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## Beakers in Britain. The Beaker package reviewed

*Des gobelets en Grande Bretagne. Le « set » Campaniforme reconsidéré*

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## EDITOR'S NOTE

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## Introduction

- 1 The idea of the Beaker Folk, a warrior race that invaded Britain from Europe at the interface of the Stone and Bronze Ages had been a staple in British Prehistory throughout the early 20th century. Beaker pottery was strikingly different to that of native traditions and had clear continental parallels. The practice of single inhumation burials beneath round barrows accompanied by a restricted range of artefacts including early metalwork and items of personal adornment was very different to the multiple inhumations that, in the pre-radiocarbon days of short chronologies, were seen to be so typical of the Neolithic. Indeed, Gordon Childe could devote a whole chapter of his *Prehistoric Communities of the British Isles* to *The Beaker Folk - The Invasion by Round-heads* (Childe 1947: 91).
- 2 Amongst others, Stuart Piggott subsequently identified some Neolithic burials below round barrows and again, in the days of a short relative chronology, he suggested that these crouched inhumations represented native Neolithic peoples highly influenced by the single-grave burial traditions of the Early Bronze Age. Because they were accompanied by native Neolithic artefacts rather than items from the Beaker package or Bronze Age in style they were seen to date to a period before full integration between locals and immigrants had been achieved (Piggott 1954: 111). Calibrated

radiocarbon dating has now demonstrated that some of these Neolithic round barrows may have pre-dated Beakers by over a millennium (Gibson & Bayliss 2009). As late as 1970, in the published version of his doctoral thesis on British Beaker pottery, David Clarke was still advocating invasion/migration to explain the Beaker phenomenon though he suggested a number of waves of migration rather than a single event (Clarke 1970).

- 3 In 1976, Colin Burgess and Stephen Shennan seriously questioned the invasion hypothesis preferring to see the arrival of Beakers as being related to a cult or even a religion that spread over Europe including the British Isles. The main thrust of their argument was that Beaker users had little effect on the monumental archaeology and, other than the artefacts of the Beaker package, they seemed to have introduced nothing, or at least very little, into Britain from their European lands of origin. Beaker users revisited earlier Neolithic causewayed enclosures, long barrows and chambered tombs. Beaker pottery has been found on earth, timber and stone circles that span the Late Neolithic and Early Bronze Age. The 'Beaker People' did not appear to introduce distinctive house plans (in fact very few house plans were known from both the Late Neolithic and Chalcolithic in both Britain and Continental Europe) or a fundamentally different economy (again a hypothesis hampered by a lack of data). The pottery itself quickly became regionalized and insular. Fabrics varied in recipe and fineness, vessels ranged in size and domestic assemblages including both fine wares and rusticated Beakers were recognisable. Decorative techniques and motifs influenced the pottery of the Early Bronze Age but interestingly these Food Vessels and Collared Urns are derived in their forms from Middle (not Late) Neolithic styles that went out of production around 3000 BC, half a millennium before the appearance of Beakers and this seems to represent, at least in part, a reinvention of tradition.
- 4 Burgess and Shennan made a convincing case and their hypothesis were highly influential in how people viewed the Beaker Phenomenon from the late 20th century onwards. This was combined with a distancing of the 'New Archaeology' from Childean Culture concepts even though Childe himself had moved away from discussing Culture(s) in his later works. Clarke (1976) also changed his view on Beaker migration preferring to see Beakers as part of a package of prestige artefacts marking the visible emergence of a social elite.
- 5 One aspect of the 'Beaker Folk' or Beaker Phenomenon, depending on one's personal preferences, has already been mentioned in Childe's sub-heading The Invasion by Round-heads. There does seem to have been a change from Neolithic dolichocephaly to the brachiocephaly of Beaker and Bronze Age populations. Burgess and Shennan rightly pointed out that the problem with this perceived dichotomy was that only the 'best' assemblages were being analysed and there was a dearth of skeletal material from the Late Neolithic (3000-2400 BC in round terms) when cremation dominated the burial record. Burgess and Shennan argued that there could have been substantial natural (genetic) reasons for this shift over the half millennium of the Later Neolithic. They also pointed out that there were a large number of unaccompanied and undated crouched inhumations that were only presumed to be Beaker or Bronze Age in date and therefore the data selection could be flawed.
- 6 Neil Brodie (1994) tackled the problem with a new cranial study of Neolithic and Beaker/Bronze Age populations. The dolicho-brachycephalic difference was upheld but the reasons for this were more difficult to determine. Whilst there was some evidence

for cranial modification, for example the use of cradle boards, this was not the whole answer and once again the lack of Late Neolithic crania was a stumbling block. Nevertheless, 13 crania from the Late Neolithic contexts at Isbister (Orkney) seemed to represent an intermediate skull morphology suggesting that the change may have been due to environmental factors. There need not have been Beaker People though they cannot, of course, due to the smallness of the sample, be ruled out. There need have been no 'either/or' but rather a combination of factors including population movement contributing to the same result.

- 7 The application of strontium and oxygen isotope analysis to a series of Beaker-associated individuals from the Stonehenge area re-opened the migration debate when it was concluded that the Amesbury Archer probably came from eastern Germany (Chenery & Evans 2011: 185-190) though in reality the isotopic evidence suggests a larger swathe of central Europe. Once again 'Beaker People' started to re-emerge at least in the popular literature whilst the more sceptical saw this as representing one of the potential few individuals who must have been responsible for the spread of Beakers and whatever ideologies were associated with them. After all, these pots and associated artefacts did not float across the North Sea of their own volition so human agency, even if small scale, must have been responsible. This new information prompted the Beaker People Project (Parker Pearson *et al.* 2016, 2019) specifically to use these new analytical techniques to test for mobility (principally immigration) within Beaker populations. The project investigated 264 individuals and whilst it did identify considerable mobility within the population, this mobility seems to have been chiefly within Britain. Only the Amesbury Archer and an individual from Bee Low in Derbyshire appear to have been immigrants. Interestingly both males and females seem to have been equally mobile so suggestions that the Beaker phenomenon spread through exogenous marriage partners do not seem particularly relevant (Brodie 2001, Vander Linden 2007). Mike Parker Pearson (*et al.*) therefore conclude that the analyses do not suggest 'mass migration as the only process of Beaker expansion, but that cultural transmission (diffusion of a 'Beaker package', as proposed by Burgess & Shennan [1976]) was also significant' (2016: 634). A process of emulation may have been responsible for the comparatively rapid spread and increase in Beaker-using communities.
- 8 In this respect comparison may be made with early Christian missionaries. Although there is archaeological evidence for early Christianity in later Roman Britain, it was in the early historic period when comparatively few individuals had a very marked effect on almost the entire population of Britain (and Europe more generally). In just a few centuries through conversion, principally of the pagan elite who ensured that their vassals soon followed suit, a completely new ideology was introduced and is still with us. Like Beaker users, these missionaries would seem to have had little initial effect on the local archaeological record as the population itself did not change. Instead, a new set of artefacts fundamental to the new religion was introduced as were new burial forms and a developing iconography. Much of our knowledge of the earliest post-Roman Christianity and the process of its introduction comes from later texts rather than from archaeological data and recognisably ecclesiastical buildings came later. In such a way, Stuart Needham (2005) documented the arrival of the first Beakers just after 2500 BC but it was not for around another 200 years, Needham's Fission Horizon, before Beakers started to manifest a variety of developed and local forms possibly suggesting that it took this long before the new ideologies were fully accepted.

