

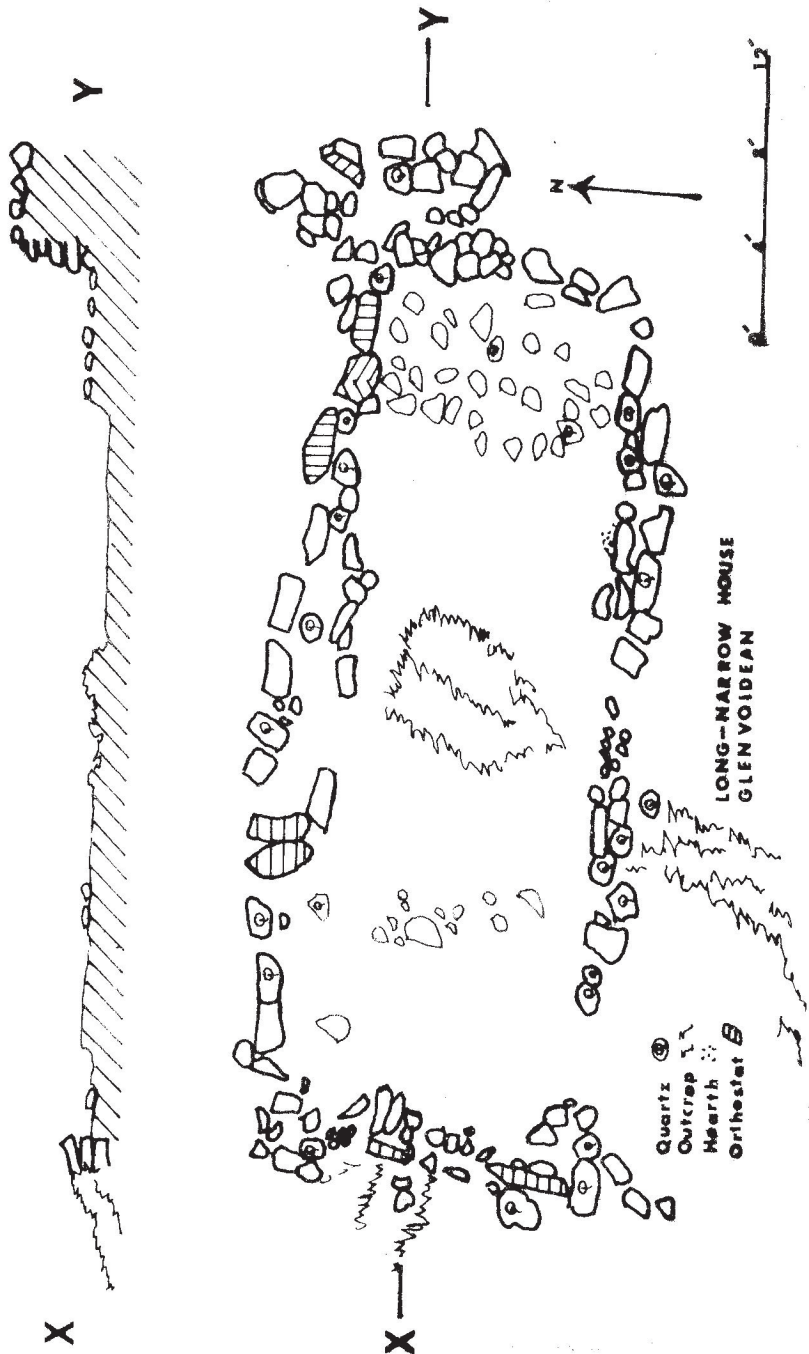
BRONZE AGE CUP-MARKED STONES GLENVOIDEAN — NS 997704

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While working at the Glenvoidean Cairn sets of small cup-marks were noticed on two earth fast boulders, one below and one above the cairn. The cups are small, 2" in diameter, and quite shallow. On the lower stone (Fig. 3) the nine cup-marks are scattered over the whole flat surface of the stone. The surface of the Mica-schist stone is very much weather worn and badly flaked. It is over 3,000 years since the cups were made and they may well have been deeper when freshly cut. There may have been more of them too. The boulder higher up the hill, above the Cairn (Fig. 4) is larger, also flat topped but the eight cup-marks are concentrated on a ledge of the stone, 1'4" by 3'. There is one possible one on the main surface of the boulder. The surface is weathered but not so badly flaked as that of the one lower down the hill.

There are only two other examples of these Bronze Age cup-marks known on Bute. The two on the standing stone at Craigberoch are illustrated in the Buteshire Natural History Nature Trail No. 1. These and the one on the large stone incorporated in the Longhouse at Little Dunagoil are the size of small tea cups. This one at Dunagoil is shown in Nature Trail No. 4.

