

HIGHLAND REGIONAL COUNCIL



FIELD MONUMENTS

ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES AND MONUMENTS RECORD

1 SITE CODE												
H	N	D	2	4	S	E	0	0	2	A		
2 NGR												
N	D	2	6	0	7	4	4	0	3			
3 QUAL												
6 SITE NAME												
C	A	M	S	T	E	R		R	O	U	N	D
10 GENERIC TYPE												
BURIAL CAIRN, CHAMBERED (OCH)												
14 PERIOD/DATE					15 DATING METHOD							
NE = BA					TYP							
18 SHAPE												
ROUND												
19 THREAT AND DATE												

4 DISTRICT				5 PARISH					
CAITHNESS				WICK					
7 AREA STATUS		8 SITE STATUS		9 REGIONAL STATUS					
		GUARDIANSHIP							
11 CONCORDANCE		12 FORM		13 DIMENSIONS					
OSND 24 SE 1+16		STANDING STRUCTURE		18.40m DIAM					
16 RELATIONSHIP OF ELEMENTS		17 CONDITION							
		INCOMPLETE							
20 LAND USE				21 GEOLOGY					
HEATH									
22 SOILS				23 VEGETATION					
24 HYDROLOGY/DRAINAGE				25 RELIEF		26 ASPECT		27 ALTITUDE	
				KNOLL ON GENTLE HILLSLOPE		W		100=1	

28 EXCAVATION (EXCAVATOR: DATE: EXTENT: QUALITY)	
1. ANDERSON & SHEARER: 1886: PARTIAL: UNSCIENTIFIC.	
2. RITCHIE, P.R.: 1967: PARTIAL: SCIENTIFIC.	
29 BIBLIOGRAPHY (AUTHOR: DATE: TITLE: JOURNAL OR PUBLISHER: VOLUME: DETAIL)	
1. ORDNANCE SURVEY: 1976: 1/10 000 MAP	
2. HENSHALL, A.S.: 1963: CHAMBERED TOMBS OF SCOTLAND: EDIN.U.P: Vol.1: pp263-266, No.13, plan	
3. ORDNANCE SURVEY: 1872: OBJECT NAME BOOK: : 13: p234	
4. : 1971: CURRENT ARCHAEOLOGY: : : p132, 28th Sept.	
5. ANDERSON, J.: 1886: SCOTLAND IN PAGAN TIMES: : Vol.1: p130	
6. RCAHMS: 1911: CAITHNESS INVENTORY: HMSO: : p184, No.564	
7. CRUDEN, S.: 1967: DISCOVERY & EXCAVATION IN SCOTLAND: CBA (Scotland): : p56 (cont. over/..	
30 GROUND PLAN NO.	31 GROUND PHOTO NO.
	87133/32A-33A, 84171/136, 84174/16
32 SLIDES NO.	33 HR. AP. NO.
	MI/784/29A, 31A 35A, 37A, C1/784/16
34 NMR. AP. NO.	35 OTHER AP. NO.: SOURCE
M1/784/37A.	(SEE 24 SE 01)
36 ARCHIVE AND LOCATION	
37 GEOPHYSICAL SURVEY	
38 SAMPLES	
39 PALYNOLOGY	
40 NUMERICAL DATES: RANGE: LAB NO.	
41 SMALL FINDS	
FLINT OBJECTS + KNIFE-BLADE, IRON	
42 MUSEUM/LOCATION	
NMAS	
43 OTHER	

44 NAME & ADDRESS OF OWNER		45 ATTITUDE OF OWNER	
46 NAME & ADDRESS OF TENANT		47 ATTITUDE OF TENANT	
48 ACCESS & RESTRICTIONS		49 NAME & ADDRESS OF FINDER/RECORDER: DATE	
		50 RECORDER: DATE	
		AM: 24.9.1985	
		51 CHECK: DATE	
		HAR: 21.10.1985	

52 TEXT

"See continuation card for text."

"See also HND 24 SE 001 and HND 24 SE 003."

"See also HND 24 SE 001 for AP."