- 9 For some time, many authors such as Humphrey Case (1966) have suggested that the prospection for copper ores might have played a part in the spread of Beakers and in this context the early dates ‘in the decades around 2400 BC’ (Lanting 2004: 314) for the copper extraction at Ross Island (Co. Kerry) must be borne in mind. Brodie (1997) has postulated a "Chalcolithic frontier" between pre-Beaker copper-using societies in Southern and Eastern Europe and those without this technology in the North-western. He envisages a desire on the part of North-western communities to partake of this ‘new’ technology by forming socio-economic links with those that already had it. Equally we might see early metallurgists interested in areas beyond the frontier in their quest for new and unexploited sources of raw materials. Beaker-bearing prospectors may have been seen as special, even magical, gaining considerable prestige from their knowledge of this new technology and the ore-to-metal transformative processes. They may have then maintained that prestige or power by becoming teachers passing on their art to the native Neolithic population or alternatively by guarding their secrets thus maintaining their mystery and prestige. Both hypotheses might equally explain why they were so readily accepted.
- 10 It must be remembered that The Beaker People Project examined individuals over a time-span of around half a millennium and it did not concentrate on the early graves. This might suggest therefore that any initial immigrants, for example the Amesbury Archer (2480-2340 cal BC [68% probability; OxA-13541; Barclay *et al.* 2011]) soon settled and integrated with the local populations, at least parts of which were already mobile, but that continental links may still have been maintained (Bee Low - 2200–2030 cal BC [95% probability; SUERC-31855]; Parker Pearson *et al.* 2016: 631, 2019). This almost certainly marked the start of the increase in British-Continental connections that continued and developed throughout the Bronze Age and beyond.
- 11 It must be remembered that despite the large number of individuals (264) that were analysed by the Beaker People Project, this must represent a very small generational sample of the true population at any given time during the currency of Beakers estimated as around 500-600 years from as early as 2450 cal BC (Parker Pearson *et al.* 2016: 622-3). This length of time might have comprised a minimum of 20-24 generations (assuming a generation of 25 years) but, in reality, the number of generations was probably much greater if we assume (as suggested by the ethnographic and historical records) that people reproduced earlier (in Britain the legal age for marriage was raised to 16 as late as the Marriage Act of 1929). The sample is therefore very small. Furthermore, it is widely accepted that only a fraction of the population seems to have been deposited in a grave as we understand it and that the majority must have been disposed of in different ways. The suite of so-called Beaker and Bronze Age burials has been recently reviewed (Gibson 2016b, Parker Pearson *et al.* 2019) and it is clear that the Chalcolithic and Bronze Age dead were treated in many and varied ways: incomplete skeletons, multiple skeletons, disarticulated skeletons, partially articulated skeletons, skeletons with traumatic injury, complete and partial cremations and so on. The ‘Beaker crouched inhumation’ is only one way of treating the dead at this time and individual inhumations may have been restricted to a small proportion of society: perhaps elites, perhaps victims, perhaps strangers (Gibson 2016b). In this case, the Beaker People Project may have used a self-selecting database as already recognised by Burgess and Shennan in 1976. Furthermore Needham (2005) has already pointed out that it was mainly during the initial 200 years of early Beakers, his ‘primary Beaker

period' that the 'typical' Beaker burial was in vogue with its standard artefact kit. After this time, the Beakers themselves need not have been particularly prestigious and burial modes and associations diversified.

- 12 The Beaker People Project was to a degree superseded by the pan-European DNA study (Olalde *et al.* 2018). This demonstrates a major change in the genetic make-up of the British population coinciding with the arrival of Beakers in the 25th century B.C. The insular British Neolithic DNA profile changes dramatically to a profile of Steppe origin reaching Britain via the Netherlands which is also one point of origin for British Beakers that has long been recognised from stylistic and artefactual analyses. The results of this genetic study suggest not just major population movement but perhaps even population replacement and might certainly explain the dolicho-brachycephalic shift discussed above. There are, of course, also problems with Olalde's study and specifically the lack of Late Neolithic samples in the database since the burial norm between 3000-2400 BC was by cremation. The Late Neolithic individuals sampled by Olalde's team are almost exclusively from Orkney so once again the sampling of the British Late Neolithic population is highly selective. Furthermore, we do not know the length of time it took to effect this genetic change and, as mentioned with regard to the Beaker People Project, the Beaker and Bronze Age individuals who were being deposited (uncremated) in graves may also represent a self-selecting sample. That said, the dramatic change, and the date of this change, can hardly be coincidental and it is as yet difficult to deny. This leads us to review the evidence for the 'lack of Beaker change' that was the back-bone of the Beaker package hypothesis especially as absolute dating is now much better understood than it was in 1976 thanks to calibration and a vastly increased radiocarbon database improved by the more rigorous selection of samples.

## The middle-later Neolithic transition

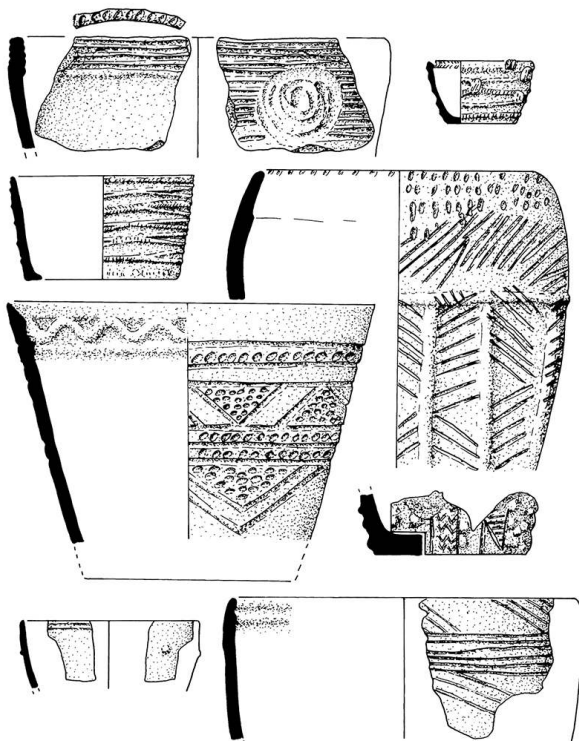
- 13 The start of the 3rd millennium sees a great change in British prehistory. Early Neolithic monuments such as long barrows, chambered tombs and causewayed enclosures cease to be constructed. The round-based Impressed Ware (Peterborough Ware) pottery tradition that can trace its ancestry back to the first Carinated Bowls of the initial Neolithic ceases to be made. A new form of ceramic, heavy tub-shaped and flat-based Grooved Ware, decorated with incised motifs and incised, raised or applied cordons, originated in the Orkney Islands but reached the whole of Britain by around 3000 BC. Novel monument types such as circles of earth, timber and stone appear at this time as does a suite of new artefact types such as stone maceheads, single barbed and ripple-flaked arrowheads and edge-polished knives. New radiocarbon dates suggest that the Neolithic axe quarries (particularly Langdale in Cumbria - Group VI greenstone) would appear to cease production at this time (inf Richard Bradley). Passage Graves, already developed in Ireland, spread to Orkney and the West of Britain. Elsewhere, the principal burial rite changes from inhumation to cremation and the population appears to have been more mobile with an increase in animal husbandry and herding.

## The later Neolithic

### Pottery

- 14 Grooved Ware (fig. 1), as the name suggests, is decorated with broad panels of incised motifs often based on triangles and lozenges or broad oblique lines (see Gibson 2011 for an introduction but beware that the dates quoted there now need revision). Plastic decoration in the form of raised or applied cordons is common on small and large vessels alike and these cordons may be plain or decorated, vertical or horizontal (or more rarely diagonal) and divide the vessels' surfaces into zones. Cordons may also occur inside the rims of some vessels. Regional styles were identified by Ian Longworth (in Wainwright & Longworth 1971) though these are now being questioned and an increased radiocarbon dataset is starting to suggest that the styles may have more chronological than regional relevance. The bases are invariably flat and this is the first universally flat-based pottery in Britain. The pots are tub-shaped or barrel-shaped (closed forms) and the size ranges encountered in Grooved Ware assemblages suggest a full domestic repertoire from small cup-like vessels to large feasting or storage vessels. Assemblages, where closed and stratified, are 'pure' with no other pottery styles found in direct association.

fig. 1: Examples of Later Neolithic Grooved Ware from Britain (Gibson 2011)



### Lithics

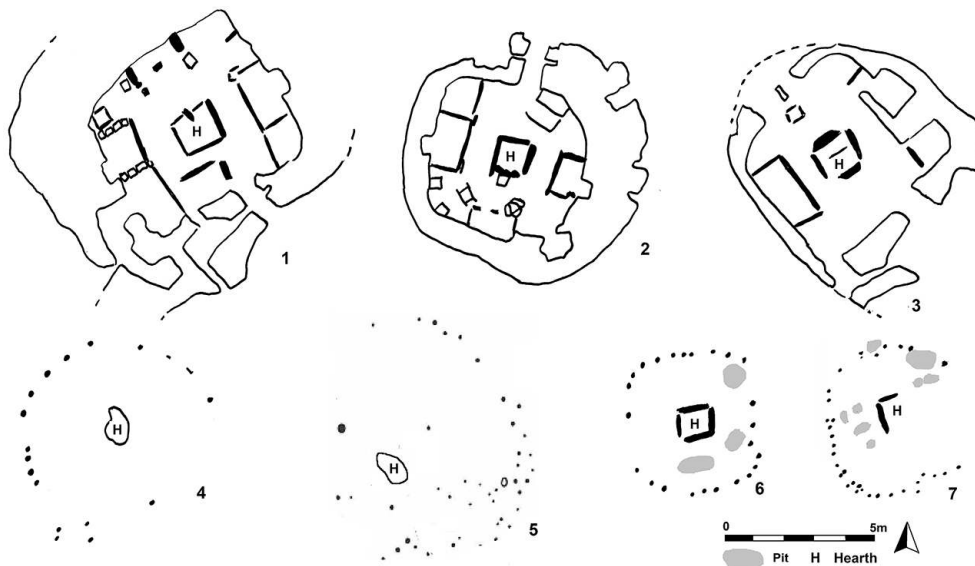
- 15 Later Neolithic flintwork tends to be poorer in quality than that which went before with larger cores of which the discoidal core is characteristic of this period. Transverse and oblique arrowheads replace the leaf-shaped and lozenge forms of the Early

