

David's Fort, Conon Bridge

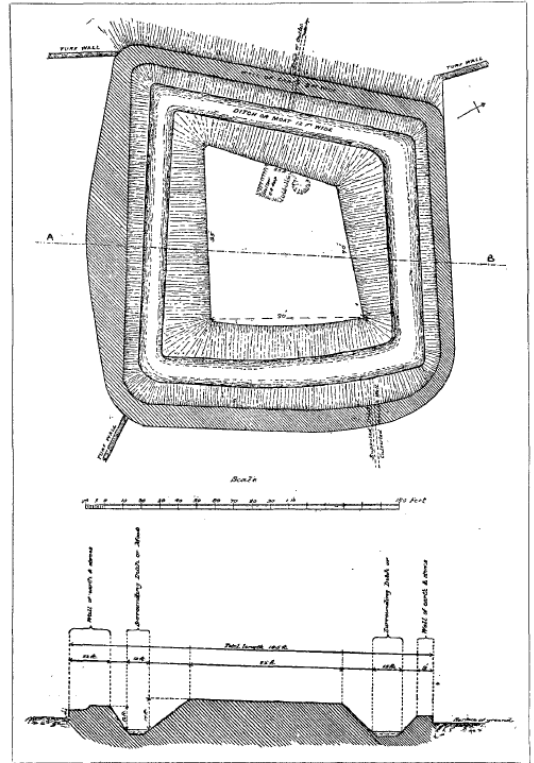
by Susan Kruse of Dingwall Museum

In the woods on the outskirts of Conon Bridge is an unusual and enigmatic site. Known as David's Fort, it consists of a mound surrounded by a moat, originally fed by an artificial pond, with an enclosing wall around that. The area has been much disturbed in the past, and is now overgrown and difficult to access, and almost impossible to photograph. We have no idea who David was.

When found elsewhere, sites of this type are generally thought to be medieval moated homesteads. They are common in parts of England, but less so in Scotland and exceedingly rare in the Highlands. The site was recorded by an antiquarian, Angus J. Beaton, who published a plan and description in the 1880s, and at that time also identified turf walls radiating from three of the walls.

Many theories have been put forward as to its function. Was it used by monks from an undocumented monastic site, with the water courses involved in raising fish? Was it the focal point of Conan estate in earlier times? Might it even have been made as a 18th/early 19th century folly for the Mackenzies at Conan House? When Beaton questioned the landowner, Sir Kenneth Mackenzie of Gairloch and Conan, he reported other theories current at the time, including a camping place for an independent military company, believing it had the mark of military engineering.

It is a site that would well reward some tidying up, and then dating evidence!



Plan published by Beaton in 1882-3



Further reading

- <https://her.highland.gov.uk/Monument/MHG8986>
- <https://nosasblog.wordpress.com/2016/02/22/davids-fort-a-medieval-motte/>
- <https://nosasblog.wordpress.com/2020/05/07/davids-fort-revisited-and-a-strange-coincidence/>
- Beaton, Angus J 1882-3. 'Notes on Ancient Fortifications in the Black Isle, Ross-shire', *Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland* 17, pp. 414-23.