

#### 10. A SHORT CIST AT ABERNETHY, PERTHSHIRE.

A short cist was found on 16th May 1947 when a trench for a telephone cable was being laid along the southern side of the road between Abernethy and Newburgh. Thanks are due to Messrs Robert Patterson & Sons, Airdrie, the contractors, for leaving the cist till it could be examined and removing the urn to safety, and to the Post Office telephone manager, Dundee, for notifying the Inspector of Ancient Monuments.

The site is half a mile north-east of Abernethy, where the road runs along a slight ridge in the undulating slopes that lie between the hills and the flats beside the River Earn, and more exactly at spot height 129 half-way between Pitcurran and Elmbank (O.S. 6" Map (1901), Perthshire. Sheet No. XCI. N.W.). The top of the massive coverstone had not been disturbed by the roadmakers, though it came close up to the surface of the grass verge. The stone was rather irregularly shaped and measured 3 feet by 2 feet 2 inches, with a maximum thickness of 17 inches and a minimum of 9 inches. Its under-surface was, however, quite smooth and overlapped the sides of the cist considerably. The cist had been internally only some 16 by 23 inches. The magnetic bearing of the long axis was 50° east. The north-west side was formed by a slab 23 inches high, 21 inches broad, and 9 inches thick. The slab on the south-east, 25 by 23 inches, was only 2½ inches thick, and was supplemented by another 2 inches thick which lay flush against it outside. The end slabs seem to have been formed of two halves of a single tabular boulder with rounded sides, split to get a flat surface. The dimensions were 23½ by 16 inches and 25 by 16 inches, with a maximum thickness at one side in each case of about 6 inches. All slabs were of sandstone.

The cist had been set in the natural gravel subsoil containing small boulders and sand. The bottom of the cist had been sandy, and about the centre a small food-vessel lay on its side. There were no traces of the skeleton. The vessel is only 4½ inches high with a rim diameter of 4½ inches (Pl. XXII, 2). It is vase-shaped with rather thick walls, buff-coloured on the surface. The inside had been rather rough and the outside very smooth, but some of the surface has flaked off where it was in contact with the ground, and over most of the remainder the

<sup>1</sup> Information from Mr Gunn.

<sup>2</sup> R.C.H.M., *Midlothian*, p. xxi.

original finish has decayed. Two low raised mouldings encircle it  $\frac{3}{4}$  and  $1\frac{3}{4}$  inches below the rim. Twelve horizontal rows of close-set impressions of short lengths of whipped cord cover the body, sloping in alternate directions, and there are two rows on the flat sloping rim.

Perth County Council has kindly agreed to its being placed in the National Museum.

R. B. K. STEVENSON, *Keeper*.