

II.

NOTICE OF THE DISCOVERY OF A CIST WITH URN AND STRIKE-LIGHT AT CORRAN FERRY, INVERNESS-SHIRE. By DONALD CAMPBELL, M.D., F.S.A. SCOT., CRAIGRANNOCH, BALLACHULISH.

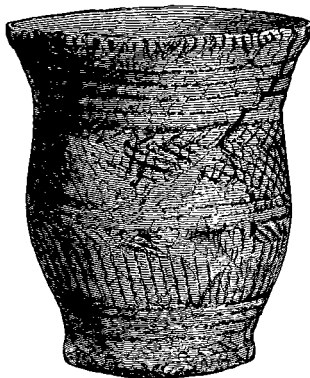
On the 21st of February 1889 a Stone Cist was discovered in a gravelly bank at the back of the Hotel at Corran Ferry, Lochaber, Inverness-shire, by Mr Thomas M'Lean, Innkeeper, while removing gravel for road purposes from the face of the bank. The cist was in a grave or pit dug out of the hard subsoil to a depth of $4\frac{1}{2}$ feet from the surface. Its sides, ends, and roof were composed of rough, undressed, stone slabs, the floor being formed by the gravel out of which the pit had been dug.

On removing one of the side flags, the cist was found to be two-thirds full of moss that had oozed through from the overlying peaty soil, and at one end, and surrounded by this moss was an urn, lying partly on its side. The contents of the cist were somewhat roughly removed by a spade, but on careful searching a few days later amongst what was thrown out a chip of flint or strike-light was discovered—one of the few found under similar circumstances in Scotland—bearing unmistakable marks of having formed part of the grave-goods,—that is to say, its rough outer surface was covered with moss of the same character as that which covered the surface of the urn and slabs. The urn contained nothing, and no skeleton was found in the cist, or any grave-goods beyond the urn and flint; but owing to the manner in which the contents of the cist were thrown out and mixed with the surrounding gravel, some small article or articles may have been lost.

The interior of the cist measured 3 feet 9 inches in length, 2 feet 2 inches in width, and 18 inches in depth, and the construction, though rough, was peculiar and neatly designed. The sides, ends, and cover—the latter consisting of two pieces—were formed of rough slabs, as already mentioned, and behind one of the sides was placed another flag by way presumably of support. But there was another feature that gave the structure a peculiar character. This consisted of a roof-shaped cover

formed by two flags placed over the cist, like the inclined timber or rafters on the roof of a house. Some small stones were also found outside the cist at one end, and were probably placed there for support. The long axis of the cist was north-east by south-west.

The urn (fig. 1) was formed of rudely baked clay and small particles of pebbles. It was elegant in shape and neatly ornamented, and belongs to the class of urns associated with unburnt burials of the Bronze Age, having everted lips, bulging sides, and ornamentation from lip to base. It is $5\frac{1}{2}$ inches in height, 5 inches wide at the mouth, and 3 inches at the base. The decorations consist of bands of horizontal, vertical, and oblique parallel lines and intercrossing zig-zags—the lines being marked with dots as if made by a comb-like instrument.



The urn, which is now in the possession of A. E. Maclean, Esq., of Ardgour, was unfortunately broken shortly after it was found, but was carefully pieced together and photographed in its reconstructed form.

Fig. 1. Urn found in the Cist at Corran Ferry ($5\frac{1}{2}$ inches high).

A drawing was also made by Mrs Campbell, Craigrannoch, showing the ornamentation and also the original shape and size of the urn as nearly as possible. A sketch of the cist, showing the peculiarly formed roof, was also made on the spot by Dr David Christison, Edinburgh.

This is the only instance known of a cist with an urn being found in or near the district of Lochaber. There are burial cairns at Ballachulish (four miles from Corran Ferry), and some objects of archæological interest have been found in the immediate neighbourhood of the site of the cist, such as fragments of urn (of which no record was kept) found on the Miller's Knoll near the farm of Keppanock, gold armlets found in a peat-moss in the hill above the said farm, a jar of bog butter, and a ladle and cross-bow stock of oak.

In conclusion, I may add that the cist and urn were seen and examined

by the following Fellows of the Society, in addition to myself: Rev. Dr Alexander Stewart, Nether Lochaber (who was first on the ground after the find was announced), Dr David Christison, Edinburgh, and Provost Alexander Ross, Inverness; but unfortunately none of us were present till after the contents of the cist had been cleared out. An attempt was subsequently made to ascertain by means of iron sounding-rods whether other cists existed on the spot, but the pebbly soil was so impenetrable that the rods could not be forced down more than a few inches.