

II.

ARCHÆOLOGICAL GLEANINGS FROM ABERFELDY, WITH NOTICES OF IRON "YETTS" AT GRANTULLY, STIRLING, AND EDINBURGH. BY C. G. CASH, CORR. MEM. SOC. ANT. SCOT.

During August 1910 my wife and I spent some holiday time at Aberfeldy. We had with us the Society's reports dealing with the Stone Circles of that district, and picked up in places items of additional information about them, and are able also to add to the list.

1. *Stone Circles at Tegarmuchd.*—In our second visit to these, as the fields were free from crop, some slight excavation was made so as to clear up some points that had previously been left doubtful.

In the middle of the northerly circle had been reported a stone that suggested a cist cover. But excavation showed that the portion above ground was merely the narrow shoulder or edge of a large irregularly pyramidal stone, 5 feet 7 inches long, and at its widest 2 feet 10 inches wide. This is almost certainly the stone that is missing from the south point of the circle.

At the southerly circle excavation exposed stones of whose presence there was evidence (fig. 1). On the circumference of a circle slightly less than 38 feet in radius are three stones: the one at the east is the standing stone previously figured; the two others, at the south-east and the south, are prostrate slabs. A little within the circle on the west are two bouldery stones, and well within the circle towards the south-east is another stone. All the northern half of the circle seems devoid of stones. The south-east stone was entirely covered by growing turf, which was removed, revealing a slab about 8 feet long, and 4 feet 3 inches across at its widest. It bears on its newly exposed surface four cup-marks arranged in a cross; the north and south cups are $1\frac{1}{4}$ inches deep and well made; the east and west cups are much less well formed. The south stone is a similar slab, just over

11 feet long, roughly elliptical in outline, and about 5 feet 9 inches in greatest breadth. It bears at its north end two cup-marks, each 3 inches in diameter. In the west part of the circle there seemed to

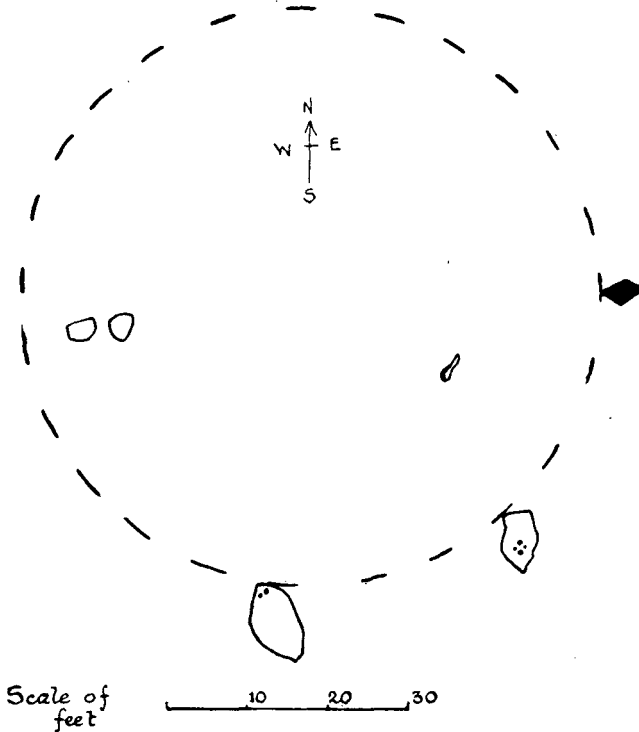


Fig. 1. Remains of South Circle at Tegarmuchd.

be a stone under the turf, and considerable excavation revealed two roundish boulders each about 3 feet in diameter; they were quite different in style from either the east pillar or the prostrate slabs. The stone that showed through the turf in the south-east part of the

circle proved to be a slab lying edge-wise ; it is 2 feet 4 inches long, 6 inches thick, and extended downwards to an unascertained depth. Against its north-east corner lay a block, and against its south-east corner lay several small slabby pieces of stone. Removal of these small slabs revealed only ordinary soil.

In the field lies a small cup-marked stone. It is a rounded boulder with a diameter of 2 feet, and carries one cup-mark.