Neolithic and can feature in substantial numbers on some Grooved Ware sites (see, for example, Wainwright & Longworth 1971: 170-173) and some ripple-flaked, single-barbed arrowheads are of exquisite quality. Discoidal scrapers often have traces of cortex remaining and edge-polished 'knives', varying greatly in size, have their edges deliberately ground so that their function remains obscure though they are nearly always carefully made. A variety of perforated stone maceheads, often in exotic materials, may represent symbols of power or prestige (Roe 1968) and the highly decorated example from Knowth (Eogan & Richardson 1982) with ground plastic spirals is truly a stone-worker's masterpiece.

## Settlement

- 16 The Late Neolithic sees a change in settlement from the rectangular timber and occasionally stone examples of the earlier period. Late Neolithic Settlements are rare outside of the Orcadian archipelago where the excellent building materials (Caithness flagstone) and sand-dune preservation has ensured the survival of a number of houses and conglomerated settlements epitomised by the so-called 'villages' of Skara Brae, Rinyo or Barnhouse and the monumental enclosed settlement at the Ness of Brodgar (Richards & Jones 2016, Towers *et al.* 2017). Elsewhere (fig. 2), structures with a similar plan have been found at Trelystan and Walton (both Powys), and Durrington Walls (Wiltshire) where a seasonally occupied agglomeration of structures pre-dates the earthwork of the henge (Britnell 1982, Gibson 1999, Parker Pearson 2007). These lowland structures are much less robust than the Orcadian stone-built sites but share similar internal arrangements and their flimsiness may explain why they are so rare.

fig. 2: Orcadian and lowland Late Neolithic Houses



- 1 – Skara Brae House 1,  
 2 – Skara Brae House 7 (after Childe 1931),  
 4 – Rinyo House G (after Childe & Grant 1947),  
 4 and 5 – Upper Ninepence, Walton, Powys (after Gibson 1999),  
 6 and 7 – Trelystan, Powys, (after Britnell 1982).



## Ritual Monuments

- 17 The passage grave tradition prevalent in Ireland since the middle of the 4th millennium developed into the monumental structures that we know from Newgrange and Knowth (Co Meath; Hensey 2015). Similar, but locally different, monuments appeared at about the same time in the Orkney Islands in the form of Orkney-Cromarty cairns (Schulting *et al.* 2010) and were followed by more architecturally sophisticated Maes Howe type passage graves in the second half of the millennium (Griffiths 2016). These tombs probably spread down the western coast of Britain though dating is imprecise and they were almost certainly adopted by the users of Grooved Ware. This western fascination with sepulchro-ritual monumentality does not seem to have been so popular in the east and south of Britain where more modest circular monuments of earth, wood and stone were built (fig. 3). These appear at about 3000 BC and therefore are likely to be associated with the arrival of Grooved Ware from Orkney where the earliest dates for Grooved Ware and earth and stone circles are found (Schulting *et al.* 2010, Richards *et al.* 2016).
- 18 The dating of these circular enclosures and monuments is still imprecise. There is not the same degree of deposition in the ditches or post- and stone-holes that occurs in earlier Neolithic enclosures such as causewayed enclosures so chronologies are more difficult to construct. Nevertheless, circles of wood, stone and earth seem to be contemporary after 3000 BC and seem to follow similar developmental trajectories from small and simple, to large and often complex in the case of timber circles, and back to small and simple again (Gibson 1998: 59). The earliest circular monuments may already have been associated with the deposition of cremated human bone (Atkinson *et al.* 1951, Gibson 2010a). Sequences can be identified, however, in cases where these monuments occur on the same site. Where timber and stone circles coincide, the stone circle is always later and where stone and timber circles lie within earth circles, it is the earth circle that appears to be later (Gibson 2012). These monuments span the Late Neolithic and Early Bronze Age and there is a Beaker presence on many. In part, they informed Burgess and Shennan's (1976) hypothesis as it was the apparent lack of any Beaker effect on these sites that was interpreted as Beaker users adapting to and adopting native Neolithic life-ways.

fig. 3: Late Neolithic circles of earth, stone and timber



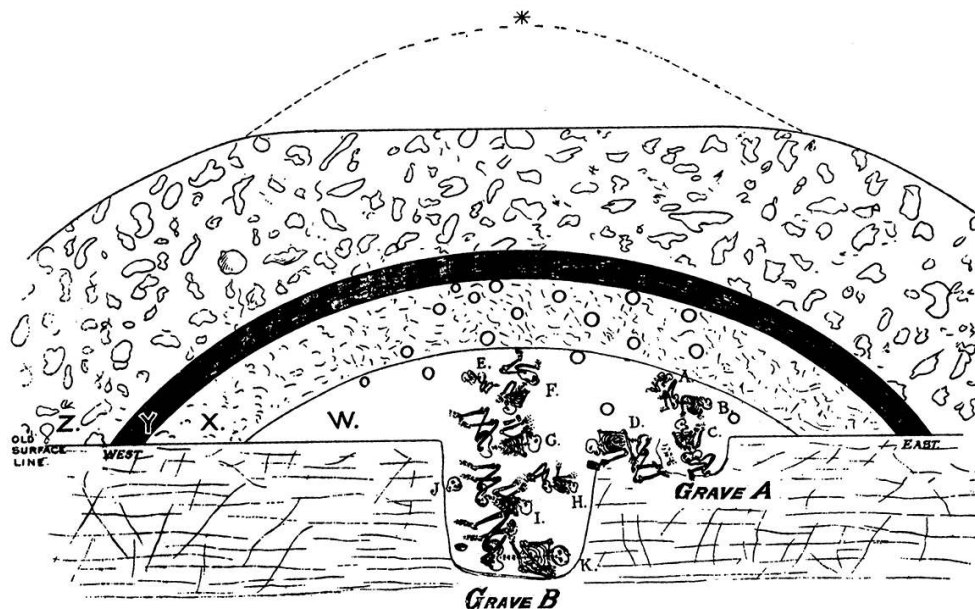
1 – Arbor Low, Derbyshire,  
 2 – Sarn-y-bryn-caled, Powys  
 (Photographs by the author)

## Burial

- 19 Aside from the passage graves (mentioned above) and the multiple inhumations that they contain, burial in the 3rd millennium BC was by cremation with few instances of inhumation other than some children (Gibson & Bayliss 2009, Healy 2012). Available radiocarbon dates from lowland sites suggest that this change was quite abrupt in the later Neolithic around 3000 BC (Parker Pearson *et al.* 2009, Gibson & Bayliss 2009, Gibson 2010b, Noble *et al.* 2017). The diversity of burial practices discussed in an earlier paper (Gibson 2004) is no longer tenable as an increased radiocarbon dataset has now placed most of these inhumation burials firmly in the Middle Neolithic before 3000 BC (fig. 4).
- 20 These Late Neolithic cremation deposits occur on small circular enclosures (Atkinson *et al.* 1951, Gibson 2010b), as secondary deposits in some Middle Neolithic round

barrows (Gibson & Bayliss 2009, Gibson 2016a), on stone circles (Gibson 2010a) and would appear to represent some of the initial activity at later Neolithic palisaded enclosures (Noble *et al.* 2017). Stonehenge phase 1 (3015-2935 cal BC), would also appear to have comprised a stone circle within a circular ditch with internal bank and associated with cremation burials (Parker Pearson *et al.* 2009). Associations are rare, probably due to the destructive nature of the cremation rite itself but would seem to include bone 'skewer pins' and stone maceheads.

fig. 4: Mortimer' (1905) schematic section of Duggleby Howe, North Yorkshire



The crouched inhumations within the pit (burials G-K) and below mound phase W (burials C and D) span the 36th – 33rd C cal BC. The Late Neolithic cremation burials (now lost) are represented by circles in mound phases W and X and can be dated by child inhumations E and F to the 29th-28th C cal BC (Gibson & Bayliss 2009).

