

## II.

NOTICE OF THE DISCOVERY OF A BRONZE-AGE CIST AND URN IN THE WEST LINKS, NORTH BERWICK. BY JAMES EDWARD CREE, F.S.A. SCOT., AND J. S. RICHARDSON. WITH NOTES ON THE BONES FOUND IN THE CIST. BY J. FRANK CROMBIE, M.D.

While workmen were engaged in forming a new bunker on the West Links, to the north of the disused quarry which forms a hazard on the approach to the sixth hole, they uncovered a short cist containing the remains of a skeleton and an urn. The following morning, as early as possible after the discovery was reported, a careful and thorough examination of the cist and ground in the near vicinity was made, and drawings prepared on the spot from measurements.

Unfortunately, at the time of the discovery the bones were disturbed and the urn removed. It appears, from statements made by the green-keeper and workmen under his charge, that there was no lid to the cist; however, it is within the bounds of possibility that there had been one, which would have been removed, without attracting any special attention, immediately previous to the discovery of the nature of the find.

The formation of the ground seemed to indicate that of an artificial mound, the cist lying at the south edge of this mound and at a distance of 100 yards from high-water level. Formed partly of flat stone slabs, it measured 36 inches long, 23 inches broad, and 16 inches deep. The floor was at a depth of 36 inches from the surface level of the ground immediately over it. The long axis ran practically east and west. This is worthy of notice, as in all previous cases in the surrounding district the long axis of such burials points to the north-east or north.

The following references to the numbers shown on the accompanying plan and section (fig. 1) will explain the relative positions of the cist and its contents and associated remains better than any verbal description :—

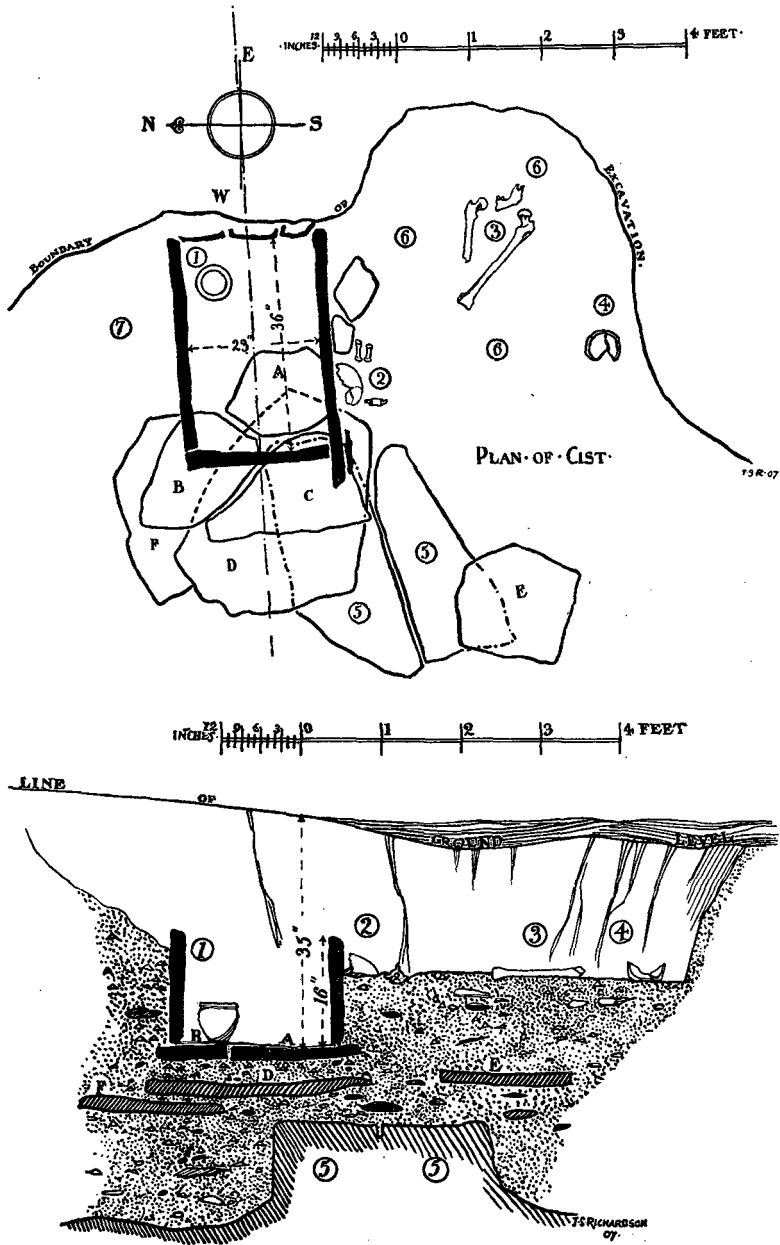


Fig. 1. Plan and Section of Cist in West Links, North Berwick. (By J. S. Richardson.)