29.
 8. FEACHEM, R.W.:1963:GUIDE TO PREHISTORIC SCOTLAND:Batsford: :p43
 9. HMB (SDD):1985:LIST OF GUARDIANSHIP MONUMENTS
 10. CLOSE-BROOKS, J:1986:EXPLORING SCOTLANDS HERITAGE, THE HIGHLANDS:HMSO:PP 64-5
 11. :1976:VISITS TO ANCIENT CAITHNESS:CAITHNESS FIELD CLUB:P16

52.

'B': An Orkney-Cromarty type round cairn, virtually intact, with a particularly fine chamber with its original roofing. It is about 60 ft in diameter and 12 ft high. Excavations by Anderson and Shearer in 1865 produced flint implements and an iron knife-blade, now in the NMA S (Acc Nos: EO 97-123) and pottery now lost. Further excavation, aimed at consolidation, was carried out by Ritchie in 1967 so that the public could have access to the chamber. A tiny beaker fragment was found. Half the blocking in front of the entrance was removed. (2), (3), (4), (5), (6), (7) & (8)

13 CAMSTER, ROUND
(O.-C., Camster-type, round)
In the parish of
WICK
Location 8 m. SW of
WICK
Map reference
ND260410

Description. The cairn is set on a slight knoll in flat moorland at 350ft. OD, only about 200yd. SSE of the long cairn of Camster. It is in much the same state as when it was excavated except that the passage is blocked. The chamber is mainly clear and its high vault is complete except for a gap beside the capstone through which it can be entered. The cairn is remarkable in that it is virtually intact and has a particularly fine chamber which can be seen with its original roofing.*

(2)

Sheet XXIX NW; ND 24 SE
Inventory number 564
References
M.A.S.L. II (1865-66)
245-49¹;
ANDERSON, J. (1886)
249-53²; R.C.A.M. *Inv.*
183-84; P.S.A.S. VI (1864-66)
449-51³; *ibid.* VII (1866-68)
293; PIGGOTT (1954) 239⁴
Plan after ANDERSON² and
PIGGOTT⁴
(fig. 39; pl. 10A)
Excavation ANDERSON and
SHEARER, 1865^{1, 2}
Visited 10.7.55

The diameter of the cairn is about 60ft. and the height 12ft. Anderson cleared a few feet of the wall-face, on either side of the entrance, which presumably encircles the whole cairn. It can no longer be seen. The entrance is from the ESE, with the outermost lintel at a higher level. The passage is about 20ft. long, increasing from 2ft. 6in. high by 2ft. wide at the outer end to 3ft. 6in. high by 2ft. 6in. wide at the inner end. Four pairs of upright slabs are built into the walls of dry masonry and help to support the roof. When excavated the passage was found to have been completely blocked with stones to the roof for its entire length.

The chamber is in two main parts. The outer compartment or antechamber is entered between portal slabs 1ft. 5in. apart. It is roofed by two lintels at a height of 3ft. to 3ft. 6in. and is only about 4ft. wide by 3ft. 7in. long, with walls of good vertical masonry. The inner compartment is entered between another pair of portal slabs 1ft. 6in. apart but 7ft. high, which form its E wall. They are set obliquely to the side walls, and their upper edges are slanting to bear the oversailing masonry which rests on them. The space between them above the lintel of the antechamber is filled with dry walling. The maximum width of the compartment is about 6ft. 6in. and the maximum length about 7ft. 6in. It is subdivided by a pair of transverse slabs 4ft. high and 3ft. apart which do not reach the roof. The lower part of the back wall is formed by a large slab. At ground level the walls of good quality dry masonry are set back between the portal and divisional stones of the inner compartment, but a few feet above the dry masonry takes on an oval plan, and the courses begin to oversail at 7ft. above the floor. The reduced span left in the roof at 10ft. above ground level is closed by a capstone.

On the floor was a compacted layer of black earth, ashes and burnt bones, from 9 to 12in. thick. Fewer bones were in the black layer on the floor, most of the bones being above this. 'There was a large quantity of ashes and charcoal scattered over the central compartment, and specially in the centre of the chamber and between the projecting divisional stones at the back.'³

Finds

Artifacts. In N.M.A., except the pottery which is lost (*ill. p.* 254).