## The arrival of Beakers

- 21 The extensive dating programme that formed part of the Beaker People Project has dated the appearance of Beaker graves at 2450–2385 cal BC (68% probability; Parker Pearson *et al.* 2016). The Beaker phenomenon was brought to Britain by people, that is not in doubt, though the scale of mobility is now a matter of debate. The pendulum of opinion has swung from a round-head invasion/migration (Childe 1947), to the movement of a few individuals (Burgess & Shennan 1976) to population replacement (Olalde *et al.* 2018) but there are problems with all these hypotheses. Parker Pearson and his team (2016) sided with Burgess and Shennan seeing small scale mobility possibly continuing throughout the Beaker period but the findings of Olalde clearly caused some rethinking (Parker Pearson *et al.* 2019). But, as already mentioned, all these hypotheses may be relying on a self-selecting dataset given that not all members of the Chalcolithic and Bronze Age population (indeed probably very few) warranted formal burial (using 'burial' in the broadest sense of the term, equating to the 'structured deposition of human remains'). Olalde and his team have also not yet demonstrated how long this genetic change might have taken. Was it dramatic as in an

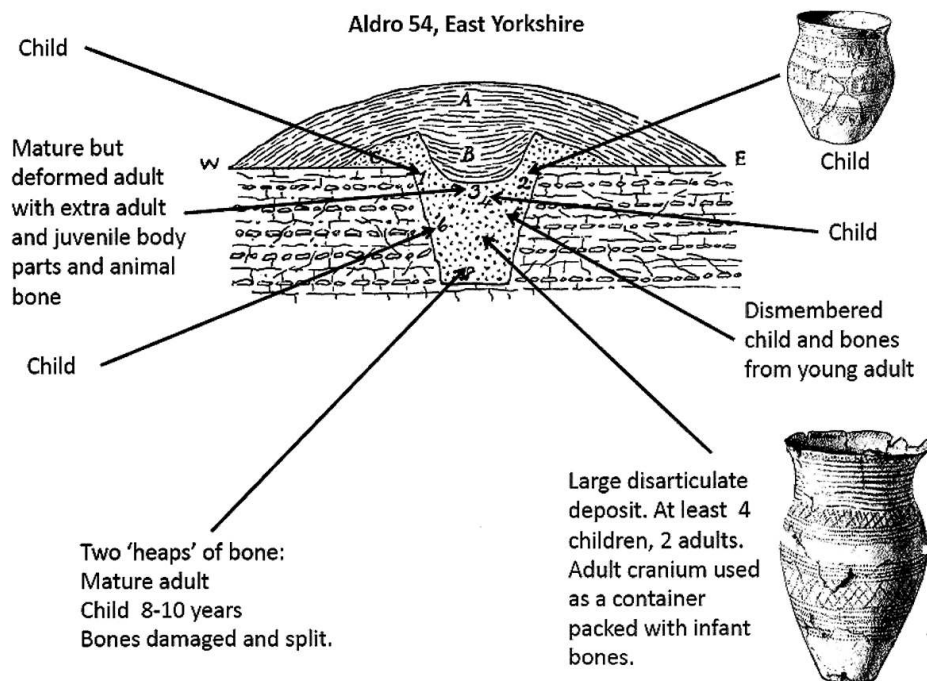
invasion and domination or was it more gradual in terms of migration and acceptance as already suggested? The fact that 'Beaker Burial' may have been restricted to members of, or people directly descended from, a specific part of the society (for example immigrants) may also skew the dataset.

- 22 As mentioned above, Burgess and Shennan's Beaker Package hypothesis was based on the premise that, other than the artefacts that constituted the 'Beaker package', the newcomers had little effect on the background archaeology but rather assimilated into the existing practices of Late Neolithic Society. Analogy has already been made with early Christian missionaries operating within pagan Anglo-Saxon and early historic societies. But is this really true? Did the arrival of Beakers have little effect on Neolithic ways? Looking more closely, some changes can be detected. They can appear subtle and also benefit from our improved radiocarbon database although there is still considerable room for improvement in this area particularly with regard to circular ritual monuments and unaccompanied burials.

### Change in Burial Customs

- 23 Burgess and Shennan (and the present writer 2004) saw in Beaker burials elements that had already been present in the British Neolithic. Other than the package of associated grave-goods, inhumations were not new. With an improved radiocarbon chronology, this needs modification as we now know that some of the native graves, round barrows, coffin burials, and mixture of articulated, disarticulated and partial burials are now Middle Neolithic rather than immediately pre-Beaker in date and had gone out of vogue some 500 years before the arrival of Beakers (Gibson & Bayliss 2009, 2010, Loveday & Barclay 2010, Sheridan 2010, Gibson 2016a, 2016b). As mentioned above, the predominant form of burial in the earlier 3rd millennium was cremation and therefore the Beaker inhumation with associated artefact package did indeed represent a change. Alison Sheridan (2008) has identified a Dutch influence in the appearance of early Beaker burials in Scotland in terms of the ceramic style, pit grave and the covering round mound though this has not received universal acceptance (Fokkens 2012). Nevertheless, the half millennium that separates the Middle Neolithic graves from those of early Beakers makes it likely that this does represent an innovation rather than a conscious re-introduction as originally suggested (Burgess & Shennan 1976, Gibson 2004).
- 24 Nevertheless, the Beaker stereotype soon modifies and diversifies after Needham's (2005) Fission Horizon around 2200 BC and rather than the standard crouched inhumation we have a range of practices in the deposition of human remains (Gibson 2016b). There are inhumations and cremations both complete and incomplete, multiple and single. There are depositions of body parts (Gibson 2016b, 2019a) an emphasis in some areas on child burials, a reintroduction of Yorkshire pit graves and differing depositional practices in the same grave (fig. 5). These diverse practices have a very Middle Neolithic feel suggesting a reinvention of tradition. This can even be seen in the re-emergence of jet artefacts almost totally absent from Late Neolithic and early Beaker contexts. We will return to these Middle Neolithic echoes below.

fig. 5: Early Bronze Age pit burial at Aldro 54, Yorkshire



Although associated with Beakers, the burials are very 'un-Beaker-like'. The number of child burials is also remarkable.

(Source: Mortimer 1905).

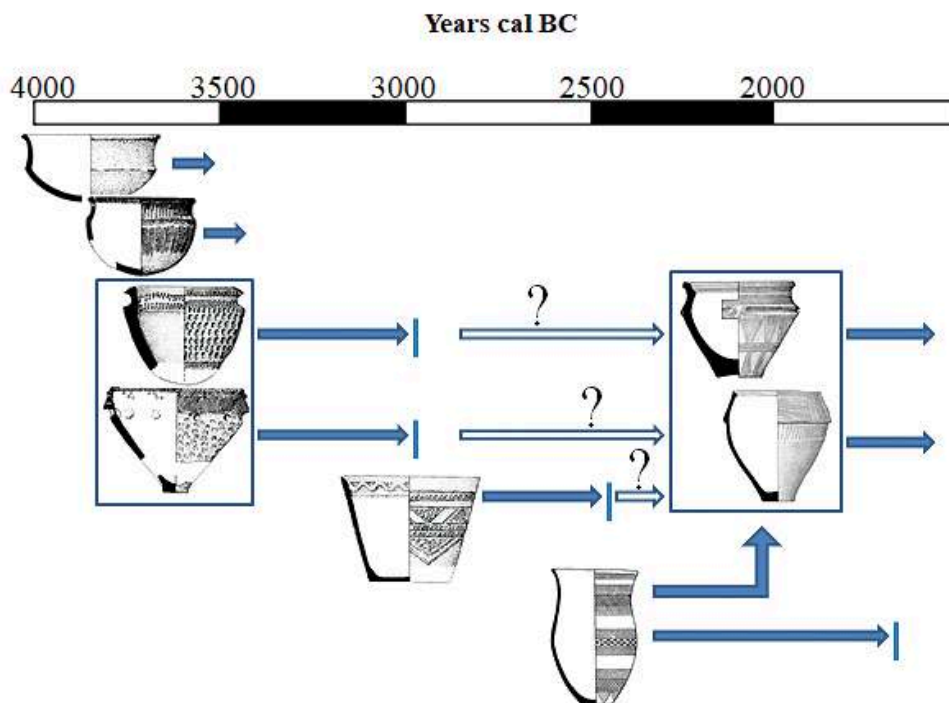
- 25 In Ireland, there is a return to megalithic burials in the form of wedge tombs (Schulting *et al.* 2008) which start abruptly at around 2500 BC and are associated with Beakers and multiple cremation burials (Hurl & Murphy 2001). As with British post-Fission horizon burials, this is neither a typical Beaker form of burial nor is it a Late Neolithic survival, rather it is a reintroduction of a much earlier burial mode. Aside from wedge tombs, and again as in Britain, there is considerable variety in types of burial after c.2200 BC (Mount 1995).

