

## II.

## NOTES ON SOME PREHISTORIC STRUCTURES IN GLENELG AND KINTAIL. By LOCKHART BOGLE, F.S.A. Scot.

Glenelg is peculiarly rich in structural antiquities. I have taken the measurements, &c., of some of them, leaving out, however, the two well-known Brochs, Dun Elètha and Dun Tròtan, both in the Glenbeg, and now said to have been placed under the protection of the Ancient Monuments Act.

*Dun Grùgaig.*—From the manse of Glenelg, I crossed the hill to the direct southward. When I came to be half way down the hillside, I noticed below me, on the gently sloping shoulder of a hill, a faint circlet

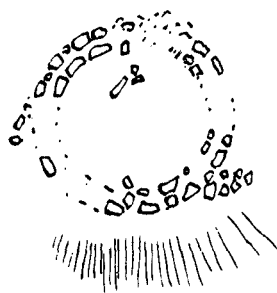


Fig. 1. On the hill between Glenelg and Glenbeg.

of stones (fig. 1). The place is about 500 feet above the level of the sea, and is slightly to the East of Correry farm, and the broch, Dun Tròtan. The broch, however, cannot be actually seen from the stone circle. On examining the stones, I found there had been a circular enclosure of a wall 5 feet thick, surrounding an internal diameter of about 30 feet. Some of the stones were of large size. The site chosen would not recommend itself as a place suitable for defence, the sward being fairly level. From its fragmentary state

and grass-grown appearance, this building probably belongs to the class of prehistoric remains.

Continuing onward, I reached the head of Glenbeg, where the prospect widens into radii of remote glens, each with its torrent. Dun Grùgaig is perched on a rock towering over the ravine of the river. Before ascending the height, however, my attention was attracted to another and very peculiar circular enclosure close to the river (fig. 2). This was large in design, and the walls of great thickness. Though very dilapidated, the walls could be easily traced through the masses of

strong heather which attempted to conceal the masonry. A row of large elongated stones had been placed upright along the inner edge of the circular wall, and each stone must have been firmly fixed beneath, as not one could be stirred. The height of the highest above the ground would be about 3 feet. I cannot divine what could have been the object of this method of building. Excavation may solve the problem. Neither this nor the previously described circular building is to be found on the one-inch Ordnance Survey map.

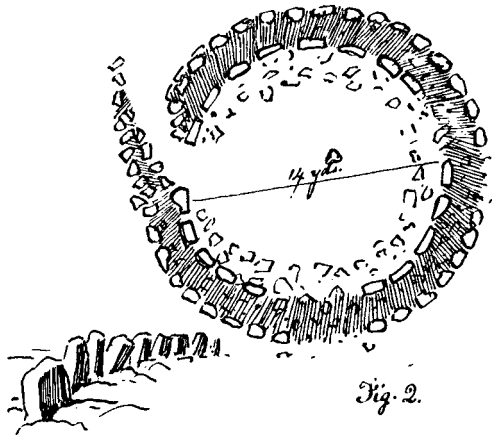
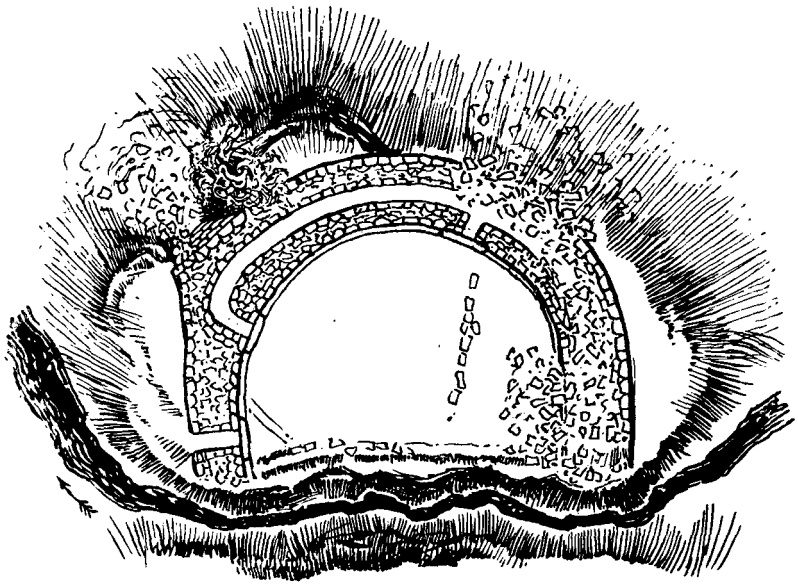


