

II.

NOTES ON THE STANDING STONES OF KINTYRE. (THE CHALMERS-JERVISE PRIZE ESSAY FOR 1929.) BY DUNCAN COLVILLE, CAMPBELTOWN.

The Society of Antiquaries of Scotland, since its institution in 1780, has been instrumental in recording and preserving much that is of great interest and value concerning the Antiquities of Argyllshire, indeed this county may be said to occupy geographically a position of the first importance for archæological research and investigation. At the same time one might venture to assert that, up to the present, expert attention has been mainly directed towards the numerous antiquities which are known to exist in the area embracing and surrounding the estate of Poltalloch in the Parish of Kilmartin.

On this assumption the writer feels that some archæological notes concerning the most southern district in Argyllshire may not be out of place. A great stimulus to local interest in this subject was given a few years ago by the formation of the Kintyre Antiquarian Society in 1921, with headquarters at Campbeltown, and this local Society is deeply indebted to certain distinguished Fellows of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland for the advice and practical assistance readily given by them.

In this connection, also, it is right that reference should here be made to the Kintyre Scientific Society, instituted in 1890, for the purpose of encouraging local scientific and archæological research, and also of establishing in Campbeltown a Museum in which specimens of local interest might be preserved and exhibited. These objects were very successfully accomplished in the course of the next ten years, but eventually the problem of finding suitable accommodation for the increasing number of exhibits became acute. This difficulty was very satisfactorily overcome, however, when the entire collection acquired by the Society was transferred to the Free Public Library and Museum opened in 1899, generously presented to the Burgh of Campbeltown by the late Mr James Macalister Hall of Killean (Kintyre), a native of the district.

It is not intended in these notes to discuss the reasons why Standing Stones were originally erected—this subject has already been fully investigated by the most eminent authorities—but an attempt will be made to place on record such information as may suffice to provide a basis for future research.

The District of Kintyre is comprised of six parishes, namely:—

(1) Kilcalmonell, (2) Gigha and Cara, (3) Killean and Kilkenzie, (4) Saddell and Skipness, (5) Campbeltown, (6) Southend.

Excluding the islands of Gigha and Cara, the area under consideration measures approximately forty miles from north to south, and eight miles from east to west. It may be convenient to deal with each parish in the order named.

1. PARISH OF KILCALMONELL.

This parish contains a very limited extent of arable land, and may be said to consist mainly of moorland and boulder-strewn hills. The writer is only aware of two Standing-stone sites in the parish, namely:—

(a) *Loch Ciaran Standing Stone* (No. 1 on map).—Situating amongst the heather 200 yards due west of the north-west corner of Loch Ciaran on the Balinakill estate. The writer has not seen this stone, but he is indebted to Mr Duncan Livingstone, the estate overseer at Balinakill, for the following particulars: "The stone tapers from 2 feet 5 inches at base to 1 foot at top, quite flat on side facing nearly due east, and round

on the other side, so: $w \int_e$ I would say it is a sort of blue-grey mica,

as we have seams of it all through Low Achaglas. It stands by the side of an old road leading from above or east of Loch Ciaran, to the village of Clachan, and this road has turf-built walls on either side of it. All the way round about Loch Ciaran was thickly populated at one time, and I am of opinion the stone was lifted on end when the road was made as there is no other landmark of any kind noticeable near it, and no cairns or signs of either worship or burying ground."

Dimensions: Height above ground 6 feet 8 inches; breadth at base 2 feet 5 inches, tapering to 1 foot at top; thickness at top 2 feet 8 inches; girth at base 6 feet.

(b) *Cairnmore: Group of three Standing Stones situated close to Ballochroy, towards North-east* (fig. 1, No. 2 on map).—The name of this farm clearly indicates the presence at one time of a large cairn, and it is at once apparent that this cairn, probably composed of large stones, was situated close to, and in a direct line with, the group of standing stones. The cairn appears to have attracted the attention of the drystone dyke builders, who no doubt found in it a ready and convenient supply of building material. Hence nothing now remains of it except an excellent example of a stone cist which appears to have formed the core

of the cairn. On the adjacent farm of Cairnbeg, which lies to the north of Cairnmore, there is still to be seen close to and overlooking the main road a large stone cairn, 80 feet in diameter, which does not seem to have been tampered with, and if these two names correctly commemorate the relative sizes of the two neighbouring cairns, one might be justified in concluding that Cairnmore must indeed have been a huge pile.

When inspected recently, the standing stones did not appear to be cup-marked, but at the same time they were rather heavily overgrown with the lichen known as "Goat's Beard." The cist is situated 123 feet south-west of the nearest standing stone.



Fig. 1. Standing Stones, Cairnmore, from the north-east.

Dimensions: North-east stone—Height above ground 6 feet 6 inches; breadth at base 3 feet 2 inches; at centre 2 feet 9 inches; at top 1 foot 6 inches; thickness at base 1 foot 1 inch; at centre 10 inches; at top 7 inches.

Centre stone—Height above ground 10 feet; breadth at base 5 feet 6 inches; at centre 4 feet 3 inches; thickness on north-west 7 inches; on south-east 4 inches.

South-west stone—Height above ground 11 feet 6 inches; breadth at base on south-west 2 feet 5 inches; on north-east 1 foot 7 inches; thickness 1 foot 6 inches.

