

# HIGHLAND REGIONAL COUNCIL



# FIELD MONUMENTS

## ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES AND MONUMENTS RECORD

1 SITE CODE	H	NH	6	4	N	W	0	0	6
2 NGR	NH	6	4	0	0	4	5	2	7
3 QUAL	CE								

4 DISTRICT INVERNESS	5 PARISH INVERNESS & BONA	6 SITE NAME CRAIG PHADRIG
7 AREA STATUS	8 SITE STATUS SCHEDULED	9 REGIONAL STATUS
11 CONCORDANCE OS NH64NW6 NMR	12 FORM STANDING STRUCTURES = EARTHWORK	13 DIMENSIONS c75.0m x 23.0m INT.
16 RELATIONSHIP OF ELEMENTS SITE OF PREHISTORIC HILL FORT REOCCUPIED IN PICTISH TIMES	17 CONDITION INCOMPLETE	10 GENERIC TYPE FORT, SUMMIT, TIMBER-LACED (VITRIFIED)
		14 PERIOD/DATE BA=IA=EM(PIC)
		15 DATING METHOD TYP=c14
		18 SHAPE RECTILINEAR
		19 THREAT AND DATE

20 LAND USE CLEARED AND MAINTAINED AREA	21 GEOLOGY
22 SOILS	23 VEGETATION
24 HYDROLOGY/DRAINAGE	25 RELIEF SUMMIT OF HILL
	26 ASPECT 360°
	27 ALTITUDE 155=175m OD

28 EXCAVATION (EXCAVATOR: DATE: EXTENT: QUALITY)
1. SMALL, A&COTTON: 1971: PARTIAL: SCIENTIFIC
2. WILLIAMS, J: 1777: PARTIAL: UNSCIENTIFIC

29 BIBLIOGRAPHY (AUTHOR: DATE: TITLE: JOURNAL OR PUBLISHER: VOLUME: DETAIL)
1. ORDNANCE SURVEY: 1959: 6" MAP
2. ORDNANCE SURVEY: 1964: 25" MAP
3. PEACHEM, RW: 1963: A GUIDE OF PREHISTORIC SCOTLAND: BATSFORD: p126
4. COTTON, MA: 1954: ARCHAEOLOGICAL JOURNAL: 111: 80
5. WALLACE, TD: 1912-3: TRANS. INV. SCI. SOC. & FIELD CLUB: VOL. 8: pp90-3 + PLAN
6. TYTLER, F: 1783: TRANS. ROYAL SOC. OF EDINBURGH: : 2: 3: pp4-13
7. PHILLIPS, CW: : D.A. INDEX: : : : OVER..

30 GROUND PLAN NO. SEE (13) 13 (AS. 200)	31 GROUND PHOTO NO. 8317114+5
32 SLIDES NO.	33 HR. AP. NO. 83/09/1/ 004-5
34 NMR. AP. NO.	35 OTHER AP. NO.: SOURCE

36 ARCHIVE AND LOCATION	38 SAMPLES
37 GEOPHYSICAL SURVEY	40 NUMERICAL DATES: RANGE: LAB NO OVER *
39 PALYNOLOGY	42 MUSEUM/LOCATION
41 SMALL FINDS DARK AGE CLASS E WARE SHERDS; 7th C AD HANGING BOWL ESCUTCHEON MOULD	
43 OTHER	

44 NAME & ADDRESS OF OWNER	45 ATTITUDE OF OWNER
46 NAME & ADDRESS OF TENANT	47 ATTITUDE OF TENANT

48 ACCESS & RESTRICTIONS	50 RECORDER: DATE GS: 7.10.1986	51 CHECK: DATE - 12.5.10 (P)
49 NAME & ADDRESS OF FINDER/RECORDER: DATE		

52 TEXT "Substratum; Middle. ORS, Conglomerate. Structure; Granite and Sandstone (Mackenzie, 1826)."(17) "See continuation sheets for text." OS 610 455 Craig Phadrig, fort (13)
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29.

- 8. ADAMNAN: :LIFE OF COLUMBA: : : :
- 9. RIVET,A:1966:THE IRON AGE IN NORTHERN BRITAIN: :68(mention)
- 10. SMALL,A:1971:DISCOVERY & EXCAVATION IN SCOTLAND:CBA(SCOT):p23
- 11. SMALL,A+COTTON,MB:1972:CRAIG PHADRIG:PLANS & EXCAVATION REPORT:DUNDEE UNIVERITY
- 12. ORDNANCE SURVEY:1974:1/10,000 MAP
- 13. HBM(SDD):1985:LIST OF SCHEDULED MONUMENTS
- 14. SMALL,A:1972:DISCOVERY & EXCAVATION IN SCOTLAND:CBA(SCOT):p23
- 15. AITKEN:1880:TRANS. INVER. FIELD CLUB:VOL.1:pp338-9,347-8
- 16. MACKIE,EW:1970:IRON AGE IN N.BR.(HARDING,ED):pp214-7,225
- 17. NESBIT,HC:1975:SCIENCE & ARCH.:VOL.15:p13,NO.50
- 18. :1791:OLD STATISTICAL ACCOUNT:VOL.XVII:pp113-4
- 19. :1993:THE IRON AGE IN SCOTLAND:SCOTLAND:1993:pp16-19
- 20. ADDENSON,J:1883:SCOTLAND IN PAGAN TIMES,IRON AGE:p277
- 21. PENNANT,T:1979:A TOUR IN SCOTLAND IN 1769:MELVINS:pp
- 22. LOVE,J:1984:ABERDEEN PRESS & JOURNAL
- 23. :1984 (Plan & section). [p15-16]

30.

MAIN RAMPART	330 ± 100 bc
	270 ± 100 bc
	180 ± 110 bc
OUTER RAMPART	300 ± 105 bc
	370 ± 105 bc
UPPER OCCUPATION LAYER	410 ± 85 ad

## CRAIG PHADRIG BIBLIOGRAPHY, H ROBINSON.: ADDITIONAL BIBLIOGRAPHY

1. WILLIAMS, J :1777:REMARKABLE RUINS IN N.SCOT.:pp31-35,75-79
2. CROSBIE :1780:UNPUB.LECTURE TO EDIN.PHILOS.SOC.
3. :1791:OLDS STATISTICAL ACCOUNT:VOL.XVIII:p113-4
4. WEST,T 1809:PHILOS.TRANS.ROY.SOC. LOND.:14:pp179-80
5. MACCULLOCH,J 1824:HISTORY OF THE HIGHLANDS:1:pp288,296
6. HIBBERT.S(MACKENZIE LETTER):1831:ARCHAEOLOGIA SCOTICA:V:pp182,188,LISTED No.26
7. PRYCE,T :1847:JOURNAL BR.ARCH.ASSOCIATION:11:pp276-77
8. MARION,J :1866:REV.SOC.SAV.DES.DEPT.:4:4e.SER:pp314-5
9. KEDDIE,W :1868:TRANS.GLASGOW ARCH.SOC.:1:p248
10. MARION,J :1872:MEM.SOC.NAT.ANT.FR:33:III,4e.SER:pp10-14
11. DAUBREE,A :1881:REVUE ARCHEOLOGIQUE (PARIS):XLIII:(2e.SER):pp36-40
12. RUSSELL, :1894:JOURNAL BR.ARCH.ASSOCIATION:pp212-14
13. CHRISTISON,D :1898:EARLY FORTIFICATIONS IN SCOTLAND:pp171,176,194 LISTED
14. M'HARDY,AB :1906:PROC.SOC.ANT.SCOT.:XL:p150
15. CHILDE,VG :1946:SCOTLAND BEFORE THE SCOTS:p134 LISTED No.6
16. FEACHEM,RW :1963:PREHISTORIC SCOTLAND:p126
17. MACKIE,EW :1975:ARCH. GUIDE TO SCOTLAND:p208
18. MACKIE,EW :1976:HILLFORTS (HARDING ED.):225, LISTED GROUP IV No.15

An oval vitrified fort, forming a flat crown to the afforested hill of Craig Phadrig.

It consists of an inner, heavily vitrified wall spread to a thickness of about 30', which encloses an area measuring 245' by 75'. An outer wall, also heavily vitrified, lies at distances varying between 45' and 75' outside this. Any other details are obscured by vegetation. There is no evidence to show that the two walls are contemporary.

Cotton observed an entrance in the W of the outer wall, and traces of a third wall on the S side, also states that the inner wall may have had four bastion-like structures near the rounded corners.

