North house with all mod cons — and an ancient one as well

A HOME on the market in Caithness has an unusual selling point — a Stone Age burial chamber in the garden.

The five-bedroom villa includes ownership of the 5,000-year-old grey Cairns of Camster, which are rated as one of the finest chambered cairns in the UK.

Excavations have unearthed burnt animal and human bones in the internal chambers, prompting speculation that they could have been the scene of ritual cremations.

The cairns are recognised as being among the most important archaeological sites in the north of Scotland.

The new owner will be subject to a deed of guardianship to preserve the cairns as ancient monuments and to give access to the public.

Merchant Navy captain Nicholas Gill, who has owned the lodge and the 15 acres of ground for three years, is selling up as his job means he is unable to spend much time at Camster.

The well-preserved mounds of stones — some as large as two tons — are sited at the top of a steep valley, just off the Watten-Clyth road.

One of the mounds stands 12ft with a 20ft low passageway leading into the inner sanctum, complete with its original corbelled roof.

The other older mound comprises two elongated burial chambers, which, at nearly 200ft long and 65ft across, makes it one of the largest cairns in Britain.

Both cairns, which were restored in the 1980s, are lit up by roof-lights.

PRES OR JOURNAL
27/06/94