

I.

NOTICE OF THREE CUP-MARKED STONES, AND THE DISCOVERY OF AN URN, IN PERTHSHIRE. BY J. ROMILLY ALLEN, C.E., F.S.A. Scor.

The following paper contains a short account of three cup-marked stones which exist at East Cult, Kincairney, and Glenballoch in Perthshire.

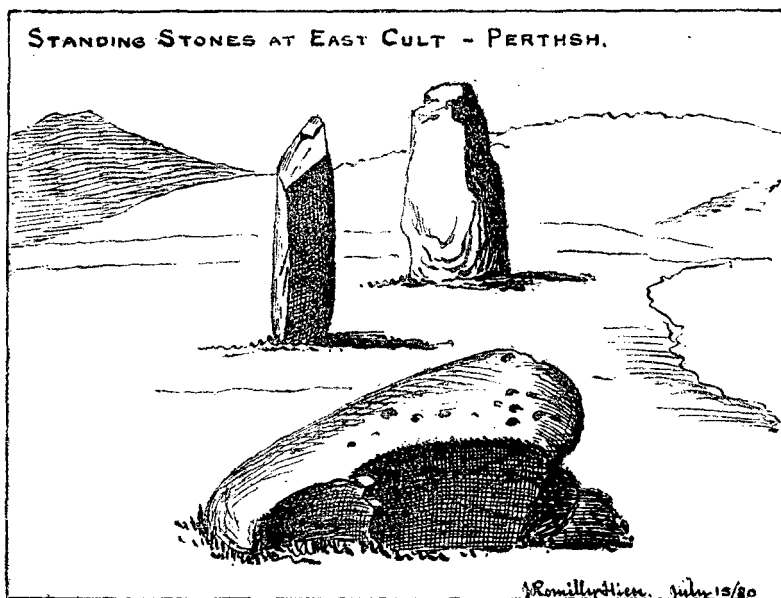


Fig. 1.

Rubbings, sketches, and measurements of these stones were taken on the 15th of July last while on a walking expedition from Dunkeld to Blairgowrie. The examination of the Glenballoch stone led (as will be seen hereafter) to the discovery and acquisition for the museum of the very

beautiful urn now exhibited. A description of it has therefore been included in the present paper. It is not proposed to discuss the origin or meaning of cup-markings, as the materials available are not sufficient to justify any satisfactory theory being put forward. It will only be necessary to say that the cup-markings on the stones here referred to are distinctly of artificial production, and are of the same character as those described by the late Sir James Simpson in the Appendix to vol. vi. of our "Proceedings."

Standing Stones of East Cult.—These stones (fig. 1) are situated 200 yards west of East Cult Farm in the parish of Caputh, 3 miles east of Dunkeld as the crow flies, and $4\frac{1}{2}$ miles by the road. (See Ordnance map

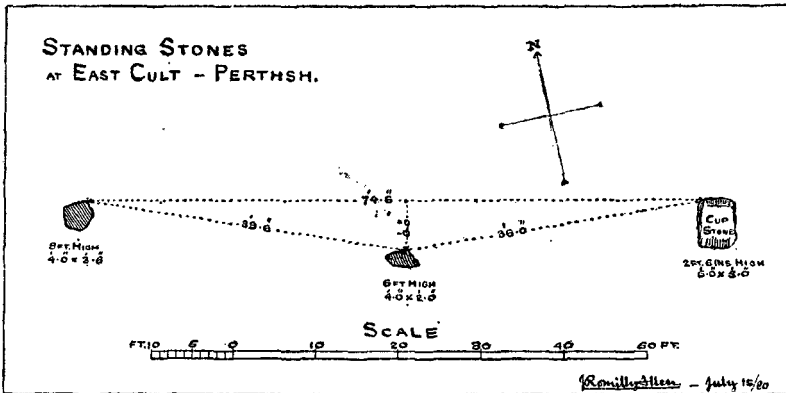


Fig. 2.