Cist—Top slab, north-east to south-west, 7 feet; top slab, north-west to south-east, 5 feet; north-west side, slab 7 feet long; south-east side, slab 5 feet 6 inches long; north-east end, slab 2 feet 5 inches broad; south-west end, slab 2 feet 8 inches broad.

2. PARISH OF GIGHA AND CARA.

Three instances of the use of standing stones in the island of Gigha have already been recorded, namely:

(a) *Achadh-a'-Charra* (i.e. "The Field of the Pillar," No. 3 on map).—In the *Old Statistical Account* we are told that within 140 yards of the ruined chapel, in the middle of the field bearing this name, stood a beautiful plain stone 14½ feet high, 3 feet broad, and 8 inches thick at the edges, inclining to the south-west, presumed to be at least 3 feet under ground. It was learned from the late Rev. D. Macfarlane, minister of the parish, that he had been informed by an old inhabitant that this stone had been rolled into a ditch when the field on which it was situated was cleared for cultivation, probably about one hundred years ago.¹ Mr Macfarlane, while able to indicate the probable former site of the monolith, had not succeeded in discovering the actual stone. From another source,² however, we now learn that it is known locally where it is. According to this authority it stood in the upper end of the field, in the part called *Slinnean-a'-Charra*, and was used as the cover of a drain.

(b) *Cnoc-a'-Charra*. (No. 4 on map).—"North-east of *Achadh-a'-Charra*, at an equal distance from the Chapel, is *Cnoc-a'-Charra*, or 'the hill of the pillar.' On the top of this hill there is another stone 9 feet long, and 3 feet 10 inches in circumference; of the 9 feet, 2 feet are in the ground. Still farther to the north-east, on a higher hill, there was a cross which fell some years since, and was broken; the three stones were in a straight line."³

This pillar on *Cnoc-a'-Charra* is now well known on account of the Ogam inscription incised upon it, and a most interesting description of it⁴ will be found in the first number of *Scottish Gaelic Studies*, published 1926. There we are told that in the course of last century it twice fell down, and on one of these occasions a length of about 2 feet broke off at the top, and is now lost. Consequently it now stands about 5 feet 9 inches above ground. Detailed particulars of these accidents will be found in Rhys's account of the stone in vol. xxxi. of the *Journal of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland*, from information supplied by the parish minister, the Rev. John Francis Mackenzie. The damage was said to have been caused by some quarrying operations in the hillock, and that it suffered further rough treatment may be gathered from the

¹ *The Story of Gigha*, Sheriff J. Macmaster Campbell (1923).

² *Scottish Gaelic Studies*, vol. i. part 1 (1926).

³ *Old Statistical Account*.

⁴ *A Pre-Dalriadic Inscription of Argyll*, F. C. Diack.

remarks of another writer,¹ who records that several times the pillar was pushed over by the lads of the neighbourhood, and subsequently replaced by the orders of the proprietor.

It may be of further interest to note that on 27th June 1899 this stone was inspected by a large party of members of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland, and of the Cambrian Archæological Association, who visited the island in the course of a specially organised archæological trip to the west of Scotland in a steamer chartered for the purpose. A description of this visit, illustrated by a photograph of the stone, was published in the *Journal* of the first-named Society.²

(c) *Carr-an-Tarbart* (No. 5 on map).—"South-west of Carn Ban, at a narrow part of the island called Tarbat, there is a large stone on end, known by the name of Carr-an-Tarbart. It is near 8 feet high, and from its inclined position cannot be less than 3 feet under ground to prevent its falling."³

3. PARISH OF KILLEAN AND KILKENZIE.

(a) *Beacharra Standing Stone* (fig. 2, No. 6 on map).—The dimensions of this stone are given in the *Old Statistical Account* as 16 feet above ground, 4 feet broad, 2½ feet thick, while in the *New Statistical Account* it is further stated that "a grave at the base of the obelisk, covered with turf, is 18 feet 7 inches in length, and 4½ feet in breadth." In June 1892 this "grave," known locally as "Leac-an-fhamhair" (*i.e.* "the flagstone of the giant"), was excavated by the Kintyre Scientific Society, when it was found to consist of three cists. From these were recovered six clay vessels, one flint implement, and one jet object, now preserved in the Museum at Campbeltown. An account of these operations, fully illustrated, was printed in the *Proceedings* of this Society ten years later.⁴ These six round-bottomed urns are representative of the types of vessels belonging to the period of the late Stone Age.

It was learned from the tenant of Beacharra recently that the excavations above referred to only embraced the northern portion of the burial area, as the southern portion was found to have been excavated on some unknown former occasion.

The Beacharra standing stone, which so far as the writer is aware is the highest in Kintyre, may easily be seen against the skyline to the left of the main road by anyone travelling south, shortly after passing through the village of Killean. It is situated 105 feet to the south-west

¹ *Off the Chain*, Gowrie (1868).

² *Jour. Roy. Soc. of Ant. of Ireland*, vol. ix., fifth series, vol. xxix., consecutive series, part iii. p. 347.

³ *Old Statistical Account*.

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⁴ *Proc. Soc. Ant. Scot.*, vol. xxxvi., 1901-2, p. 102.

of the burial cairn (magnetic bearing 38°), while at a distance of 120 yards to the south-west of the standing stone there are the remains of a stone fort where many large embedded stones still lie scattered all over the turf-covered site, some apparently in their original positions.