According to Wallace, there is a small earthen tumulus with a stone in its centre, within the fort, and a portion of the NE corner was marked off from the rest by two rows of earthfast stones in the form of a rectangle. He could not trace a well, said in 1783 to be 6' in diameter.

This is the reputed scene of the visit of St Columba to Brude, son of Kaelchon, king of the Picts, and the latter's conversion to Christianity.

A vitrified fort, as described by Feachem. The inner turf-covered wall is well defined, surviving to c. 1.2m above the interior, with an entrance in the NE indicated by a slight depression. Immediately outside this entrance is a stony causeway which spans the gap between the two walls.

The outer wall is reduced to a terrace except in the SW and NE where it survives as a turf-covered stony bank c. 0.8m high. The entrance is not evident but it was probably in the E arc where there are two slight depressions in the bank. Cotton's alleged entrance in the W is due to mutilation.

The third wall observed by Cotton is a hornwork outside the E arc of the outer wall. It is defined by a reduced turf-covered stony bank which springs from the E corner of the wall and runs N to rejoin it opposite the entrance through the inner wall. There is an entrance gap near its S end up to which runs an ill-defined hollow way.

There is no trace of any structure within the fort except the alleged cistern which is a hollow c. 3.0m across at the lowest point within the central area, but there are several similar hollows around it.

Excavation by Small and Cotton during 1971 has established the vitrified character of the inner rampart. Radio-carbon dates suggest the mid-4th c B C as the period of construction. Similar dates were obtained from the outer rampart which appears to be only in part timber-laced, several parts being entirely constructed of earth sometimes retained by revetting walls. A further season's excavation is essential before definite conclusions can be reached, however.

The fort appears to have been destroyed soon after construction. Post-destruction domestic occupation has been recorded before 150 B C and up to c. 400 A D. The most important find is the clay mould for the escutcheon of a hanging bowl.

Scheduled - Crown property.

"NH 6400 4527. Vitrified Fort."

"NH 6400 4529. Cistern."

*Plan, 1809, held in Birk's Jewel Office, Edinburgh. (See also Plan, 1809) (102) (103) (104) (105) (106) (107) (108) (109) (110) (111) (112) (113) (114) (115) (116) (117) (118) (119) (120) (121) (122) (123) (124) (125) (126) (127) (128) (129) (130) (131) (132) (133) (134) (135) (136) (137) (138) (139) (140) (141) (142) (143) (144) (145) (146) (147) (148) (149) (150) (151) (152) (153) (154) (155) (156) (157) (158) (159) (160) (161) (162) (163) (164) (165) (166) (167) (168) (169) (170) (171) (172) (173) (174) (175) (176) (177) (178) (179) (180) (181) (182) (183) (184) (185) (186) (187) (188) (189) (190) (191) (192) (193) (194) (195) (196) (197) (198) (199) (200)*

## THE INVERNESS SCIENTIFIC SOCIETY.

1880] EXCURSION TO CRAIG-PHADRICK AND THE LEACHKIN.

But, interesting as Craig-Phadrick is from a geological point of view, it is much more interesting as the site of one of those vitrified forts which have so long puzzled archaeologists. To the remains of this fort the members next directed their steps. The hill is 555 feet in height, and the old rampart which encircles its summit encloses an area of 270 feet in length by 103 feet in breadth. Dr Aitken led the members along a path which seemed to be the ancient approach. It entered between two low walls, like an old gateway. The fort had an outer as well as an inner rampart, with a hollow between; and the outer rampart showed some fine specimens of vitrification. At the gateway there were also traces of a projecting elbow of wall, to give additional strength and protection. The party walked along the summit, and descended by a pathway on the west side. Just at the west end of the principal rampart a portion of the wall had been broken, and the members observed evidence of a suggestion which Dr Aitken had advanced. This was to the effect that the walls of Craig-Phadrick were not vitrified through and through, but that a casing of vitrified matter enclosed a dyke of loose stones. At the point above-mentioned the vitrified shell was broken and the loose interior exposed.

Craig-Phadrick was first examined by Mr John Williams, a mining engineer who was employed on the forfeited estates of the North after the Rebellion of 1745. His account of it was first published in 1777, and excited great interest and discussion. At the distant period when the hill was actually a fort or citadel, its aspect and surroundings must have been somewhat different from what they are at present. It must have been a bare, barren hill, capable of overlooking the whole country, carefully guarded to serve as a place of retreat, and ready at any moment to be put into a state of defence. Even since 1780 its aspect has entirely changed, and its defences have been gradually effaced by the accumulation of mould. At that time Tytler describes and figures it as a conical hill, without any clothing of wood. The pathway on the west side seemed to him to have been partly cut out of the rock. He says that "the form alone of the road leaves little room to doubt of its being an operation of art." Dr Aitken stated the various theories that had been suggested to account for the vitrification in the case of Craig-Phadrick and similar fortified places. The conclusion at which he arrived, and which was accepted by the members, was that the walls had been vitrified by design. The evidence of deliberate purpose appeared too strong to be resisted. The mode in which vitrification was carried out is uncertain, but it is interesting to know that the gneiss of the district is easily fusible.\*

\* See paper by Dr Aitken at page 3

## VITRIFIED FORTS.

(v)

On a subsequent occasion, Dr Aitken read a paper on Vitrified Forts, which may be best introduced at this point:—

The subject of vitrified forts has been and still continues one of the vexed questions of Scottish Archaeology. A vitrified fort may, to quote Hibbert, be defined "as an area of ground often of a round or elliptical form, and evidently selected for some natural defence . . . which is further protected by one or more enclosing ramparts formed by stones . . . showing to a greater or less extent marks of vitrification by which they are cemented together." One of these structures, the one, indeed, which first attracted attention, is situated in the hill of Craig-Phadraig, a mass of conglomerate rising to the height of 500 feet, and forming one of the most prominent objects in the neighbourhood of Inverness.

The fort of Craig-Phadraig consists of two lines of defence. The inner one is somewhat rectangular in form, but rounded off at the angles, and follows the contour of the summit of the hill. It is almost uniform in height and thickness, except that between thirty and forty feet from each angle, there can be made out an increased thickness of vitrification, which was so marked at the time Tytler described it, that in consonance with his view of these structures, he suggests they might have been the foundations of towers. The outer wall is some thirty to forty feet below this, and towards the south-eastern angle is even much lower down, and it passes round the sides of the hill on the western, southern, and south-eastern aspects, whilst at about 170 feet from the south-western angle there exists a well-marked mound of vitrified matter from which a still more external rampart springs, forming the outer wall, guarding the western entrance to the Fort. Two distinct approaches existed to this.—one from the east, and the other from the west. That from the west consists of a winding path on an average about 10 feet broad; and about half way up. Lying upon a platform on the right hand side are five large stones, supposed, at the time attention was first directed to these forts, to have been placed there for the purpose of being rolled over and blocking up the way. On the left hand side two similar large stones existed, according to Tytler, with the design of blocking up a hollow in the hill, and thus preventing its ascent, but these have now entirely disappeared. For about 120 yards above this platform, the path is continued straight up the hill, and then making, as it were, a double curve, winds its way into the Fort, at the gaps indicated in the plan.\* The south-eastern approach commences by a gentle ascent from the rising ground above Inverness, and is quite straight in its course, until it comes to the gap in the most external wall, when it bends suddenly to the north-west, and passing between the middle and external ramparts for a distance of nearly 30 yards, turns to the west again, and finds, by a comparatively easy ascent, its way into the Fort. It is only for me to add to this description that vitrification of greater or less extent exists at all points indicated by the dark line in the plan: that the hill is only fortified in those places most accessible and most requiring defence; and that, writing in 1780, Tytler describes as existing, at the south-west corner, a number of *small mounds* of earth with a stone placed in the centre, and at the north-east side a *quadrangular place* marked by two ranges of stones fixed in the ground. Whilst midway between the southern boundary of this included space and southern inner wall, is a hollow believed to be a well. Excavations were made at different points within the Fort in 1826, by Sir George Mackenzie, but he obtained nothing but a sharpening stone, fragments of burnt wood, bones and teeth of deer, and a bone, stated by an Inverness surgeon to be a human tibia.

No definite opinion can be expressed as to the age of vitrified forts, and the only fact I have become acquainted with in connection with this point, is that a large fragment of granite taken from the ancient fortress of Ribandelle, in France, has attached to it a Roman tile, which the fire has completely soldered to the stone. Tradition has equally failed to connect itself with these ancient fortresses, but Craig-Phadraig has been referred to as one of the probable sites of King Brude's Castle, the Celtic king converted by St Columba, and Dr Angus Smith has endeavoured to bring some of them in our neighbourhood into connection with the legends of Cuthullin and the sons of Uisneach.