1-inch scale, sheet 48, and 6 inch scale, sheet 62.) The height above the sea-level is 668 feet 6 inches. The stones stand on the summit of a ridge that forms a spur of Newtyle Hill. The view commanded by the site in all directions is exceedingly fine and of great extent. The stones are three in number, placed almost in a line running east and west (fig. 2). The centre stone is, however, 6 feet out of the straight line joining the two end ones. The distance between the two end stones is 74 feet 6 inches, and from

the centre one to the east stone 36 feet and to the west stone 39 feet 6 inches. The dimensions are as follows: centre stone, 4 feet by 2 feet at the base by 6 feet high; east stone, 6 feet by 4 feet 6 inches by 2 feet 6 inches high; west stone, 4 feet by 3 feet 6 inches at the base and 9 feet high. All three are rough unhewn blocks of metamorphic slate of a

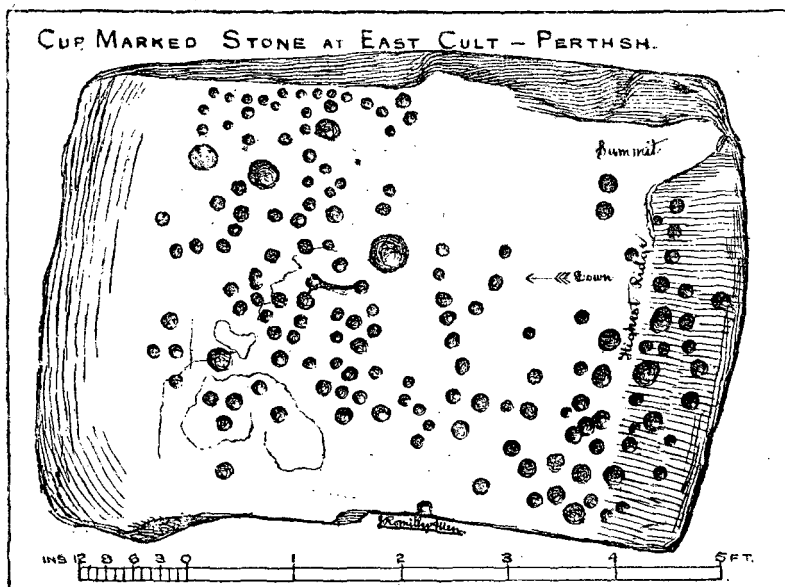


Fig. 3.

greenish hue. The top surface of the east stone is tolerably smooth, and slopes at an angle of about 15° to the horizon. The whole of this surface (fig. 3) is pitted with cup-shaped depressions numbering 158, and varying in diameter from 1 to 4 inches. There appears to be no special design in the arrangement of the cups, which are scattered broadcast over the surface of the stone. There is one cup 4 inches in diameter, two others 3 inches, three more $2\frac{1}{2}$ inches, and all the rest of an average width of $1\frac{1}{2}$ inch. Two of the cups are connected by a groove, and three run one into the other. None of the cups are surrounded by rings.

There are several cairns in the neighbourhood, one a furlong to the southward, another a mile to the north, another a mile to the east, and a fourth a mile and a half to the east.

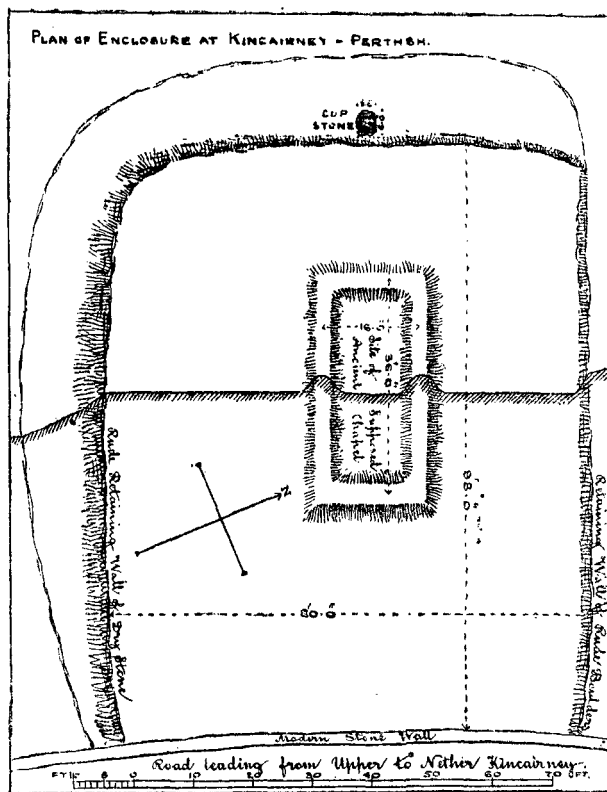


Fig. 4.

Sir James Simpson refers briefly to the stones of East Cult and describes them as being part of an alleged circle.¹ There is no evidence that this is the case. He also mentions there being some cup marks on one of the

¹ Proc. Soc. Ant. Scot., vol. vi., Appendix, p. 15.

stones composing a circle round a barrow within the policy of Glendelvin 2 miles east of East Cult. This barrow I did not succeed in finding.