1. Pottery, in the floor. 'The broken fragments of four or five urns . . . some of them of decidedly well made pottery. . . . These fragments are larger than any found in the floors of the other cairns. One of these vessels of well-burnt clay, blackened on both sides, must have been twelve inches across the mouth. The pieces marked nos. 1 and 2 join together, and form a large segment of the rim. They were found three or four inches under the surface of the floor, close together, but while the lip of the one was uppermost, in the other case it was down. The clay of these is also plentifully mixed with mica. On no. 8, the ashes still adhere to the inner side, while the outer side is clean and unblackened. Fragments, nos. 3, 4, 5 and 6, belong to the same vessel, and partly piece together. It has been of very handsome make, and is the thinnest pottery I have seen from these cairns. Holes, about the diameter of an ordinary goose-quill, have been bored in it at intervals, immediately under the lip. No. 7 (of the fragments) exhibits an ornamentation unique as regards the pottery of these cairns. The outside is roughened all over by the impression of the point and nail of a small finger, obliquely thrust into the clay.'¹ 'Some were ornamented with incised lines.'² 'Some had thickened, and others had everted, lips.'²

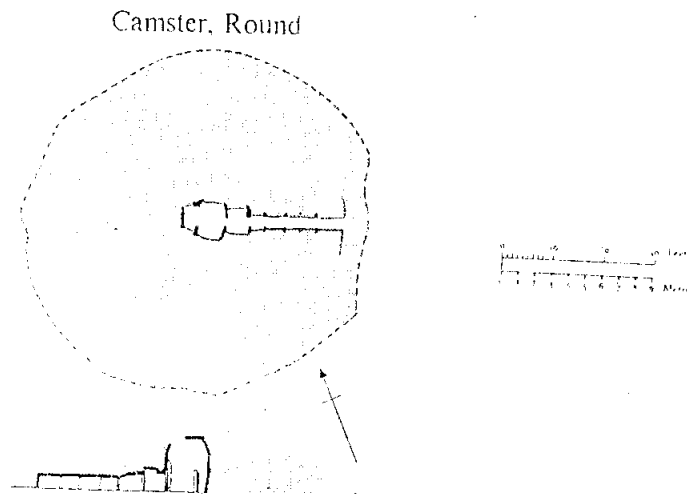
- 2. Knife of dark grey speckled flint, with fine pressure flaking, one edge ground, broken at each end (EO 97).
- 3. Transverse arrowhead of grey speckled flint (EO 101).
- 4. Scraper of grey flint (EO 98).
- 5. Long triangular point of grey-buff flint, steep retouching down each side (EO 102).
- 6. Flake of brown flint, retouching on one edge (EO 110).

7. Rectangular blades of grey and brown flint, retouched down each long side (EO 103-4).
 8. Flint flakes with one or two edges retouched (EO 99, 100, 105-6, 111, 114, 118, 119).
 9. Broken end of a worked flake of brown flint (EO 107).
 10. Small utilised flint flakes (EO 108-9).
 11. Flint and chert flakes (EO 112-3, 115-7, 120-22).
 12. Iron knife-blade (EO 123).
- 1, 2 in the earth and ash layer; 12 lay on this layer.
1, 6, some of 8, 10, 11, 12 not illustrated.

Skeletal. Lost. On the earth and ash layer, were unburnt human bones, more than in the layer below.² In the burnt layer were 'a considerable number of fragments of human bones, mostly imperfectly burnt, but in some cases completely calcined',² the remains of at least three or four skeletons. In the passage blocking 'two skeletons were found about half way between the chamber and the outer end of the passage. Of the skeletons only the upper extremities remained; and the skulls and arm bones were not on the floor but among the stones above it. The suggestion of the circumstances was that the bodies had been placed there in a sitting position, and the stones that blocked up the passage packed in about them.'²

Animal remains. Lost. Relatively few animal bones

²Recently the site has come under the guardianship of the Ministry of Works. The chamber has been closed in for safety pending consolidation; when this has been completed the chamber will be open to the public.



CAT 13
CAMSTER ROUND
Reference D. and E., 1967, 56

The chamber and passage are now open to the public after consolidation by the Ministry of Public Building and Works. The published plan of the cairn was found to need modification, for at the entrance the kerb was flattened, and in front of this stones had been piled as a blocking. It can now be seen that the passage is not straight but bends slightly to the NE near the entrance. The two outer pairs of orthostats are not quite opposite each other, and the wall-face edging the cairn runs from the outermost orthostats (not exposed on the S side).