\* Plan prepared by Mr James Fraser, C.E.

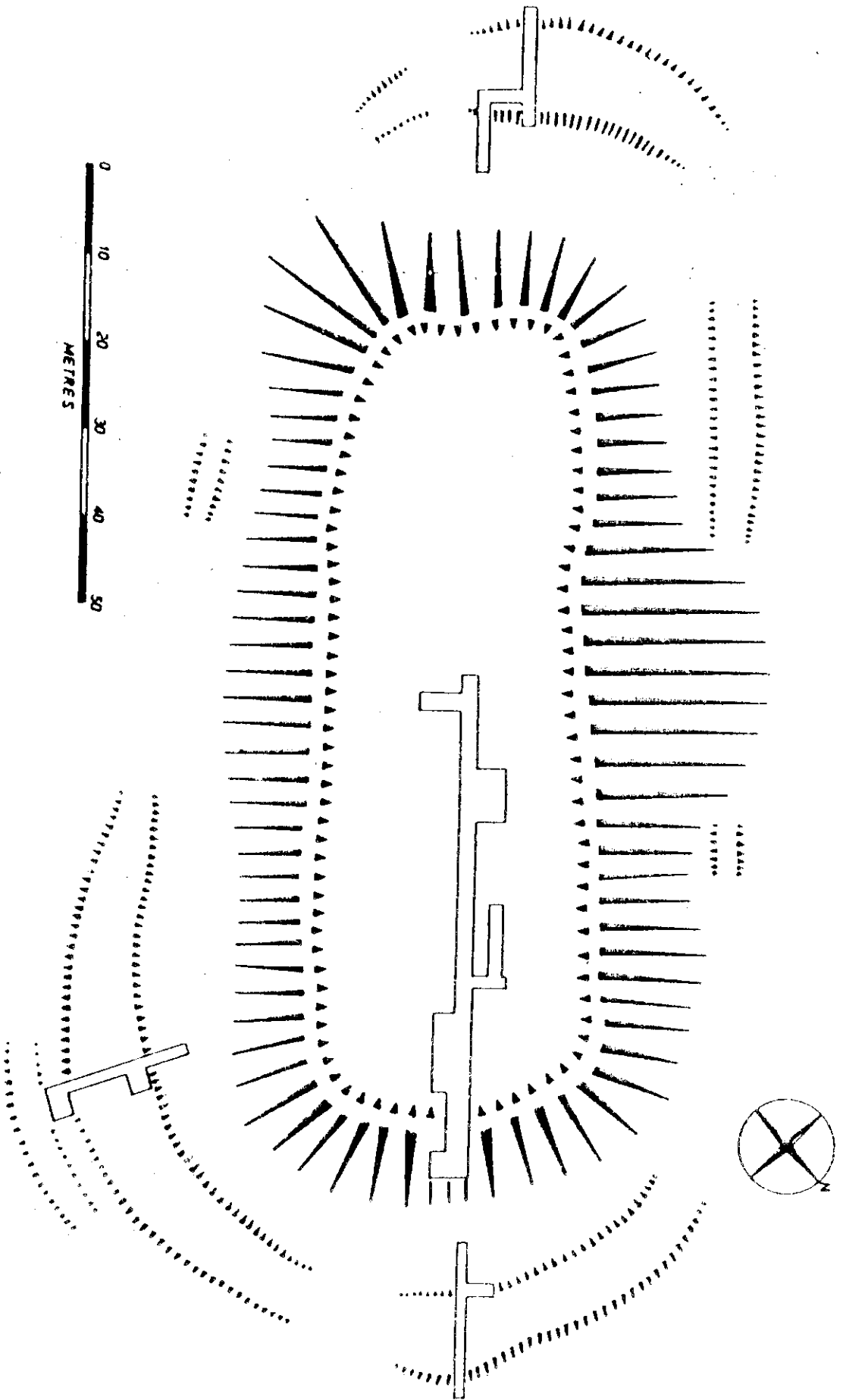
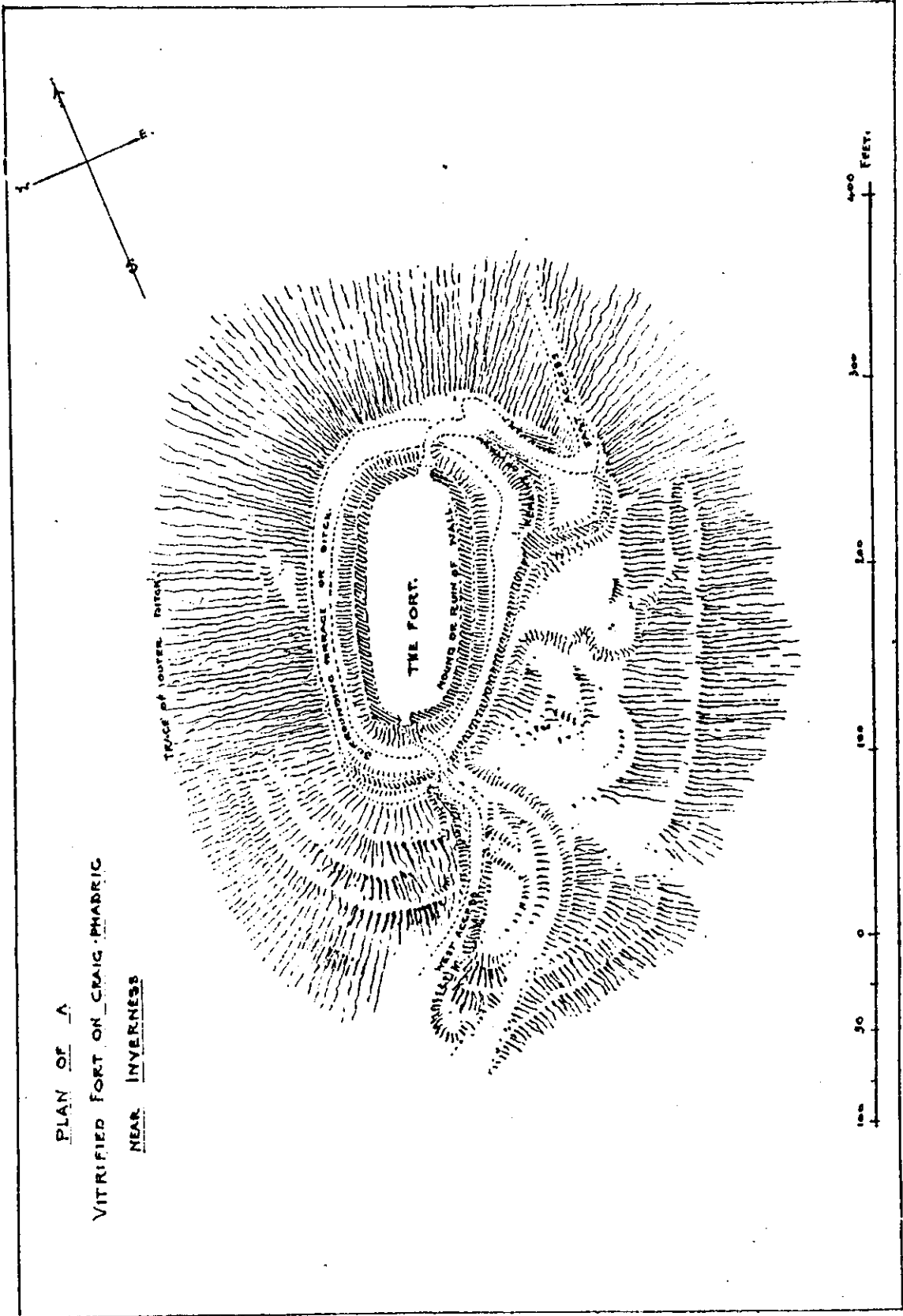


Fig. 2 Plan of fort showing areas excavated in 1971



PLAN OF A  
VITRIFIED FORT ON CRAIG PHADRIC  
NEAR INVERNESS

TRACE OF OUTER PITCH

THE FORT.