Kincairney Cup Stone.—On the Ordnance map (scale 6 inches to the mile, sheet 62), will be found marked the site of a chapel (fig. 4) lying midway between Upper and Nether Kincairney in the parish of Caputh. It is

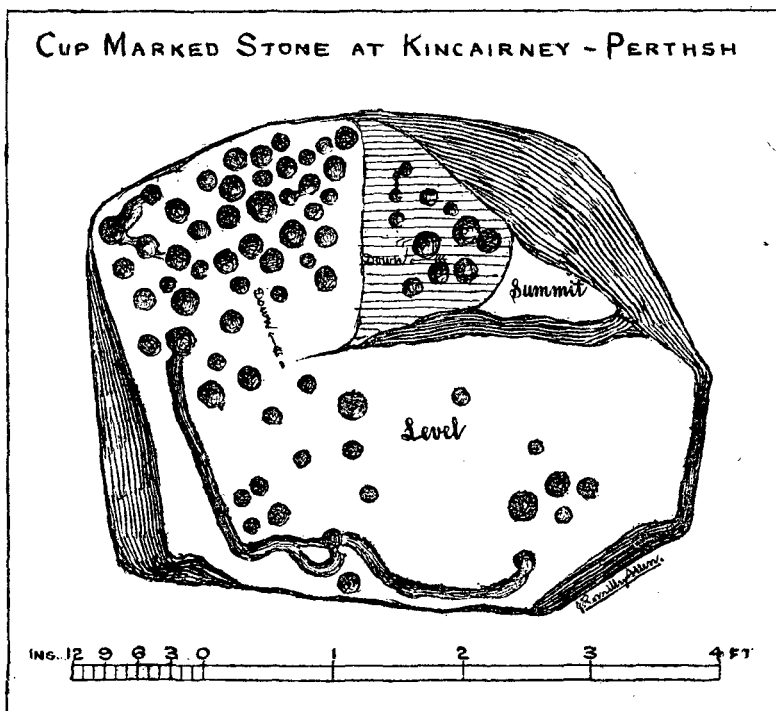


Fig. 5.

situated $1\frac{1}{2}$ miles north-east of East Cult, and $3\frac{3}{4}$ east-north-east of Dunkeld as the crow flies, but 6 miles from the latter place by road. It is at a height of 410 feet above the sea-level, but the view is confined and the

position secluded. All that now remains of the so-called chapel is the foundations of a rectangular building measuring 36 feet by 16 feet from centre to centre of walls. These foundations rise about 2 feet above the ground, but are so covered with turf that it is impossible to judge of their exact thickness or of the character of the masonry. The direction of the longer axis of the building is E.S.E. by the compass. The building is on the side of a hill, but stands in the middle of a level enclosure 98 feet long by 80 feet wide, formed by digging away the ground and building dry stone retaining walls of rough boulders on each side. At a distance of 20 feet beyond the end of the building to the west, and in a line with its longer axis, is a boulder (fig. 5) measuring 4 feet 9 inches by 3 feet 9 inches, and projecting 1 foot above the ground. This stone is 2 or 3 feet outside the west wall of the enclosure. Its upper surface is covered with cup markings, similar to those at East Cult, numbering 73; and varying in diameter from $1\frac{1}{2}$ to 3 inches. There is also a single cup cut on the vertical face on the south side. There is a groove $1\frac{1}{2}$ inches wide running round two of the edges of the stone and connecting three of the cups. Four of the cups at one corner of the stone run into one another. The greater part of the surface of the stone is horizontal, but there is a small triangular piece which slopes down from the summit and has eleven cups cut on it. The summit is $4\frac{1}{2}$ inches above the rest of the stone, and the length of the sloping portion is 1 foot 1 inch. The boulder is of quartzose slate. Half a mile south-west towards East Cult is a cairn, at Nine Wells.

It would be interesting to have the site of this supposed chapel explored with a view to deciding if possible whether the building is of Christian or pagan origin.