## Pottery

- 26 The sharp and notable change from Middle Neolithic Impressed Wares to Grooved Ware just after 3000 BC in England and Wales has been mentioned above. Impressed Ware can trace its roots from the earliest Neolithic pottery in Britain, the Carinated Bowls, c. 4000 BC (Gibson 2011) but this development stops abruptly in favour of the pan-British and Irish Grooved Ware tradition (see above). The origins of Grooved Ware are still poorly understood but it is generally accepted that it was developed in Orkney in the two centuries before 3000 BC then spread rapidly southwards at the start of the 3rd millennium. Similarly, the demise of Grooved Ware is also not fully understood in terms of absolute chronologies but current dates suggest that it does not extend beyond 2300 BC on mainland Britain. A current dating programme for Scottish Grooved Ware may shed further light on this hypothesis. If the interpretation of the radiocarbon data is correct, then it would appear that Grooved Ware ceases as abruptly after the introduction of Beakers as Impressed Ware did with the appearance of Grooved Ware.

- 27 What is more puzzling is that Grooved Ware seems to have left very little in terms of a ceramic legacy. Domestic assemblages of the Beaker period exhibit little of Grooved Ware influence. Grooved Ware ceases to be used or deposited at ritual sites. Early Bronze Age Food Vessels and Collared Urns owe much of their form and technology to Middle Neolithic Impressed Ware. Cordoned Urns may derive their cordons from Grooved Ware Barrel-shaped vessels but are more likely to represent devolved Collared Urns (Gibson 2011, Waddell 1995). The plastic decoration on some Food Vessel Urns may be a Grooved Ware legacy but the suggestions that horizontal cordons on the necks of some late Beakers may also be Grooved Ware derived are less convincing (Case 2001, Gibson 2019a) given the presence of such features in some northern European assemblages. Bell Beaker ceramics, in contrast, do influence Early Bronze Age Food Vessels and Collared Urns that appear in graves after Needham's Fission Horizon at c. 2200-2000 BC in terms of the use of combed decoration, and geometric motifs.

fig. 6: The development of British Neolithic and Early Bronze Age pottery showing gaps in the sequence and external (Beaker) influences



- 28 This ceramic change is not immediate but is profound and quick in archaeological terms. It represents another real break and once again it seems to be the Middle Neolithic traditions rather than Late Neolithic Grooved Ware that influence Early Bronze Age post-Fission horizon ceramics, certainly in terms of shape and impressed decoration (especially whipped and twisted cord). That this follows the appearance of Beakers and their initial development is unlikely to be coincidental.

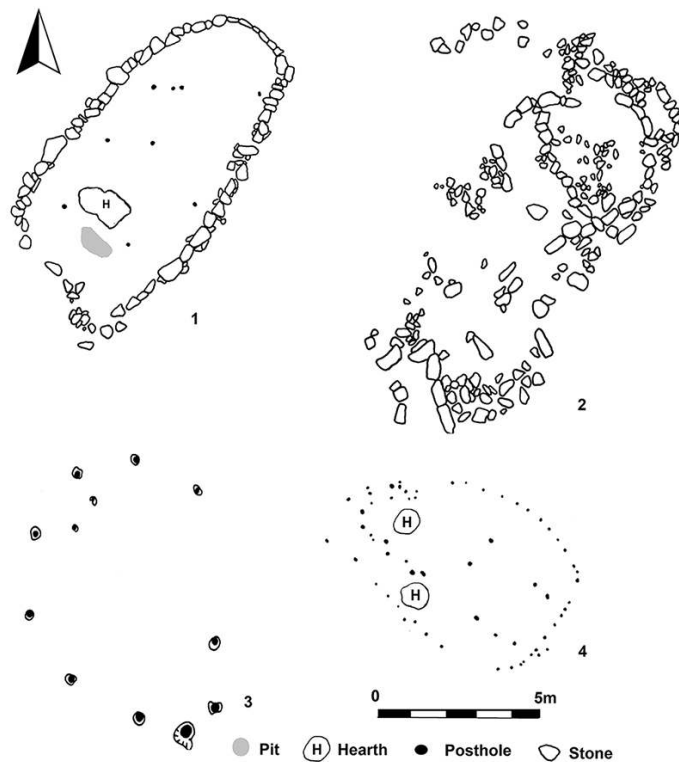
## Settlement

- 29 As mentioned above, Late Neolithic houses outside Orkney are rare though recent finds at Durrington Walls combine with those from mid-Wales, and to an extent Ronaldsway

on the Isle of Man (Bruce *et al.* 1947) to suggest a flimsy national lowland type (see fig. 2 above). These Grooved Ware-associated structures cannot be compared to Impressed Ware houses, as none of the former have yet been found and they differ considerably from the earlier Neolithic houses which are rectangular and more substantial (Smyth 2014, Gibson *et al.* 2017, Gibson 2019b).

- 30 In the Orkney Islands, Beaker appears on the Grooved Ware settlements such as Skara Brae after they had entered a period of rapid decline described as the result of a catastrophe by Childe (1931: 64, Bayliss *et al.* 2017). A similar scenario was encountered at Links of Noltland, Westray, (Clarke *et al.* 2016) and Toft's Ness, Sanday, (Dockrill *et al.* 2007). At the former site, Beaker-related pottery was dated to 2265-1975 cal BC (95% probability) at the end of the period of major construction whilst at the latter site radiocarbon dates extend into the 2nd millennium. Colin Richards *et al.* (2016) have made a case for double houses spanning the 3rd and 2nd millennia BC, the best known being house 8 at Skara Brae or houses 1 and 6 at Barnhouse (Richards 2005) but whilst these double houses are undoubtedly contemporary with Beakers in Orkney, there are no direct Beaker associations and instead they seem to represent a regeneration or adaptation of the stone house tradition. This stone construction is hardly surprising given the suitability of the Caithness flagstone for dry-stone construction and the rarity of trees on the islands.
- 31 At lowland Late Neolithic house sites such as Trelystan and Durrington Walls, Beaker appears in the same location but in later contexts after the houses had already gone out of use. Those at Trelystan were sealed by Bronze Age barrows. The Durrington Walls 'village' went out of use in the mid-3rd millennium whereupon it was slighted by a palisade enclosure in turn dismantled and covered by the henge bank early in the later 3rd millennium BC as Beakers were making an appearance. This aspect of monumentality is discussed again below.
- 32 There are few domestic structures associated with Beakers in Britain and Ireland (Gibson 2019b). This gave rise to theories of mobility and even Romany-type caravans (Ashbee 1978: 139). The corpus has increased slightly since the 1970s but structures associated with stylistically early Beakers are still unknown. Indeed, domestic sites generally and those 'houses' that have been excavated such as Northton (Harris), Monknewtown (Co Meath), Sorisdale (Coll) and High Lea (Dorset) have assemblages that are clearly post-Fission horizon in style. The structures, in keeping with other domestic contexts, are also associated with pure Beaker ceramic assemblages that show none of the later-Neolithic influences that make up the Beaker Accompanying Pottery or 'Begleitkeramik' material that forms so much of the domestic assemblages on European sites (Gibson 2019b, Besse 2014). These structures also tend to have a circular or, more frequently, oval ground plan (fig. 7) in keeping with contemporary structures along the Atlantic coast (Gibson 2019c) and so are very different to the sub-rectangular Grooved Ware predecessors (compare fig. 2 above).

fig. 7: Highland and Lowland Beaker houses



1 & 2 – Northton, Isle of Harris (after Simpson *et al.* 2006),  
 3 – Hunstanton, Norfolk (after Bradley *et al.* 1993),  
 4 – High Lea, Dorset (after a plan generously provided by John Gale)

- 33 This evidence suggests that domestic structures did change at the time or just after Beakers were starting to appear in graves. This was part of a major change (decline or even collapse) in the stone house communities of Orkney leading to new house types albeit usually without Beaker pottery. Elsewhere distinctive Beaker-associated house plans can be identified but what was happening to the preceding Grooved Ware settlements is more difficult to determine though it is safe to say that those that we know appear to have gone out of use.

