

III.

NOTICE OF THE EXPLORATION OF A CAIRN AT CORAPHIN GLEN,
ARGYLESHIRE, CONTAINING A CIST WITH A CINERARY URN.
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TOWN.

This cairn is situated on the bank of the Balnabraid Water, about 5 miles south of Campbeltown on the Leaward side-road. It is 150 yards from the sea, and 50 yards from what is known as the Coraphin Brig. The cairn is 20 yards long by 7 yards broad, and 5 feet 6 inches in height. It is composed of loose stones and boulders of various sizes gathered in the vicinity. In its original state it must have been much larger than it is at present. This is seen from the amount of debris fallen towards the water side.

The cairn has been under the observation of the finder of the urn (Mr Donald M'Queen) for quite a long time, but only on the 21st of October 1910 was his search rewarded by results. On removing some loose stones, he saw the bottom of an urn; then, on coming home, he reported the place and circumstance to Mr James Lothian, Local Factor to the Duke of Argyll. So, on the 28th October, Mr M'Queen and myself, in company with Mr T. L. Galloway, C.E., his wife, and their son, arrived at the Braid Water. We commenced the work of excavation on the west side, and, after some labour, a kind of circular chamber was found, about 27 inches in diameter and 30 inches deep, and covered by a slab of sandstone. In this cavity was the cinerary

urn (fig. 1) inverted, and containing calcined human bones. On the ground round its mouth stones were tightly packed. After clearing the front and sides preparatory to having the urn removed, I took its dimensions, and found that it measured $15\frac{3}{4}$ inches by $11\frac{1}{4}$ inches; from



Fig. 1. Cinerary Urn found in a Cairn at Coraphin Glen. ($\frac{1}{2}$)

a little past its centre it tapers to its bottom, where it is $4\frac{3}{8}$ inches. It is ornamented by a band of five impressed parallel lines round the lip, $2\frac{3}{8}$ inches; then a band of obliquely crossing lines, $2\frac{3}{8}$ inches; then five fluted lines, 2 inches; then a plain space, $2\frac{3}{8}$ inches; then five other fluted lines where it begins to taper towards the bottom,

which is flat. The vessel is made of clay, and must have been made in two operations—that is, the body, and then an outside covering and the ornamentation, while soft. The shape, material, and ornamentation point to its being of the Bronze period. No implements of any kind were found in or among the debris.

In line with the urn, and a little to the south, we found a cist containing calcined bones. This was made of four sandstone slabs profusely covered with rain-prints, $1\frac{3}{4}$ inches thick. The cist measured inside 20 inches by 12 inches by 12 inches deep. The bottom consisted of gravel from the seashore. As in the case of the urn, no tool or implement was seen. At about the same distance to the north, we found another cist, made of rough, flat stones, but having no bones; but I may remark that the earth in the bottom was very black. The cists lay as to their longitudinal position, east and west.

The tumulus is beautifully situated, facing the Sound of Kilbrannan, having in view Arran and Ailsa Craig, and in the distance the Ayrshire coast. The coast-line here is very rugged. Auchinhoan Head lies to the north, with its caves, one of which has the odour of sanctity, in its having been associated with St Kieran, one of the apostles of Kintyre, and still bears his name.