The Standing Stone of Glenballoch.—The Glenballoch stone (fig. 6) is situated a furlong south of the farm house from which it takes its name. Glenballoch is in the parish of Rattray in Perthshire, $2\frac{1}{2}$ miles north of Blairgowrie (see Ordnance map 1 inch scale, sheet 56, and 6 inch scale, sheet 52). The stone occupies a position on the north side of a secluded valley

through which the Craighall Mill burn runs to join the River Ericht. The site of the stone is at a level of 700 feet above the sea, and is 100 feet below the summit, close to Glenballoch Farm. The view from thence

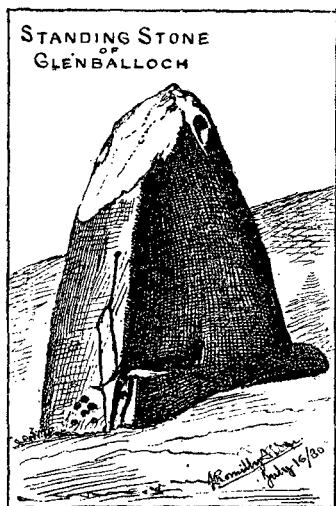


Fig. 6.

is not by any means striking. On the opposite side of the valley to the south a wooded hill called Broad Moss rises to a height of 977 feet above sea-level, and commands a large tract of country. The standing stone is a rude whinstone block of conical or sugarloaf form, 8 feet 6 inches high and 20 feet in circumference at the base, or a little over 6 feet in diameter. On the south-east side, which faces the valley, are cut a series of thirteen cup markings, varying in diameter from $1\frac{1}{2}$ to 3 inches. The highest and lowest cups are connected by a vertical groove 6 feet 6 inches long and $1\frac{1}{4}$ inches wide, running into a loop in the middle and at the bottom (fig. 7). Four of the cups are placed together as on dice, forming a rude quatrefoil. The bottom of the long groove and the lowest cups are 2 feet below the present level of the ground. On the other side of the valley, a furlong to the south-west, close to Craighall Mill Dam, is a circle of 4 stones (fig. 8) on the top of a grassy knoll. The diameter of the circle is 18 feet, and the average size of the stones 5 feet by 4 feet by 3 feet. Sir James Simpson refers briefly to the Glenballoch stone as follows:—"Cup excavations exist also on an erect standing stone at a megalithic circle behind Craighall House, Blairgowrie. The cups are five or six in number, and placed in a group near the foot of the stone."¹

The Glenballoch Urn.—While I was examining the stone just described,

¹ Proc. Soc. Ant. Scot., vol. vi., Appendix, p. 15.

Mr George Harris of Glenballoch came up and kindly offered to bare the foot of the stone so as to enable me to make a complete rubbing of the cup-markings. In the course of conversation Mr Harris mentioned that he had dug up a "pig" a few years ago, and said that if I would accompany him to his house he would let me see it. I accepted his offer, and to my surprise and delight he produced the broken fragments of the "pig" out of a disused dog kennel in the garden. The "pig" turned out to be the magnificent ancient British cinerary urn (fig. 9), now exhibited. Mr Harris at my suggestion offered to present it to the National Museum of Scottish Antiquities, and allowed me to take it away there and then in an old garden basket. I took every care to preserve the fragments from further injury, and was so far successful that, on placing them in Mr Anderson's hands, he was enabled to have them put together so skilfully and well. Mr Harris told me that he found the urn inside a stone circle near Glenballoch Farm House. The urn was full of bones, and was protected by stones built round it in a

beehive form. Mr Harris also informed me that about twenty years ago he had dug up a stone with cup-markings upon it, on the opposite side of the valley to the south-east of the Glenballoch stone. The stone lay horizontally with the cups uppermost. It was split up and is now built

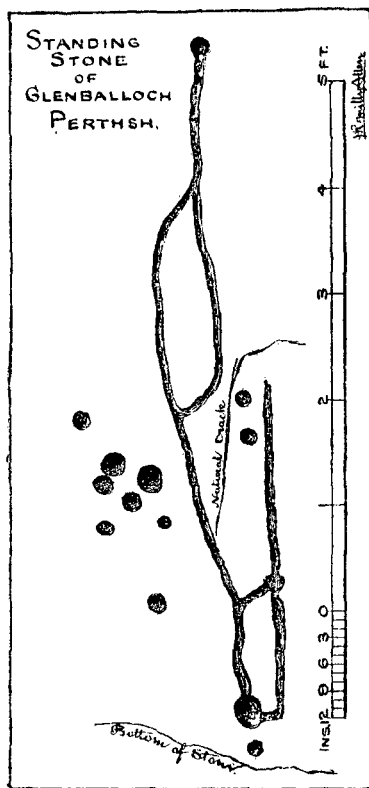


Fig. 7.

into the out buildings of Glenballoch Farm. The two largest fragments form the cover and sill of the hole through which the shaft of the

