

7. FOOD VESSEL CIST AT DOUNE, PERTHSHIRE.

Quarry operations by the Springbank Sand and Gravel Co. on the large gravel ridge 150 yds. N. of the railway station at Doune, Perthshire (fig. 7, Nat. Grid ref. 27/724020) revealed the remains of a stone cist on 4th March 1954. Unfortunately, only a portion of the cist was preserved, the southern section having fallen down the quarry face with the roots of a large tree stump dislodged by bulldozing. Mr Rentoul, Manager of the Company, informed the Ministry of Works of the discovery, and the following day the author visited the site and recovered the relics described below, which Lord Doune has kindly donated to the National Museum of Antiquities.²

The cist, orientated NE.-SW., lay at a depth of 3½ ft. from the surface of the gravel ridge. The portion still remaining *in situ* measured 2 ft. in length and consisted of an end and two lateral upright sandstone slabs, 18 ins. high, with a cover slab 22 ins. wide. The floor of the cist was natural gravel. The disturbed nature of the gravel above the cist showed that the latter had been inserted in a specially prepared pit slightly wider than the cist on the east side.

Fragments of the skull and upper jaw of a child found on the floor of the cist showed that the rite was inhumation. Dr L. H. Wells of the Department of Anatomy, University of Edinburgh, examined the fragments and reports as follows:

“The upper jaw shows that all the milk-teeth were present, and the first molar of the permanent series was also fully erupted. This indicates an age certainly between five and eight years, and most probably six to seven. The fact that the parts of the occipital bone were fully united also indicates an age of at least five years and probably more. Not enough of the skull can be reconstructed, but it gives the impression of having been short but not particularly broad—quite a reasonable Bronze Age skull.”

¹ *P.S.A.S.* (1929-30), 31-2, figs. 4, 7 and 8. For these now see *P.P.S.*, 1958, 227-9.

² *P.S.A.S.*, LXXXIX, 458.

Finds.

In the innermost portion of the cist, presumably close to the head, a small food vessel and a miniature stone axe were discovered, while fragments of a larger vessel were recovered from the broken edge of the cist and from the quarry scree.

Food Vessel (fig. 8). EQ 608.—This is of the type classified by Childe¹ as Bfh, most conveniently described as Beaker—Food Vessel—Hybrids. It is a small vessel 3·4 ins. in height, slightly carinated, with an internal rim diameter

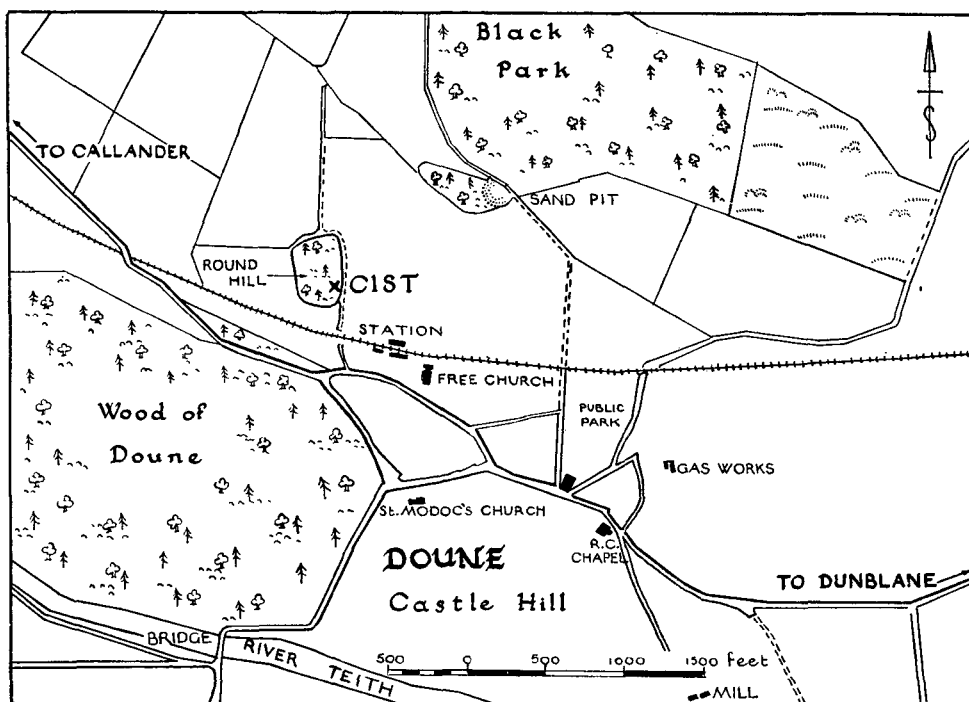


Fig. 7.

of 3 ins. and base diameter of 2·5 ins. The ware is brown and friable with large grits. Decoration consists of slanting whipped cord impressions covering the body.

