

## III.

REPORT OF THE EXCAVATION OF TWO CISTS FOUND IN MAKING  
A GOLF COURSE BETWEEN LONGNIDDRY AND PORT SETON.  
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A golf course was in process of being laid out last summer on sandy ground formerly covered with wood which lies on either side of Longniddry Dean and stretches for a mile or thereby to the south of the coast road from Cockenzie to Aberlady. The original surface swells here and there in slight mounds, ancient sand-dunes, such as one is accustomed to meet with along a low-lying coast-line.

In the spring of 1915 a cist was discovered towards the east end of the wood, as already reported in our *Proceedings*.<sup>1</sup> On 30th June of this year, having been kindly informed by Mr Connor, Lord Wemyss's factor, that another cist had been located, I went down and made an inspection of it. The site lay about a quarter of a mile to the west of that where the previous discovery had been made, and some 40 yards in from the road, near the centre of a slight ridge running parallel to the coast-line.

The cist was a small one, formed of comparatively light stones, which had, owing no doubt to their being placed in sand, somewhat shifted their position. The covering slab, 2 feet or thereby below the present surface, measured 2 feet 7 inches in length by 1 foot 8 inches in breadth. It no longer rested directly on the ends and sides of the structure, and lay with its main axis north and south (magnetic).

Within the cist lay a skeleton in well-preserved condition, though the skull had been broken by the falling in of the slab at the north end, while further dilapidation had crushed the feet bones. The skeleton, in a flexed position, lay partially on its left side turned to the east, the face turned somewhat upwards and the limbs drawn up to the left. Only one tooth remained in the skull, and that very much worn. The skull was pronounced by Professor Bryce to be that of an aged individual, who had survived the loss of teeth long enough to permit of an absorption of the alveolar margins on the jaws and the disappearance of the sockets.

The original length of the cist, judging from the skeleton, had been about 3 feet 4 inches.

No relics whatever were found to indicate the period of the inhumation.

On 6th July I received intimation from Mr Hart, foreman in charge at the golf course, that another cist had been discovered, and on Monday the 9th I again visited the place.

<sup>1</sup> Vol. I. p. 150.

At a point where there had been a sand-dune, and where a bunker was in course of construction, some 40 yards to the east of the farm road leading from Seton Mains to the coast road, and some 60 yards inwards from the latter, the cist had been partially uncovered (fig. 1). The covering slab, the east side, and the south end were exposed. The covering slab, which was oblong and almost rectangular, was of sandstone, and measured 5 feet 5 inches in length by 2 feet 6 inches in breadth and from 6 to 8 inches in thickness. It lay almost horizontally, but was not supported by the slabs forming the outline of the grave which merely seemed to rest against it at their upper ends.



Fig. 1. Cist on Longniddry Golf Course.

The main axis pointed to 30 degrees east of north (magnetic). Four slabs, varying in length from 7 inches to 1 foot 11 inches, and in height from 18 to 20 inches, formed the east side and extended the full length of the grave cover. At the south end, one only, 1 foot 8½ inches in length, remained upright and in position. A double row of four slabs each formed the west side, while those which had formed the north end had apparently disappeared.

On the covering slab being raised there was found towards the south end, extending over an area of about 3 feet by 2, a deposit of sand, some 4 inches thick, blackened and immixed with charcoal, and with burnt bones scattered throughout it. Interposed between this deposit and the covering slab lay a small slab measuring 1 foot 8 inches by 2 feet. The

circumstance that the cover lay directly on the burial deposit and within the lines of enclosing stones indicated, I think, that after the interment had taken place, owing to the great weight of the slab, it had pressed out the walls and settled down directly on the bottom, and the small slab found beneath it may in reality have been one of the stones from the south end, as the existing stone there was not of sufficient length to extend the whole breadth.

On the level with the deposit, and chiefly noticeable along the east side, were found in the cist a number of brightly coloured red pebbles from 3 to 5 inches in length, evidently specially selected from the beach on account of their attractive appearance, and neatly placed point inwards from the edge.

No relics were found, but a small quantity of tawny-coloured earth, at one spot only, may have represented an urn long since crushed to powder by the weight of the superincumbent cover. Among the pieces of charcoal from the deposit of discoloured sand was picked up one-half of a hazel nut.

Beyond revealing that they had been those of an adult, the bones were too fragmentary to enable any conclusion to be drawn from them.

I have pleasure in acknowledging my indebtedness to Professor Bryce for examining these scanty human remains.