

II.

NOTES OF ANTIQUITIES IN LOCH ALSH AND KINTAIL. BY THOMAS WALLACE, F.S.A. SCOT., HIGH SCHOOL, INVERNESS.

The broch "Castle Grugag" is a round tower or broch similar to those in the neighbouring Glenelg. It stands at the foot of a precipitous rock called Onag, on the south shore of the extreme east end of Loch Alsh, and about half a mile west of Totag Ferry. The highest point to the south-west of the castle is called Faire-an-Dun (the watching-place of the tower). Grugag is the only specimen, as far as I know, in Loch Alsh. It differs in no particular from others of its class except in the larger size of the stones, and the shape of one that surmounts the doorway. This stone is triangular, and was in all probability found in that shape by the builder.¹ One side measures 4 feet and the other 3 feet 6 inches, while its height is a little over 3 feet. I had the privilege of seeing this broch cleared out in 1889, and can give the following particulars of the ruins as they now stand. The doorway measures 4 feet 9 inches high on the outside, 3 feet 6 inches wide at the base, and 2 feet 9 inches at the top. The west side of passage measures 6 feet 6 inches high and 12 feet long at the base. About half way up it measures about 11 feet 10 inches long. Inside the doorway on the west side there is 4 feet 4 inches of wall from the entrance. From this point the wall recedes 7 or 8 inches, and continues towards the inside for 7 feet. The inside of the doorway on the east side shows the following measurements:—From the entrance the wall measures 4 feet 4 inches, and then recedes 8 inches, and from this point the wall continues for 7 feet to the interior of the castle. On the right-hand side, looking inwards, about 16 inches from the entrance, there is an opening 3 inches wide, and circular in form. One section of the wall, 10 inches from the base, showed the following measurements:—3 feet 8 inches of wall, 3 feet 3 inches of passage, and 3 feet of wall, making

¹ Since writing these notes, I have ascertained that at least two of the Sutherlandshire Brochs have similar triangular stones above the doorway.

in all 9 feet 11 inches. This measurement was from the outside inwards. The floor of the castle was the sloping face of solid rock. All that was found in it was half of a quern.

Vitrified Forts.—The island on which Castle Donan stands at Dornie has been fortified by a vitrified wall on the land side. There is a vitrified Fort on a rocky knoll between the Glennan Burn and Loch Long, to the north of Bundalloch. From the remains, this fort has been of oval shape, measuring 33 feet from W.S.W. by 28 feet broad. The site of the fort is called “The point of the tower,” and the fort itself the “Bard’s Castle.” Fifty yards east of the fort is a large carried boulder, resting on the 50 feet terrace, and called the “Bard’s Stone.” From this fort the site of another can be seen in the neighbourhood of Ardelve.

Cup-marked Stones.—In Glen Elchaig, at the head of Loch Long, there is one large boulder at Fadoch and another at Camus-linne, on the opposite side of the river, covered with cups of the usual size and character, but no rings. Both stones lie on slight eminences, about the same height above the river. At Dornie there is a stone built into the dyke on the right-hand side of the road as you leave the village to go towards the church. This one has seven or eight cups. At Carr, about 2 miles from Dornie, on the east side of Loch Duich, there is a boulder covered with cups. About half a mile south-east of the manse of Kintail there are a number of boulders between the road and the river, bearing numerous cups. The most interesting group is to be found between Lienassie and Dorusduan, where there is an exposed glaciated rock-surface on the low ground, literally covered with cups. If the turf were removed, I have no doubt many more would be seen. On a point of rock jutting out to the sea at Totag Ferry there are some very large and deep cups. This rock is limestone, and the cups may have been the result of weathering. There are others similar to them in some of the outer islands.

