

Marginal Land

MORAY

Doune of Relugas 15755

Cluny Hills, Forres

Burghead

Knock of Alves

Caysbriggs

Quarry Wood

Shougle - "Danish Camp"

Thomshill - "Camp"

Binn Hill

Tom a' Chaidreil

Grant's Fort

10 16214

MORAY.

PARISH OF ALVES.

FORT, KNOCK OF ALVES. The Knock of Alves forms the E. part of a narrow ridge a mile and a half in length to the N. of which the coastal plain extends for four miles to the shore of the Moray Firth at Hopeman. The Knock rises from the general level of the ridge to attain a height of 335 feet O. D., and commands an extensive view in all directions except the E. where Quarry Wood Hill, distant one mile, stands 100 feet higher.

The fort, which occupies the whole of the higher part of the Knock, is very ruinous; some parts of the defences lie in conifer plantations and others under thick heather and whins, while a modern track, a monument, a mausoleum, ploughing and quarrying have also played their parts in the mutilation of the remains. The uppermost recognizable work is an enclosure measuring 125 feet from E. to W. by 75 feet transversely. The E. and S. <sup>aces</sup> ~~works~~ are formed by mere crestlines along which a very few stones and boulders appear, but to the W. and N. the rickle of stones representing a ruined wall (I) is much more conspicuous. The natural crest of the N. flank of the rocky plateau which forms the absolute summit of the hill lies about 20 feet S. of and above the spread of stones that are considered to form the N. arc of wall I, but no remains at all can be seen along it. The entrance was probably in the E.

The next structure to be considered is a ruinous wall (II) which encloses an area measuring 415 feet from E. to W. by 75 feet transversely and including the work already described. The E. part of the N. sector of this wall follows the same course as the N. arc of the first work, but W. of this the rickle of stones continues all the way to the W. and back along/

along some 70 feet of the S. sector. A continuous row of large facing stones runs for a distance of 50 feet along the SW. arc. The entrance to the enclosure formed by wall II is the same as that formed by wall I. The possibility thus exists that the latter is a later structure, built over the ruins of the E. portion of the wall of the larger enclosure, but the state of the remains is such that this must remain problematic.

A third ruinous wall (III) lies outside the second. For much of its course it has been overlaid and obliterated by the modern track which ascends the hill from the W., and in consequence the whole of the E. arc and the N. sector are represented only by tumbled stones beside the track. The W. and SW. arcs, however, consist of a scarp studded with stones and boulders, and these continue on to the E. for about 100 feet before fading out on the steep S. flank of the hill. The entrance was probably in the E. arc.

Outside the third wall are the remains of two heavy ramparts of rubble and earth, distant 18 feet apart for most of their length, the inner lying at distances varying from 35 feet to 70 feet from wall III. The SE. arcs of these have been removed by ploughing, and the SW. arcs by the quarrying, while a smaller quarry, now in a wood, has encroached upon the N. sections of both ramparts. The inner rampart encloses an area which includes the three stone-walled enclosures and measures 500 feet in length from E. to W. by about 180 feet in width. The entrances are probably in the E. arcs.

The construction of the tower and mausoleum on the top of the hill was probably attended by damage to walls I and II, while the track up which materials for these structures was drawn has, as described, mutilated much of wall III. Despite this and/



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and other damage, however, sufficient remains to show that the fort was a large and strong structure in an area where monuments of this kind are few.

163629. vii. SW.

17th April 1957.

MORAYSHIRE.

PARISH OF EDINKILLIE.

FORT, THE DOUNE OF RELUGAS. The district and village of Relugas are situated in the angle between the rivers Findhorn and Divie immediately S. of their confluence. The N. apex of this area consists of a promontory measuring about a quarter of a mile from E. to W. by a little less from N. to S. which is bounded to the W. by the River Findhorn and to the N., E. and SE. by the lowest ridges of the River Divie. The 300 foot contour runs a short distance within the W., N. and E. limits of the promontory, and Relugas House stood near the central

- I. On the date of visit almost all traces of Relugas House had been removed, but its site can be seen on the 1906 edition of the 6 inch map."

point at a height of about 330 feet above sea level. Immediately E. of the site of the house the whole of the SE. part of the promontory is occupied by a steep-sided rocky eminence which rises to a height of about 70 feet above the level of the site of the house and about 100 feet above the River Divie, which borders it to E. and S. From the summit of the hill, at about 400 feet above sea level there is an uninterrupted view over the lower Findhorn Valley to the Shore of the Moray Firth at Culbin Sands, nine miles to the N.

The hill is crowned by the remains of a small vitrified fort consisting of a single wall surrounding the flat summit plateau which measures 165 feet from ENE. to WSW by 100 feet transversely. Almost all traces of the wall have been obliterated and destroyed by a terrace-wall which borders the perimeter of the summit and by a drystone dyke, now ruinous, that runs round at a distance of 10 feet or 12 feet inside it. The ground within the area bounded by the dyke has been under cultivation, and among a large pile of stones and boulders cleared from it which stands beside the entrance, in the E., there/

there are numerous masses of vitrified stones and boulders. Similar masses, tumbled from the ruin of the wall, were observed on the flanks of the hill. The flanks of the hill fall at an angle of between  $30^{\circ}$  and  $40^{\circ}$  in all directions for between 40 and 50 feet. To E. and S. the lowest slopes continue thereafter steeply to the River Divie, and no further lines of defence can be distinguished along them. To W. and N., however, where the knoll rises only from the promontory described above, further defences were required. By digging a ditch along a line somewhat above the actual base of the hill and throwing the spoil outwards the constructors formed a large and partly natural rampart with the ditch on its inner side. In the W. arc there is a rise of as much as 25 feet from the general level of the promontory to the crest of the rampart. From the crest there is a drop of 5 feet to the bottom of the ditch, and then a rise of 55 feet to the summit of the hill.

While classifications and groupings of hill forts in the N. and W. of Scotland must have been made on very tentative bases until more facts become available, it can at least be observed that this fort is more remarkable for its situation than for its size. Other vitrified forts in the vicinity which merit the same observation are Dun Evan and Dun Finlay and possibly the structure called Dun Davie where vitrification was reported in 18 , but has not been seen since. Other such small vitrified forts, with or without outer works, occur W. of Inverness, in the Great Glen, and on the W. coast, and the three or four mentioned here may represent the easternmost penetration of the type. If, as it is at least reasonable to suggest in the present state of knowledge, the small forts were the work of different peoples from the builders of the/

the larger vitrified forts, then it may be constructive to note here that the latter include Knock Farril in Strathpeffer, the most northerly, the Ord of Kessock, Craig Phadraig and Dunearn on the W. side of the Buchan Massif, and the Tap o' Noth, Dunnideer, Finavon, Green Cairn, Abernethy and Forgandenny further S.

003495. xv. SE.

15th April 1957.