400 FEET.  
300  
200  
100  
0  
50  
100



### 3. *Craig Phadrig, Inverness-shire (NH/640453)*

Craig Phadrig is a Group IV timber-framed hillfort more or less rectangular in plan and enclosing an area of about 2300 sq yd; there is more than one outer rampart, one of which may run right round the fort. The situation is strategically significant, being on high ground on the south shore of the Beaully Firth just before the narrows where it debouches into the Moray Firth at Inverness. It also commands the north-eastern exit from the Great Glen. The Ord of Kessoek is opposite, on the north side of the same strait.

Excavations in 1971 and 1972 unravelled the stratigraphy of the inner rampart and the interior of the fort<sup>36</sup>. The wall rested on an old turf line and a sloping rubble layer of building material rested on this and against the lower part of the inner face. On top of this builders' level was a thick black turf layer which must have formed during the use of the fort. The mass of rubble from the wall fell on this when the fort was destroyed.

Three radiocarbon dates were obtained for carbonised wood from below the main rampart. They were  $330 \pm 100$  b.c. (N-112),  $270 \pm 100$  b.c. (N-1123) and  $180 \pm 110$  b.c. (GX-2441). The sample which gave the youngest date could be related to the wall stratigraphy only in that it underlay the layer of construction rubble already referred to. Presumably a date in the fourth or third centuries B.C. for the building of Craig Phadrig is indicated. The width of the main wall is about 22 ft and distorted beam holes were observed in the upper part of the inside face.

The outer wall was examined and appeared to be a revetted rampart, not a stone wall, made of turf and heated stones, the latter having presumably been quarried from the main wall after it had become vitrified. However, debris from the collapse of the inner timber-framed wall partly overrode this outer rampart at one point so the latter must have been built before the burning of the former. Both walls rested on the same turf-line so presumably the outer one was repaired and added to after vitrification had occurred. A carbonised branch in its core gave a date of  $300 \pm 105$  b.c. (N-1120), and some peat and turf laid between the blocks of its outer revetment gave a date of  $370 \pm 105$  b.c. (N-1124). This sample was from the western end where there was vitrification *in situ*, showing that the outer rampart was at least partly timber-framed at this point.

The deposits in the interior of the fort had been extensively disturbed but two occupation layers were identified. The lower one overlay many animal bones. The upper one gave a radiocarbon date of a.d.  $410 \pm 85$  (N-1119) and also produced some sherds of Dark Age class E ware<sup>37</sup> and a fragment of a clay mould for the escutcheon of a hanging bowl of a type which might belong to the early seventh century A.D.<sup>38</sup>. There is thus good evidence that Craig Phadrig was occupied in Pictish times though this was after its ramparts were in ruins.

- 36 SMALL, 1971  
37 PEACOCK & THOMAS, 1967  
38 STEVENSON, 1971

FEACHÉM, 126

Craig Phadrig, Fort (NH 640453), 1½ miles W. of Inverness, Sheet 26 (A.9 and by-road).  
*Inverness-shire.*

This famous fort forms a flat crown to the afforested hill which overlooks the narrows at the E. end of the Beaully Firth from the SW. It consists of an inner, heavily vitrified wall spread to a thickness of about 30 ft. which encloses an area measuring 245 ft. in length by 75 ft. in width. An outer wall, also heavily vitrified, lies at distances varying between 45 ft. and 75 ft. outside this.

Excavations in 1971-72 disclosed that the two ramparts date from about 500 B.C., but also brought to light a hanging bowl of about the 7th century A.D.

(16)

(3)

L E T T E R VI.

IN my last I finished my account of Knockfarril, in which I was the more particular, once for all, as I had made the sections, and examined that remarkable ruin with more care and time than any other; and as I have given a pretty full account of that, I can pass the quicker by others, to save repetition.

The next vitrified fort I will point out to you, is on the hill of Craig-Phadrick, immediately above the house of Muirroun, two miles west of Inverness.

This ancient ruin has as noble a situation as can be imagined. It is on the summit of a hill much about the height of Knockfarril, right above the head of the Moray frith; the view of which it commands on both sides, all the way down, 'till the sight is lost in the ocean.

Turn

32 L E T T E R VI.

Turn the eye west and north, and it commands that branch of the sea which goes up to Beuley; and looking south, you see that beautiful piece of water, Lochness. So much for the watery prospect, which is truly great and beautiful; but a full view of the land it commands, would be ravishing, to a lively, and benevolent imagination.

Westward, you see the country of the Ard, and Beuley. North, you see a considerable part of Ross-shire. Eastward, immediately at the foot of the hill, you have a full view of the town and lands round Inverness, and all the way as far, and farther than Forres; and southward, you see the country between Lochness and the town.

Besides the charming views of the cultivated countries round this admirable situation, you see from it a great deal of the Highlands, south, west, and north; and many extensive openings among the Highland hills.

The

L E T T E R VI. 33

The fortifications on this hill have been extensive, and appear by the ruins to have been very strong.

There is one thing here, peculiar only to this ruin, which I have not yet seen on any other fortified hill; viz. There are here distinct ruins of two vitrified walls quite round the inclosed area, and three at the entrance on the east end: But it is common in other places of this kind, to have additional works at the entry.

The inner wall here appears to have been very high and strong; but, on the contrary, the outer wall seems to me, never to have been of any great height. It is founded on the bare, solid rock, about six or eight paces from the inner wall; goes quite round, but what remains of it is so low, that I cannot think it was designed for defence, unless it was to secure their cattle, which I imagine it was intended for, as I do not remember to have seen any dry stone ruins here. Perhaps good stones, for building a dry stone rampart to defend their cattle, were not easy

E

got here, and that they rather chose to make a low vitrified wall.

I saw a good deal of this outer wall, seeming to me entire, sticking to the firm, bare rock, where it was first run, not above four or five feet high, but it must have been some higher.

