

GLEN CALLUM BAY BRONZE AGE CAIRN
N.S. 112526

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Glen Callum Bay, at the southend of Bute, lies facing south east. A great horseshoe of cliffs, 150' high, edges a wide flat stretch of grass and bracken. A burn coming down from the upper part of the glen in a waterfall over the cliff, winds its way to the shore. Some 130 yards up the burn from the beach are the ruins of an old Inn, used by sailors in the days of sail when ships lay off shore waiting for a favourable wind to take them west to Canada or south to Australia. After visiting this ruin in 1968 Mr. John Drummond came on a structure 50 yards south of the inn, which he at first thought to be a well but excavation proved is to be a Bronze Age cist lying in the centre of a low mound of stones.

The cairn is oval rather than round 28' by 32' and not more than 2' high. There is little tumble of stone about so that it is unlikely that it was ever much higher. It is made up of stones (6" to 9") which seem to have come from the scree behind rather than from the shore.

The actual burial cist lies NW by SW and is very roughly built with only one upright slab. The cist measures 4' 6" by 3' 9" and is 3' deep. The NW side has the one upright slab which makes up half the side, the rest is made up of a roughly built wall. At right angles to the upright stone is a rectangular one stretching the breadth of the cist. The top of this stone was probably at the top of the cist. It rested on loose stones and earth. Opposite it there is more attempt shown at building as five courses of water-rolled stones remain, the largest is 20". The side opposite the upright stone is very roughly built with smallish stones. There is no sign of a cap stone. The floor of the cist was on the natural shingle of the beach and rather lower than the ground level beyond the cairn. No trace of bones or burial deposit was found. It seems likely that the

cist was filled with earth and stones at the time of burial for the poorly constructed sides would not have survived to the extent they have if they had been left unsupported.

This cist is unlike any of the other 17 so far found in Bute. The others follow the normal pattern of a B.A. cist made of slabs set on end or, as at Auchenteerie, with a well built wall. Where there is a cairn these are much higher than the Glen Callum one. Dr. John Corcoran found a similar, very roughly, constructed cist in a cairn at Glen Luce.

In carrying out this excavation I was assisted in the digging and planning by my sister, Dr. S. M. Marshall and by Guides of the 1st Rothesay Company and by Junior Naturalists.

THE CRANNOG ON QUIEN LOCH N.S. 062593

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Interest in the Crannog on the Quien Loch was revived when Mr. Murdo MacKenzie reported having hooked a wooden vessel on his fishing line. He was anchored off the east side of the island, smoking a cigarette with his line lying slack. When he raised the line on the end of it was an oval wooden dish, perhaps 10" long, but just as it was seen and recognised for what it was, it slipped off the line down among the reeds.

In August 1968 a skilled diver, Mr. Thomas Knowles, attempted to retrieve the dish but lack of visibility under water made this impossible. The water here is about 15' deep and the floor of the loch is covered with a dense growth of weed. Floating detritus adds to the darkness under water where the visibility is a mere 2'.

John Mackinlay examined the Crannog, from the shore, in 1824 and read a paper about it and the one on the Dhu Loch, to the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland in 1858 (P.S.A.S. Vol. II). Some 65 years later Dr. J. King Hewison on visiting the site found Mr. Mackinlay's "account quite conjectural" (Bute in Olden Times Vol. I Pg. 44). He considered the island entirely artificial. It was connected to the west shore of the loch by a causeway about 7' broad edged by a double row of oak posts and laid with small flags. The island he planned as pear shaped, 90' by 70', with a heavy wall running round an inner area 50' in diameter. In the centre of this he found a hearth but no artefacts.

In 1968 we found roughly the same features and measurements as Dr. Hewison reported, but it seemed that the shelf, 2' under water, shown in his plan as surrounding the island was made up of small stones and mud. It may have been a natural shallow in the loch on which the Crannog was built, using stones from the hills beside the loch. For most of the way round the central part of the island are the remains of a wall which had an inner and an outer edge leaving a stone filled ledge up to 10' wide. This wall, of

