

## 6. PREHISTORIC POTTERY ASSEMBLAGE

*Ann MacSween***6.1 Description and discussion**

About 150 sherds and fragments and multiple smaller fragments and crumbs of pottery were recovered from the excavations at Grantown Road. Sixteen vessels were identified, and more will be represented by the tiny fragments which were too small to be attributed to individual vessels (Illus 18). The pottery was recovered from ten pits and two postholes with one or two vessels being represented in each. In general, the sherds recovered represented a small proportion of the original vessel (See Table 2). Twelve of the vessels have between 10% and 40% rock fragments and the remaining four are made of sandy clay. Four of the vessels have a smoothed exterior and three have burnishing on the exterior. None of the vessels has sufficient sherds remaining to determine the profile of the vessel, but from the character of the rims and decorated sherds, and radiocarbon dates in the first half of the 4th millennium BC, the pottery from Area E

and most of the pottery from Area C is likely to be Early Neolithic round-based pottery. Later dates for Pit [1127] in Area C (final century of the 4th millennium/1st century of the 3rd millennium BC) and from Pit [1045] in Area H (mid-3rd millennium BC), indicate that use of the area went on throughout the Neolithic. There is too little of the pottery remaining to securely ascribe it to a tradition. One of the vessels, (SF 32/38 from Pit [1128]), is decorated with incised lines forming a criss-cross, lozenge-based design, and two rows of small dots (1mm diameter). It also has a perforation just above what may be a carination (Illus 18G).

**6.1.1 Early Neolithic round-based bowls**

Several of the diagnostic sherds were identified as Early Neolithic round-based bowls –

- SF 20 (Context (1019) – fill of Pit [1018]) has a slightly flattened rim with an out-turned lip and a slight shoulder or carination. The profile suggests a round-based bowl. Mid-37th century cal BC date (Illus 18A).

**Table 2** Prehistoric pottery

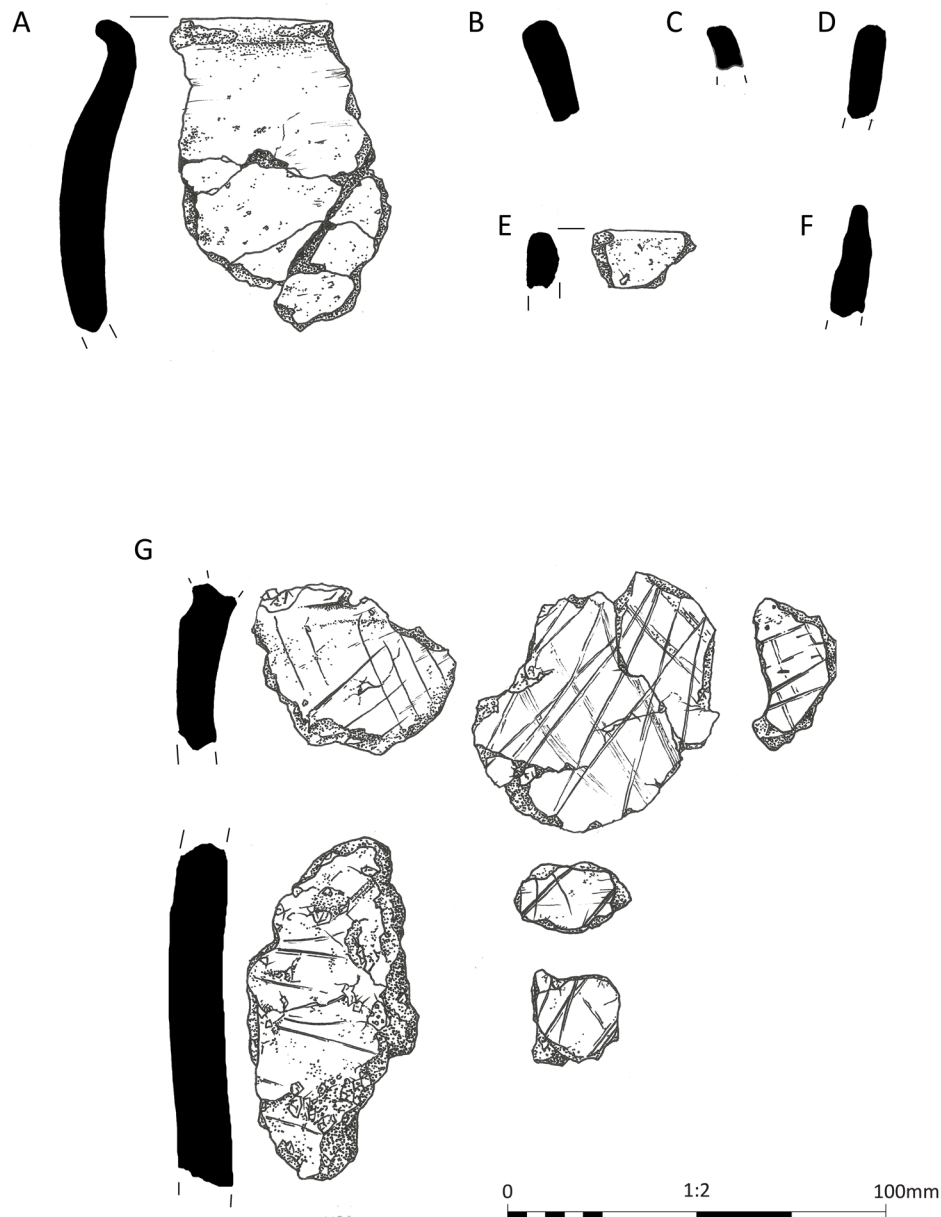
Area	Context	Feature	No. of Sherds	No. of Vessels	Comments
C	(1128)	Pit [1127]	80	1	Possible carination, decorated
C	(1130)	Pit [1129]	3	2	
C	(1135)	Pit [1134]	11	2	
C	(1139)	Pit [1138]	1	1	
C	(1143)	Pit [1142]	1	1	Plain rim, flattened
C	(1151)	Pit [1150]	8	2	Flattened rim
C	(1153)	Roundhouse Posthole [1152]	7	2	Plain rim, possible lug
E	(1019)	Posthole [1018]	1	1	Flattened rim
E	(1021)	Stone-lined pit [1020]	12	1	
E	(1023)	Pit [1022]	12	2	Out-turned rim
E	(1035)	Pit [1034]	13	2	
H	(1046)	Pit [1045]	1	1	Flattened rim

