

## II.

NOTICE OF THE DISCOVERY OF CISTS AND URNS AT LONGCROFT,  
LAUDERDALE. By FRANCIS LYNN, F.S.A. Scot.

Those who have had the fortune to visit Longcroft, in Upper Lauderdale, with its fine conical hill, crowned by extensive and intricate British fortifications, will readily remember a small knoll in the valley just below Longcroft Farm, and beyond the burn on the left when facing downwards. Its form and the obvious labour which had been spent in forming it into terraces at once caught the eye, and without any direct proof it was believed to be a British burial mound. In natural structure it is a grass covered knoll, the core of which is silurian rock, much tilted and shivered. Generations ago a quarry was opened in its southern side, which was rapidly destroying its form. When the late Mr Dickinson entered the farm, some fifty years ago, his good taste caused him to put a stop to the destruction of the hillock, and since then the quarrying has ceased.

Recently the shepherd informed the Messrs Dickinson that the children had discovered an urn near the top of the knoll, and had kicked off the bottom part, which was uppermost, and found it to be full of small fragments of bones. Mr Dickinson at once went and took steps to protect it till a regular examination could be made; and then arranged with Provost Turnbull of Melrose to join him in investigating the matter. On the 10th of May last, Provost Turnbull went up to Longcroft, taking with him Dr Routledge, Melrose, and Francis Lynn, Galashiels. After reaching Longcroft, along with the two Messrs Dickinson and several of the shepherds, an examination of the knoll was made. The urn was found on the brink of the old quarry, and the material around it having been carefully removed it was seen to be inverted with its mouth resting on a flat stone and filled with incinerated bones. It was also found that it had been deposited in a roughly built cist, one side of which had partly fallen into the quarry. Amongst the

fragments of the incinerated bones which formed the contents of the urn, there were noticed the crown of a human molar tooth, and a front or cutting tooth.

The urn (fig. 1) is of the ordinary cinerary type, with an overhanging brim, a constricted collar between the overhanging brim and the shoulder, and below the shoulder a plain flowerpot-shaped lower part. The diameter over the mouth is 7 inches; the rim, which is  $\frac{3}{8}$  of an inch in thickness, is slightly bevelled inwards, and ornamented with an

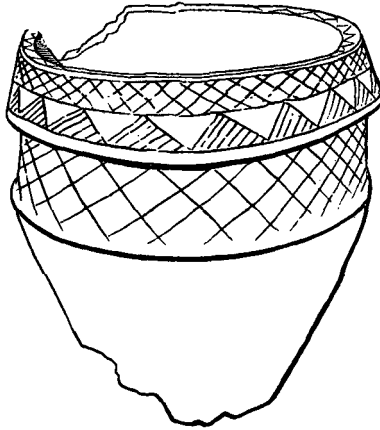


Fig. 1. Cinerary Urn found in the first Cist at Longcroft. ( $\frac{1}{4}$ .)

irregular zigzag line running round the whole circumference. The overhanging brim, which is  $1\frac{3}{4}$  inches in depth, is ornamented in two bands, each  $\frac{3}{4}$  of an inch in width, the upper band consisting of parallel lines crossing each other obliquely, about  $\frac{1}{4}$  of an inch apart, while the lower band consists of a series of triangles with lines drawn parallel to one side, alternating with plain triangular spaces. The collar underneath the overhanging brim is ornamented with parallel lines, crossing each other obliquely, so as to form lozenge-shaped spaces similar to those on the upper band, but larger. All the lines of the

ornamentation have been made with a thin edged implement drawn smoothly into the surface of the soft clay. The vessel has been well fired, and the surface is fairly smooth and hard.

Outside the urn, on the east, and at a slightly higher level, were found a deposit of bones. Much broken up, these also had been burned, and were laid aside for after examination.

But while this cist was under examination, the workmen had struck the edge of a stone, evidently of large size and great weight, and evidently also foreign to the locality. This with some labour was now uncovered,



Fig. 2. Urn of Food Vessel type found in the second Cist at Longcroft. ( $\frac{1}{2}$ .)

and with the application of strong levers was tilted over, revealing below it a fine cist 3 feet long, 2 feet deep, and 1 foot 6 inches at the one end, and 1 foot 10 inches at the other or eastern end. The cavity was quite full of a rich dark mould, which was dug out with care. At the bottom, in the western end, was a very finely ornamented "food vessel urn."

This urn (fig. 2) stands 5 inches in height and  $5\frac{3}{4}$  inches in diameter across the mouth. The lip is bevelled inwardly and also to a less extent outwardly, and the surface on both bevels is ornamented with parallel oblique lines made by a comb-like instrument. The collar,

or hollow moulding between the brim and the shoulder, is decorated with seven closely set rows of similar markings running horizontally round the circumference. The projection of the shoulder itself is marked with a double row of indentations as if made with the end of a small twig or stem. Below this is a band,  $1\frac{1}{4}$  inches in width, filled with a pattern formed of lozenge-shaped spaces in the centre, each surrounded by five closely set lines of comb-like markings arranged round the central lozenge and parallel to its sides. This band of lozenge-shaped ornament is bounded on the lower border by a double row of indentations similar to those on the upper side. From this border the lower part of the urn tapers gradually to a flat bottom of 3 inches in diameter. The tapering lower part is completely covered by zigzag rows of comb-like markings set parallel to each other, and less than a quarter of an inch apart.

This urn was filled with the same rich mould as the cist itself contained. The examination, as carefully made as was possible in the time at the disposal of the party, did not reveal any other object besides the urn. The sides of the cist were smooth and well formed, and the top edges square and straight. Its position in the knoll was on the summit, and before the outline was broken by the quarry this cist would be near the centre. The stone cover is of whinstone, irregular in form, and measuring 4 feet 6 inches long by an average width of 2 feet 10 inches; its thickness will average 10 inches. The upper side was lumpy and uneven, and bore traces of exposure and weathering through long ages, but the under surface was smooth and even, almost straight.

The result of the day's exploration is that the green knoll, with its striking outline, and carefully formed encircling terrace, is now known to be a British burial mound. Close beside it runs the line of ancient roadway, of Catrail type, descending from the great Fort on Longcroft Hill, and connecting it with the numerous forts on the hills around.