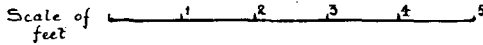
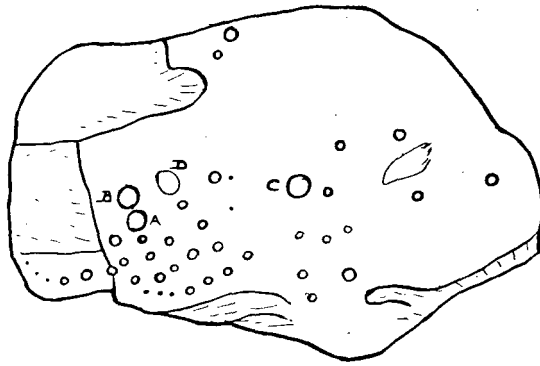


Fig. 2. Cup-marked Stone at Balhomais.

2. *Standing Stone at Tullichro.*—This site is on the north side of the main road, about three-quarters of a mile east from the Tegarmuchd circles. A plantation of larches occupies a natural knoll by the roadside, and behind it the ground continues to rise irregularly. A small plateau, about an acre in extent, is studded with a natural outcrop of irregular rock masses slightly suggesting a circular arrangement. Among these is the standing stone, about 3 feet 6 inches high.

3. *Cup-marked Stone at Balhomais.*—This stone (fig. 2) lies within a

few feet of the back door of the farmhouse, and is a notably good specimen of a cup-marked boulder. It is rounded and irregular in shape, 7 feet 6 inches in extreme length, 5 feet 6 inches in breadth, and 3 feet in thickness. Its upper surface carries forty-three cups, arranged as shown in the drawing. A is 4 inches in diameter and 1 inch deep, B and C are 4 inches by $\frac{3}{4}$ inch, D is shallow and vaguely shaped. The eight "cups," marked by black dots, are mere small

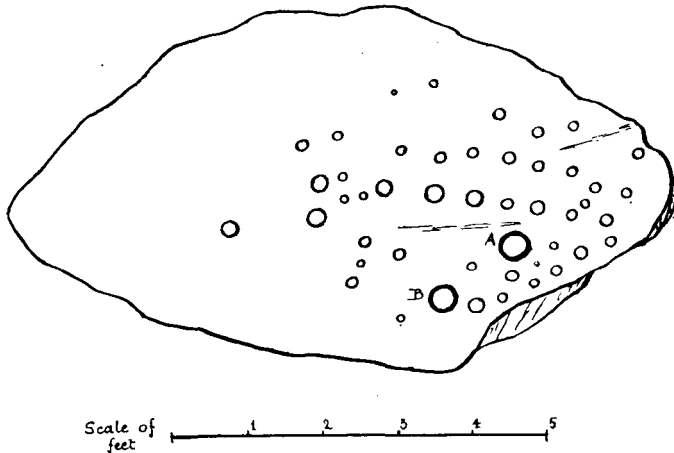


Fig. 3. Cup-marked Stone at Mains of Murthly.

drill holes, not bigger than the sharpened part of an ordinary blacklead pencil.

4. *Cup-marked Stone at Mains of Murthly.*—The farm of Mains of Murthly lies on the south side of the Tay, about a mile east of Aberfeldy. Some three hundred yards south-east of the farmhouse there is a bouldery knoll, near which there was formerly a hamlet, now entirely vanished. Here is a notable cup-marked stone (fig. 3) previously reported by Mr Romilly Allen and by Dr Hugh Macmillan.

The stone is an irregular boulder, with extreme measures of 9 feet, 5 feet, and 2 feet 6 inches. It is thickly coated with leathery lichen, and bears forty-five cups. Of these the two largest, A and B, are each 5 inches in diameter and 2 inches deep. I find that my drawing differs from Mr Allen's, showing more cup-marks than his, but not showing the cup with enclosing ring that appears on his drawing.

Nearer the farm is the somewhat famous "sliding stone," a common play-place for children when the hamlet was there. I do not under-

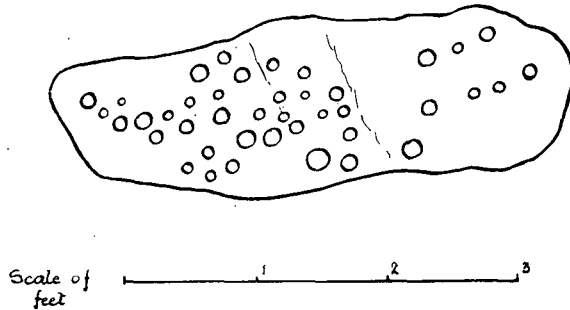


Fig. 4. Cup-marked Stone at Lundin.

stand Mr Allen's dimensions of this stone. Its extreme dimensions are 16 feet by 10 feet by 5 feet.