At the present time, the standing stone serves as a "straining post" for a wire fence, three wires of which encircle it at a height from the ground of 2 feet 5 inches, 3 feet 3 inches, and 3 feet 10 inches, the fence running south-east from the stone. It is perhaps desirable to note this, as instances have occurred where the pressure of fence wires has resulted in a series of grooves of somewhat mysterious appearance. No cup-marks were observed on the Beacharra standing stone.

Dimensions: the measurements quoted above from the *Old Statistical*



Figs. 2 and 3. Standing Stones at Beacharra and South Muasdale.

Account were found to be almost correct, but the height might be more accurately recorded as 16 feet 4 inches, while the breadth at base is 4 feet 6 inches.

(b) *Muasdale Standing Stone* (fig. 3, No. 7 on map).—Situated on a ridge of hilly arable ground on the farm of South Muasdale, and easily seen from the main road at Glencreggan. It was learned from the proprietor that the field immediately to the north of this stone was formerly known as "Ach-na-caraig" (latterly known as "The Triangle").

This stone has been incorporated in a drystone dyke in which it forms an angle, the two sections of wall meeting there at an angle of about 125° . Moreover the magnetic bearings of the stone and of the two sections of wall, 33° , 75° , and 86° respectively, suggest that the stone still stands in its original position, and on its original site. No cup-marks were observed on this stone. Dimensions: height 9 feet 6 inches; breadth at centre 3 feet 3 inches; thickness at centre 1 foot.

(c) *Killocrow Cup-marked Stone* (fig. 4, No. 12 on map).—This is really not a standing stone, but in view of the fact that so many of these cup-markings have been found on standing stones, and as in this instance we have an excellent example of these cup-markings, it is perhaps of sufficient interest to justify its inclusion here. It is situated on the farm of Killocrow, north-east of the farm-steading, and a short distance to the north of the shepherd's house. It lies about 33 feet east of the upper drystone dyke, next to the moorland. The dimensions of this stone are approximately 12 feet long and 5½ feet broad at the centre, the longest line of axis being east and west.



Fig. 4. Cup-marked Stone at Killocrow.

It bears upwards of twenty cup-marks, with ducts and gutters connecting the depressions to each other.¹



Fig. 5. Cup-marked Stone at Gaigean.

(d) *Gaigean Cup-marked Stone* (fig. 5, No. 13 on map).—The writer was informed by the Rev. D. J. Macdonald, minister of the parish, of the existence of this cup-marked stone forming a gate-post in the boundary wall between the arable and hill ground on the farm of Gaigean. The gate referred to is situated on the top of a steep bank on the south side of a small stream, a short distance uphill to the east of the farm-steading of Gaigean. The front of the stone is now set at an angle of about 45° to the ground facing almost south-west (105° magnetic across the face). Underneath the stone is another boulder similar in size, with several smaller stones wedged between the two, thus preventing further inspection. With a view to

securing a record of the position of the cup-marks, the writer (having no chalk available) hit upon the expedient of packing the cavities with damp mud, with the result shown in

¹ Another flat, cup-marked boulder lies beside the fence between Tangymail and Killarow, about 300 yards from the upper end of the plantation there.

the photograph. One deep gutter on the right-hand side of the stone was unfortunately omitted to be packed, and is not therefore visible.

Dimensions: height 5 feet 1 inch; breadth at centre 3 feet 2 inches; thickness 1 foot 1 inch.

(e) *Barlea Standing Stone* (fig. 6, No. 8 on map).—Situating near the seashore, on the farm of Barlea, this standing stone may be seen from the main road looking from the Parish War Memorial. "A short distance to the north of the stone there is a small mound with a heap of stones on top. The remains of a stone cist lie at the centre. Two of the slabs are in almost the original position, while the corresponding ones have been removed from their respective places to within a short



Figs. 6, 7, and 8. Standing Stones at Barlea, Barrmains, and High Park.

distance."¹ No cup-marks were observed on the standing stone, which is slightly inclined at the top towards the west.

Dimensions: height above ground 5 feet 10 inches; breadth at base 3 feet 8 inches; at centre 2 feet 9 inches; at top 2 feet. Thickness on north edge, base and centre 8 inches; top 4 inches; thickness on south edge, base 1 foot 2 inches, centre 9 inches; top 6 inches.

Cist slab 4 feet 5 inches long by 3 feet 2 inches broad; 6 inches thick and another 4 feet long.

(f) *Barrmains Standing Stone* (fig. 7, No. 9 on map).—Some difficulty may be experienced in locating this stone, which is situated in a grass field on the farm of Barrmains at a distance of 32 yards from the dry-stone dyke enclosing the field on the south-east. The shortest approach is by a small glen three-tenths of a mile to the north of Patchan Cemetery on the main road, and the drystone dyke may be observed on the left-

¹ *Antiquities of Killean and Kilkenzie Parish*, Rev. D. J. Macdonald (1924).

hand side of the glen after proceeding a little farther than a quarter of a mile from the road. No cup-marks were visible on this stone.

Dimensions: height 4 feet; breadth at base 4 feet; at centre 2 feet; at top 1 foot; thickness varying from 2 feet 4 inches to 7 inches. The stone projects 9 inches towards the east at 1 foot above the base.

(g) *Park Standing Stone* (fig. 8, No. 10 on map).—Situated on the farm of High Park in a small, cultivated field; this stone is of the rounded type, resembling in that respect the standing stone at Colinlongart. No cup-marks were noticed on this stone.