Fig. 2. Circular foundation at the head of Glenbeg.

Most interesting is the broch-like structure of Dun Grùgaig<sup>1</sup> (fig. 3), hanging over the mountain river, and within sound of its everlasting murmurs. On the E. side, where there is no great natural protection, a stupendous wall has been reared, fully 15 feet thick at the base, and much the highest part of the broch. The proximity of the river channel precludes the notion of its ever having been circular; the river being confined by the solid sides of rock must always have flowed as it now does. I give a sketch from the N., of part of the

<sup>1</sup> Gordon in 1726, and Sir Henry Dryden who planned this structure in 1871, call it Castle Chonil.



Figs. 3, 4. Plan and view of exterior wall of Dun Grùgaig.

wall, with a strange twisted rowan tree, which looked as if it might be almost as ancient as the structure itself (fig. 4).

Dun Grùgaig has the intermural galleries and other peculiarities of the broch. As to the "ground floor" chambers, I was unable to see the approaches to any, the interior being, of course, heaped up with debris; but the first gallery is laid open most of the way. The wall on the E. side contains a second gallery, which is in a tottering condition (fig. 5). I remember once as a boy having crept into this upper gallery for shelter from rain. Untold wealth could not tempt me to enter it now. It is a pity that this very fine ruin has not been propped up like its two neighbouring towers in the glen, and

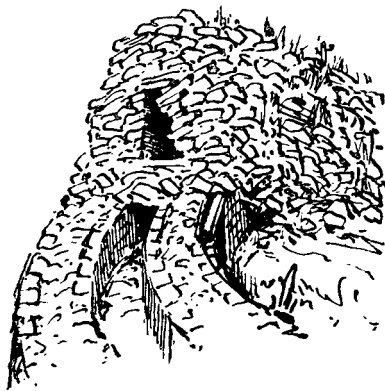


Fig 5. Dun Grùgaig—galleries in wall.

put under the protection of the Board of Works. The wall on the E. attained the height of 14 feet, and, judging from the fallen material visible, must have been much higher. A narrow wall lined the edge of the cliff, probably to protect the inmates from the arrows of the foe on the rock across the river. Traces of walls existed in the interior, which was 58½ feet in its longest interior diameter. All the lintels had not been carried away; three still remained,—one over a doorway, most difficult of access.

The *Bàghan Burblach* (fig. 6).—I am not certain of the precise meaning of the word *Bàghan* in this connection. Macleod and Dewar's Dictionary gives "*Badhan*; a little harbour, a creek, a road for ships," none of which will apply to this subject.

Joyce, in his *Irish Names of Places*, however, gives the following explanation, in the chapter on Habitations and Fortresses:—"Beside