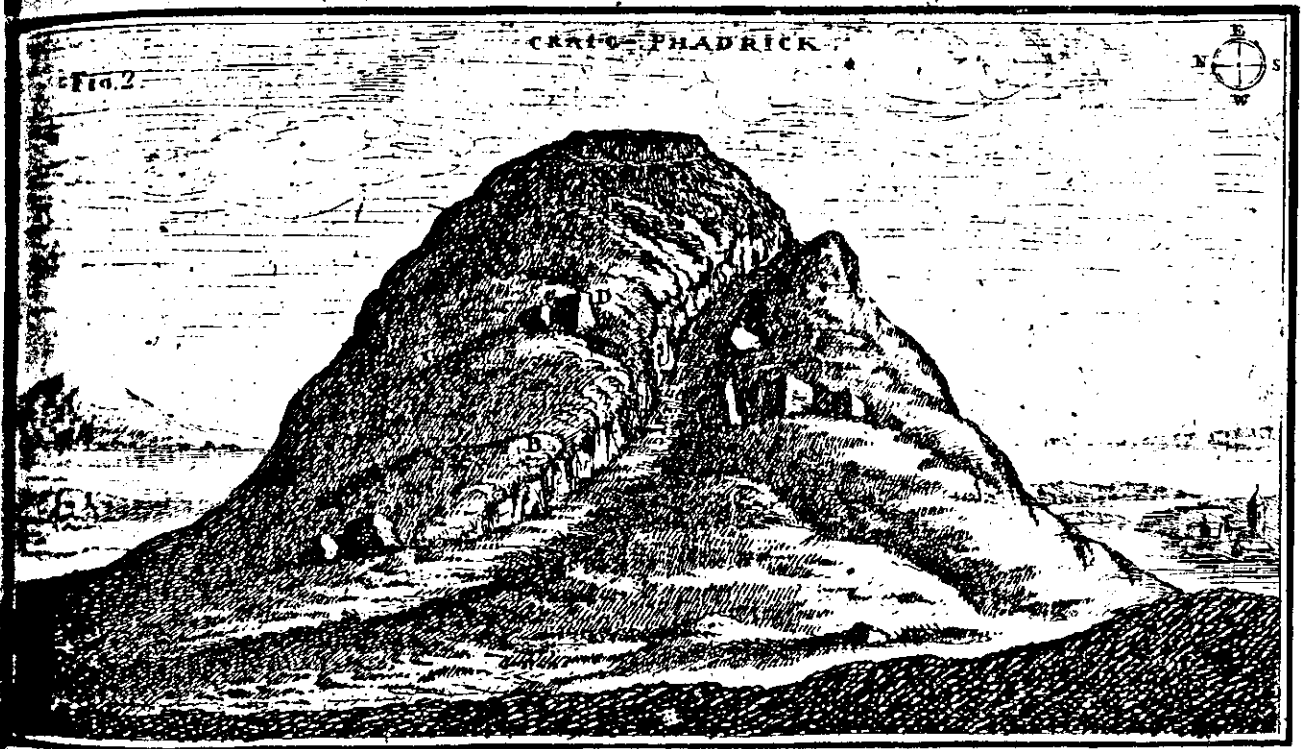
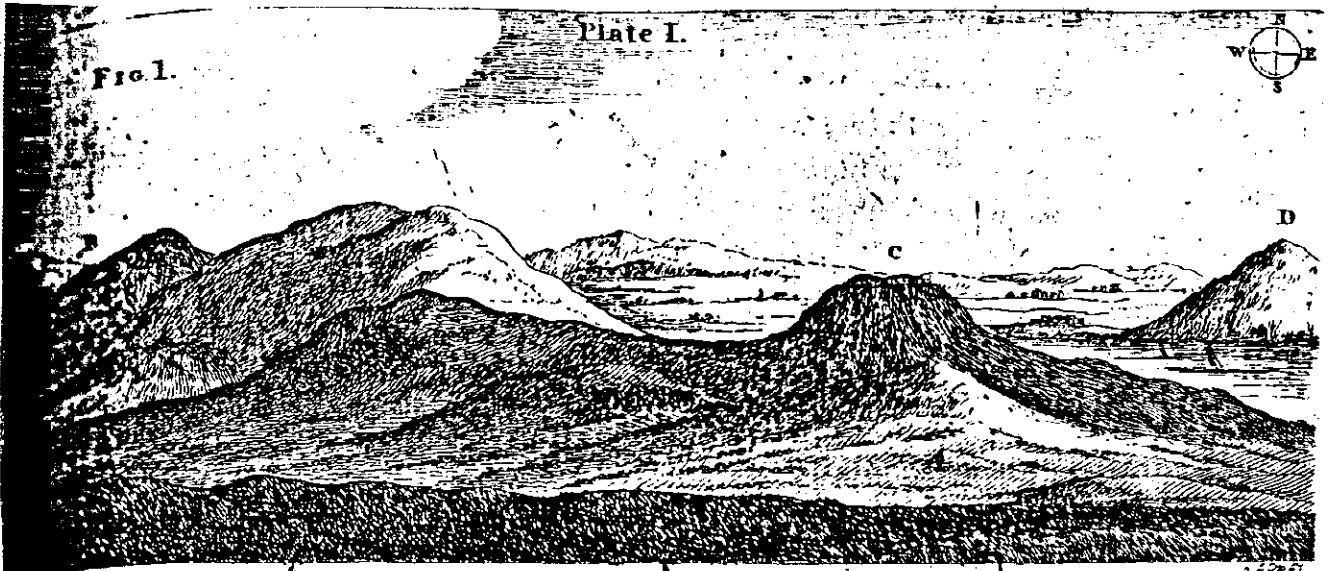
I cannot help looking upon what remains entire of this low vitrified wall, as the greatest curiosity of any ruins in Europe.

This is a specimen in little of the vitrified walls, not fallen to total ruin, which may help to give an idea of what sort of structures they were, that have produced such vast, though undistinguishable ruins. I am happy to have seen this entire portion of the remains of the vitrified buildings, as it will enable you the better to conceive my meaning, in what I have wrote, and what I purpose to advance in some future letters, concerning these vitrified ruins.

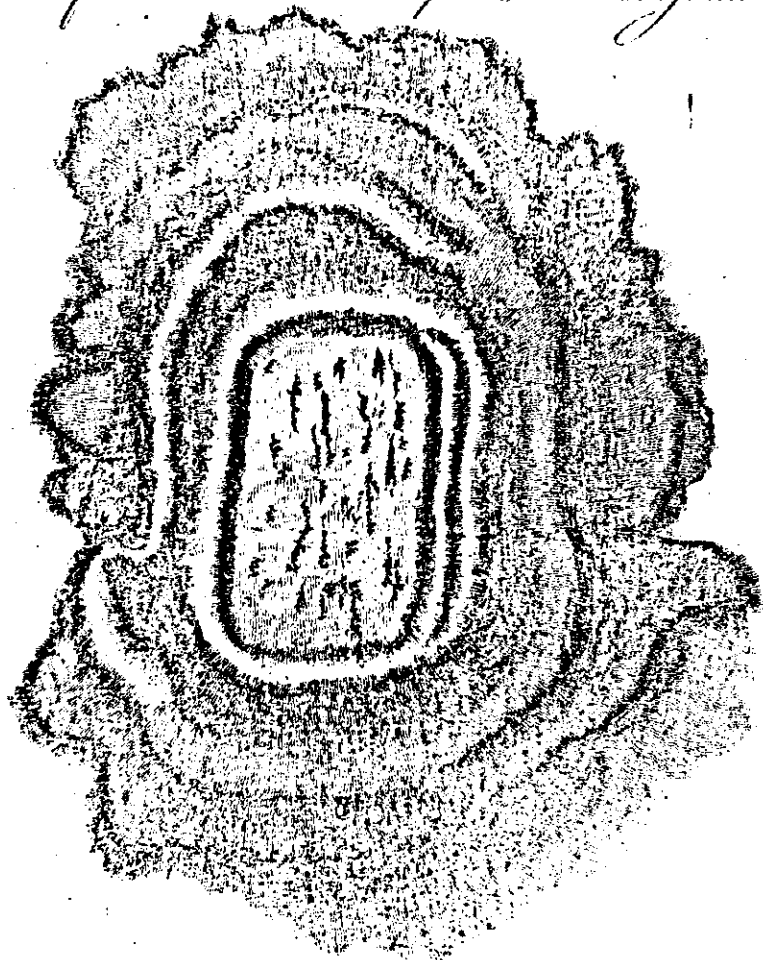
The area within walls here, I mean within the inner wall, is about eighty paces

paces long, and twenty-seven broad; and both the inner and outer walls appear, by the ruins, to have been exceeding well vitrified.

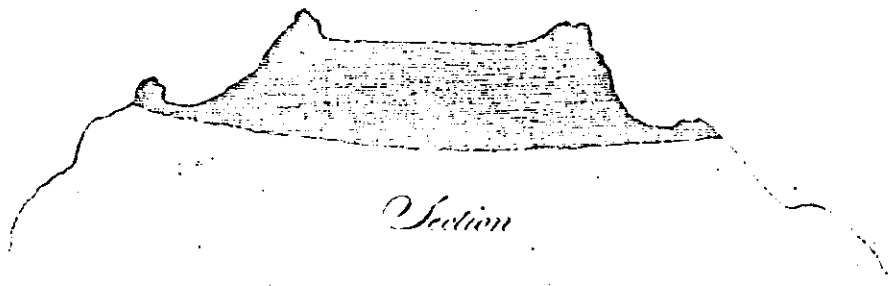
The rock of this hill is of the plumb-pudding kind; and there seems to be a good deal of lime, in the cementing quality of the stone.



SKETCH of CRAIG PATRICK by W. Watt Engineer



*Northwest end.*



*Section*

Craig Phaidrick was one of the first sites to be recognised as that of a vitrified fort. Williams described it as immediately above the house of Muirtown, 2 miles west of Inverness. He found ruins of two vitrified walls encircling the enclosed area and three walls at the entrance at the east end. The inner wall was strong and high, but he thought that the outer wall, then standing 4 ft.-5 ft. high, had always been lower. The rock was of 'plum pudding' stone with plenty of lime. His account of the site was supplemented by that of the engineer James Watt, who said that Craig Phaidrick was on the detached summit of a rocky hill of granite and granulated quartz. The flat summit, of oblong form, had a rampart some 4 ft. high round it which had rounded corners. There was a ditch and a counter-scarp bank. The banks were vitrified and in many places were adherent to the rock.

Pryce examined the walls in several places and thought them joined together with lava. Keddie stated that part of the site was laid bare by Telford, the engineer who built the Caledonian Canal. It was 435 ft. above the River Ness on the hill of Old Red Sandstone and Conglomerate. The inner wall of the fort was oval and the outer was a contour defence on the edge of the escarpment. The measurements inside the fort were 285 ft. x 90 ft. Maision visited the site when at Inverness and wrote of it as on a hill 540 ft. high which was isolated on three sides and which separated the valley of the River Ness from Loch Beaully. The area inside was basin-shaped, rather like the crater of an extinct volcano. Sir George Mackenzie excavated inside the area in 1826 and found burnt wood and animal bones some of which were worked. He found that both walls were vitrified and thought that the outer had never been very high. They were made of granite and sandstone blocks of large dimensions. Triple banks existed at the east end. The site was covered by forest. Wallace, in a more recent description, stated that the entrance was at the west and that there was no entrance to the inner enclosure. The fort is on the summit of a rocky eminence 555 ft. high and is oblong in form with rounded corners. It measured 260 ft. x 95 ft. and both walls are vitrified. At the west end the two main walls are 45 ft. apart. A third wall exists on the south side, and at the east end there is a large mound of vitrified material some 40 ft. wide. The inner wall, though higher, is of the same width as the outer and may have had four bastion-like structures inside it near the corners. The fact that the outer wall has an entrance and not the inner was reminiscent of certain of the Gaulish forts.