(6)

CAMSTER ROUND CAIRN, CAITHNESS

ND 260440. Consolidation of the structure has been carried out so that the public may have access to the chamber. Examination of the floors of both chamber and passage showed them to have been well scraped during the earlier excavation. A tiny fragment of beaker was found in the chamber. The published plan of the site requires some modification. At the entrance the cairn is finished with a flat façade in front of which was placed a pile of stones to act as blocking. One half of this blocking has been removed. No small finds were recovered from it or from the underlying surface.

(7)

52.

564. *Chambered Cairn*.—This cairn, which is situated about 200 yards to the SSE. of the horned long cairn (No. 563), stands on a small eminence. It is circular, with a diameter of about 66', and rises to a height of 12'. It also was excavated by Dr Joseph Anderson, and from his description of it the following details are taken:—

(6)

The entrance passage to the chamber from the ESE. was over 20' in length, closely roofed with enormous flags, and packed full of stones from end to end. At the exterior opening it was only 2½' high by 2' wide, increasing in height and width inwards, until at the entrance to the first compartment of the chamber it was about 3½' high and 2½' wide. It was buttressed at intervals on both sides by stones standing edge-wise in its walls, which helped to support the massive roofing slabs, as well as to strengthen the dry-built walling. The chamber, which was found to be tripartite, consisted in reality of two chambers under separate roofs, the larger of which was subdivided by low division stones. The first compartment formed a sort of ante-chamber to the bee-hive shaped chamber beyond, and was roofed with two large slabs. The side walls were compactly built, and measured 3' 7" and 3' 10" in length respectively, and 3½' in height. The entrance from this compartment to the vaulted chamber beyond was only 1' 3" wide and 3' high. The divisional stones which flanked it, built into the walls, were 7' high, and set at a considerable angle to the side walls, in order to fall in with the oval form of the cell-like inner chamber. The divisional stones of this inner chamber occurred at 4' 10" and 4' 5" from the entrance to it, rose to a height of 4' above the floor, and were 3' apart. The compartment in rear of them measured 3' × 4' 2". The greatest height to the roof was 10', the walls bulging out slightly in the middle and contracting upwards from a height of 7' above the floor. Access was gained to the chamber through an existing hole in the roof formed by the removal of one of the covering slabs.

On excavation there were found embedded in the layer of burnt bones and ashes which formed the floor of the chamber to a depth of 9" to 12", besides human and animal remains, many fragments of pottery—chiefly portions of round-bottomed vessels, of a very thin, hard-baked paste—and a small finely formed flint knife. There were also found on the surface of the floor an iron single-edged knife or dagger blade about 4" in length, and a number of bones, both human and animal, and in the passage two human skulls; these, however, not necessarily connected with the original use of the structure.

The passage is now entirely blocked up. The chamber is intact except for the aperture in the ESE. side of the roof through which the interior is visible: the height of the roof is 8' above the present floor level. The walls are entirely built except for one large slab occupying the centre of the back wall.

This is the finest example of an excavated chambered cairn in the county, if not in Scotland. The interior is practically free from debris, and, except for the opening in the roof, its walls are intact.

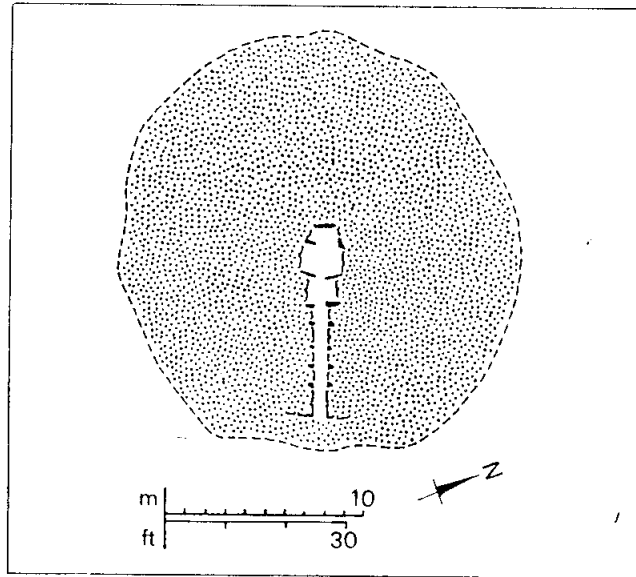
The flint knife and fragments of pottery found on excavation are preserved in the National Museum of Antiquities, Edinburgh.

