

V.

NOTICES (1) OF THE DISCOVERY OF BRONZE AGE URNS ON THE BRAID HILLS; AND (2) OF THE DISCOVERY OF A CIST AND URN NEAR PORTPATRICK, WIGTOWNSHIRE. BY F. R. COLES, ASSISTANT KEEPER OF THE MUSEUM.

On Saturday, 13th May 1899, notice from the green-keeper having reached the Museum of the discovery of an urn on ground near the ninth hole of the golf course, I went out at once and secured the pieces which had been carefully put aside in Braid Hill Cottage. On the Monday following, I went out again, and, with the assistance of the green-keeper (who is much interested in this discovery and that of the cup-and-ring-marked boulder), made careful measurements, and left marks on adjacent rocks so as to be provided in the event of further discoveries with the means of ascertaining their exact relations to the present site.

As, owing to stress of weather, my former examination of this part of the hill was far from complete,¹ and as in course of time archaeological interest may probably deepen around it, this seems a fitting occasion for a more minute account.

Description of the Site.—The plateau (see Ground Plan, fig. 1) on which both the cup-and-ring-marked boulder and this urn have been found, extends for an area of, roughly speaking, about a quarter of a mile N.W. by S.E., and is 200 feet wide in parts. It lies entirely to the east of the quarry which is in the middle of the hill. From its northern edge there is a steep uneven slope down to the main valley; while above it, southwards, the ground is very rugged and full of rocky protuberances. The general level of this little plateau is about 600 feet above sea-level. The urn was found on the flattest portion, very near the western limit of the plateau, 27 feet S.W. of the sharp edge from which there is the steep slope down to the ninth hole; and this hole is 100 feet distant from the edge. Close to the three circular dots on

¹ See *Proceedings*, vol. xxxi. p. 110.

the plan (marking roughly the sites of the urns and patches of ashes found) is a triangle named ROCK; on the apex of this rock, which is 46 feet 5 inches W.S.W. of the first urn-site, from B on small plan, a deep mark has been chiselled which will be a guide to any further investigation. From it, due east 370 feet, is another

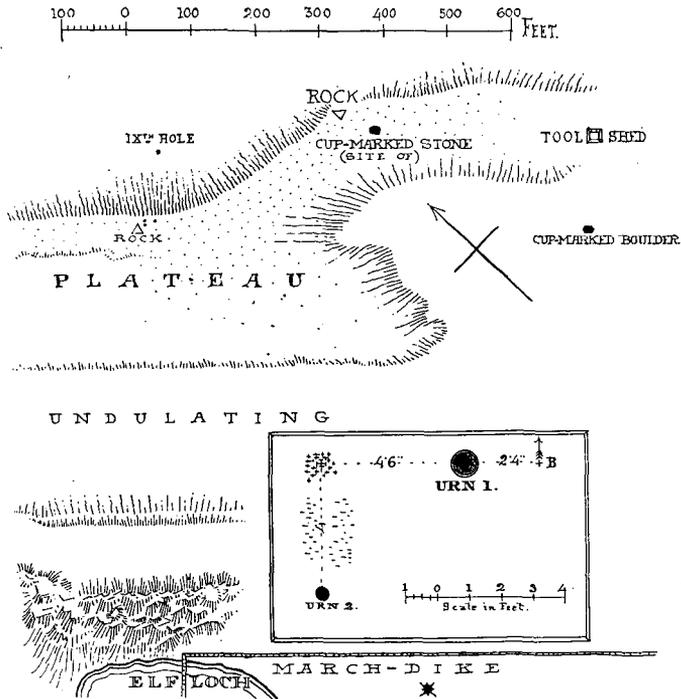


Fig. 1. Ground Plan of site of Bronze Age Burials on Braid Hills.

rocky point similarly marked. 50 feet south of this last, and in the hollow sward, may yet be traced the site of the cup-and-ring-marked stone discovered by Mr Lamb. The stone now leans up against the north side of the tool-shed. Due S.W. from this shed, 134 feet, is a small whinstone boulder, deeply earth-fast, which bears the three

cup-marks as described in my former notes. Its distance from the site of the other cup-marked stone is 368 feet; and 930 feet due west, we touch the angle of the March-dike which here intersects the Elf Loch. On the south side of this dike, on the Buckstone golf-course, at or near the spot marked with a star on the plan, were long ago discovered the empty cists seen by Sir J. Y. Simpson.¹

The above measurements were made by chaining, and in many of them with the assistance of Mr J. E. Simpkins, second attendant in the Museum.