1. Urn.
  2. Portion of skull and other human bones (skeleton No. 2).
  3. Femurs, portion of human jaw (probably skeleton No. 2).
  4. Portions of urn, No. 2.
  5. Bed rock.
  6. Split animal, bird, and fish bones, also shells of edible species.
  7. Shells of the edible species.
- A, B, C. Flat stones forming part of floor of cist.  
 D. Larger flat stone below former.  
 E. Flat stone on level with D ; position 16 inches to south.  
 F. Flat stone below D.

Firstly, the deposit in the bottom of the cist was removed and riddled ; it contained quantities of limpet shell. Then the ground round the cist to the width of about 18 inches was trenched and treated in a like manner, and resulted in the discovery of portions of a skull and other human bones belonging to a second skeleton. These were lying almost on a level with the top of the cist, and close to the slab which formed its south side. After this soil had been examined to the level of the floor, the north and west sides were removed, thus laying bare the entire floor. The east side of the cist did not consist of a slab, but only a few small stones that formed a lining. The floor for the most part consisted of gravel, but at the west end three flat stones, A, B, and C, were laid. On these being removed, at a depth of 4 inches below them, there was a larger flat stone, D ; on a level with it, at a distance of 16 inches to the south, lay another such stone, E ; and below stones B and D was still another, F. Below them all, at a depth of 24 inches from the floor of the cist, was the bed rock, with an uperop of a foot which lay immediately to the south-west of the burial.

The fact of the stones A, B, C, D, and F being laid in such a manner tends to confirm the supposition that the large mound in which the cist lay was an artificial one. Unfortunately, the east end of the cist lay just on the finished boundary of the bunker, and an examination in this direction was impossible. However, on finding the ends of other human bones at a distance of 24 inches to the south of the cist, we were permitted to dig a few feet into the bank. This resulted in bringing to light two femurs, besides other human, split animal and

bird bones. There were also quantities of shells of the edible species intermingled in the soil with the former. All were found at a depth ranging from 26 inches to the surface level.

Portions of another pottery vessel were discovered at a distance of 42 inches from the centre of the south side of the cist.

During the past years similar burials have been found within a radius of 200 yards. One containing an ornamented urn of the drinking-cup type is recorded and figured in vol. xxxiv. of the *Proceedings*, page 123, and another containing an urn of a similar type, only of much inferior workmanship, was discovered two years ago. This one was recovered in an entire condition, but was smashed to atoms through the builder conveying it home amongst tools in a tool-chest.

JAMES S. RICHARDSON.

On Monday evening, the 14th January 1907, the head greenkeeper of the North Berwick Links brought me an urn in fragments, which, he informed me, he and his men had found that afternoon in the cist already described above by Mr Richardson.

The following morning I accompanied Major Kirkpatrick, D.S.O., Secretary of the New Club—the lessees of the Links,—to the spot where the interment had been found, and we had not been long there when we were joined by Mr J. S. Richardson, who kindly gave us his valuable assistance.

His account of the position and measurements of the cist is quite complete, so I shall pass on to give a brief description of the urn, and other matters not touched upon by him.

The remains, when seen by me, were, unfortunately, not in their original position. They had been gathered into a pile in the north-east corner of the cist; but, from the information supplied to me by the men who found the cist, there is little doubt but that the skeleton had been lying on its right side. Corroborating this, I may state that the left side of the skull was in a much worse state of preservation

than the right, consequent on its having been more exposed. The remains were in the usual contracted position, with the head at the east end and facing north.