Childe noted that the face of the rampart was exposed on one side, and he gives the internal dimensions as (250 ft. x 50 ft.)

#### Inverness

##### CRAIG PHADRIG VITRIFIED FORT

*A. Small*

NH 640453. Excavation has established the vitrified character of the inner rampart. Radio-carbon dates suggest the mid 4th Century B.C. as the period of construction. Similar dates were obtained for the outer rampart which appears to be only in part timber laced. Several parts of the outer rampart are built entirely of earth sometimes retained by revetting walls. The fort appears to have been destroyed soon after construction. Post-destruction domestic occupation has been recorded before 150 B.C. and up to c400 A.D. The most important find is the clay mould for the escutcheon of a hanging bowl. An interim report is being published and will be available from Department of Geography, University of Dundee. (Price not yet fixed).

#### Inverness

##### CRAIG PHADRIG VITRIFIED FORT

*A. Small*

NH 640453. This season's excavation was entirely devoted to the outer defences. A vitrified outer rampart was established at the SW end but shown not to be continuous round the fort. On the NW no outer rampart existed but the main rampart had been partly reconstructed after its collapse on vitrification. On the NE side it was shown there was a double rampart, the impression of a third being created by the ditch from which the material for the outer rampart had been upcast.

Craig Phadrig, near Inverness, when examined by Williams, presented the peculiarity of two vitrified walls, the remains of which could be traced quite round the inclosed area, while the remains of a third were visible at the entrance at the east end. The outer wall was founded on the rock, about 6 or 8 paces distant from the inner wall. Its greatest height did not then exceed 4 or 5 feet, but he found large masses of it adhering to the rock where it was first run. The area enclosed was from 80 to 90 paces long by about 30 broad.

## CRAIG PHADRICK.

In 1777 attention was turned to the Hill Forts of the Highlands of Scotland by several observers. Mr John Williams, a mining engineer, was the first to call attention to them. Dr James Anderson of Monkshill, the Bishop of Derry, Pennant, and others followed him. In 1780, Andrew Crosby, Esq., contributed a paper to the Philosophical Society of Edinburgh. Lord Woodhouselee visited Craig Phadrick in 1782.

Craig Phadrick appears to have attracted the attention of all these, and their views may be read in the Transactions of the Royal Society of Edinburgh, the Philosophical Society of Edinburgh, and the Society of Antiquaries of London. It is interesting and instructive to compare the deliberations of the members of the learned societies of that time with the knowledge since acquired. When specimens of the vitrified walls of this fort were submitted to the members of the Royal Society of London, the secretary reported:—"These specimens have been examined by some of the members well acquainted with volcanic productions, and were by them judged to be true lava."

These early observations called forth a most exhaustive and instructive paper by Alexander Fraser-Tytler in 1783, which will be found in the Transactions of the Royal Society of Edinburgh. This paper is accompanied by four illustrations, showing the hill at that time destitute of trees, and forming a prominent feature in the landscape. The plan of the fort, illustrating Mr Fraser-Tytler's paper, in every way corresponds to the present state of the ruins which are represented in the following sketch:—

The entrance to the outer enclosure of the fort is from the west, and Mr Fraser-Tytler says that it was cut out of the solid rock, and defended at certain points by large boulders placed ready to hurl upon an approaching foe. The path may, however, be considered natural, and the boulders were no doubt left in their present positions by the ice during glacial times. In point of fact there is no entrance to the inner fort. The entrance here, as in other examples, is in the outer rampart, and in this respect resembles some of the Gaulish fortifications. The fort occupies the summit of the rocky eminence (555 ft.), which commands an extensive view in all directions. It is supposed by some that a position was chosen by the builders of these forts, from which several others could be communicated with. But this is not always the case, for from the position of some of them signalling would be impossible.

The fort is oblong in shape, having the corners rounded, and measures 290 feet long by 95 feet broad. It is defended by an outer wall or rampart, also vitrified, and which is separated from the inner wall by a space varying in breadth. At the west the two walls are separated by about 45 feet. On the south side the distance between the two varies from 32 to 90 feet. A third out-work can be traced on the south side, about 30 feet from the second one. At the east end, where the ascent is not so steep, are the remains of a large mound of vitrified material, about 40 feet in breadth. The third rampart, on the south side, is joined to this mound, and extends to meet another branch from the second wall. It is here that the entrance is through the outer ramparts.

The following was the condition of the fort in 1763:—  
"The outer wall is in many places so low as to be almost level with the rock, though in other places it rises to the height of two or three feet, but even where it is lowest, the marks of it may be traced by a line of vitrified matter sticking fast to the rock, all along nearly of the same breadth, which in most places is about nine feet. This wall is strongly vitrified all round, except in one place, on the north side, where, for about seven yards, it is formed only of dry stones and earth, because the extreme steepness of the rock here was sufficient protection."

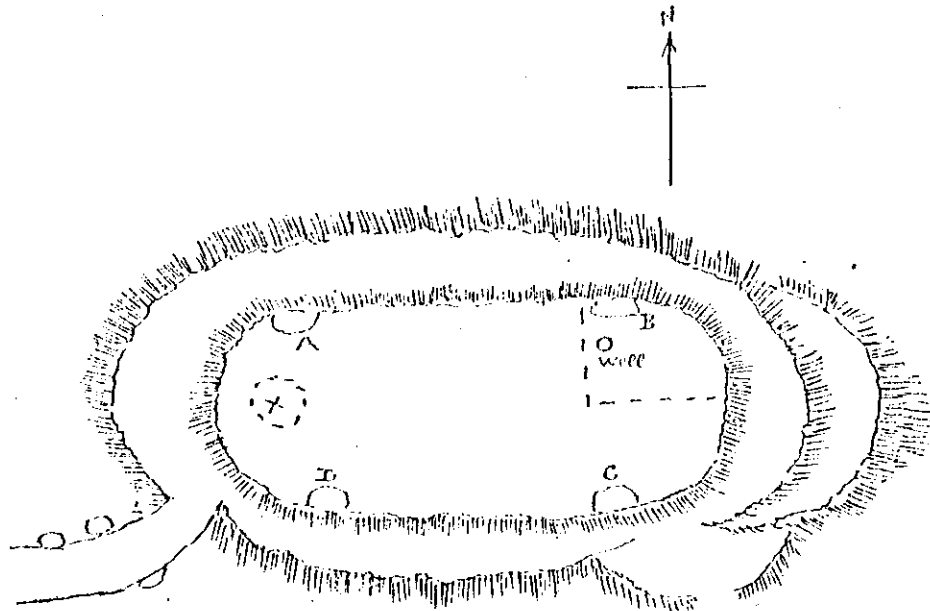
The inner wall was of the same thickness as the outer one, and of considerable height. There was some appearance of it having been armed and strengthened by four bastions or enlargement of the walls, at A, B, C, and D on the plan.

Mention is also made of the existence of a small tumulus of earth, with a stone in the centre, resembling cases found in ancient fortifications in Ireland. A portion of the space at the N.E. corner was marked off from the rest by two rows of stones firmly fixed in the ground in the form of a rectangular parallelogram. The whole inner space of the fort was clear; no trace of stones could be found except those mentioned.

From the accumulation of vegetable growth, these details in the interior of the fort cannot be determined. The existence of bastions is not inconsistent with the mode of defence in primitive times, as, for instance, in the case of the Gaulish forts, where towers similar to Roman towers were raised up to the level of the walls. These towers gave the defenders increased advantage over the attacking force. The entrances in the outer walls, and in their absence in the inner ones, show a striking resemblance to some of the Gaulish forts.

