

## 9 Radiocarbon Dates from Ferndale by *PRJ Duffy*

Two samples of single-element cremated human bone, one each from cist fills (contexts 006 and 008), were sent for accelerator dating at the Scottish Universities Research and Reactor Centre ([Table 2](#)). A calibrated date of 1980–1760 BC (SUERC-2987) from context 006 and a calibrated date of 1980–1740 BC (SUERC-2988) from context 008 was obtained at a 2-sigma level of confidence. The dates were calibrated on OxCal v3.8. Human bone submitted to obtain a date from the fill of cist 003 was found to be

insufficiently well-preserved to allow a date to be obtained.

The dated material points to a secure date in the first quarter of the second millennium BC. This would appear to fit broadly with the limited dating evidence available from cists containing cremations in Orkney, although the site would appear to be amongst the earlier examples in this tradition (see [Table 3](#), below)

**Table 2 Radiocarbon dates from Ferndale**

Lab code	Sample material	Lab age BP	Calibrated dates		
			$\delta^{13}\text{C}$	1 $\sigma$	2 $\sigma$
SUERC-2987 (GU-12120)	Cist 010 (context 006) Cremated human femur	3555 ± 35	-23.8%	1950–1770 BC	2020–1760 BC
SUERC-2988 (GU-12121)	Cist 004 (context 008) Cremated human humerus	3550 ± 35	-25.3%	1950–1770 BC	2020–1740 BC