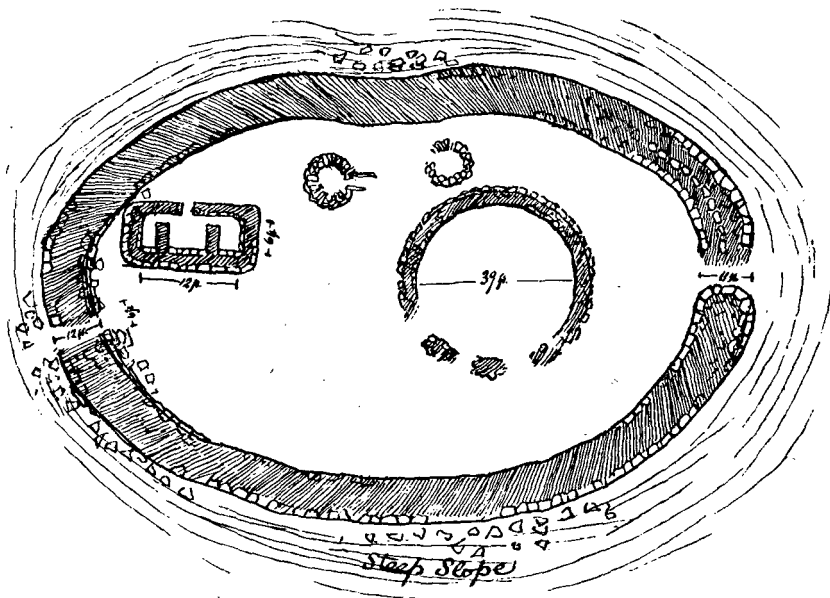


Fig. 6. The *Bàghan Burblach*.

many of the old castles there was a bawn (*Badhun*) or large enclosure, surrounded by a strong fence or wall, which was often protected by towers; and into this enclosure the cattle were driven by night to protect them from wolves or robbers. O'Donovan also accounts for the name "bawn," which frequently appears in documents relating to Irish history since the plantation of Ulster, as being the Anglicised form of the Irish *Badhun*, an enclosure or

fortress for cows. But in its Anglicised form in the 16th and 17th centuries it is often used for the courtyard of a castle or other fortified enclosure.

Burblach is the name of the old farm on which the Bāghan is situated.

Close to the stables of the Glenelg manse is a green hill, with a summit resembling the interior of a boat, slightly concave within, with rising prow and stern. A wall 11 feet thick forms the gunwale of the boat, with entrances E. and W. The remains of the wall are nowhere over a few feet in height. The exact width of the entrances cannot be determined without excavation, but it seems to be 6 feet. Inside are the remains of a hut of comparatively recent erection. Remarkable traces of a circle, 39 feet in diameter internally, are discovered near the centre of the enclosure. The walls of this circle are much grass-grown, and measure 5 feet in thickness. Numerous traces of small circular huts, 5 or 6 feet across inside, are found in the Bāghan, which is of great size, the interior measuring 34 yards by 56 yards. No vestiges of intermural chambers are to be found.

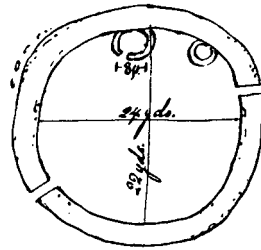


Fig. 7. The Bāghan Galldair.

The *Bāghan Galldair* (fig. 7).—This is a smaller Bāghan, being 22 yards by 24 yards, beside the hill road which leads to Ardintoul. The walls, 8 feet thick, are composed of smallish stones; and there are two entrances. Inside are traces of two circular huts.

“*Caisteal MhicLeod*” or *MacLeod’s Castle*.—Behind the village of Galldar, sheer cliffs rise to a great height, and seem to threaten the huts beneath with destruction. On the edge of one of these precipices is perched, like an eyrie, Macleod’s Castle (fig. 8). Castle, however, it never was, in the mediæval sense of the word, and examination only tends to show that it belongs to that strange class of prehistoric buildings, constructed with dry stone, or, as is evidently the case here, with stone and earth. On the highest part of the summit a semicircular

wall of irregular form is drawn across the level space (fig. 9), leaving a narrow and dangerous entrance to the E., where a slip might mean death. The wall is entirely grass-grown, but some of the stones are still *in situ*. On the W. side, where there is no great slope, the wall measures 14 feet in thickness; on the E., 9 feet only. There are traces of a hollow in the N. wall, such as might be caused by a small window, but this explanation is doubtful. There is also what appears to be the remains of a row of large stones in the centre of the W. wall. A similar appearance is noticed in the Burlach Baghan E. wall (fig. 6). A narrow wall forming the S. side of the fort seems to have run along the lip of the cliff, as if for protection from the precipice. What seemed