Military Roads.—The first road-makers in Britain were the Romans. After their departure their roads were allowed to fall into disuse; but there were no properly made roads in the Highlands till the last century, the first roads having been mere tracks or drove-roads. General Wade

began his road-making about 1724, and continued the work till 1733, when he was succeeded by General Clayton, who extended the Highland Road from Crieff to Stirling. Wade's roads after this were always spoken of as the "old roads." In 1733 Calfield was appointed Inspector of the new roads. In 1747 he was entrusted with the making of a road from Dumbarton to Inveraray, Lord Albemarle being the Commander-in-Chief of the Forces. From 1747 to 1768 sums varying from £5000 to £10,000 were annually spent upon new roads. In 1814 the military roads were handed over to the Commissioners of Highland Roads and Bridges. One of the principal Military Roads in the Highlands was the one from Fort-Augustus to Bernera and Skye, passing through Glen Shiel. The following reference to this road is made in vol. xxxii. of the House of Commons Journals, p. 701:—"To a party to work upon the road leading from Fort-Augustus to Bernera and the island of Sky, which party to consist of 2 Subaltern officers, 92 days, at 3d. each per diem, 4 Sergeants at 1s. each, 4 Corporals at 18d. each, 2 Drummers and 100 men at 6d. each = £292, 17s. 4d. Extraordinary charges for Artificers, carts, tools, lime, underground drains, coal and other incidental expenses, £239, 10s. 0d." It is pretty certain that at least for fifteen years (1770-1784) a regimental party was employed each year upon this road; and as the regiments in Fort-Augustus would be changed each year, the stones recording a year's work might each be the record of different regiments.¹ Figs. 1 and 2 are representations from photographs of stones in Glenshiel, evidently set up in connection with the road to Bernera, each probably marking a year's work. No. 1 still stands on an old road in Glenshiel, about 2 miles from Shiel Inn. It bears the inscription "XXIV. Reg. Ended." It measures 2 feet 6 inches high; breadth at the top 14 inches, at the middle $16\frac{1}{2}$ inches, and at the bottom 22 inches, and is 4 inches thick. No. 2 is unfortunately not in its original position, but lies in front of the house, in the wall of which it was discovered, some years ago, on the shores of Loch Duich, about 2 miles from Shiel Inn. Its dimensions are similar to No. 1, and the inscription runs—"The IV. of King's Own Royal Reg. made 249 (yards?) of Road Ea[st], 1771."

Old Brooch.—A small circular brooch was washed out of the gravel

¹ For these notes I am indebted to Sir Kenneth J. Mackenzie of Gairloch.

of a mountain stream near Dorrisduan shooting-ledge. It is made of copper, and is of the rudest workmanship, and measures 2 inches in outer diameter and $1\frac{1}{4}$ inches inside diameter, the breadth of the rim being $\frac{3}{8}$ of an inch. On one side it is covered with zigzag ornament, which can only be seen by the aid of a glass, owing to the amount of corrosion it has suffered.

Underground Dwelling.—The position of this dwelling can still be pointed out, although the entrance has been closed up for years. It is thus described by Miss Gordon Cumming :—“ About a mile from Shiel



Fig. 1.

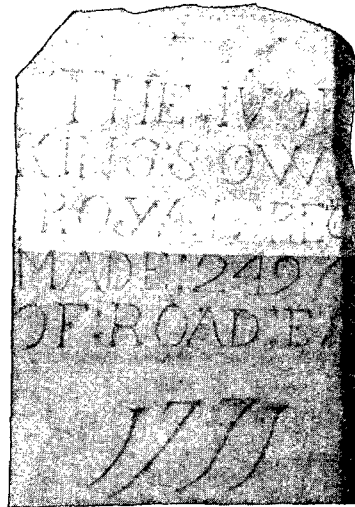


Fig. 2.

Regimental Tablets erected on General Wade's Road.

Inn is a subterranean cave, close to the road, into which you may crawl. Once inside, you will find a chamber 8 feet high, paved and lined with large flag-stones, and with a stone roof of long slabs, resting on cross rafters also of stone.”