regions in the Neolithic period. A particularly good example of rock art at Concho (fig. 12) was covered over in recent decades to protect against vandalism. This is a great shame as rock art is an exciting element of Neolithic archaeology and one that is popular amongst the general public. A project investigating the distribution, context and potential for public display of some of these sites would be welcome. In general the Neolithic archaeology of west central Scotland is poorly promoted and displayed. The Upper Clyde Valley could become the focus of an archaeological trail or some other means of promoting public access and awareness as this area contains a number of upstanding archaeological sites. More challenging will be finding means of engaging the general public with the more ephemeral and below-ground traces of the Neolithic as represented in aerial photography and contract archaeology.

More must also be done to connect the Neolithic archaeology of the study area to wider debates in Neolithic archaeology and to more fully interpret the evidence in its wider setting. The Earlier Neolithic chambered cairns with links to Ireland, the eclogite axehead from the Alps, the Langdale axeheads from Cumbria and the common occurrence of pitchstone from the Island of Arran on Neolithic sites in west central Scotland hint at the long-distance connections of the Neolithic people of this region. As noted earlier, the Clyde would have been the major routeway in this region and this of course leads to the sea in the west and to the islands of the Firth of Clyde and beyond. The Upper Clyde Valley is also at an important

geographical locale being situated at the head of three rivers, the Clyde, the Tweed and the Annan. This may partly explain the richness of the evidence in the Upper Clyde Valley and the common occurrence here of stone axeheads and other material redolent of long-distance connections.

In terms of the whole organization of archaeology in this region, west central Scotland has developed a good mix of university, contract and community archaeology. This has developed more by chance than design and more must be done to integrate these separate interest groups as this will provide more opportunities and coherency for the study of the Neolithic. Publication of all 'grey literature' sites (excavations of sites undertaken during contract archaeology and only existing as small-circulation technical reports) would be a useful means of publicizing less-well-known sites and producing more detailed syntheses of all Neolithic sites in the region, and would be a profitable step in promoting further research on the archaeology of west central Scotland.

Summary

The Neolithic period is one of the most exciting periods of prehistory to study, with the still-visible traces of elaborate stone, timber and earth monuments in the landscape today. The study area has variable traces of this period according to the level of modern development present in each local authority. South Lanarkshire in particular has an excellent record of most aspects of Neolithic settlement and monumentality, but even here, further research is necessary to begin to more fully characterize the nature of the Neolithic in west central Scotland. The Neolithic archaeology of the region has representative examples of most kinds of Neolithic site and artefact, ranging from monumental chambered cairns to antiquarian finds of stone axeheads in museum collections. We are beginning to understand the range of monumental structures built in the Neolithic in west central Scotland with some well-targeted research excavations in recent years, but the nature of Neolithic settlement in the region remains a major lacuna in our understanding of this period. The archaeology of the region has remained generally under-researched despite the early encounters of Neolithic material in the post-medieval development of the urban areas. We are now, however, more able to deal with the threats that development poses to sites such as the one at Knappers excavated by Ludovic Mann. More must be done, nevertheless, to maximize the benefits of this material to academic study and in the promotion of archaeology to the general public. There is much to be gained from further investigation of the early farming societies of this region.

Acknowledgements

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Abbreviations

Proc. Soc. Antiq. Scot. = Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland

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