

IV.

NOTICE OF THE DISCOVERY OF TWO CISTS WITH URNS OF STEATITE,
IN THE PARISH OF SANDWICK, ORKNEY. BY WM. G. T. WATT,
OF SKAILL, ORKNEY.

In the summer of 1883 a steatite urn was discovered by a herd boy digging to get at a "bee's byke" in the centre of a tumulus on Gyron Hill, Sandwick. It was not disturbed until I was present. A flat stone lay on the ground, and the urn stood on it mouth upwards. It was built round about with stones, and across the top of the building and over the urn was laid a heavy flag cover. Clay had been packed above and around the outside of the cist. The urn was filled to within two inches of its brim with calcined bones. The contents were carefully examined, but nothing was found among the bones. The urn is 16 inches across the mouth one way and 15 inches the other, and stands 11 inches high. Underneath the rim it has two incised lines drawn round the outside by way of ornamentation. A neatly prepared slate stone, 10 inches by 8 inches, and oval in shape, forms the bottom of the urn, and rests on a narrow ledge or groove running round the inside.

The only implement found about the mound was a rude stone, 19 inches long, 4 inches broad, and about 2 inches thick, made sharp and slightly polished at the end. Mr Robert Stewart Clouston, who was with me when taking the urn out, drew my attention to this stone, it being like some among his interesting collection of rude stone implements found in this parish.

I may mention that within 50 yards there are several other mounds.

Last month, January 1885, the tenant of South Scatter brought me a small steatite urn, in fine preservation, which had been found in a cist on Gyron Hill, Sandwick, and not far from where the one just described was got. The cist in this case is placed in a low natural knowe or rising ground of stiff clay, and from the general appearance of the soil I am of opinion that no mound had ever been erected over it. The sides and ends of the cist were formed by four carefully dressed flags resting on a

large flat stone, and the cover was a neatly fitting slab, above which about 2 inches of clay was well packed. The grave, which is 28 inches in length, lies south-east and north-west. The south-east end is 15 inches and the north-west end $17\frac{1}{2}$ inches in width, and the depth is 22 inches. It contained a few burnt bones, a small quantity of earth, and the urn, which was found in the north-west corner. The dimensions of the urn are 5 inches across the mouth in the longest diameter, and in the shortest $4\frac{1}{2}$ inches, and 3 inches high. It measures across the bottom 4 inches by 3 inches. Immediately below the rim is a flat incised band running round the exterior. This urn is smaller, but in general appearance very like the one found in 1874 in Fair Isle.

Both the urns I have now described are in my collection at Skail House.