

IV.

NOTES ON THE DISCOVERY OF A CIST AT STAIRHAVEN, WIGTOWNSHIRE. BY THE REV. R. S. G. ANDERSON, B.D., F.S.A. SCOT.

In the *Inventory of Ancient Monuments for Wigtownshire*, No. 329 notes that "on the W. side of Barnsallie Burn, about 100 yards above where it enters the sea, and on the edge of a bank 15 feet in height, are the indefinite remains of a small circular or oval construction, possibly a hut circle, measuring over all some 30 feet by 24 feet, partially broken away on the E. side."

A further fall of the bank has revealed that this construction had been used as a burial place, and that it is probably a dilapidated cairn. In 1917 attention was drawn to the end of a large stone projecting from the bank, and examination proved it to be a rough slab, about 5 feet by $2\frac{1}{2}$ feet by $\frac{3}{4}$ foot, superimposed on a small cist some 20 inches by 14 inches by 12 inches, in measurement. The burial may have been a secondary one, as it appears to have been made considerably towards the E. margin of the cairn. But a slight examination nearer to the centre showed no traces of any other.

The cairn stands on a small knoll about 100 yards above high-water mark and at an altitude of about 25 feet. It is interesting to note that it is situated at the verge of the 25-foot beach, and that the quantity of small waterworn stones used in its construction point to this beach having been laid under tribute.

The cist had been sunk in the ground and was orientated practically E. and W. In the N.W. corner of it, there were found a few fragments of an urn of the food-vessel type, and on the floor a small quantity of burnt human bones, with three small quartz pebbles. On the top of the large stone cover a yellow flint scraper was lying.

The fragments of the urn provided almost a complete section, and were sufficient to show that it had been simply and somewhat rudely yet effectively decorated. The main decoration seems to have been produced by means of two stamps, one with six teeth, the other with nine—the teeth being small close-set ovals with flattened ends.

Beneath a projecting rim, the neck of the urn has been decorated with a narrow band, half an inch or so in breadth, running between two pairs of fluted rings and covered with vertically-placed impressions from the six-toothed stamp—the rows so close as to give a honeycomb effect to the appearance. On the shoulder of the urn immediately below this is a much broader band with (probably at two or three points only) the clay

pinched up to form in high relief one chevron inverted above another. Running round this band also, and even over the raised ornament, has been impressed with the nine-toothed stamp a triple row of chevrons inverted over a similar row. Under two fluted rings runs a third band similar in width and decoration to the first. The fourth band has been somewhat broader, and has contained a double row of the chevron ornament—the impressions made by the larger stamp. Between single fluted rings, the fifth band, of about the same breadth as the first and third, has an arrangement of detached and more acute-angled chevrons made by the shorter stamp; the chevrons on their sides, and the apex of each fitted into the figure in front. The lowest band—the sixth—is slightly broader than the fourth. Its ornament is a triple series of the chevron design made by the nine-toothed stamp, the series being inverted in relation to that of the fourth band. The artistic effect of the whole is achieved by a simple combination of vertical, inclined, and horizontal lines, together with a pleasing balance in spacing and adaptation to the object decorated. It would seem from an angular deviation of the lowest ring to make room for the apex of the chevron below, and from an overlapping of the fourth band ornament on the ring under it, that the artist began his decorating at the lowest section and worked upwards.

I am much indebted to the Rev. R. Ingles, M.A., of Glenluce, who was present at the exploration, and who has preserved the cist with the various relics found, for acquainting me with the details of the discovery and affording me facilities for examining the objects discovered. I am much indebted also to Professor T. H. Bryce for the appended report.

REPORT ON THE BONES. By Professor T. H. BRYCE.

They form a typical deposit of burnt human bones from a burial after cremation. The incineration is complete, and the fragments are of small size. From the character of certain of the fragments it can be inferred that the individual was of adult age, but nothing can be stated regarding sex or stature. There is none of the green staining which is often to be noticed in cases where an object of bronze has been in contact with the bones.