

## II.

RUTHVEN BARRACKS, IN BADENOCH. BY MAJOR W. MEYER-GRIFFITH, F.S.A. SCOT., F.R.G.S., F.R. HIST. S.

When Sir John Cope, making for Corriearrach Pass, in August 1745, found himself outmanœuvred by Prince Charles Edward, he turned aside from Wade's western road at Blarigg Beg, not far from Dalwhinnie, and marched north to Ruthven, centre of the strongly Jacobite Badenoch district, where General Wade had constructed, in 1737, on the site of an old castle, fortified barracks at the junction of two of his military roads.

The ruins of Ruthven Barracks stand to this day, and consist of two blocks of buildings (see the plan, fig. 1), with an open space between them, possibly once walled in. The buildings face south-east and north-west, and one of the enclosures, containing the barrack square and barracks proper, is far more imposing in every way than the other. The whole is built on a grassy mound (fig. 2) of some 150 feet in height. This mound is probably artificial, but is of very great age, a castle (once residence of the "Wolf of Badenoch") having crowned its summit from remote antiquity. The top of the mound is irregular in shape, and from this it results that the larger enclosure is not quite a square, its sides measuring roughly 27, 26, 26, 24 yards in length. Loopholed towers at the east and west corners guard the two entrance gateways, so placed that they can enfilade the south-east and north-west walls, in the centre of each of which the gateways are pierced. The walls are also loopholed, and arches all round them serve the double purpose of recessing the *meurtrières* and of providing a platform for the sentry walk. The western tower, practically square, has windows and a chimney, and was probably used as a guard-room. The eastern tower, though similar, has, owing to the unsymmetrical shape of the whole building, as mentioned above, its south-east and