See *Mem. Anthropol. Soc. Lond.*, ii. p. 245; Anderson, *The Bronze and Stone Ages*, p. 249 (plan and illus.); *Antiquaries*, vi. p. 449 (illus. plan and sec.); *ibid.*, ix. p. 246.


O.S.M., CAITH. xxix.

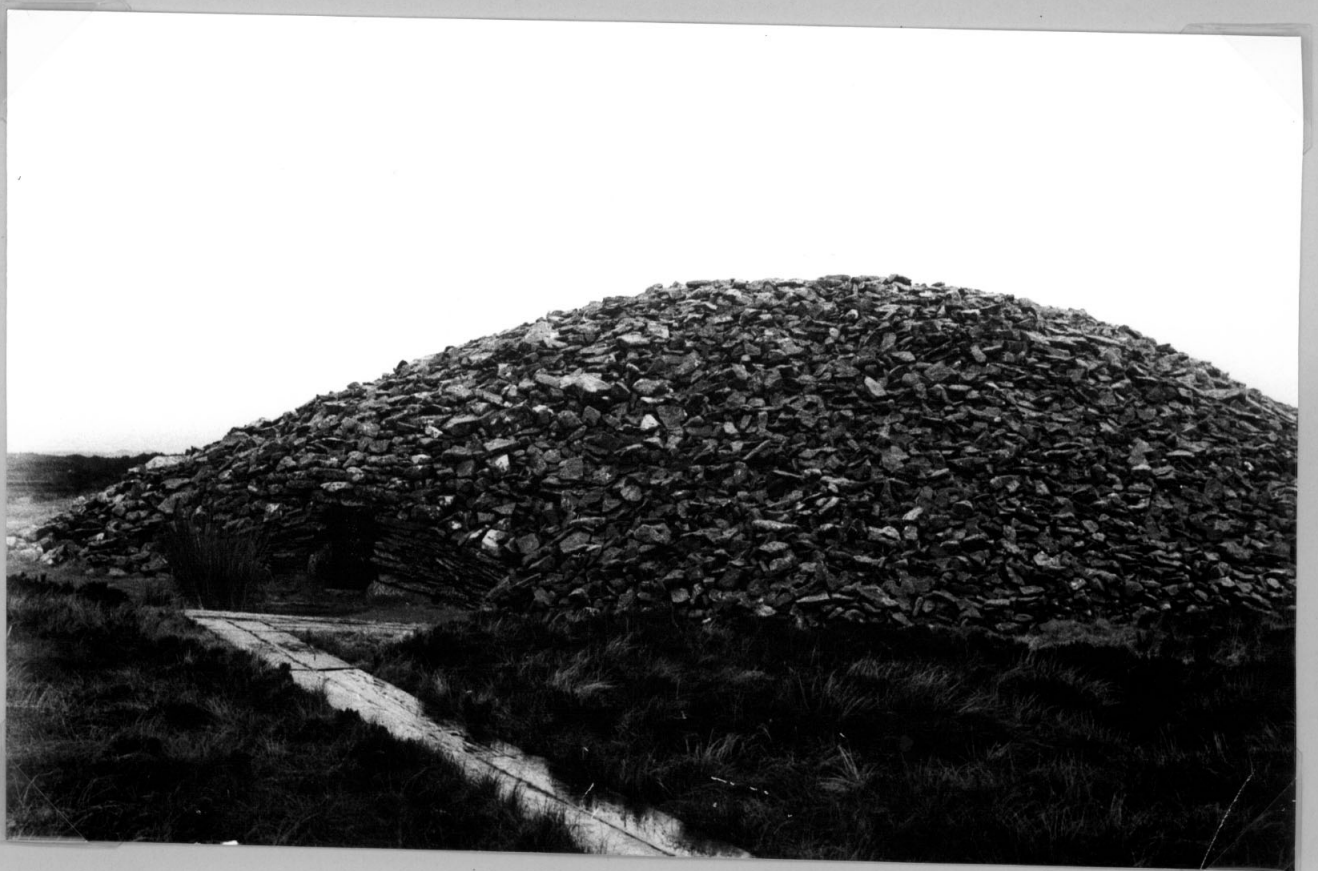
Visited, 14th July 1910.