5. *Cup-marked Stone on Lundin Farm.*—A fine cup-marked slab lies a few yards south of the large stone circle. The slab was entirely hidden by a dense tangle of bushes, and was also largely overgrown with moss. When cleared, the stone, which was about 4 feet long (fig. 4), showed forty-one cup-marks. Dr Hugh Macmillan probably refers to this stone in his report, as he does also to the next object I describe.

6. *The "Priest's Bath," Lundin.*—This stone lay about three hundred yards east of the stone circle, and was almost buried in the

upturned earth on the edge of a ploughed field. When the surrounding earth was dug away the stone appeared as a somewhat rectangular block, rather less than a yard square on its upper face, and with the corners much rounded. The sides splay out slightly towards the base. In the upper face there is hollowed a cup, not quite centric, slightly conical, and about 10 inches deep.

An ancient pathway to the old church of Pitcairn passes the stone circle, comes near where the Priest's Bath now lies, and runs obliquely through a cultivated field.

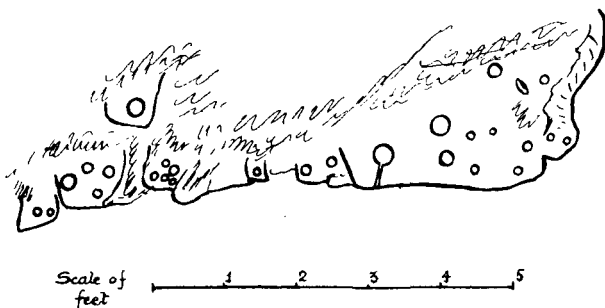


Fig. 5. Cup-marked Rock at Urlar.

7. *Cup-marked Stones and Circle on Urlar Farm.*—From the cross roads at the west end of Aberfeldy the Crieff road ascends southwards, and before it crosses the Moness Burn a steeper road leaves it, keeps on the west side of the burn, and leads past Urlar Farm, and by a hill path to Glen Quaich.

Close behind Urlar Farm a ledge of natural rock (fig. 5) projects irregularly through the turf, and bears numerous cup-marks; it has been reported by Dr H. Macmillan. The exposure of rock is 8 feet in length, and shows twenty-eight cups, one of them with a short groove running from it to the edge of the rock.

Higher up the hill behind Urlar, about a quarter of a mile to the south-west of the house, some 20 square feet of irregular natural rock

surface protrudes through the turf in two sections (fig. 6). On the eastern section are ten cup-marks; on the western section are two cup-marks, and also a depression 8 inches in length, exactly like the print of a human right foot wearing a *riolin* or shoe of untanned hide.

Near the Urlar Burn, about a quarter of a mile upstream from the house, is a circular setting of stones about 33 feet in diameter. The

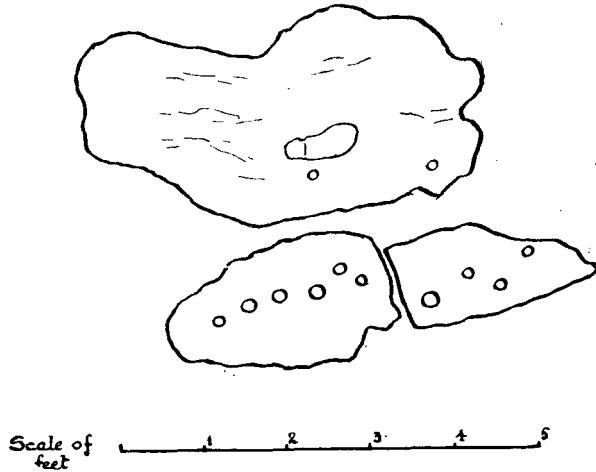


Fig. 6. Cup-marked Rock South-west of Urlar.

stones were quite buried in the turf, and could not be counted. A few yards from the circle towards the stream is a block of stone with sixteen cup-marks on a face 3 feet by 1 foot 6 inches.

