

#### IV.

##### NOTICE OF STONE CIRCLES AND CUP-MARKED STONES IN STRATH-BRAAN, PERTHSHIRE. BY JAMES MACKINTOSH GOW, F.S.A. Scot.

During a holiday in the month of September 1884, in Strathbraan, I took the opportunity to examine a stone circle on the hillside above the farm of Meikle Fandowie. It is on Lord Mansfield's property, and situated 5 miles west from Dunkeld, on the south side of the River Braan.

The hill is named on the Ordnance Map "Airlich" (a name perhaps having reference to the circle), and is easily distinguished by its remarkably conical shape; the summit is 1026 feet above the sea-level. The stone circle (fig. 1) is also marked on the map, about half-way up the hill, and is on the slope, facing north, to the south-west of the farmhouse. Six of the stones are standing in their original positions, and other four are thrown down, one being in several pieces; but the circle does not appear to have consisted of more than the ten stones, and,

roughly speaking, is about 25 feet in diameter. The stones, which are still standing are about 3 feet above ground. The circle is little known in the district, and no tradition exists regarding it.

My next excursion was to the farm of Little Fandowie, about a mile further west, on the same side of the river, and also on Lord Mansfield's property. The tenants of the farm are very old people, and although they have lived nearly all their days within a mile of the circle above referred to, they had never seen it. I was informed, however, that in a corn-field about 400 yards west from the farm-house, there was a group of stones called in Gaelic *Clachan Aoradh*, and on proceeding there I found the remains of a circle which probably had been

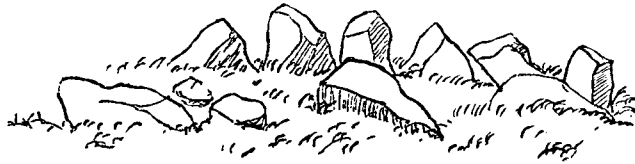


Fig. 1. Stone Circle on Findowie Hill, Strathbraan, Perthshire.

nearly of the same dimensions as the one already described, but all the stones, with one exception, have been thrown down and huddled together, and some of them broken. The only one left standing, which appeared to be in its original position, is 4 feet above ground. It resembles the trunk of a large tree, about 2 feet in diameter, and is perfectly flat and smooth on the top. The name applied to this group of stones, *Clachan Aoradh*, which is understood as "worshipping stones," has no doubt prevented their total destruction or removal from cultivated ground. There is a mountain ash tree of considerable age standing beside the only remaining upright stone.

Near the steading of this farm of Little Fandowie, there was pointed out a stone enclosure of comparatively recent date, in which there was said to be an old burial-place. On examining it, I found that it contained what appeared to be the foundation of a chapel, about 33 feet long from east to west, by about 20 feet broad at the east end. The

ground was deeply covered with grass and weeds, and no headstones or other marks of burial were visible.

Outside of the enclosure, however, and scattered about, were several large whinstone boulders, on one of which (fig. 2), near the entrance, were nine cup marks. This stone is 6 feet long by 3 feet broad, and 2 feet 6 inches deep; the largest of the cups is 4 inches in diameter.

Mr Anderson, one of the tenants of the farm, who is about ninety years of age, informed me that his father had told him of the last interment made in this burial-place. It was that of a child belonging to

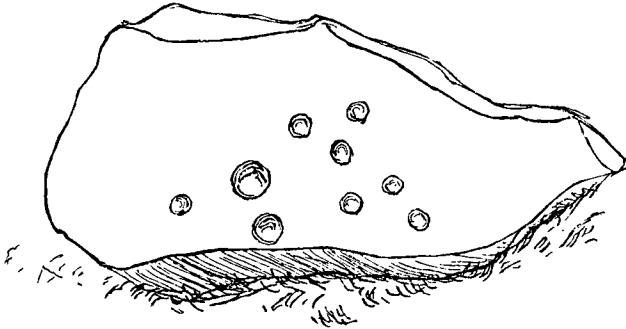


Fig. 2. Cup-marked Stone at Little Fandowie, Strathbraan, Perthshire.

a soldier (perhaps one of General Wade's sappers), who worked at the road from Crieff to Dunkeld, some time after the period of the Rebellion. Mr Anderson himself had seen a person of the name of Macduff, who came to the spot to bury one of his teeth, as he said the ground was the burial-place of the family. The chapel had probably given the name "Fandowie" to the place, meaning the church or burial-place of the Duffs, which may be synonymous with "Kilduff," a name which occurs in other parts of Scotland.

The foundations of the house or castle of a Baron Macduff, who flourished in the time of James V., were also pointed out, quite near and east from the chapel, and all round were marks of buildings, as if a considerable number of people had lived under the baron's wing. His traditionary fame as a warrior still remains. He was the best bowman

far or near, and many stories are told of his exploits. A tree, on which he hanged his people, stood near the house. The king, in one of his frolics and disguised as a beggar, had visited the baron, and was hospitably entertained, the baron being afterwards summoned to Scone to dine with the king, who then made himself known as the visitor at Fandowie, and gave Macduff a grant of land, "from the one burn to the other," in token of his regard for the kindness he had received. King James had a hunting seat at Trochrie, three miles further east in the Strath; the remains of one of its towers are still standing.

On inquiring at the farm of Tomnagairn, also in Strathbraan, on the north side of the river, and nearly opposite to Little Fandowie, Mr Macduff, the tenant, mentioned a stone with cup markings (fig. 3), on which he

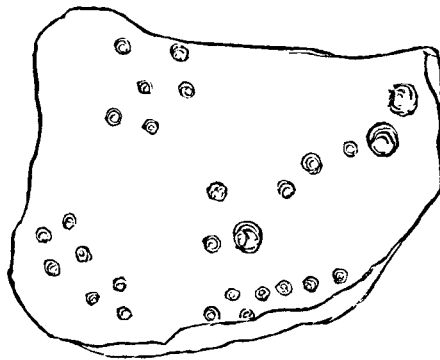


Fig. 3. Cup-marked Stone at Tomnagairn, Strathbraan, Perthshire.

had played when a boy,—“making,” as he said, “the gathered rain run from one cup to the other.” It lies on the top of a stratified rock, which juts out of the ground in one of the fields, half-way between the farmhouse and the road to Amulree, and slightly east from the six-mile stone. There are twenty-eight cups of various sizes on the stone, which is harp-shaped, 4 feet 8 inches in length, 3 feet 8 inches broad at the top, 3 feet 4 inches across the centre, 1 foot 6 inches deep at one side, and 8 inches at the other. On showing this stone a few days afterwards to the Rev. Mr Maclean, Grandtully, who happened to be in the district, he suggested that

it was part of the rock on which it lay, and this was confirmed by our finding three additional cups on the rock itself (fig. 4). Endeavours had evidently been made to remove the obstruction from the field in the course of reclaiming the ground, but these had gone no further than detaching the top of the rock, and leaving it where it now remains.

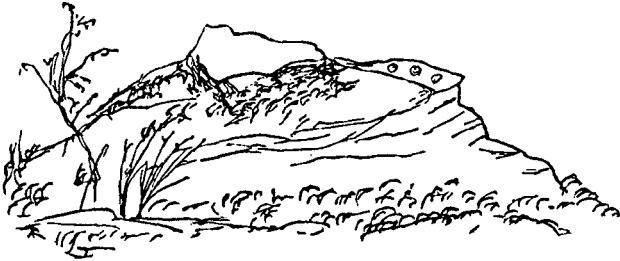


Fig. 4. Cup-marked Rock, Tomnagairn, Strathbraan, Perthshire.