

IV.

STONE CIST FOUND AT KILDINNY, NEAR FORTEVIOT, PERTHSHIRE.

BY HENRY COATES, F.S.A. SCOT.

On 16th November 1917 a stone cist was discovered in a stubble field on the farm of Kildinny, in the parish of Forteviot, tenanted by Mr Peter M'Arthur. The site is 480 yards WSW. of Kildinny farm-steading, 14 yards north of the road leading from the village of Forteviot to the farm, and about half a mile east of the Parish Church of Forteviot. The foreman on the farm, William Bennet, when preparing a potato pit, struck what appeared to be rock surface about 5 inches below the surface of the ground. Having previously come upon the same obstruction when ploughing the field in spring, he resolved to investigate it further. On removing the soil, he found it to be a large slab of stone, resting on four other slabs placed on edge, the whole forming a chamber, the interior of which was entirely filled with soil. He next removed one of the end stones, and began to remove the soil from the chamber. In doing so he exposed a human skull, lying in the south corner of the cist, with the face uppermost. His spade, unfortunately, struck the skull, and broke it into several fragments. He then replaced the skull in its original position in the corner of the cist, and covered it with one or two thin pieces of sandstone which he had found in the soil inside the cist.

On the following day, Saturday, 17th November, I visited the spot, along with Mr Thomas M'Laren, Depute Burgh Surveyor, Perth, and Mr J. J. Simpson, factor on Dupplin estate, when we made a thorough examination of the cist, its contents, and surroundings. Photographs were taken of the cist, and also of the skull, before anything was disturbed, and careful measurements were made by Mr M'Laren. The longer axis of the cist was from NE. to SW. The interior measurement at the top was 2 feet 10 inches in length by 2 feet 2½ inches in width. The cover stone was an irregular slab measuring 3 feet 7 inches in length by 2 feet 6 inches in width, and 6 inches thick. Its upper surface had been about 5 inches below the general level of the ground. As will be seen from the plan, the cover stone was not sufficient to cover the chamber completely, vacancies being left at the corners. The foreman had noticed that the west corner in particular had not been covered. It is possible that the thin pieces of sandstone already referred to, which were found in the soil inside the cist, may have been used to cover these vacant spaces. The stones are all roughly square blocks of

the Old Red Sandstone of the district, varying in thickness from 3 to 9 inches. The soil found in the interior was a reddish-brown sandy loam, similar to the soil of the surrounding field. Scattered through it, however, were a number of pebbles, some rounded and others angular.

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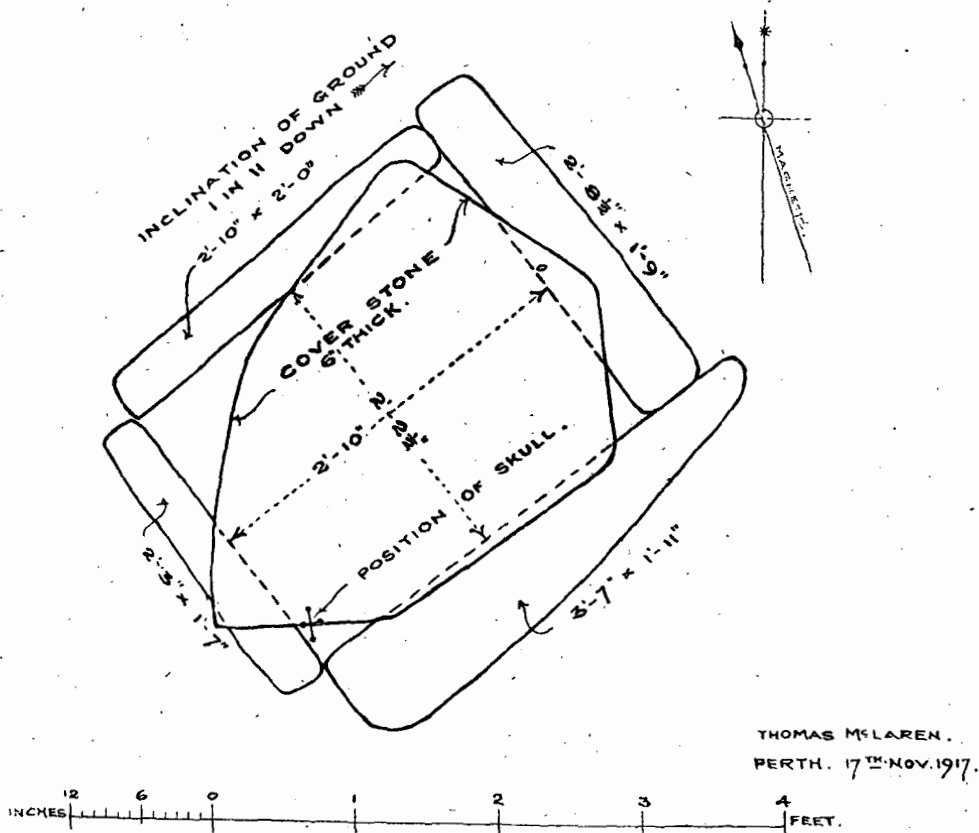


Fig. 1.

The skull was lying close into the south corner, facing NNW., the top of it being 1 foot 6 inches below the cover. Along with it were found seventeen loose teeth, and one or two fragments of the jaw, but no other bones. After carefully removing the skull, the soil in the bottom of the cist, as well as that which had been taken out by the foreman, was carefully sifted and examined. Nothing, however, was found in it, beyond the pebbles already referred to. About 2 feet below

the cover stone a layer of gravel was reached, which was found to be hard and difficult to excavate. At a depth of 4 feet 9 inches beneath the surface of the ground a deposit of clay was met with, which was probably the Boulder Clay.

It is interesting to note that the road leading from Forteviot village to the site of the cist is known as the "Kirk Brae," and there is a tradition amongst the old residents that a church once stood near this spot. The name "Kildinny" would seem to support this tradition.

Both the cist and the skull have been removed to the Antiquarian Museum in Perth.