- A rim from sampling of Context (1151) (fill of Pit [1150]) is probably from a simple round-based bowl with an open profile (Illus 18B).
- A small rim from SF 24, Context (1023) (fill of Posthole [1022]) is out-turned. Late 38th to mid-37th century cal BC date (Illus 18C).
- Two small rim sherds, Context (1143) (fill of Pit [1142]) and SF 28, Context (1046) (fill of Pit [1045]) are from vessels with a plain

rim with a slightly flattened lip (Illus 18D and 18E).

- A plain rim from SF 37a, Context (1153) (fill of Posthole [1152]) is probably, from its context, from a round-based bowl with an open profile and has slight traces of a possible lug (Illus 18F).

Round-based pottery was used widely across Great Britain and Ireland during the Early Neolithic (Sheridan 1998: 219–20). A date span for the use of



**Illus 18** Prehistoric pottery: (A) possible round-based bowl (SF 20), Context (1019); (B) round-based bowl from Context (1151) retents; (C) out-turned rim (SF 24), Context (1023); (D) plain rim, Context (1143) retents; (E) plain rim SF 28, Context (1046); (F) plain rim (SF 37a), Context (1153); (G) incised vessel (SF 32, 32b, and 38c), Context (1128)

carinated bowl pottery was suggested by Sheridan (2007: 451–8, fig. 6) as 3950/3900 to 3600 BC. The dates for carinated bowl pottery from the excavations at Forest Road, Kintore (Cook & Dunbar 2008: 167–70) indicated that round-based pottery was in use throughout the 4th millennium in the North-East, and this was confirmed by dates from the 2000–2013 excavations at Grantown Road, Forres (Cook 2016; McLaren 2016: 30).

Round-based assemblages from the north and east of Scotland include those from the excavations at Garthdee, Aberdeenshire (Murray & Murray

2015; Sheridan 2015) from a small ovoid building; from contexts associated with occupation from the excavation of pits at Dubton Farm, Angus (Cameron 2002; MacSween 2002); from the ceremonial site of Balfarg, Fife (Barclay & Russell-White 1994; Henshall 1994); and from the large timber building at Warren Field, Crathes (Murray et al. 2009; Sheridan 2009). The emerging picture across the North-East is complex, with a great deal of variation between sites, which makes collection and dissemination of as much data as possible important for building more accurate regional pictures.