**GROUND PLAN  
OF  
RUTHVEN BARRACKS,  
BADENOCH.**

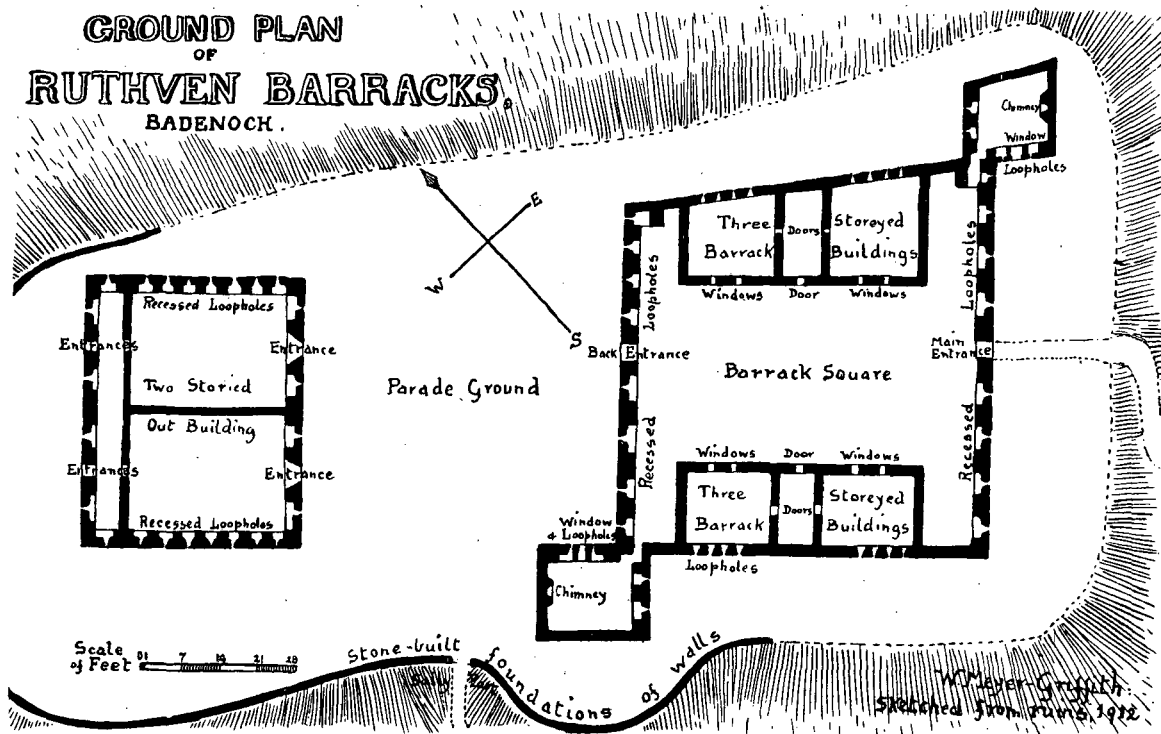


Fig. 1. Ground Plan of Ruthven Barracks, Badenoch.

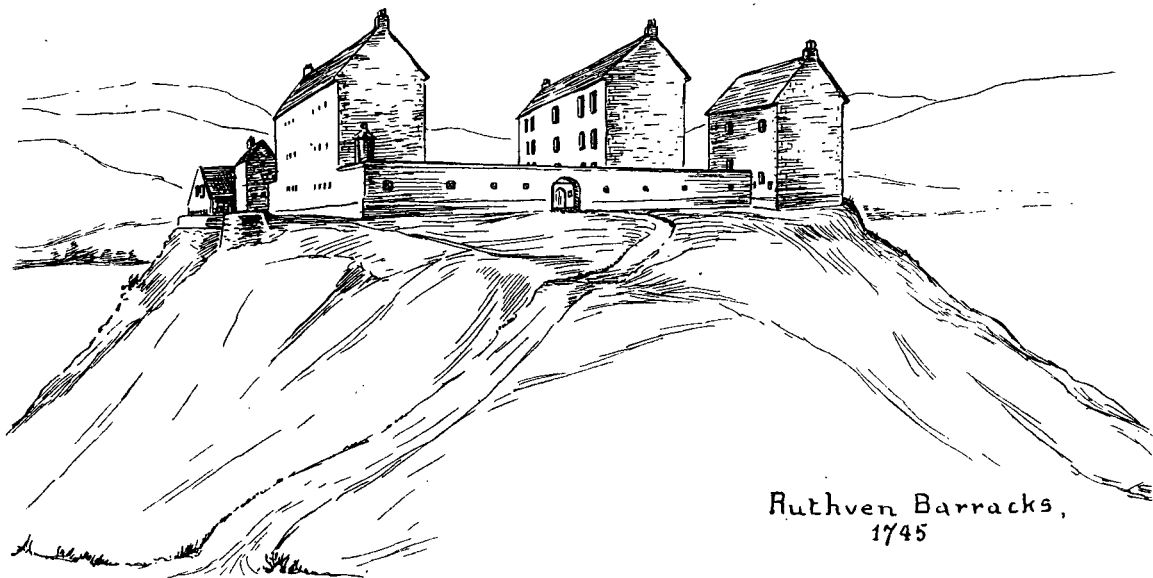
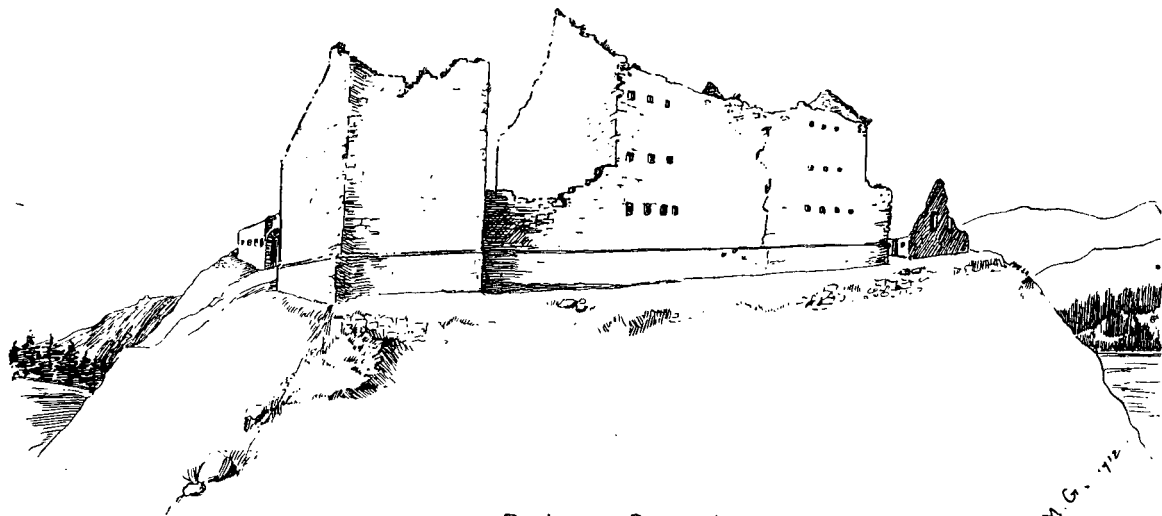