In all the forts a supply of water was necessary, and depressions, called "wells," are pointed out in them all. These were more likely to be natural reservoirs, as from their elevated and isolated positions, and the fact that they are usually built upon solid rock, it is difficult to see how natural springs were possible. The well in Craig Phadrick, in 1783, was said to be six feet in diameter, and had probably been dug out of the solid rock, but it was filled up with rubbish to within a yard of the top. These dimensions seem to warrant a well or reservoir of considerable capacity. Its position now could only be found by clearing away the accumulated turf. Rock-cut wells are not unusual. One may be seen at Ormond Castle, near Avoch, Ross-shire, and another at Eilan Donan Dornie, Kintail.

Before these "wells" can be properly understood, as well as the characters of the builders and occupiers of the fort themselves, more spade work must be undertaken.



Craig Phadrick



Antiquity No.

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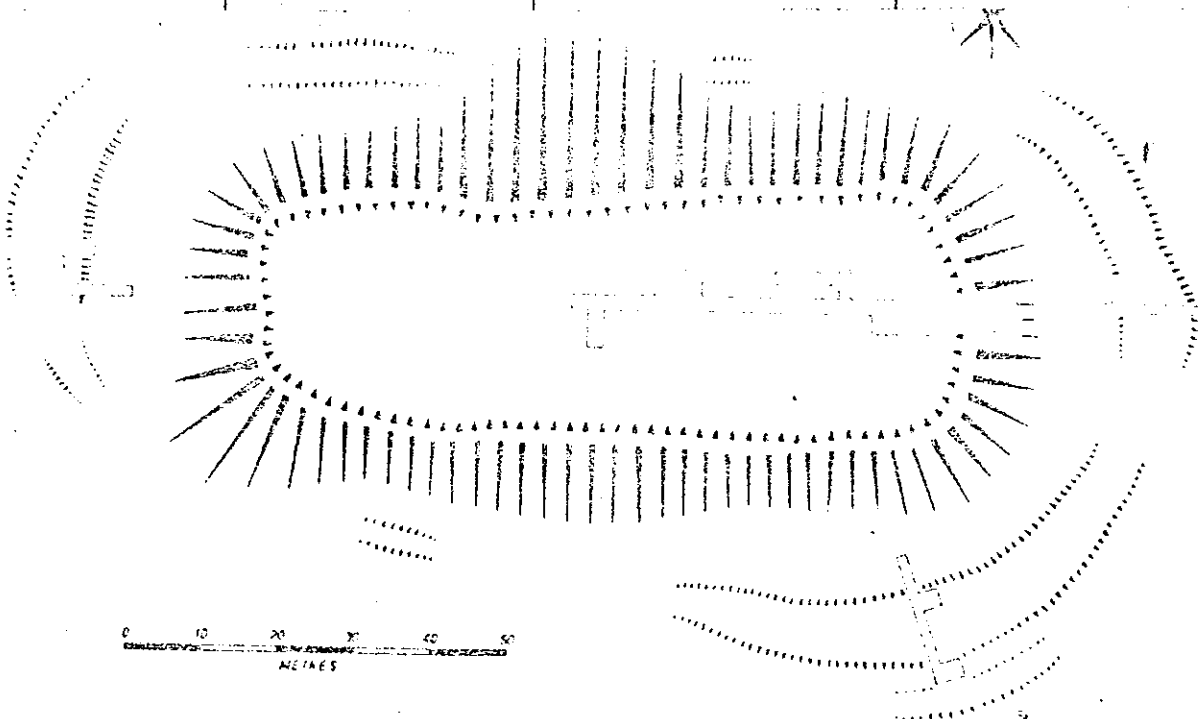


Fig. 2 Plan of fort showing areas excavated in 1971

# Probing the past at Craig Phadrig

MEMBERS of Inverness Field Club recently climbed Dunain Hill and Craig Phadrig, the dominating ridge of high ground to the west of Inverness above the golf course and the new housing developments of Leachkin and Scorguie. From this high ground, despite stands of tall trees, it is possible to get extensive views of the Beaully Firth, the Ness lowlands and beyond.

In former days the district was part of the Barony of Kinmylies, a name which first appears in the records of Inverness in 1232, when King Alexander conferred the land on Andrew de Moravia, the seventh Bishop of Moray. It remained church property for over 300 years until 1544, when it was disposed of by Bishop Patrick Hepburn and the Chapter of Elgin Cathedral to Hugh Fraser, Lord Lovat.

By this time Easter and Wester Kinmylies had been transferred to the Barony of Spynie, though a contemporary rental of the Bishopric reveals that it still included part of Glen Urquhart, Abriachan, Boleskine and Foyers, Kiltarlity, Moniack, fishings on the River Ness and several tenements in the Burgh.

General Roy's map of the mid-18th century shows many rigs, and it is known that there was a church and burial ground at 'Kilmyles', so the land between Craig Phadrig and Torvean has always been well populated. From a late charter of 1743 it appears that the feuars of Kinmylies also had the right to pasturage on Tomnahurich.

The exposed rocks on the summit crags of both hills

## INVERNESS FIELD CLUB

show that the ridge is composed of a reddish conglomerate consisting of locally derived pebbles and angular fragments of the underlying metamorphic rocks.

They are of Devonian Age and represent a continental facies of deposition which in Scotland is known as the Old Red Sandstone. Together with associated sandstones, mudstones and shales they form part of the sedimentary succession over 6000ft thick.

The conglomerates continue across the Kessock Narrows to the Black Isle where they are disposed in a great downfold or syncline, and where once again they form the areas of major relief. There is evidence that the Dunain ridge is a fault bounded on three sides, especially to the south where the Great Glen fault is responsible for the adjacent Ness lowlands.

From the summit of the hill it is possible to distinguish the superficial landforms in the valley of the Ness which were created in late and post glacial times, some 10-15,000 years ago. Foremost are the great esker systems which include Tomnahurich and Torvean, and the kame terraces close by Dunain Park.

Although the remains of the ancient shore lines cannot be easily traced from the summit viewpoint, it is worthwhile noting that 20 years ago the experts considered the sea to have entered the Ness basin following the retreat of the ice. Now the latest research suggests that this event never happened.

In 1971 Inverness Field Club sponsored an archaeological investigation of the late Bronze Age/Iron Age hill fort that partially crowns the summit of Craig Phadrig.

The results indicated that the inner ramparts were 20ft thick and were estimated to rise to a height of 25ft. Significantly they were laced with horizontal timber beams which, although conferring certain structural advantages, were ultimately responsible for their destruction by fire, and the creation of one of the great antiquarian controversies of the last century.

At the time of the first Field Club visit to Craig Phadrig on 21st August 1880, led by Dr Aitken, president of the club and superintendent of Craig Dunain Hospital, arguments raged over the origin of the vitrified material known to be incorporated within the walls.

Today it is considered that the partial melting of the rocks, which made up the inner rubble core, was caused by fires accidentally or deliberately introduced, but not as a specific construction technique aimed at strengthening the walls as some early antiquarians believed. In 1991, as current members discovered, it is still possible to see examples of this vitrified material in situ.

The sandstone gables, slated roofs and square towers of Craig Dunain Hospital today rise above the green fields and dark firwoods of the lower slopes. It was established in 1864 following

the Lunacy Act of 1847. In those days it was known as the Inverness District Lunatic Asylum and was designed to accommodate 250-300 psychiatric patients.

Before this the mentally ill and handicapped were held and treated in the cells of the maniac department of the Northern Infirmary, which was separate from the rest of the establishment. In the new hospital patients were encouraged to work on some of the projects initiated within the hospital grounds.

The first edition of the six inch Ordnance Survey map, drawn in 1869, details a farm, piggery, garden, gas works, laundry and a water collection scheme, which included a reservoir later enlarged by the patients themselves.

Above the hospital on the eastern ascent of Dunain Hill by the Reservoir is "Fuaran a chragain Bhrich" or "well of the spotted rock". In earlier times this was a place of great resort, the waters, among other healing virtues, being supposed to be strangely diuretic.

It was both a "clootie well" and a fairy well. One report stated that the surrounding bushes were often so completely adorned with rags and threads as to be hardly distinguishable.

At Craig Phadrig it was disappointing to see that some of the explanatory notices set on stone plinths and covered with two sheets of tough transparent plastic had been vandalised and rendered useless. No doubt it was a sound decision to fill in the site of the 197 excavation after all.

### 75 DUN-DA-LAMH, FORT, EAST INVERNESS-SHIRE

1st millennium AD.

NN 582929. About 9.5 km NNW of Dalwhinnie. On A86, about 3 km SW of Laggan, park behind cottages. Walk N 1 km along track, then left into trees (notice on gate admits walkers), and 1st turn right. At end of track, go uphill through heather; fort on right in trees. (About 45 mins).