On the opposite side of the valley of the Urlar or Moness Burn, some quarter of a mile north of the Coilleaichur Circle, and near the old hill drove road that passes it, lies a cup-marked rock surface previously known, but not reported (fig. 7). The exposure is about 6 feet by 4 feet, and bears three cup-marks not enclosed, and also two groups enclosed by grooves. Of the unenclosed cups two have a diameter of

$1\frac{1}{2}$ inches each, and depths of 1 inch and $\frac{3}{4}$ inch respectively; the third cup is shallow and indefinite. The larger enclosing groove is $19\frac{1}{2}$ inches in diameter, and shallow. It encloses five cups, the largest of which is 2 inches in diameter and 1 inch deep, and has around it a ring 6 inches in diameter, and connected with the enclosing

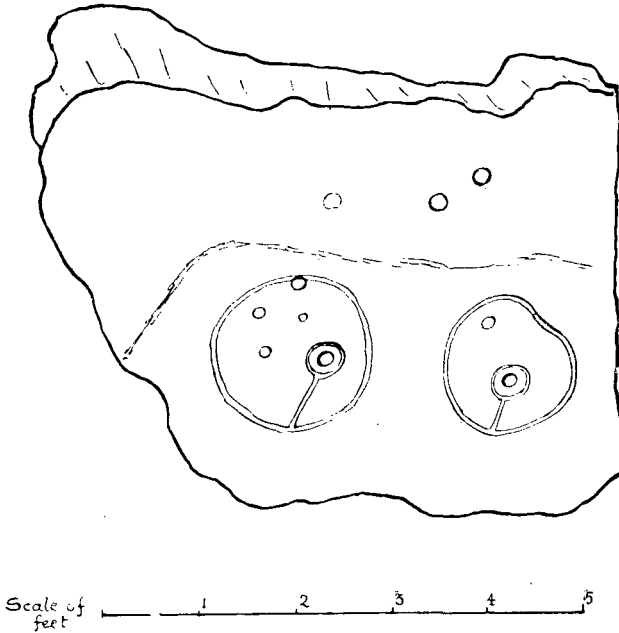


Fig. 7. Cup-marked Rock on Creag Formal.

groove by a straight channel. The smaller enclosing groove, somewhat irregular in shape, is 15 inches in diameter. It contains two cups, the larger of which is $1\frac{1}{2}$ inches in diameter and $\frac{3}{4}$ inch deep, and has around it a ring 6 inches in diameter and connected with the enclosing groove by a straight channel.

Three other cup-marked stones were discovered thereabouts,

apparently not previously known, one of which is here sketched (fig. 8). This stone, on a surface 7 feet by 4 feet, bore nine cups, some of them rather large. The dimensions of the two largest were 5 inches diameter and 2 inches deep; two others had diameters of 4 inches each, and depths of 2 inches and $1\frac{1}{2}$ inches respectively. On one of the stones was another "footprint."

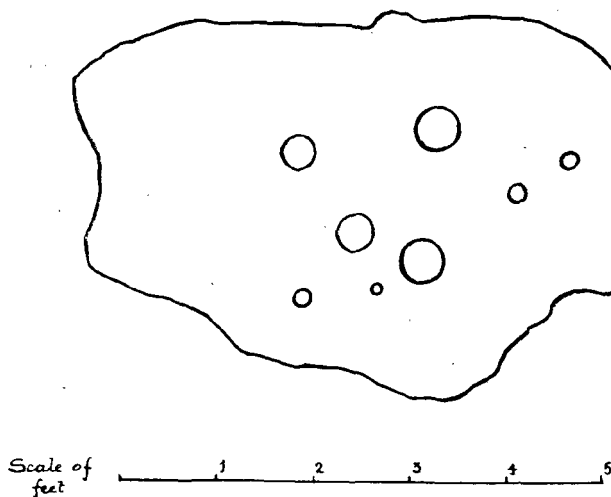


Fig. 8. Cup-marked Stone on Creag Fomal.

8. *A Marked Stone on Mairgmore Farm.*—Where the drove road begins to drop towards the lower ground, on the east of the burn, it passes Mairgmore Farm. Close to the lower building of the farm lies a stone bearing some curious marking (fig. 9). The stone is about 3 feet 6 inches long, and the marks are: (1) a pair like the prints of a cow's hoof, (2) one like the shape of a horse's hoof, (3) an irregularly shaped depression running off into a vague linear irregularity of the surface. These markings seemed to be well known in the immediate neighbourhood, and were called respectively the Cow's Feet, the

Horse's Hoof, and the Pig's Foot. If these markings are natural hollows, they are certainly of exceptionally curious shape; and if they are artificial, they are equally curiously lacking in definition.