Dimensions: height above ground 9 feet 6 inches; breadth at base 4 feet 3 inches; at centre 5 feet 3 inches; thickness 2 feet at base, tapering to 1 foot 6 inches near top; maximum girth 12 feet 8 inches.

(h) *Arnicle Standing Stone* (No. 11 on map).—On the 1-inch O.S. Map this stone is shown at a distance of almost exactly one mile to the south-west of the summit of Beinn-an-Tuirc. The writer has only seen this stone in the distance from an adjoining moor, but he has been kindly supplied with the following particulars direct from Arnicle. The stone is standing on wet ground and has possibly sunk somewhat. It is not a boulder in its natural position, but appears to have been erected there, and is wedged up with stones at the back. A rough sketch supplied to the writer suggests that in outline the stone bears a considerable resemblance to the largest stone of the Clochkeel Group (see fig. 14). There are two parallel straight lines carved across the face of the stone, not grooved, but raised above the surface and sloping obliquely upwards from right to left.

Dimensions: height above ground 5 feet to 6 feet in a leaning condition; breadth 5 feet at base, and pointed towards the top; thickness 1 foot 2 inches or 1 foot 3 inches, and thicker at base.

There is an interesting tradition attached to the Arnicle Stone, one version of which is as follows:¹ When King Robert the Bruce was a fugitive in Kintyre he was hospitably entertained by a farm tenant named Mackay, who proceeded to escort him on his way to the ferry for Arran. They started accordingly, and rested where this standing stone now marks the spot on the hill of Arnicle. Mackay pointed out to the King certain Crown lands, namely Arnicle and Ugadale, and at length on reaching the ferry the King sat down on a stone where, thanking Mackay for his hospitality and giving him his brooch as a farewell token, he declared to him who he was. Mackay, becoming alarmed, was soon relieved by the King telling him he need not fear as he had entertained him hospitably as a stranger, and that if he should succeed in obtaining his rights he would give him those Crown lands of Ugadale and Arnicle. The King afterwards carried his promise into effect, and the lands of

¹ *Argyll's Highlands.*

Ugadale are still the property of Mackay's descendants, the Macneals of Losset, who also retain in their possession the Bruce Brooch, while the lands of Arnicle remained in their possession up to 1927. The standing stone was known by the name of "Crois Mhic Aoidh"¹ (*i.e.* "The Cross of Mackay"). In other versions of the tradition the King's journey is in the opposite direction, and the stone is named "Clach Mhic Aoidh."²

The second stone mentioned in the above narrative is a large boulder now known as the "Ugadale Stone" (No. 27 on map). It is situated on the farm of Low Ugadale, just beyond the farm steading, at a distance of 60 yards below the main road to Carradale. Certain curious markings on this boulder have been known to arouse the curiosity of archæologists, who may well have felt puzzled as to their significance, but an explanation is available. It is recorded that the stone, owing to some unexplained cause, had fractured into two sections, and in order to preserve it a groove had been cut round its margin, in which a band of iron was placed to keep it together.³ The iron band has now completely disappeared, but the groove still remains. There is also, however, an incised ring 6 inches in diameter, with a cup in the centre, on the flat surface of the boulder, which makes it of much greater archæological importance. The flat side of the stone slopes at an angle of about 150° to the ground and faces almost due east (268° mag.). The crack above referred to measures 1 foot 10 inches from upper to lower edge of surface. The circular face of the stone measures 2 feet 3 inches vertically across centre, while the outer band is 3 inches deep, with a diameter of 3 feet 2 inches. Unfortunately the stone has been defaced in recent times by the letters "A. C." inscribed across the southern part of the face. The boulder is 1 foot 7 inches thick on west and 10 inches thick on east side.

4. PARISH OF SADDELL AND SKIPNESS.

(a) *Brackley Group of Stones* (fig. 9, No. 14 on map).—It has been recorded that at Brackley graveyard, in Carradale Glen, there is a *Carragh* (Gaelic, signifying "a stone pillar"), consisting of three large stones, one of them erect and the other two horizontal, at equal distances, near which is a consecrated place or sanctuary. These sanctuaries, we are told, were called *Comraich*, *i.e.* "a place of refuge," and in this instance the sanctuary lay between two places designated *Slighe aoraidh*, and *Duil sleuchdaidh*—the former meaning "the way to worship" and the latter "the field of prostration," names by which these places were known up to recent times.⁴ These stones are now locally known as the

¹ *History of Kintyre*, 1st ed. (1861), p. 55, Peter Macintosh.

² *Celtic Monthly*, Dec. 1892.

³ *History of Kintyre*, 3rd ed. (1870), p. 133.

⁴ *Ibid.* (1861); *Oban Times*, Feb. 1889.

“Druid Stones,” and while inspecting them lately, the writer was informed by the farm tenant of Brackley that a curious superstition regarding them still prevails. It is believed that if anyone suffering from toothache drives a nail into the large standing stone of the group at twelve o'clock midnight, the toothache will forthwith be cured. On the occasion of his visit, the writer counted no less than twenty-eight large iron nails driven flush into the south edge, and one nail into the north edge of this stone!

Dimensions: Standing Stone—height above ground 7 feet 6 inches on east; 6 feet 3 inches on west; breadth at base 6 feet 6 inches; at centre 6 feet; at top 3 feet 9 inches; thickness 1 foot.