The fort is built on a knoll at the east end of a long, steep-sided ridge known as the Black Craig, and is divided from the main ridge by a saddle. Standing some 200 m above the valley floor, it has extensive views over upper Strathspey and Strathmashie. The knoll has two craggy summits with a lower area between, now overgrown with tall grass and heather: its Gaelic name (pronounced 'dun da larve' means 'fort of the two hands' and may refer to the two summits. The rampart does not follow a level contour round the hill, but climbs up and down with the crags, and it was unusually massive, varying in width from four to six metres or more: it is now tumbled and lichened. The inner face of the wall has been exposed at the northwest and southwest corners by the removal of rubble, showing the fine quality of the masonry built with small slabs (however, unless covered over soon, this face will itself deteriorate). Because of the odd shape of the hill, the fort has pronounced corners,

with angles skilfully constructed on the inner side of the wall. The original entrance may have been in the middle of the north wall where there seems to be a gap.

The position of the fort on such a craggy knoll and the use of rock outcrops suggest that this fort may be of early historic date, perhaps contemporary with fortifications on crags in the south of Scotland, such as Dumbarton Rock near Glasgow, Dunadd in Argyll and Dundurn, Perth and Kinross District.

### 76 CRAIG PHADRIG, FORT, INVERNESS

1st millennium BC and 6-7th centuries AD.

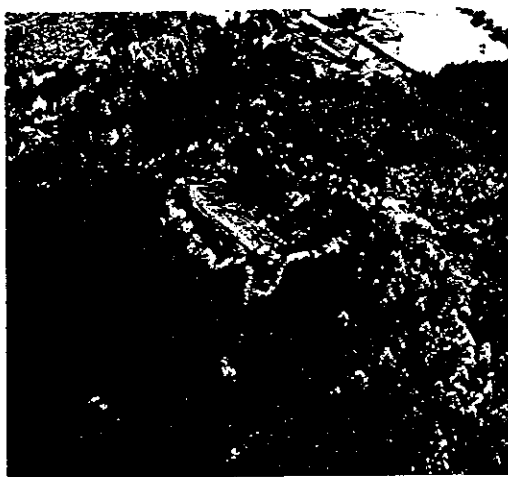
NH 640452. About 2.5 km W of Inverness. A862 over canal, left at roundabout (King Brude Road), 3rd right (Leachkin Road), 3rd right (Leachkin Brae), shortly track on right into carpark for Craighphadrig Forest. Steep path to fort on top of hill.

Forestry Commission

The fort occupies the summit of a prominent wooded hill. It has two more or less concentric ramparts enclosing a grass-grown subrectangular area some 80 m long. The fort and its ramparts are clear of trees, and there are glimpses of the originally extensive views over Inverness and the Beaully Firth.



Dun-da-Lamh fort



Craig Phadrig

Excavation in 1971 showed that both ramparts had been constructed of timberlaced stonework and subsequently burnt, and contained large masses of vitrified material. The inner rampart is particularly massive, and good examples of vitrification can be seen under the roots of a pine tree at the north end. There is a steep slope down to the outer rampart which is a slighter affair. No original entrances can be identified. Radiocarbon dates from the ramparts suggest they were built in the 5th or 4th centuries BC.

A small excavation in the interior produced unexpected evidence for reoccupation of the fort in the 6th or 7th centuries AD. The finds included a few small scraps of imported pottery, and a clay mould for casting a metal fitting for a hanging-bowl (in NMS, replica in Inverness Museum). There is some suggestion that the ramparts were refurbished at this time. An historical king of the Picts, Bridei son of Maelchon who ruled around AD 555 to 584, had a royal house near the river Ness where he was visited by St Columba. The description would fit Craig Phadrig well, though other sites such as Inverness Castle Hill are also possible.



### 77 KNOCK FARRIL, FORT, ROSS AND CROMARTY

*Late 2nd or 1st millennium BC.*

*NH 504585. West of Dingwall. Approach from S on A835 via Maryburgh and Ussie to Knock Farril crofts, then road and track to W end of hill.*

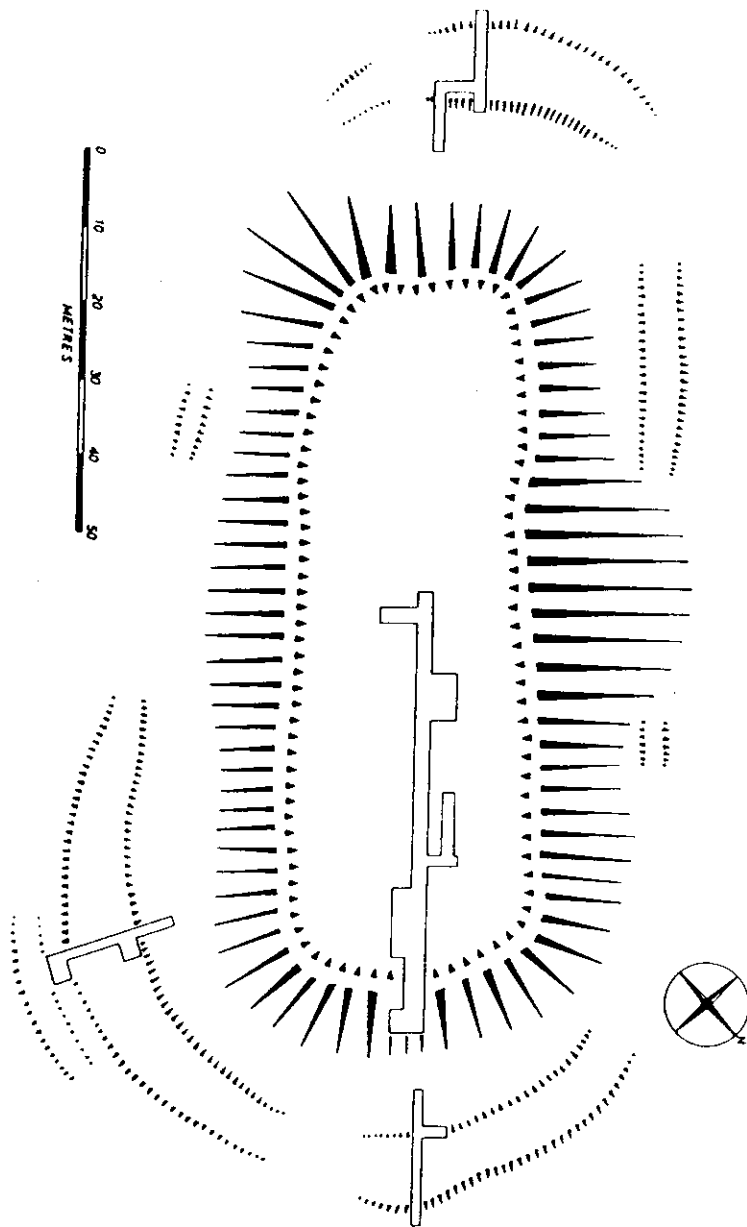
Knock Farril  
(Right)

The fort occupies the summit of a ridge standing high above Strath Peffer with steep slopes to north and south but a gentler approach at the west end where the ridge continues. It is covered in grass which is a pleasant change from the tough heather of so many Highland forts.

The fort is subrectangular in plan, and its stone rampart is heavily vitrified. Great masses of vitrified rock outcrop along the south rampart in particular, where in places stones can be seen to have partly melted, started to run out like thick treacle, and then solidified again. An unusual feature of this fort is that lines of vitrified rampart lead out east and west from either end. These may have been ramparts with breastworks each side, built to prevent attack along the narrow spine of the ridge. There are traces of an outer rampart round part of the circuit. Modern scientific tests (thermo-luminescence dating) of the vitrified stone suggest the main rampart may belong to the bronze age, but more evidence is needed. The plan of the fort is confused by three later ditches which cut across the fort from side to side: one ditch cuts across the vitrified wall east of the fort, one across the fort itself and the other across the western wall, each with a bank on its west side. These were trenches excavated by the engineer John Williams in the 1770s as part of an early attempt to understand vitrified forts. He suggested that there was a gap between the main rampart and the end walls, so that they could be cut off if necessary by removing a drawbridge.



Fig. 2 Plan of fort showing areas excavated in 1971



Small, A. & Cottam, M. B.  
 Craip Phadrig Univ. of Dundee Dept. of Geog. (1972)  
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