Camster Round is almost intact and stands some 12 m high and 18 m in diameter, though some collapse round the sides has buried its original drystone kerb. A passage leads to the central chamber which still has its original corbelled roof, a rare survival. The walls are of drystone masonry and large vertical slabs divide the chamber into three parts. The cairn was excavated in the 19th century when burnt bones, pottery and flint tools were found in the chamber and the remains of several skeletons in the chamber and passage.




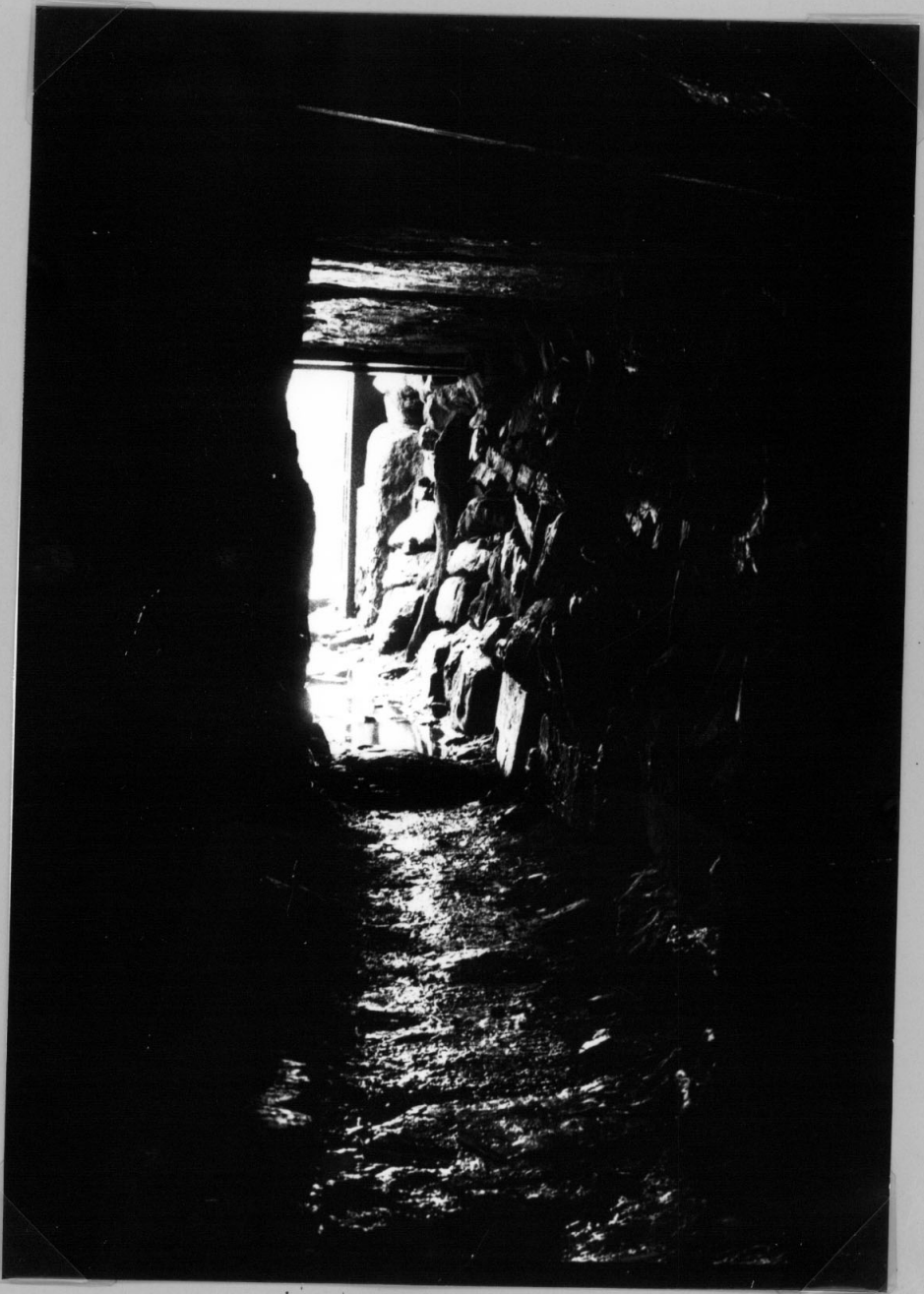
NEG/SLIDE No:	817034113	DATE:	27/3/1967	GRID:	H N D 26 07 4 4 0 3	QUAL:	CE
DISTRICT:	CATTNESS	CODE:		PARISH:	WICK.	CODE:	
SUBJECT KEYWORDS:	BURIAL CAIRN, CAWSTOTR.						
DETAIL:	BURIAL CAIRN, CHAMBERED (OCH)						
	SHOWING ENTRANCE.						
LOCATION:	CHAMBER, CATTNESS.						