In dealing more particularly with the finding of the urns, we must note, first, that the whole extent of the plateau in common with other and much less level portions of the Braids bear distinct marks of having been ploughed and cultivated. Therefore, it is not surprising to hear that, on the turf being stripped, only the lower portions of the large Cinerary Urn (Urn 1 on the small plan), that is, the shoulder and the rim—for it stood inverted—were discoverable: the rest, no doubt, having been knocked away by ploughshare or harrow. In the space covered by this urn (about 11 inches in diameter) was a small quantity of burnt bones, which, from their slightness, point to the interment as that of a person of immature age. Four feet six inches to the west there was observed a small quantity of ashes much mixed with the soil (marked with small crosses in plan). Five days later Mr Anderson, the green-keeper, brought to the Museum the pieces of a second urn, which had been found the previous day at the spot indicated on the small plan, just 4 feet S.W. of the deposit of ashes (Urn 2). On going to the spot with him, we made a little very careful digging in the same line for about 8 feet, but came on no more pottery, though the soil was turned over for a depth of 2 feet. Exactly underneath the site of the second urn, which is of Cinerary type but small, burnt stuff and bony remains were traceable down to 2 feet 9 inches.

Description of the Urns.—The large cinerary urn (fig. 1), unfortunately so imperfect, must have measured about 18 inches in height,

¹ *Proceedings*, vol. xxxi. p. 112.

tapering from the mouth to a base of $3\frac{1}{2}$ inches in diameter. It is of very coarse gritty clay, and half an inch thick at the plain flat lip. Across the mouth the diameter is $11\frac{3}{4}$ inches, at the shoulder 15 inches, the depth of the overhanging rim being $3\frac{1}{4}$ inches, vertical and with a sharply-defined edge; the band, below this, is also well defined, and measures $3\frac{9}{16}$ inches in depth. The ornamentation on the overhanging rim consists of fourteen wide triangles filled in with vertical lines, the outer spaces with many similar lines placed obliquely; and all done

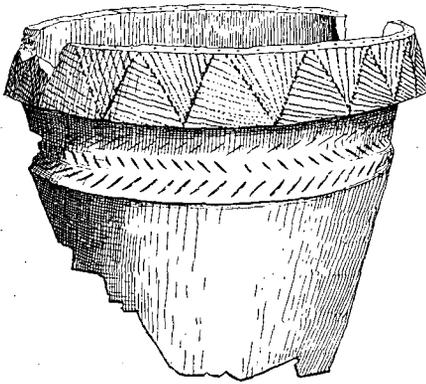


Fig. 1. Larger Urn from Braid Hills. (6.)

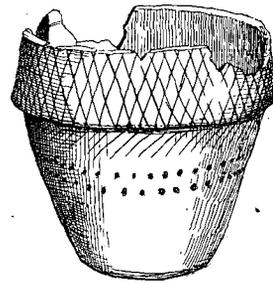


Fig. 2. Smaller Urn from Braid Hills. (4.)

as if with a twisted cord. The lower band bears a triple row of deeply-marked, short sharp diagonals, as if done with an edged tool of some kind.

The small urn of cinerary type (fig. 2) is $5\frac{3}{4}$ inches in height, $5\frac{1}{2}$ inches wide across the mouth, at the shoulder 6 inches wide and 2 inches in depth, from the lower edge of which it tapers to a base of 3 inches. The ornamentation on the shoulder is of crossed lines done with a point, and below it a single row of sharp, oblique lines with a double row of rudely triangular notches of a somewhat peculiar form, not precisely like the nail or finger marks frequently observed, but as if pressed in with the broadish point of a bone, or other hard implement.

(2.) NOTE OF THE DISCOVERY OF A CIST AND URN NEAR PORTPATRICK,
WIGTOWNSHIRE.

On the 29th October 1899, notice was received of this discovery, in the form of a communication from Rev. G. Philip Robertson, Free Church Manse, Sandhead, to Dr Anderson; and subsequently an extract from *The Galloway Gazette*, enclosed in a letter to Dr Anderson from the Right Hon. Sir Herbert E. Maxwell, of date 5th November 1899, gave the following facts regarding it:—

The site, about 2 miles south of Portpatrick, is on the farm of Port of Spittal, in Stoneykirk. The interment was found by some boys in a sandpit, on the sloping south-east side of a field, in which there is a standing stone, a block of whinstone about 5 feet high; near to which, it is stated, many years ago, grave-slabs were turned up by the plough, but, the graves being empty, the slabs were replaced. Locally, the field is known as "The burial-ground of the four Kings." Quantities of sand having been removed for building purposes, the grave was exposed. It was made of flat sea-washed stones, and measured 3 feet 9 inches in length with a breadth and depth of 2 feet 6 inches. At the S.E. corner was a decorated urn, "smaller than a boy's head," the exterior brown, the interior black. Besides the urn, which was irretrievably smashed, there were found a jaw-bone containing nine teeth in good preservation, and other small pieces of bone, brown with age but hard in substance. The grave was covered, as usual, with a heavy whinstone slab, which lay fully 3 feet below the surface of the field. The setting of the grave seems to have been east and west.

Judging from these details the interment seems to have been of the ordinary variety of uncremated Bronze Age burial, accompanied by an urn of food-vessel type.