

## 9. CISTS NEAR TWEEDSMUIR.

In the middle of September 1939 a few loose bones led to the recognition of a cist which protruded at the edge of a knoll of terrace gravel above the flood-plain of the Tweed, 100 yards S.E. from Polmood Post Office, near Tweedsmuir, Peeblesshire, and just beside the main road to Moffat and the South. It proved to be a long cist of the type frequently found, particularly along the East Coast, and generally thought to be Early Medieval. The interest of this example is its occurrence in the heart of the southern uplands.

Mr Wilson, who lives at the Post Office nearby, informed Dr W. S. Crockett of Tweedsmuir, who kindly communicated with the Museum. To both thanks are also particularly due for having left the cist undisturbed pending fuller examination.

The grave sloped up toward the head, which was towards the south-west. There were three slabs along each of the long sides, with an extra slab outside the south-east. The south-west end slab was the highest of all, its top being 1 foot 4 inches above the bottom of the grave. The stone closing the north-east end had been lost owing to the exposure, and possibly there may have been a further couple of side stones at that end. The width varied from 1 foot to 1 foot 6 inches. There were four cover stones, about 10 inches below the present surface of the ground, one of which was no longer *in situ*. The cist was floored with six closely laid slabs, giving a length of almost 6 feet. A photograph was published in the *Scotsman*, 5th October 1939. The skeletal remains were very fragmentary, but Professor Low has kindly reported that they are probably those of a well-developed male of about 40 or 45 years of age. The collar bones, upper and lower parts of the back bone, some ribs, parts of the pelvis, head of the right femur, and the left shin bone lay undisturbed under an inch or so of earth, and showed that the body had been laid at full length on its back. Further, the right arm had been extended along the side and bits of the left lower arm survived to show that the left hand had lain in the lap. The skull had rolled down and lay on top of the right elbow, probably owing to disturbance by rodents. A fragment of what appeared to be cinder underlay the pelvis, and a few other fragments of the same material occurred in the cist.

While at Polmood I heard that a grave had been found some years ago at Woodend, Mossfennan. The fairly massive cover of a short cist is still visible

in a large artificially rounded mound on the edge of the flood-plain, 50 yards down the valley, and on the opposite side of the road, from the cottage of Woodend (Mr Moir). Several other similar burials, apparently in less well-constructed cists, had been found in the same mound. In the distance could be seen the mound on the other side of the Tweed nearer Drumelzier that was excavated by the late Mr J. H. Craw (*Proc. Soc. Ant. Scot.*, vol. lxxv, pp. 263 ff.).

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