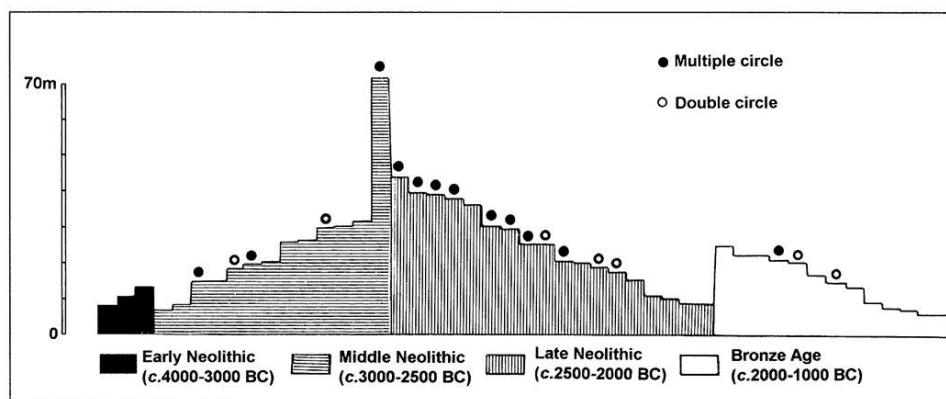
## Ritual Monuments

- 34 Before 3000 BC, the irregular causewayed enclosures, long barrows and elongated cursus monuments ceased to be constructed. After this date, ritual monuments tended to become circular (although earlier round barrows, cairns and passage graves had been built) and this circularity persisted throughout the Beaker period until the end of the Early Bronze Age. From Grooved Ware beginnings, through Beaker uses and finally Early Bronze Age demise, these sites demonstrate the continuity that was so important in Burgess and Shennan's (1976) hypothesis and also prompted Burgess (1980) to formulate the Age of Stonehenge in an attempt to break away from the three-age system. But important changes can be detected within this apparent continuity.
- 35 Timber circles are comparatively easy to date as the posts were often charred before being set in the ground as this improved their waterproofing and durability. This outer carbonisation can provide secure dates for the construction of the site assuming that



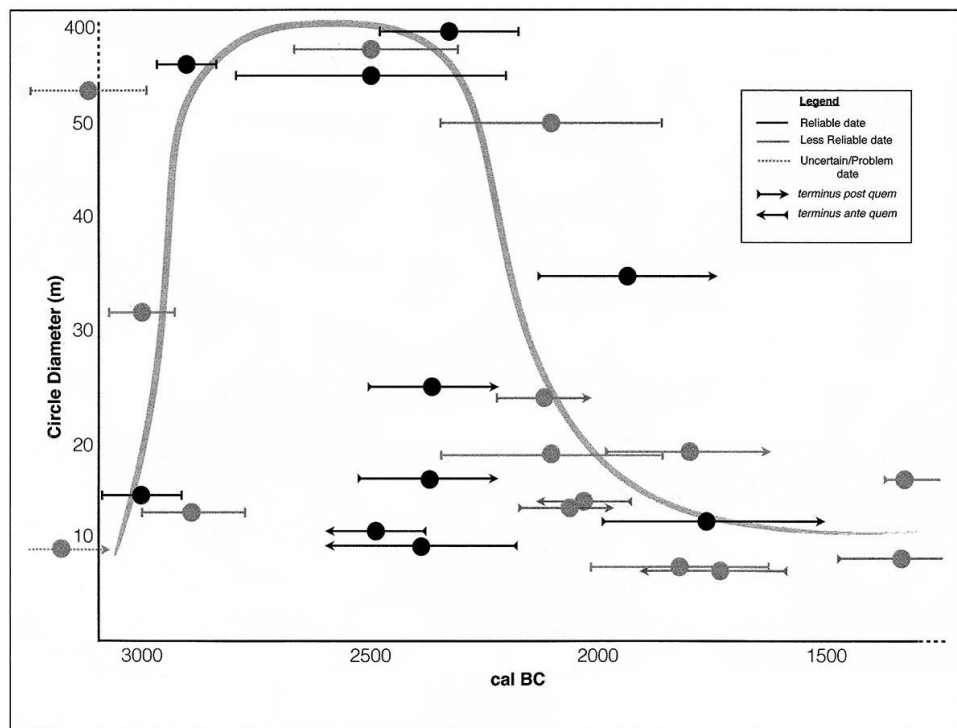
the timbers had not been reused. Through a combination of dates, associations and stratigraphy the present writer (Gibson 1998) was able to demonstrate that timber circles started small and modest around 3000 BC, then grew in size and complexity climaxing, in the mid-3rd millennium, in the large multiple circles such as Woodhenge (Cunnington 1929) and Durrington Walls (Wiltshire; Wainwright & Longworth 1971) and possibly at Balfarg (Fife; Mercer 1981). More modest circles, of course, may have continued to have been constructed. After this floruit, they once again reduced in size and complexity. This rise in size may have been a developmental consequence, but again it coincides or just precedes the appearance of Beakers in graves.

fig. 8: The chronological development and decline of timber circles (after Gibson 1998)



- 36 Stone circles are notoriously more difficult to date because what was happening in the interior cannot date the construction of the circle, only part of its period of use. Aubrey Burl (2000) proposed that stone circles started large and open, perhaps connected with the exchange of stone axes, but then became smaller and more sepulchral in function. This model needs revision and the dating of the foundation cremations at Balbirnie (Fife) place this modest stone circle at 3000 cal BC but it continued in episodic use well into the Early Bronze Age when the interior was finally covered by a cairn (Gibson 2010a). That some smaller four-poster circles are Bronze Age in date cannot be denied (Burl 1988) so, as with timber circles, we have the small stone circles at either end of the chronological range.
- 37 Less easy to date are the large circles epitomised by the large Cumbrian rings and, of course, Avebury (Wiltshire), but looking at available radiocarbon dates, Wishart (2016) was able to demonstrate that from a modest start, stone circles increased dramatically in diameter towards the mid-3rd millennium before declining again towards the end of the millennium and beyond (fig. 9). As with timber circles, the construction of smaller sites seems to have continued throughout the period and Burl's observation that burials at these sites increased in the Early Bronze Age still seems valid.

fig. 9: Scatterplot of the absolute and relative date ranges for stone circles



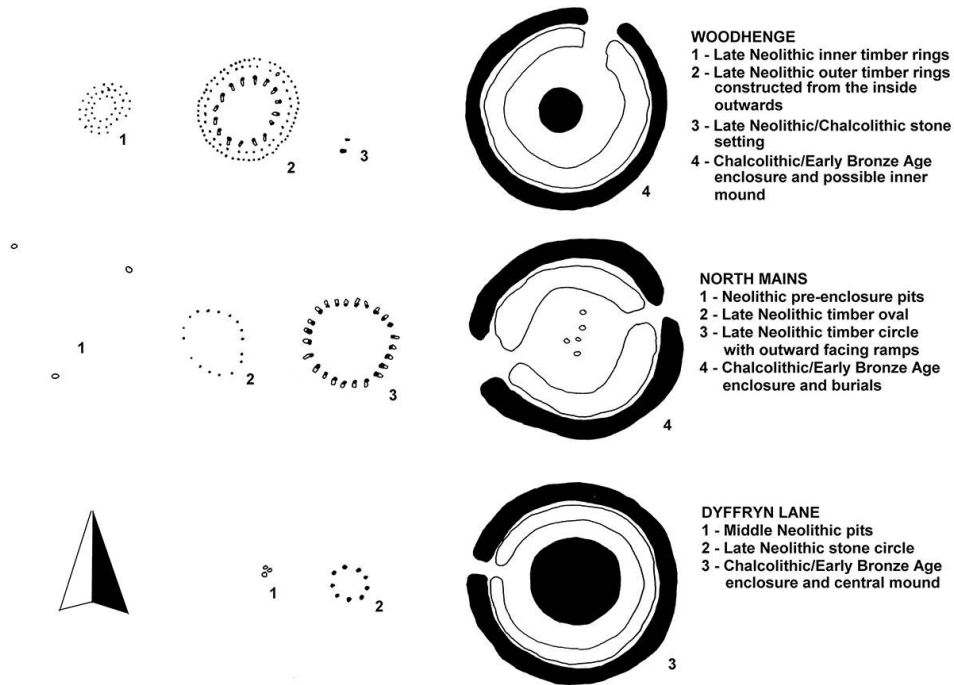
The curving line plots a hypothetical fluctuation in circle diameter through time (from Wishart 2016, courtesy of Tony Wishart).

