

7. SHORT CIST AT KNOCKHILL, KIRKDEN, ANGUS.

On 18th February 1948 the coverstone of a short cist was discovered during ploughing on Captain Bruce Gardyne's estate of Middleton, near Friockheim,

<sup>1</sup> *Proc. Soc. Ant. Scot.*, vol. lxiii. (1928-29), pp. 56-7.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 56.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 67, fig. 45.

<sup>4</sup> To be published in *Proc. Soc. Ant. Scot.* shortly.

<sup>5</sup> *Proc. Soc. Ant. Scot.*, vol. lxiii. (1928-29), p. 58, fig. 39.

<sup>6</sup> P. 234.

<sup>7</sup> *Proc. Soc. Ant. Scot.*, vol. lxxix. (1944-5), p. 167.

Angus. The cist was empty but for a food-vessel, which Mr Ernest Mackay, the ploughman, removed for safe keeping. Subsequently Mr F. A. Ferguson, F.S.A.Scot., visited the site, and some days later, at his invitation, I accompanied him to undertake a further examination. Our thanks are due to Mr Leslie, the tenant, for having kept the grave undisturbed.

Situated two-thirds of the way down a hillslope at about 350 O.D., the spot provides a relatively restricted view in undulating country. Cotton of Gardyne lies 350 yards to the north, and Knockhill Cottage less than 100 yards to the west (Nat. Grid ref. 37/577476).

The coverstone lay only a few inches below the surface, there being no trace of a tumulus, and was a single slab (an irregular parallelogram) of sandstone with a much-pitted surface, measuring 4 by  $2\frac{1}{2}$  feet and about 2 inches thick. The cist was rhomboidal (Pl. LIV, 5), the main axis being N.N.W.-S.S.E. and the true bearing of the longest side  $25^\circ$  E. A small slab lay across the north corner, probably to level-up the cover. Three sides each consisted of a slab of pinkish-grey sandstone about 19 inches high (max. 21 inches) and at most  $5\frac{1}{2}$  inches thick, which had clearly been obtained by splitting a single glacial erratic into three. Striæ were very distinct on the inner side of the south-west slab, while the other flat surface of the block was the outer face of the north-west stone, the centre of the "sandwich" forming the north-east side. These sides measured internally 26, 25 and 33 inches respectively. The south-east, 21 inches long, was in contrast made up of half a dozen small slabs in three rows one behind the other, the largest stone being 16 inches long. Covered by a couple of inches of fine soil, in which no trace of bone remained, one stone formed the bottom of the cist 15 inches below the coverstone; it was roughly a right-angled triangle 24 by  $18\frac{1}{2}$  inches, with the base at the south-east end. This stone rested on a layer of clean clayey sand 4 to 6 inches thick. The side stones, however, chiefly rested on the underlying gravel, like that against which they were backed. The layer was found to continue at least for a couple of feet beyond the south-east end, but further examination was not possible. It seems as if the cist-makers had simply incorporated a natural fluvio-glacial stratum, but Professor F. E. Zeuner notes that a sample had a looseness of texture that suggests, inconclusively, either an upper weathering horizon or spreading by man.

The food-vessel (Pl. LIV, 4), placed in the east corner, is reddish buff in colour, bowl-shaped and rather clumsy; height 4.9 inches, rim diameter 5.9 inches, base diameter 3.8 inches. The flat rim,  $\frac{1}{2}$  inch thick, is decorated with two lines of cord impressions. Similar lines decorate the outside in five zones, with which alternate five zones of extremely debased false-relief consisting merely of two rows of subtriangular depressions with their apices all upwards. The profile has what seems to be a blurred reminiscence of the broad central groove of south-west Scottish bowls, Childe's Type C.<sup>1</sup> It is from that type that the Knockhills specimen has clearly devolved, and helps to show, indeed, that we may generally for East Scottish food-vessel bowls choose Childe's second alternative and classify as C rather than B. A closely comparable specimen comes from Bo'ness and also serves as a link, while others even more devolved have been found at Pencaitland in East Lothian.

Captain Bruce Gardyne has generously presented the food-vessel to the National Museum.

R. B. K. STEVENSON, *Keeper of the Museum.*

<sup>1</sup> *Scotland before the Scots*, p. 105.



1. Gold armband from Kirkmaiden ( $\frac{1}{3}$ ).



2. Neolithic pot from Roslin, Midlothian (c.  $\frac{1}{2}$ ).



3. Beaker from Fettercairn ( $\frac{1}{3}$ ).



4. Food-vessel from Knockhill, Kirkden, Angus ( $\frac{1}{3}$ ).



5. Cist at Knockhill, Kirkden, Angus (food-vessel replaced).



6. Food-vessel from Balbie Farm, Burntisland ( $\frac{1}{3}$ ).