Fig. 2. Ruthven Barracks, Badenoch, in 1745.

north-east walls acute-angled. Forming the side walls of the barrack square are three-storeyed buildings, loopholed outwards, but having windows giving on to the square. Each block is divided into three compartments, with doors leading into the central house. As there is no trace of a governor's lodging, which in Forts George and Augustus was built over the main entrance, it is probable that one of these compartments was used for that purpose and another utilised as officers' quarters. There are no signs now of the stone sentry-boxes so prominent on the bastions of Edinburgh Castle and Fort Augustus. They may have been battered down during the Jacobite siege. Even more striking is the absence of any sort of gun-emplacment, which goes to prove that Ruthven was essentially a barracks rather than a fort. There are no bastions, no glacis, no lunettes, and the shape of the roofs, even those of the corner towers, is that of an ordinary house. This is the more odd, as Forts William, George, and Augustus were fortresses first and barracks after; and Wade, who built them all, must have known that sooner or later Ruthven would have to stand a siege. To reach the second block of buildings one leaves the barrack square by the north-west gate, and crosses an open space, probably once the parade ground. This block consists of a two-storey house with four entrances, two facing the main barracks and two looking towards Kingussie, or north-west. Entering by the latter, one is faced by a blank wall, pierced by two doorways. There are windows in the upper storey and recessed loopholes below. The existence of this wall within a wall seems to indicate the possibility of this building being used as a powder magazine. A second blank wall down the centre divides the house into two apartments, but to get from one of these into the other one has to go outside, or rather into the space between the outer shell and inner wall. If one room was the magazine, the other may have been the quartermaster's store.

This completes the survey of Ruthven Barracks as it stands, a striking, but by no means beautiful, ruin, at the present day (fig. 3);



Ruthven Barracks  
(from the east)

Fig. 3. View of Ruthven Barracks, from the East, 1913.

highly interesting to the military student, however, as, of all Wade's fortified forts, it alone shows anything of its original size and form.

When Cope, as we have already seen, halted near the barracks on 27th August 1745, he withdrew the garrison to reinforce his depleted army, leaving there only a sergeant and twelve men in charge. Prince Charles, having decided to ignore Cope and march south on Edinburgh, missed Ruthven, so for a short time the sergeant and his slender garrison were left undisturbed. In September, however, his peace was rudely broken by 200 clansmen, who sat round the barracks for some weeks, but, having no guns, could make no impression on it. It is certainly surprising that 200 wild Highlandmen should not have been able to rush and escalate the place—since its thirteen defenders could not be everywhere at once; but either the sergeant and his merry men were inordinately wily or the clansmen lacked initiative, for it was not until March 1746 that the position was captured by a Jacobite army with cannon, after a three-days' bombardment. The Jacobites then burned it to the ground before they marched north to their doom at Culloden. After Culloden, Ruthven was assigned as the rendezvous of the clans, and there, receiving the order to disperse, in the Prince's own hand, the Jacobite nobles (including Lord George Murray, Lord Ogilvie, the Duke of Perth, and Lord John Drummond) took a sad farewell of one another before—homeless exiles for the Stewart cause—making their way in twos and threes to the coast and safety.