Fig. 9. Group of Stones at Brackley, Carradale, from the south.

Horizontal slab, facing south-east, 7 feet 11 inches by 3 feet 5 inches; thickness, north-east end, 1 foot 7 inches; centre 1 foot 1 inch; south-west end, 1 foot 2 inches.

Embedded slab, parallel to above, 6 feet 7 inches long, 1 foot 9 inches thick.

(b) *Allt Gamhna Standing Stone* (No. 15 on map).¹—Situated on a very steep slope beside the burn which forms the march between Skipness and Stonefield estates. Height at upper face 8 feet, and at lower face 13 feet; breadth 14 feet, and 9 feet thick. A photograph of this stone will be found in the *Proceedings* of the Society, where particulars are also given of seventeen other stones at Skipness, the majority of which are of comparatively small dimensions.

5. PARISH OF CAMPBELTOWN.

(a) *Peninver Standing Stone* (fig. 10, No. 16 on map).—Nothing seems to be known by the present generation regarding the history of this

¹ *Proc. Soc. Ant. Scot.*, vol. liii., 1918-19, “A Survey of the Ancient Monuments of Skipness,” Graham.

stone. It forms part of the wall at the roadside in front of Peninver Shooting Lodge, and one might reasonably conclude that it had been removed there from some field in the vicinity in order to facilitate cultivation, a fate that would resemble the Gigha Stone already referred to. It is known, however, that the stone was in its present position before the wall was built, the Lodge having been erected in 1898, but as the stone face is at right angles to the wall and road, it is possible that an older roadside wall or fence may have once been erected there.

The stone projects 1 foot towards the road beyond the outer line of the wall. No cup-marks were observed on it.

Dimensions: height above ground, on south-east, 7 feet 10 inches—on north-west, 7 feet 6 inches (south-east is inside wall); breadth at base 3 feet 9 inches; at centre 4 feet 1 inch; thickness at base 1 foot 2 inches; at centre 1 foot.



Fig. 10. Standing Stone at Peninver.

(b) *Balegreggan Standing Stone* (fig. 11, No. 17 on map).—This monolith, situated on a ridge in the centre of a field on the farm of Balegreggan, forms a prominent feature in the landscape overlooking the north side of Campbeltown Loch. The stone is very considerably inclined towards the west and towards the north, a feature regarding which there is a curious but perhaps doubtful story. It is said that a local worthy, inspired by the belief that “oolay” (Gaelic *ulaidh*, meaning treasure) might be discovered at the base of the stone, commenced digging there, but in

the course of these clandestine operations the stone suddenly “canted,” and the excavations were speedily filled up by the alarmed treasure-seeker. The writer remembers this character, who was locally known as “Rocky” (*alias* Alex. Campbell), and who died in 1900 at the age of eighty-one. This story is by no means impossible, as the writer knows of an old, retired shepherd, still alive in Campbeltown, who informed him that he had spent many hours digging for “oolay” at a spot which he named in the parish of Campbeltown. He admitted, however, that his search had been fruitless.

The Balegreggan Stone has a considerable number of cup-marks on the side facing south, the largest of these being 3 inches in diameter and $1\frac{1}{2}$ inch deep. Some of the smaller depressions are rather indistinct,

however, but at least six of them appear to be good examples. There is a large crack about 9 feet long running down the east side of the south face of the stone, and appearing also on the north face, which may yet result in the stone becoming disintegrated. The top of the stone is now 12 feet from the ground, but the following are its dimensions, assuming the stone to be erect: height above ground 12 feet 10 inches; breadth at base 4 feet 6 inches; at top 2 feet 8 inches; thickness at base 1 foot 3 inches; at top 1 foot.

(c) *Glencraigs Standing Stone* (fig. 12, No. 18 on map).—Situated on the farm of Glencraigs, in a field next to the main road. In close proximity, in centre of same field, is the Mote Hill 60 yards to the south, a rocky



Figs. 11, 12, and 13. Standing Stones at Balegreggan, Glencraigs, and North Craigs.

eminence which the name would indicate to be a seat of justice in ancient times. No cup-marks visible.

Dimensions of Glencraigs standing stone: height above ground 7 feet; breadth at base 3 feet 7 inches; at centre 3 feet 4 inches; at top 2 feet 6 inches; thickness at base 1 foot; at centre 10 inches; at top 8 inches.

(d) *North Craigs Standing Stone* (fig. 13, No. 19 on map).—This stone now forms part of the roadside wall at the march between the farms of Glencraigs and North Craigs. It is not known how it came to occupy its present site, but it may be surmised that, as in the two instances already referred to, namely at Gigha and at Peninver, it was probably removed from its original site in some adjoining field, as it is placed at right angles to the end of the wall. There are no obvious cup-marks on it.

Dimensions: height above ground 8 feet 6 inches; breadth 4 feet 9 inches; thickness varies from 9 inches to 5 inches.

(e) *Clochkeel Group of Standing Stones* (fig. 14, No. 20 on map).—On the farm of Clochkeel, situated in a sheltered circular hollow on the

links, are three stones, two of them erect, the largest of which is about 6 feet high above ground, and their relative positions might almost suggest that at one time they formed part of a stone circle.