- 38 Earth circles (henges) are also in much need of a better-defined chronology but ditches rarely contain foundation deposits or datable material in any great quantity. The available radiocarbon dates focus on use rather than construction but when treated with this in mind, the data seem to show that single-entranced enclosures (penannular ring-ditches) start small as at Sarn-y-bryn-caled Site II (Powys) around 3000 BC (Gibson 2010b) but that such small enclosures were still being constructed in the Early Bronze Age at, for example, Balneaves (Angus; Russell-White *et al.* 1992). Larger sites were appearing by the middle of the 3rd millennium as at Dyfrryn Lane (Powys; Gibson 2010c).
- 39 Double and multiple entranced earth circles have a much tighter period of currency although at face value they too seem to start around 3000 BC (Gibson 2012). When a more judicious approach to the  $^{14}\text{C}$  dates is taken, and looking at reliable dates for the foundation and construction of the earthwork, then it can be suggested that they focus on the period 2500-1750 BC (Gibson 2012, fig. 12) in other words coinciding with the arrival of Beakers. This is also the case at Durrington Walls, where Beaker has been found beneath the bank (Farrer 1918), Avebury where the ditch has been dated to just before 2500 BC (Pollard & Cleal 2004), and Arbor Low (Derbyshire) whose construction can be shown to date to around the middle of the 3rd millennium by the barbed and tanged arrowhead on the base of the ditch (Gray 1903).
- 40 There is another aspect to these larger enclosures and to the double entranced enclosures in particular and that is that they appear to be the last monumental act on sites that have had a long history of ritual activity. As such they seem to form an act of closure and this would explain the internal ditch and the uneven nature of the external

banks at sites such as Avebury and Arbor Low. At Avebury, the primacy of the great stone circle may be inferred by the closeness of the substantial stones to the inner edge of the ditch but more reliable <sup>14</sup>C dates are needed. This is also the case at Arbor Low where, furthermore, the enclosure has a different orientation to the stone circle (Gibson 2012). At Cairnpapple Hill (West Lothian) the ditch and external bank surrounded an already existing stone circle again on a slightly different orientation (Barclay 1999, Bradley 2011) and this modification may have been broadly associated with Beaker burials. At Broomend of Crichtie in Aberdeenshire (Bradley 2011) the double-entranced enclosure was constructed around the already existing stone circle and Early Bronze Age burials were added. This would also explain the external banks at these sites. The internal monuments would be enclosed by a ditch and the quarry material would have to be thrown to the outside in order not to compromise the interior.

- 41 Perhaps the best example of these acts of closure is the sequence at North Mains (Perth and Kinross; Barclay 1983, 2005). Early Neolithic features were recorded at the site but then two timber circles were constructed on different alignments. The lesser of the two was oval and is of uncertain date but its lack of concentricity with the second circle and the earthwork suggest it may be the earlier (Gibson 1998: 36-7). The outward facing post ramps of the later circle, dated to c. 2900-2200 BC (Barclay 2005), demonstrate that the circle had to predate the earthwork. The construction of the enclosure at North Mains has a *Terminus Post Quem* date of 2140-1960 cal BC (95% probability; Barclay 2005) from a cremation burial beneath the bank and is contemporary with Beaker/Food Vessel associated burials in the interior. Although this 'closing' is later than some of the English sites, it nevertheless marks a major change in the function of the monument within the late Beaker period and we might also assume that the timber circle had either been destroyed or had become derelict by this time.

fig. 10: Sequences at some 'henge' monuments illustrating that the bank and ditch enclosures are amongst the latest elements at the site



Woodhenge after Cunington 1929, North Mains after Barclay 1983, Dyffryn Lane after Gibson 2010c. Not to scale.

- 42 Even some single entranced sites may have been involved in closure. At Dyffryn Lane, Middle Neolithic pits (later 4th millennium) were located below the buried soil beneath the bank of the enclosure. A stone circle was dated to c.2850-2500 cal BC (68% probability - TAQ) and then the henge was constructed around the circle c.2527-2460 cal BC (68% probability - TPQ) being dated from short-lived samples from a hearth directly below the bank (Gibson 2010c). The interior was also closed by the construction of a large turf mound dated to c.2472-2389 cal BC (68% probability - TPQ), broadly contemporary with the bank and ditch, that buried the stone circle. The entrance to the enclosure may also have been closed by the construction of a pit across the entrance and detected by geophysical survey.
- 43 At Woodhenge we can also envisage a protracted sequence of development. As at North Mains, the positions of the post ramps in the timber ovals are crucial and show that there must have been at least two phases of the timber setting and that the outer rings could not have been constructed were the earthwork in place (Gibson 2012, fig. 10). The earthwork is later and the Grooved Ware associated with the timber settings is found in the ditch and below the bank of the enclosure. We do not have the <sup>14</sup>C chronology that helps us interpret North Mains and Dyffryn Lane but we may assume a date in the middle of the 3rd millennium for this act of closure.
- 44 Rosamund Cleal and Josh Pollard (2012) have detailed the remarkable changes that took place at Stonehenge and Avebury during the period 2600-2200 BC. At the latter site, this included the construction of the palisaded enclosures, the bank and ditch at Avebury, the construction of Silbury Hill, the replacement of timber circles in stone and the unification of the monuments in the area by the construction of connecting stone

avenues. In the Stonehenge area, not only was there the monumental activity at Durrington Walls already discussed, but at Stonehenge itself there was major remodelling with the replacement of the internal timber settings by the construction of the sarsen circle and horseshoe and the Q and R arrangement of bluestones. The earliest Beakers at these sites are located at a respectful distance from the main monuments.

- 45 None of the building programmes or modifications are necessarily Continental in influence. They are major modifications that fit well into Late Neolithic native traditions (with exception, perhaps of the four entrances of the Wessex henges) but they are taking place at a time when Beakers are starting to make an appearance. They could be perceived as being a native response to whatever ideologies were starting to appear. Given the collapse of the Grooved Ware settlements in Orkney, are we seeing a community under crisis frantically trying to maintain its unity by ambitious, labour intensive communal construction projects that link the important religious centres and make them more permanent? Not to mention the construction of Silbury Hill or the movement of stones across the Avebury landscape, or the creation of the truly monumental bank and ditch at Avebury, at Stonehenge, the creation of a 'timber circle' out of massive blocks of sandstone imported from the Avebury area attests major mobilisation. This does not imply that Beakers are the cause of this. They may be the response in the same way as they appear after the collapse of the Orcadian settlements.
- 46 Of course, Late Neolithic circular earth enclosures have long been seen to be uniquely British and Irish and, although often compared to Stonehenge by central European researchers, the broadly similar Kreisgrabenanlagen have been shown to be much earlier coinciding with the LBK/Lengyel transition in the early 5th millennium BC (Melichar & Neubauer 2010) but the distinctly double-entranced henge-like ditch at Oostwoud (Noord-Holland, Netherlands) and the discovery of the enclosures at Pömmelte and Schönebeck (Saxony-Anhalt, Germany) may suggest that the 'Britishness' of circular enclosures is more due to a lack of Continental knowledge and research than to an archaeological reality. The pre-barrow opposed entrance enclosure at Oostwoud (Fokkens *et al.* 2017) looks suspiciously like a class II henge and with a foundation date of 2556-2204 cal BC it is contemporary with the start of the British examples. At Pömmelte the sequence appears more complicated. The site seems to have started in the late Beaker period, c. 2300 BC, and continued into the Early Bronze Age (Spatzier 2017, Spatzier & Bertemes 2018). The date comes from the enclosure ditch and the fact that it has an external bank may suggest that this is later than the undated internal post rings. The four-entranced ditched enclosure appears to reference the slightly earlier and larger Wessex enclosures. Late Neolithic to Early Bronze Age circular enclosures are also becoming increasingly recognised in the Iberian Peninsula (Valera 2012, Escudero Carrillo *et al.* 2017) with Bell Beakers being found in the later phases of the sites and it would appear that the uniqueness of the British Late Neolithic circular enclosures with their monumental architecture and solar orientations is now no longer tenable though clearly there are regional, even national, differences.
- 47 The Late Neolithic ancestry of these sites and the longevity that at first appears to suggest an unbroken monumental tradition was so much at the heart of Burgess and Shennan's (1976) hypothesis. This can no longer be seen to be so simple and real changes in scale and architecture seem to coincide with the period just before the appearance of Bell Beakers in graves, at least in the Wessex heartlands. The Beaker

sherds below the bank at Durrington Walls clearly show that Beaker ceramics were already present when these changes were being made and it is distinctly possible that Beakers were in use in Britain, albeit in a restricted way, before they started to appear in graves. These changes then coincide with the advent of Beakers rather than Beaker burials.