9. *Stone Circle at Shian, Glen Quaich.*—On the high ground above Shian the hill road passes a small shooting bothy, and then crosses a wire fence by a stile; the circle is just east of this fence, opposite the midway point between the bothy and the stile. The site is about half

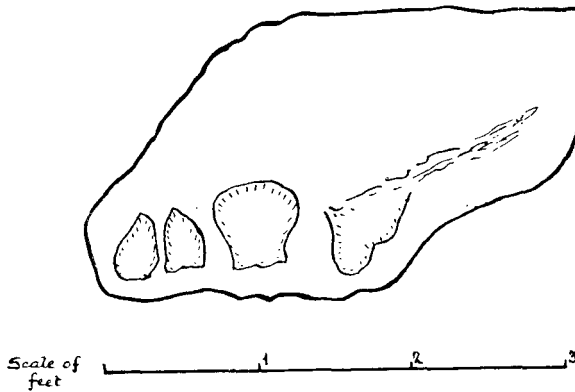


Fig. 9. Curiously marked Stone at Mairgmore.

a mile due north of the schoolhouse of Shian, and at an elevation of about 1500 feet. The ground thereabouts was very marshy. Fig. 10 is only a diagrammatic plan of the circle; a detailed survey would not be very easy to make or very effective, as all the stones are smallish in size, and project but slightly above the heather and rank moss. The circle is about 68 feet in diameter, and has twenty-six stones in place, at irregular intervals, and holes in the ground from which three stones seem to have been removed. The most interesting fact about the circle is that all the stones are blocks of white quartz; this is decidedly uncommon.

IRON "YETTS" AT GRANTULLY, STIRLING, AND EDINBURGH.

10. "Yetts" at Grantully Castle.—At Grantully Castle are two specimens of the Scottish type of interpenetrating iron bar gate called

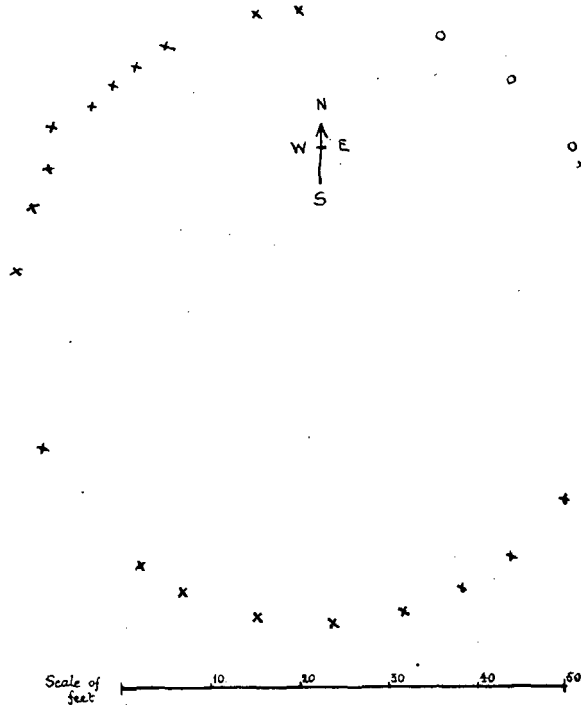


Fig. 10. Stone Circle above Shian, Glen Quaich.

by Dr Christison "yett." Of such gates he gave an interesting account in the *Proceedings* for 1883 and 1888, but the Grantully specimens were unknown to him. One is at the outer door of the castle, apparently in its original position, and in almost perfect condition. In only one bar did it show damage, and that is said to have been done when

the castle was burnt. This "yett" is of full door size, and if closed would lie immediately behind the wooden door. The other "yett" is of an unusual type. It is small, being about a yard long and three-quarters of a yard wide; and it lies horizontally over an opening in the vaulted roof of a dungeon, this opening being the only entrance to the dungeon. This "yett" is in very bad condition, being much rusted away, owing to neglect during the time when the castle stood practically in ruins.

11. "*Yett*" *Constructions at Stirling Castle and Edinburgh Castle.*—In his 1888 paper on "yetts" Dr Christison says that it would be interesting to know whether the Scottish portcullis was constructed on the "yett" principle, and adds that no Scottish portcullis remains in existence. But in the south tower of the inner gateway of Stirling Castle there still exists a small portcullis, and it is of the "yett" construction. Also at Stirling Castle are "yett" window gratings, said to have been placed outside the windows to prevent the abduction of James VI.

At Edinburgh Castle there are several "yett" window gratings at the windows of vaults below the Great Hall and the western adjacent buildings. These windows look out on to the *chemin des rondes* behind the parapet wall. Also there are two "yett" gratings closing two portholes that look eastwards from a battery to the north-west of the portcullis gate.