Despite the hundreds of examples of cup-marked stones no satisfactory explanations as to their significance has ever been found. They are most commonly found on flat outcrops of rock or on boulders. Sometimes they are found on standing stones, sometimes on slabs of burial cists. Sometimes the cups are surrounded by concentric rings or grooves and grouped in elaborate patterns. Near Berwick on Tweed is a rock face covered with cups within squares.



Usually they are where some metal bearing rocks are found, as at Kilmartin, Kirkcudbright, and Aberfeldy. This has made some authorities link them with Bronze working. While Bute was never a centre of metal working there is copper not very far away on Loch Fyne side. There are fine examples of cup and ring marks on a boulder on the hill beyond Strachur and near the fort at Ardmarnock.

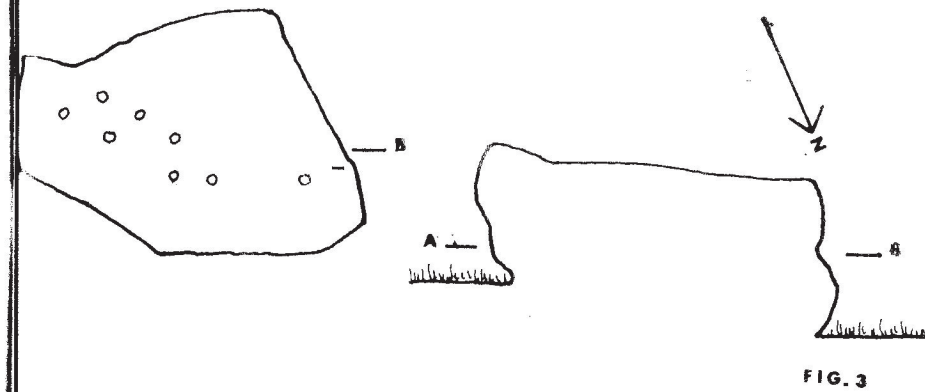


FIG. 3

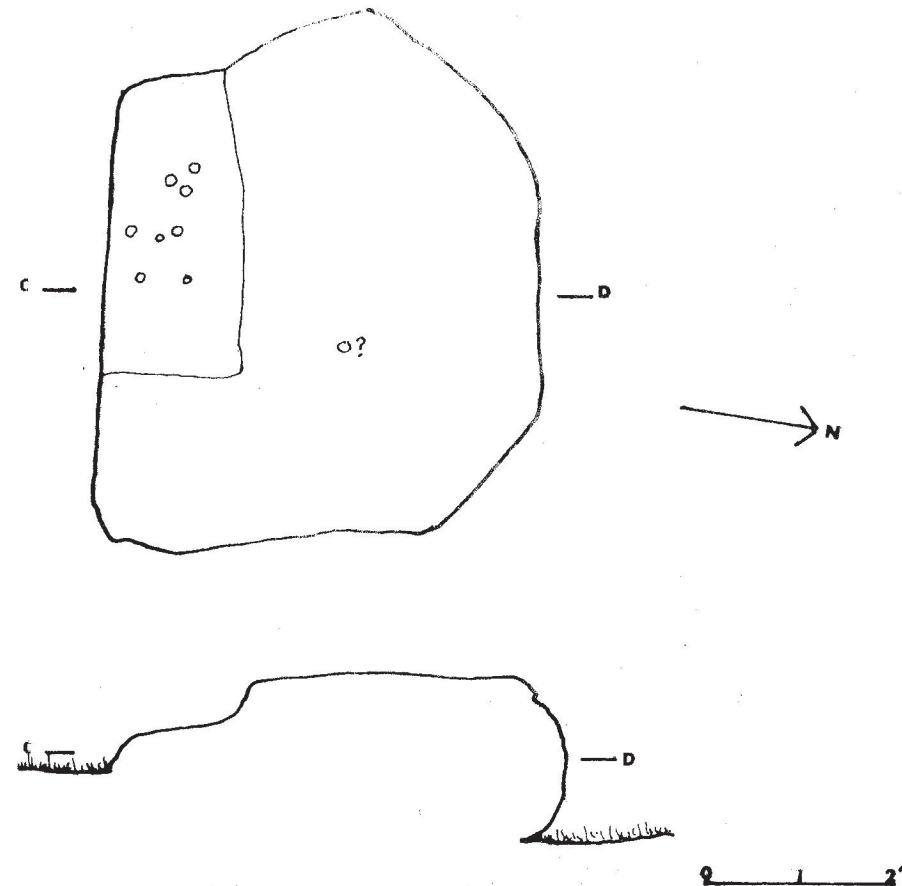


FIG. 4

BRONZE AGE CUP-MARKS
- GLENVOIDEAN