As to the position of the urn, in relation to the skeleton, I must



Fig. 2. Urn from the Cist at West Links, North Berwick.

also rely on the information supplied to me by the greenkeepers, who, however, took particular note of it when found. It was lying on its side, with the mouth to the west, and must have been within a few inches of the skull, and immediately in front of it. It contained only some dark-coloured earth.

The urn (fig. 2) is of more than ordinary interest, as it partakes of

some of the characteristics of both the beaker and the food-vessel types. It is of fine texture, and of a good red colour, being well and evenly fired, and shows a blue-black in fracture. It measures  $5\frac{7}{8}$  inches in height, and  $4\frac{7}{16}$  inches at the mouth, inside diameter. The bottom is 3 inches in diameter, and the rim is slightly everted. The ornamentation extends from the rim downwards for  $2\frac{3}{16}$  inches, terminating just below the shoulder, and consists of a simple incised device. Four sets of double grooves run round the vessel, and from these diagonal lines extend, forming a neat herring-bone pattern.

In the earth in the cist a number of whelk and limpet shells were found.

Lying almost against the outside of the south wall of the cist, but at a level about 10 inches above the bottom of it, we found other human remains, including portions of another skull, a femur, etc., together with some animal bones and limpet and whelk shells lying all among them. As to the human bones, some were burnt and some were unburnt, from which one may conclude that burials had taken place, both by inhumation and incineration, before the interment in the cist took place, and that this may account for the disturbed condition in which the former were found.

Some time ago, I sent some of the bones found, other than the portions of the skull and femur already referred to, to Dr T. H. Bryce, F.S.A. Scot., of Glasgow, and he has kindly favoured me with the following report on the same:—

1. A human metatarsal, unburnt.
  2. Fragments of a human temporal bone, burnt.
  3. Fragments of burnt bones, probably, but not certainly, human.
  4. Fragments of ox bone (vertebræ, astragalus), unburnt, along with two ox molar teeth.
  5. Fragments of a wing-bone of medium-sized bird.
- The ox and bird bones may be fortuitous.

Almost due south of the centre of the cist, and at a distance of 3 feet

6 inches from it, we also found a few portions of another urn. This vessel is much inferior in texture to the food-vessel found in the cist. It has been imperfectly fired, is of a dull brown colour, is very friable, and the clay of which it was made contained several small stones. The ornamentation seems to have been of a very simple character, and consists of a series of thumb-nail indentations, forming a chevron pattern.

Mr and Mrs Hamilton Ogilvy, the proprietors of the estate of Archerfield, on which the cist was discovered, have kindly authorised me to present the urn to the Society on their behalf.

JAMES EDW. CREE.

NOTES ON THE BONES FOUND IN THE CIST. By  
J. FRANK CROMBIE, M.D.

These bones were all more or less soft and inclined to crumble away. The only entire bones found were the right and left astragalus and some of the metatarsal and metacarpal bones and phalanges.

The skull, which was in fragments, when pieced together, apparently belonged to the mesaticephalic type.

The bones of the skull were completely ossified, the lines of cleavage not corresponding to the lines of the sutures. From this fact, as also from the absence of muscular ridges of the long bones, and the somewhat rounded angle of the inferior maxilla, the bones are probably those of a female beyond middle life.

Many of the cervical, dorsal, and lumbar vertebræ, including the 1st, 2nd, and 7th cervical, were found in a good state of preservation. Only a few small fragments of the ribs were noticed.

Portions of all the long bones were noticeable as being slender and small for an adult. The lower ends of humeri and the upper ends of both ulnæ were found, as well as the upper two-thirds of the left femur.

This was completely ossified, small, and with the neck forming an obtuse angle with the shaft.

Fragments only of the innominate bones were found.

A portion of the inferior maxilla showed the angle to be slightly rounded, and the muscular ridges not well marked.

Several bicuspid, canine, and molar teeth did not show very marked signs of attrition, except one molar, which, as the result probably of caries, had been worn down almost to the gum. Some incisor teeth which were found were normal in character and showed the usual sharp edges.

The two astragalus bones found were both small, compared with the average adult of the present day.

As to the human bones found outside the cist, a very few fragments, chiefly bones of the skull, were brought to light. These were much more worn away and softer than the bones found in the cist. The bones of the skull had been ossified, but had separated at the sutures, and were probably those of an adult in the prime of life.

J. FRANK CROMBIE.