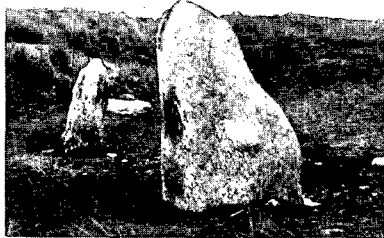


Fig. 14. Standing Stones at Clochkeel.

The nature of the site would also support this conclusion. The meaning of this farm name has been rendered *Clach gheal*,¹ i.e. "the white stone," but as it is known by local Gaelic speakers as *Clach-caol*, signifying the "slender stone," it is not unlikely that this name originated from the presence of these standing stones, and that it is consequently of considerable antiquity. With a view to ascertaining its correct dimensions the writer recently

excavated the edges of the embedded stone of the group, subsequently restoring the soil to its original position. No relics were observed in the course of this small excavation.

Dimensions: West stone—height above ground 6 feet 3 inches; breadth at base 4 feet 2 inches; at centre 2 feet 6 inches; at top 2 feet;

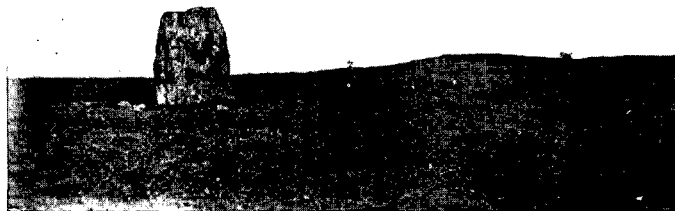


Fig. 15. Standing Stone at Kilkivan, showing part of Turf Circle against skyline on the right. Taken from the south.

thickness 1 foot 6 inches; girth at base 11 feet 2 inches. The stone is slightly inclined towards the east.

Centre stone—height above ground 4 feet 3 inches; breadth at base 2 feet 4 inches; at centre 2 feet 5 inches; thickness 1 foot 6 inches; girth at base 7 feet 6 inches.

East stone: total length 7 feet; visible above ground 5 feet 9 inches; total breadth 2 feet 5 inches, visible above ground 2 feet; thickness 1 foot 6 inches to 9 inches.

¹ *Place-names of Argyll*, Cameron Gillies.

(f) *Kilkivan Standing Stone* (fig. 15, No. 21 on map).—This stone is situated near the ruins of Drumfin, on a grassy hill on the farm of Kilkivan, and while it stands scarcely 5 feet above ground, it may perhaps be considered of some importance in view of the fact that close to the east of it are traces of three concentric turf circles (fig. 16). Excavation would reveal whether these circles are formed of stones underneath. It is noteworthy, too, that at the spot marked “Cnocan-a’-Chluig” on the 1-inch O.S. Map, which is situated at little more than a quarter of a mile to the north, there are two turf circles of a similar nature, though smaller and not concentric, while in each instance the centre of the circle consists of a deep square hole (No. 28 on map). The only tradition regarding this antiquity was recorded by a local historian¹ in the following words: “There is a hill near the (Kilkivan) church called Cnocan-a’-chluig, on which a man stood ringing a bell, to give due notice to the people to repair to church. The bell was consecrated and called *an ceolan-naomha*, or “the holy music.” About a century ago it was used by “the town-crier of Campbeltown in delivering his notices.” This was written in 1861, and similar references will be found in the works of two subsequent writers—Captain White² and Cuthbert Bede.³

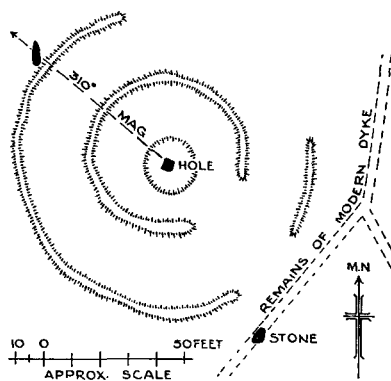


Fig. 16. Plan of concentric Turf Circles and Standing Stone, Kilkivan.



Fig. 17. Standing Stone at Knockrioch.

Dimensions: height above ground 4 feet 10 inches; breadth at base 3 feet 8 inches; at top 2 feet 5 inches; thickness 1 foot 3 inches.

(g) *Knockrioch Standing Stone* (fig. 17, No. 22 on map).—Situated in a field on the farm of High Knockrioch and visible from the main road, this standing stone is of more than ordinary interest, as it contains two well-defined cup-marks on the side facing east, which may easily be seen on the illustration.

Dimensions: height above ground 6 feet; breadth 4 feet 2 inches; thickness at base 1 foot; at top 10 inches.

¹ *History of Kintyre*, Peter Macintosh.
² *Archæological Sketches in Kintyre*.
³ *Glencreggan*.

(h) *Cnocan Sithein* (No. 23 on map).—This name, which signifies “the fairy hillock,” is applied to a large turf-covered tumulus composed of sandy soil and stones, situated on the farm of West Tordigal, close to the main road to Machrihanish. This tumulus was excavated in 1825,¹ and a full account of these operations will be found in *Archæologia Scotica*.² There it is stated that “some large stones were said to have once stood outside at the north of the tumulus,” while some particulars are given of a cist which the excavations disclosed. We seem to have no other record of these stones, nor does there appear to be any definite trace of them visible now, although it is right to mention that a large stone, almost hidden by the turf, may still be observed at the north-east base of the tumulus, and it is possible that this may be one of “large stones” referred to. One large slab of the cist is still visible, embedded on the sloping bank of the cavity which now surmounts the tumulus.