SMR No:	H	H	D	2	4	S	E	0	0	2
 ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES AND MONUMENTS RECORD PHOTOGRAPH										
PHOTOGRAPHER:						COPYRIGHT:				
P.R. CAMPBELL						H.R.C.				



NEG/SLIDE No:	87013419	DATE:	27/3/1987	NGR:	H N 026074403	QUAL:	CE
DISTRICT:	CATHNESS	CODE:		PARISH:	WICK.	CODE:	
SUBJECT KEYWORDS:	ENTRANCE PASSAGE, BURIAL CAIRN (OCH)						
DETAIL:	PHOTOGRAPH SHOWS ENTRANCE PASSAGE OF CHAMBERED CAIRN FROM THE INSIDE.						
LOCATION:	CANISTER, CATHNESS.						

SMR No:	H	N	D	2	4	S	E	0	0	2
 ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES AND MONUMENTS RECORD PHOTOGRAPH										
PHOTOGRAPHER:						COPYRIGHT:				
P.R. CAMPBELL.						H.R.C.				



HIGHLAND REGIONAL COUNCIL



ARTEFACTS

ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES AND MONUMENTS RECORD

4 DISTRICT CAITHNESS		5 PARISH WICK		1 SITE CODE H N D 2 4 S E 0 0 2 B	
8 CONCORDANCE osND 24 SE 1+16 NMR		9 MUSEUM/LOCATION OF FIND(S) RMS (QUEENS ST.)		10 ACCESSION NO. EO 97-123.	
13 FIND CIRCUMSTANCES FROM EXCAVATION OF CAMSTER BURIAL CAIRN.		14 CONDITION		7 GENERIC TYPE FLINT OBJECTS (ARROWHEAD+BLADES +SCRAPER+FLAKES)+KNIFE-BLADE, IRON.	
17 LAND USE		18 GEOLOGY		11 PERIOD/DATE NE=BA+ia	
19 SOILS		20 VEGETATION		12 DATING METHOD TYP	
21 HYDROLOGY/DRAINAGE		22 RELIEF		15 EXCAVATOR AND DATE	
25 DETAILED DESCRIPTION/DIMENSIONS		23 ASPECT		16 EXCAVATION RECORD NO.	
26 BIBLIOGRAPHY (AUTHOR:DATE:TITLE:JOURNAL OR PUBLISHER:VOLUME:DETAIL)		24 ALTITUDE			
27 GROUND PLAN NO.		28 GROUND PHOTO NO.			
29 SLIDES NO.		30 HR. AP. NO.			
31 NMR. AP. NO.		32 OTHER AP. NO. : SOURCE			
33 ARCHIVE AND LOCATION		35 SAMPLES			
34 GEOPHYSICAL SURVEY		37 NUMERICAL DATES: RANGE: LAB NO.			
36 PALYNOLOGY		38 OTHER			
39 NAME & ADDRESS OF OWNER				40 ATTITUDE OF OWNER	
41 NAME & ADDRESS OF TENANT				42 ATTITUDE OF TENANT	
43 ACCESS & RESTRICTIONS					
44 NAME & ADDRESS OF FINDER/RECORDER: DATE				45 RECORDER: DATE HAR: 21.10.1985	
				46 CHECK: DATE HAR: 21-10-1985	

47 TEXT
"See over card for text & illusts.)"