

##### 5. BEAKER BURIAL AT KILMORY KNAP.

In 1956 sherds of a beaker were discovered in a field at Kilmory Knap by Mr Angus MacTaggart and his relatives. They were sent to the National Museum, and I have since then investigated the matter, recovered further sherds and collected from the MacTaggarts details of the circumstances of the original discovery.

The site is in the field at Kilmory Knap whose western boundary is the Kilmory

Burn and whose eastern boundary is immediately below the main road (NR 702749). It slopes gradually from the road towards the burn. The site is 10 yds. E. of the field dyke adjoining the burn, and exactly 70 yds. SW. of the projecting angle of a barn higher up in the field. Where the pottery was found, the slope of the ground becomes more abrupt before flattening out, whilst behind (*i.e.* E. of) the site the profile of the field is rounded and may owe something to human effort. But as long ago as 150 years, according to Mr Dougall MacTaggart who is eighty-nine and a native of the place, the field was ploughed by a farmer named MacIntyre in defiance of a local tradition that this place should never be disturbed. The immediate outcome of his ploughing was the finding of "urns, which were sent to Edinburgh" (where nothing is now known of them).

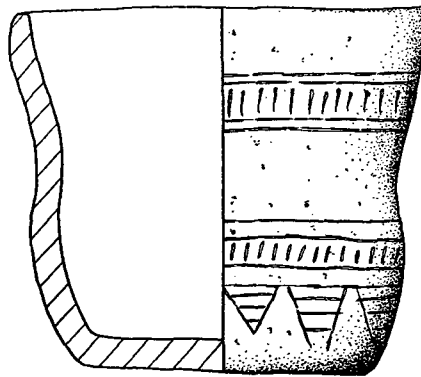


Fig. 5.

Mr MacTaggart's suspicions were aroused by seeing the upper edge of a slab of stone showing above the grass. He dug around it and found the sherds lying broken about nine inches away from the south end of this slab, and about 5 ins. below the surface. These sherds disintegrated further on being picked up. His digging revealed the slab standing more or less vertically, orientated NNE.-SSW., measuring 27 ins. long by 14-17 ins. wide (*i.e.* deep) and thickening from 2 ins. at its south end to 4 ins. at its north end. It would appear to be in its original position. Leaning against this slab was another smaller slab, not obviously its fellow. This measured 18 ins. long, 14 ins. at its greatest width and thickening from 2½ ins. at its south end to 4½ ins. at its north end. It was lying so that its bottom edge was parallel to the main axis of the longer slab and 10 ins. distant (to the W.), and its top edge rested against the flat, inner side of the long slab. It is doubtful if this smaller slab was *in situ*. Between the two slabs, and extending beyond them to the N. a little, was a layer of rounded pebbles, many of them quartz, which had been laid as a floor about 3 or 4 ins. in depth. Owing to the digging that had taken place before investigation was possible, accurate details of this bed of pebbles were not to be had. Only a part of it was undisturbed, but it was firmly packed, and Mr MacTaggart stated that the layer had continued nearly the whole length of the long slab and 10 ins. at least out from (*i.e.* W. of) it.

In investigating, the soil thrown out in the earlier digging was riddled and yielded several more sherds. The irregular hole around the slabs was slightly enlarged in order to trace further pieces of beaker or other grave-goods, so that

the area excavated measured 4 ft. 6 ins. by 3 ft. 6 ins. and down to the deb of pebbles.

Though incomplete, sufficient sherds of the beaker survived for it to be reconstructed (fig. 5). It is of a rather squat form, with a very slack S-profile,  $3\frac{1}{4}$  ins. high,  $4\frac{1}{4}$  ins. across the mouth and 3 ins. across the base. It is decorated on the neck and shoulder by a pair of double lines with a row of more or less vertical jabs between, below the lower are a row of pendant hatched triangles which reach almost to the base. Though the pattern is neatly arranged, the lines are executed by a series of rather irregular incisions, varying in depth and not always exactly connecting. The ware is hard, pink to buff on the surface, and with a number of small dark grits. Sherds of a more shapely S-profile beaker, with a similar arrangement of horizontal lines, jabs and pendant triangles, was found at Denbeath, Fife<sup>1</sup> (EQ 587 in the N.M.A.).

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