Between the tumulus and the seashore, about a quarter of a mile in extent, there is a flat expanse of land on which the home portions of the two golf-courses at Machrihanish are laid out, and there is a strong local tradition that on this site a battle was fought at the period when the tumulus was erected. This tradition is recorded on the 6-inch O.S. Map in the following words: “Machair Unnein—supposed site of battle between the Scots and Danes, 10th century.” The same map also records that human remains were found in the locality, and in fact a human skull was accidentally exposed to view in the summer of 1929 by one of the greenkeepers employed by the Machrihanish Golf Club. The skull was unearthed close to the west of the former 17th, now 18th, putting green, and was subsequently reinterred at the same place.

(i) *Drumore Standing Stone* (No. 24 on map).—There is evidence³ to show that a standing stone formerly stood “on the west side of Campbeltown near to Drumore” (farm), and that this stone was removed and utilised to form a bridge across the burn which supplies water-power to the Campbeltown Mill. With a view to confirming this, the writer recently examined the Mill Street bridge which spans this burn at the spot probably referred to. Underneath the bridge the span across the burn is 4 feet wide, and from north to south the bridge is supported by (a) several heavy wooden beams now decaying, (b) four schist slabs, (c) several more wooden beams, (d) one dressed slab, apparently sandstone, (e) six schist slabs, in the order named. The bridge thus appears to have been widened at least once, and the slabs vary from about 1 foot 6 inches to 2 feet 3 inches in width, while they are all

¹ *Archæology and Prehistoric Annals of Scotland*, Daniel Wilson (1831).

² Vol. iii, p. 43 (1831).

³ *Records of Argyll*, p. 377; *Argyll's Highlands*, p. 271.

probably at least 6 feet in length, allowing for 1 foot overlap at each end. It is not improbable, therefore, that one of these slabs was formerly the standing stone at Drumore.

(j) *Skeroblingarry Standing Stone* (fig. 18, No. 25 on map).—This stone is marked on the 1-inch O.S. Map, on the farm of East Skeroblin, in close proximity to the south side of Skeroblin Cruach. The stone may be located about 300 yards to the east of cottage at roadside just beyond Skeroblingarry farm-steading, and stands on the grassy margin of a heather-covered hill at a distance of 38 yards from the dyke separating the arable land from the moorland. There are several turf-covered ridges beside this stone which might be worth further investigation, and indeed there would appear to be two turf-covered circles surrounding the stone with a radius of 4 feet and 27 feet respectively. A large stone slab is embedded in the ground 6 feet to the east of the standing stone.

In the same locality, at a place called Puball, there was formerly a stone circle, apparently about 150 feet in diameter, which is shown on the 6-inch O.S. Map with the remark, "Urn and coins found."

The writer was informed by the farm tenant at Skeroblingarry that these relics were found "in the wall" of the circle by a ploughman named Mitchell while engaged in removing the stones to facilitate cultivation. This man emigrated to America probably about a hundred years ago, and the writer has failed to ascertain what became of these relics. The site is about half a mile south-south-east of the Skeroblingarry standing stone in a flat, rushy meadow surrounded by hills, and the circle may still occasionally be seen clearly outlined on the ground when viewed from a higher altitude in certain favourable conditions of the light and of the vegetable growth.

There is also a turf circle 21 feet in diameter situated almost three-quarters of a mile south-south-west of Skeroblingarry standing stone.

Dimensions: height above ground 4 feet 9 inches; breadth 3 feet; thickness 1 foot; no cup-marks visible.

(k) *Ardnacross Stone* (No. 26 on map).—On the farm of Ardnacross there is a large stone situated near the mouth of the river Lussa, which



Fig. 18. Standing Stone at Skeroblingarry.

is believed in some quarters to have been a standing stone. This stone lies on its side in a recumbent position, with face towards the west at an angle of about 135° to the ground, and may possibly have been removed there from an adjoining field. It may be located at the top of a grassy bank which slopes towards the river, about 100 yards south-east of the main road bridge. There is no evidence of cup-marks on this stone.

Dimensions: length 8 feet 5 inches; breadth 2 feet 10 inches; thickness at base 1 foot; at top 9 inches; longitudinal magnetic bearing 145° .

On the same farm, but a short distance to the north, there is a spot near the middle of a field, which is locally known as "The Priest's Grave." At this place there are several large stones lying heaped together which are not unlike the remains of a cist. The largest stone, lying flat on the ground, much resembles the top slab of the cist at Cairnmore, and is almost circular in shape. It measures 6 feet 2 inches from east to west, 5 feet 7 inches from north to south, and 7 inches thick. A second stone alongside of it measures 3 feet 3 inches from east to west and 1 foot 6 inches from north to south, while there are also some smaller stones. The Priest's Grave can be seen from the main road at a distance of 35 yards looking towards the sea.¹

6. PARISH OF SOUTHEND.

(a) *Knockstapple Standing Stone* (fig. 19, No. 29 on map).—Situated on the farm of Knockstapplemore, this prominent monolith may easily be seen from the main road, looking towards the east, at a distance of about half a mile. It stands in a field of rough pasture, 50 yards from the boundary wall separating the arable ground from the moorland. No cup-marks were observed on the Knockstapple standing stone.