Larger Vessel (fig. 8). EQ 609.—Six fragments allowed the partial reconstruction of a larger vessel, which must have originally exceeded 8 ins. in height, though the base is now missing. The diameter of the hollow-bevelled rim is 7 ins. It is of a friable brown ware, 0·42 in. thick, containing large grits, and with a black core. Two slight cordons occur, 1·5 ins. below the rim, the wall of the pot being almost vertical above these and contracting below. Trace of one stop-ridge remains in the groove between them. Decoration consists of two rows of deep triangular jabs on the internal rim bevel and slanting cord impressions between parallel

¹ V. G. Childe, *Scotland before the Scots*, 105.

lines on the outer bevel; above the groove the same slanting motif occurs between two sets of five horizontal lines. The groove zone carries four rows of triangular jabs, below which at least four groups of horizontal comb impressions, with slanting line, occurred to the base.

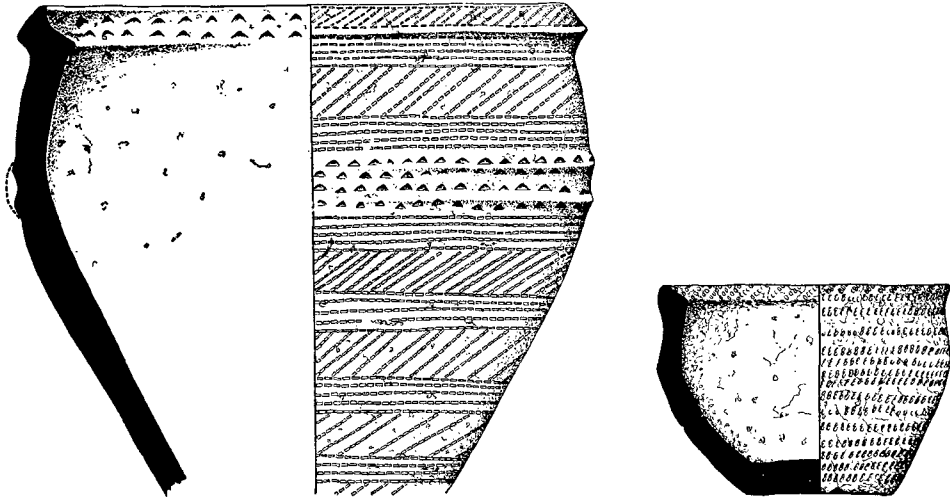


Fig. 8.

Miniature Battle-Axe (fig. 9). EQ 610.—This miniature battle-axe, of much-weathered granitic stone, measures $2.6 \times 1.3 \times 1.1$ ins., with a straight, central perforation. The upper and lower surfaces between the double blades are concave.

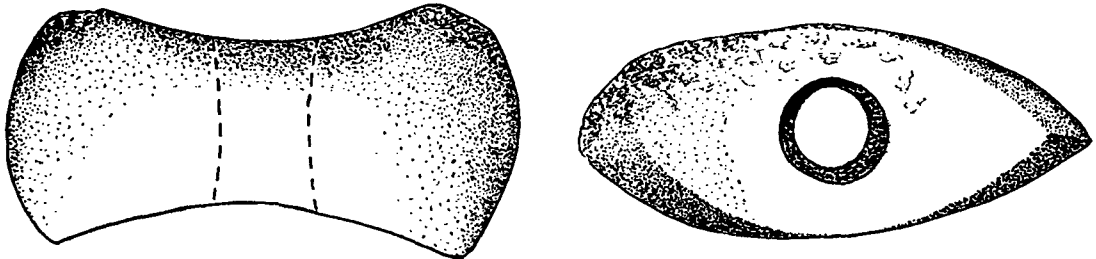


Fig. 9.

This assemblage of finds from a food vessel cist is unique in Scotland, so far as is known. The small battle-axe is of particular interest in its association with a child burial. Two miniature battle-axes have recently been recorded from an early prehistoric house site in Shetland.¹ In one of these² the central perforation had only just begun, while the second,³ of which only half survived, has an hour-glass perforation. Another miniature axe⁴ is known from Orkney, while at Glenhead Farm, in the vicinity of the present find, the excavation of a cairn

¹ *P.S.A.S.*, LXXXIX, 392-3.

² HD 1025.

³ N.M.A. Cat. No. HD 1024, measuring $2.25 \times 1.25 \times 1.25$ ins.

⁴ *P.S.A.S.*, LXVIII, 19, N.M.A. Cat. No. AH 196.

yielded a small hammer or pestle-shaped mace head of veined quartzite (length 2.25 ins., diameter 1.25 ins.) together with a food vessel of B1 type.¹ The association of a small axe-hammer with the ashes of a child about nine years old is recorded in a cairn at Garthbeibio, Montgomeryshire,² which also yielded a food vessel. Another miniature axe is recorded from a cist, probably with inhumation, under a barrow at Llanrhian in Pembrokeshire.³

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