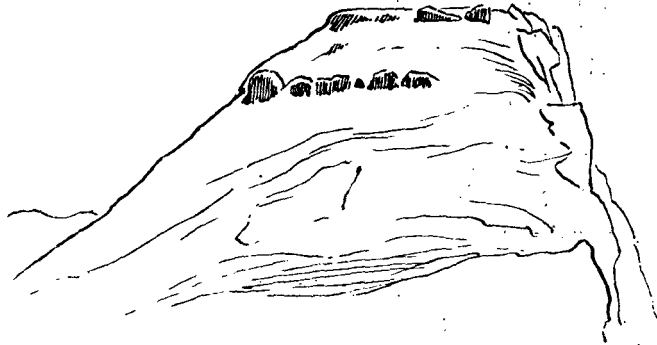


Fig. 8. Site of Macleod's Castle.

to have been a strong outwork ran along on the N. to the cliff, where the outer entrance might have been. The natives had long been in the habit of pushing the stones over the rock and using them for the erection of their huts.

This "castle" is peculiar in having a well-known and firmly believed tradition relative to its occupation as a dwelling in historic times. I obtained this tradition from several of the oldest men of the place. "It was last inhabited by 'Alistair Crotach' (the humpbacked), the first chief of Macleod who came to Glenelg. His child fell over the

rock and was killed ; so he left the castle, and went to another dwelling called *Dalla-mhor*, on the site of the present Free Kirk manse." *Alistair Crotach* obtained a charter of Glenelg from James V. in 1539. There is no ruin of any mediæval castle in Glenelg, and it seems to me quite probable that this ancient prehistoric fort might have been used by Macleod as a temporary residence or hunting-lodge when he visited

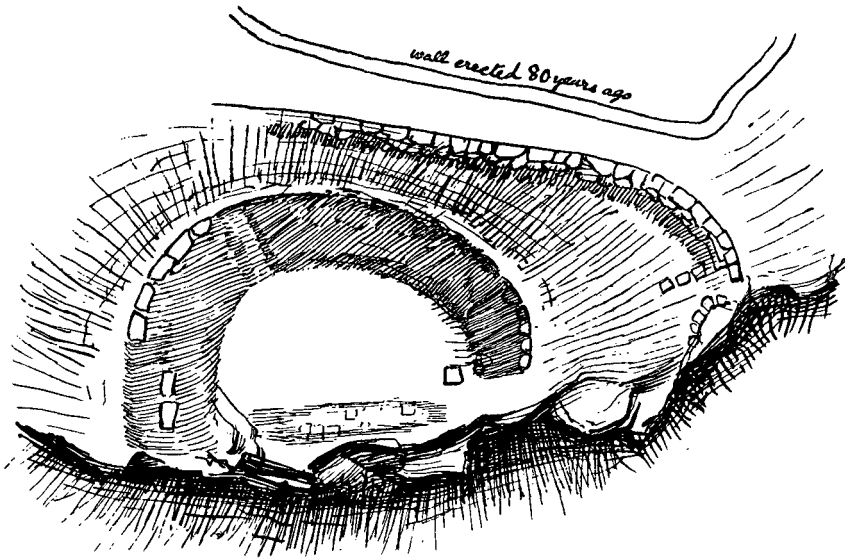


Fig. 9. Macleod's Castle—ground-plan.

that country and collected rents, &c. The smallness of the internal dimensions (18 feet by 34 feet), the difficult entrance, and the sense of the terrible storms which must sometimes sweep over the rock, make one fully realise what an eirie habitation "Macleod's Castle" must have been in old times.



## KINTAIL.

Near the farm of Beolary is a high alluvial bank, through which the river has cut its way. On the top of the bank are faint traces of some circular building, the half of which seems to have fallen into the river through the wearing away of the bank. In the bed of the stream, immediately below, can be seen large stones. From the few stones to be seen on the top, I found the outer measurement was 13 yards in diameter (fig. 10).