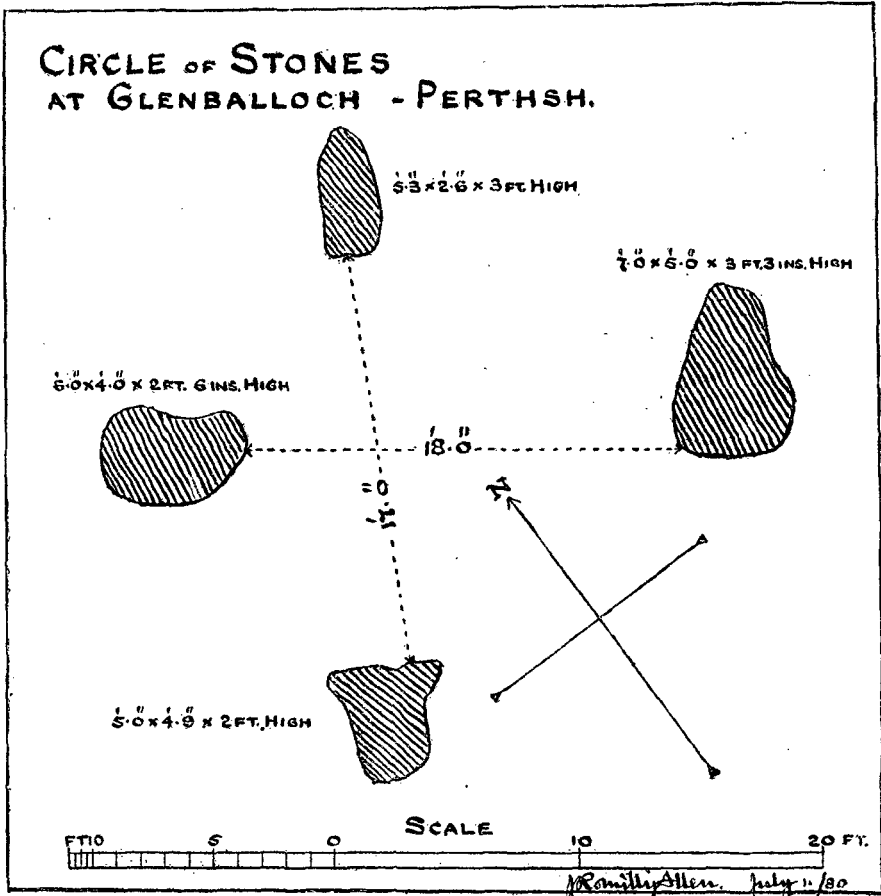


Fig. 8.

threshing machine passes through the wall of the horse-mill, into the house. A third fragment is built in above the window at the opposite

side of the house, and is of greenish hue. Mr Harris expressed his great regret at not having known the value of this stone when he broke it up, and he is evidently proud of the stone which remains, and is determined that no ill shall befall it as long as he remains its guardian. The cup marks on the stone which was broken appear to have been arranged sym-



Fig. 9. Urn found in a stone circle at Glenballoch (25½ inches high).

metrically in two rows, and Mr Harris affirms distinctly that they were alternately circular and rectangular. Mr Harris showed me a beautifully formed flint arrow-head and some spindle whorls he had found in the neighbourhood. The following are the dimensions of the urn :—

Diameter at top inside, $10\frac{1}{2}$ inches ; diameter at top outside, 12 inches ; greatest diameter 14 inches, below top $3\frac{1}{2}$ inches ; diameter at bottom 6 inches ; height outside $25\frac{1}{2}$ inches.

The greatest diameter, as above mentioned, is at a point $3\frac{1}{2}$ inches below the top, and the profile of the side slopes inwards both towards the top and bottom from thence. The sloping rim round the top thus formed is most beautifully ornamented with a zigzag moulding dividing the circumference into triangles and one diamond, all recessed below the surface. The occurrence of the diamond amongst the triangles is probably explained by the difficulty of making the two ends of the zigzag meet exactly. Artifices of this kind for overcoming geometrical difficulties in setting out occur frequently in Norman mouldings, where a change in the pattern is used to hide the defect. Below the zigzag moulding are two furrows with a ridge between which serve to emphasise the broadest part of the urn. The whole of the mouldings are ornamented by rows of oval dots apparently produced by means of a pointed stick. All the workmanship of this urn is very carefully finished, and will compare favourably with that of any other production of Ceramic art, ancient or modern.