- 48 Large roughly circular to oval enclosures of wooden uprights are also found in the Late Neolithic associated with Grooved Ware. Some sites may be on the site of Middle Neolithic activity but the enclosures themselves are Grooved Ware-associated (Gibson 2002, Jones & Gibson 2017) and activity at the sites can continue into the Bronze Age with burial activity of this date recognisable at some of the excavated sites. These sites are non-defensive in nature, some having external facing entrance corridors but rather seem to be about exclusion and ritual activity. The precise dating of these sites is hampered by sites producing dates that are not in statistical agreement and also by the Late Neolithic plateau in the calibration curve. But Bayesian analysis would suggest that they were being constructed in the 29th C cal BC and were out of use by the 21st century though sites such as Mount Pleasant may have lasted longer as witnessed by the large amounts of Beaker from the excavations (Griffiths 2017). The short-lived palisade below the bank at Durrington Walls (Parker Pearson & Gaffney 2016) dates to around the middle of this period but it is not known how Beaker users affected the use of these sites, if at all.

## The Environment

- 49 Palaeoenvironmental data for this period are fairly poor and the fact that many ecofactual assemblages come from 'special' sites may skew the true picture but nevertheless Michael Allen and Mark Maltby (2012) conclude that, from deposits of colluvium, there is evidence for increased tillage in the Beaker period though it may be more related to Needham's (2005) Fission Horizon after 2200 BC than to the arrival of Beakers. There may have been an expansion of sheep farming, possibly at the expense of pig, and cattle rearing continued to be important. Horses are introduced but their remains are rare suggesting that they were perhaps prestige animals rather than food sources. Whatever their numbers, horses would facilitate greater and more rapid mobility and create a real distinction between the 'haves' and the 'have nots'.

## Metalwork

- 50 That ore prospection may have played a part in the arrival of Beakers in Britain has already been mentioned as have the early dates from Ross Island (O'Brien 2004). Radiocarbon dates for the earliest metalwork in Britain are mainly from Beaker graves (Needham 1996, 2005) which gives the impression that early copper and gold artefacts are relatively small comprising awls, ornaments and knives. In fact, the earliest copper artefacts are substantial axes which do not occur in graves (Needham 1996, Burgess 1980) and the casting of these artefacts as well as the smelting of ores at Ross Island attest a developed technology. Although the formulation of a precise initial chronology is problematic, it is generally assumed that these early broad-butted axes (Stage I – Burgess 1980; Metalwork Assemblage 1 – Needham 1996) date to between 2500-2300 BC.

They are therefore contemporary with the earliest appearance of Beakers and this date range agrees well with the pre-bank dates for Durrington Walls.

## Conclusion

- 51 We are now in a position to begin to see beneath the theory of continuity that so influenced Burgess and Shennan. The artefact package in Britain was innovative as they acknowledge and this is universally accepted. So too was the burial rite which was introduced some 500 years after crouched inhumation was last practiced in Britain. House plans are also new with oval structures replacing the sub-square houses of the Late Neolithic. Some of the Beaker structures are partly sunken, although we have few of them. Continuity can indeed be seen in the ritual monuments of the period but there is also real change within them including the closing of some sites by banks and ditches and the restricted time-span of double-entranced enclosures. They increase in size at this time and there is the lithicisation of the Wessex complexes, including the sarsen circle replacing the timber settings at Stonehenge. It is now that the massive Silbury Hill is constructed starting in the second half of the 25th century BC and completed sometime around 2300 cal BC (Marshall *et al.* 2013: 97-116). This all suggests a society under stress, perhaps from external sources: it is a period of turmoil and it is a picture that can be seen across large parts of Europe.
- 52 It is logical that the users of Beakers reached these islands before they died and therefore, as mentioned above, Beakers were almost certainly circulating in Britain, albeit on possibly a small scale, before they started to be placed in graves. In this regard, the Beaker sherd from below the bank at Durrington Walls must be borne in mind (Farrer 1918) as well as the early dated Beaker from the filling of the West Kennet chambered tomb although this latter context is not particularly secure (Bayliss *et al.* 2007).
- 53 As far as Britain was concerned, Beakers were innovative in their own right and differed substantially from native pottery traditions. They were associated with innovative artefacts and an innovative burial rite, as well as the innovation (at least in Britain and Ireland) of metallurgy. There is little if any evidence for contacts between Britain and Continental Europe during the Middle and Late Neolithic so the people bearing these new forms and a new technology (by which solid stone was turned to liquid and then to a different (and very useful and shiny) solid) must have seemed very different, exotic, alien and even, in the case of metallurgy, magical. These innovations must have been attractive and desirable for them to have dominated burial traditions and then persisted in the archaeological record for over half a millennium. By the time Beakers appear in graves, 'critical mass' has already been reached – that is the point at which Beakers and their associated innovations become quickly and universally accepted and adopted (i.e. visible in the archaeological record) after their initial introduction (Fokkens 2012: 119).
- 54 As Needham (2005) has proposed, the primary (pre-Fission Horizon) Beaker period from c.2450-2250 BC is the time when the 'typical' Beaker burial appears and flourishes and this may correspond to the period immediately following Fokken's 'point of critical mass'. This would mean that the local populations and Beaker innovators had been building up to this point for some time, perhaps as much as a century. The changes that we see in the archaeological record that date to just before or on the cusp of 'the

Beaker Period' therefore may already be a response to this innovation not just in artefacts and technology but very probably also ideology. After the Fission Horizon, we see the re-emergence of Middle Neolithic ways exemplified by a greater diversification of burial practices, deep pit graves in Yorkshire, the use of a wider range of materials including the reintroduction of jet and amber artefacts, and ceramics based on Impressed Ware forms.

- 55 Archaeologically speaking, the collapse of Grooved Ware societies is sudden (c. 2450-2300 BC) and other than circular ritual monuments, the legacy of Late Neolithic Grooved Ware users is difficult to detect. Grooved Ware influence on Beaker and later ceramics is negligible. The demise of Grooved Ware seems as sudden as its emergence. Why should this be? Why should Middle Neolithic ways and forms re-emerge with the Beaker Fission Horizon and why does Grooved Ware not form a British Begleitkeramik in domestic assemblages? Grooved Ware appears suddenly around 3000 BC associated with great changes: settlement forms, ritual monuments, artefact packages and burial rites. Do the users of Grooved Ware suppress the Middle Neolithic populations? Do they impose their Orcadian ways on the rest of Britain? Was, some 500 years later, their society subsequently threatened by Beaker innovation and ideology to the extent that major population mobilisation can be seen at this time, particularly in Wessex? These questions must remain rhetorical for the time being but if the hypotheses that they encapsulate are correct, then the users of Beakers, like missionaries, may have been seen not just as innovators but also as liberators.

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## ABSTRACTS

From round-headed warrior invaders to introducers of a cult package, accounts of the appearance of Beakers in Britain have varied considerably. The basis of Burgess & Shennan's 'Beaker Package Hypothesis' was that, other than the distinctive burial and associated artefacts, Beaker users had little impact on the other aspects of the contemporary archaeological record.

But is this the case? With an improved radiocarbon-based chronology, new excavations and discoveries since 1976, and the reinterpretation of older data that these discoveries allow, we can instead see some fundamental changes coinciding with the arrival of Beakers. This is particularly the case in the domestic sphere, but other changes in ritual monument and artefacts can also be identified. In addition, we can document the demise of Later Neolithic Grooved Ware-using societies and the emergence of a new Early Bronze Age but with its roots very firmly in the Middle, not Late, Neolithic.

Les récits relatifs à l'arrivée des communautés à Campaniforme en Grande Bretagne varient considérablement, allant des guerriers envahisseurs brachycéphales aux initiateurs d'un culte. Le point de départ de « l'hypothèse sur l'ensemble Campaniforme » de Burgess et Shennan était que, à l'exception des sépultures caractéristiques et des objets associés, les communautés à Campaniforme ont eu peu d'impact sur les autres aspects du registre archéologique qui leur est contemporain. Mais est-ce bien le cas ? Grâce, d'une part, à une chronologie améliorée basée sur des datations au radiocarbone, de nouvelles opérations archéologiques et de nouvelles découvertes depuis 1976, et d'autre part, à la réinterprétation d'anciennes données que ces nouvelles découvertes facilitent, nous pouvons, au contraire voir des changements fondamentaux qui coïncident avec l'arrivée des communautés à Campaniforme. C'est particulièrement le cas dans la sphère domestique, mais nous pouvons également déceler d'autres changements dans les monuments et objets rituels. De plus, nous pouvons suivre la disparition de communautés à *Grooved Ware* du Néolithique récent et l'émergence d'un nouvel âge du Bronze ancien mais fermement ancré dans le Néolithique moyen et non dans le Néolithique final.

## INDEX

**Mots-clés:** Package campaniforme, céramique imprimée, Grooved Ware, peuplement, sépulture

**Keywords:** Beaker package, Impressed Ware, Grooved Ware, Settlement; Burial

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