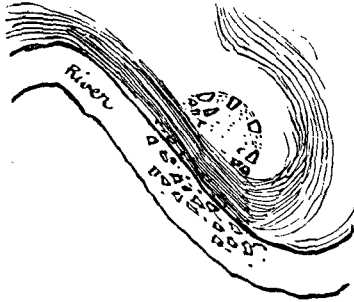


Fig. 10. Circular structure near Beolary.

*Kintail, Dunan Diarmaid* (fig. 11).—In close proximity to the E.C. manse of Kintail is a little peninsula running out into Loch Duich. A rock usurps almost the entire space of the promontory, and on its top is found an irregular circle of very thick wall, almost level with the ground and covered with grass. Some

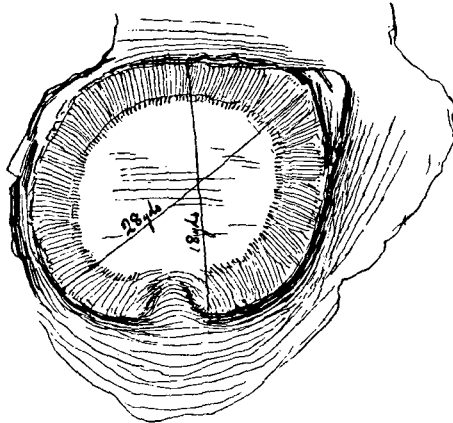


Fig. 11. Dun an Diarmaid.

of the outer stones seem to be still *in situ*. No doubt the two-storied

house, a short distance off, has been built of the stones. To the S. is a wide hollow in the wall, which formed the entrance. Little or none of the structure can be seen without excavation, but from the outline not being a pure circle, and from the absence of indications of wall chambers, I consider it to be no broch. Measurements from outside walls, 28 yards by 18 yards.

The word *Diarmaid*, associated with the *Dunan* or little Dun, also occurs in *Uaigh Diarmaid*, or Diarmaid's grave (fig. 12), which lies in a field close by. Twenty large rough stones, of an average length of 2 feet each, extend to the length of 27 feet in a double parallel row, while the measurement across from the outer edge of the stones is 8 feet. Five of the stones have been removed or have sunk out of sight. The remaining fifteen are embedded on a level with the grass, which might argue for a great antiquity. The tradition of the natives affirms that Diarmaid

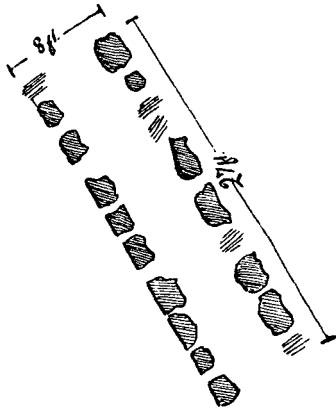


Fig. 12. Diarmaid's Grave.

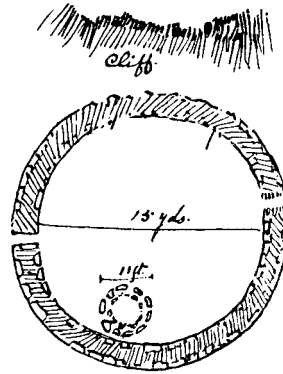


Fig. 13. Near the manse of Kintail.

and his wife are both buried here,—the Diarmaid being the hero celebrated in the Fingalian ballads.

Not far from the same manse, on the way to Dornie, is found beside the road a circular walled enclosure (fig. 13). It seems similar in some respects to the Genelg Bàghans. The space inside contains a small circular

building 11 feet outside diameter, and it measures in total diameter 15 yards. The walls are 5 feet thick ; and there are two entrances, each seemingly 1 yard wide. It is singular that the structure is built on a slope beneath a high cliff, from which arrows could be fired into it.