Dimensions: height above ground 11 feet; breadth at base 6 feet; at centre 5 feet; thickness at base 1 foot 9 inches; at centre 2 feet; at top 9 inches.

(b) *Brunerican Standing Stone* (fig. 20, No. 30 on map).—Situated on the farm of Brunerican and on the golf-course of the Dunaverty Golf Club, this standing stone is composed of a thin, irregular slab of red sandstone conglomerate or "pudding stone," and alone shares this distinction with the neighbouring group at Macharioch, material of this nature being not uncommon in that part of Kintyre. The other stones described in these notes all appear to be composed of schist. The Brunerican stone is covered with depressions resembling cup-marks, but these are presumably caused by the action of the weather on its peculiar composition.

¹ On the adjoining farm, Ballochgair, there is a cup-marked boulder about half a mile west of the steading.

Dimensions: height above ground 9 feet; breadth at base 4 feet; at centre 5 feet 5 inches; at top 3 feet 4 inches; thickness 1 foot.



Figs. 19, 20, and 21. Standing Stones at Knockstapple, Brunerican, and Colinlongart.

(c) *Colinlongart Standing Stone* (fig. 21, No. 31 on map).—Situated in a field on the farm of Colinlongart, close to the east side of the Glenbreckrie road. No cup-marks observed.



Fig. 22. Group of Red Sandstone Conglomerate Stones at Macharioch, from the east.

Dimensions: height above ground 7 feet; breadth 4 feet 3 inches from east to west; thickness 2 feet 9 inches on west, tapering to an edge on east: girth at base 11 feet 8 inches.

(d) *Macharioch Standing Stones Group* (fig. 22, No. 32 on map).—These

two standing stones, together with several embedded boulders and smaller stones, form a group situated on a flat field close to the east of Machariorch House. Composed of red sandstone conglomerate or "pudding stone," as in the case of the Brunerican stone, these stones have cup-like depressions upon their surface, which, however, seem to be due to the nature of the conglomerate.

Dimensions: Larger standing stone—height above ground 6 feet 8 inches; breadth at base 4 feet; at centre 4 feet 4 inches; at top 4 feet; thickness 2 feet 6 inches.

Smaller standing stone—height above ground 3 feet 8 inches; breadth at base 5 feet; at centre 3 feet; at top 2 feet; thickness varies from 2 feet to 1 foot.

Large flat, embedded boulder—6 feet 6 inches by 3 feet 8 inches above ground; smaller, flat, embedded boulder—4 feet 4 inches by 2 feet 2 inches above ground.

It is possible, and indeed probable, that the foregoing list of standing stones is incomplete, as it has been fairly evident that instances have occurred of the removal of the stones from their original sites where their presence might present an obstacle to ploughing operations. In such cases the stones thus obtained might well be converted into material for building drystone dykes by anyone who did not appreciate

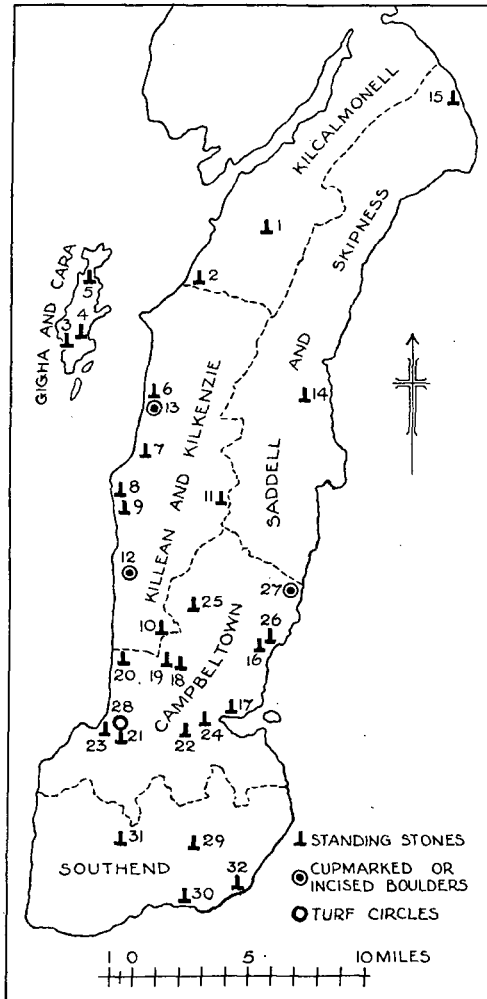


Fig. 23. Map of the District of Kintyre, showing sites of Standing Stones.

ate their archæological interest and value. Again there is the possibility that certain surviving place-names may commemorate stones of this category, as for instance in Campbeltown parish we have "Achnaglach" ("the field of the stone"), and "Clachfin" ("white stone"), while

in the Parish of Killean and Kilkenzie¹ there are "Druim-a-charragh" ("boulder ridge"), at Portavorrain, "Gortean-na-cloich" ("stone field") at High Ballochantuy, and "Ach-na-cloich" ("stone field") at North Muasdale and Skerinish.

On summarising the standing stones of large dimensions dealt with, it would appear that they are much more numerous in southern Kintyre, where the land is fertile and comparatively low-lying, than in the hilly and bleak district of northern Kintyre. It should perhaps also be borne in mind that the southern district lies directly opposite Ireland, in fact at one point less than twelve miles from Ireland, and that for this reason it furnished an access to Scotland from the earliest times.