

# Scotland

## Auchernack Stones

Clachan-neart Achernack

Small 103kg / 226lb

Large 130kg / 286lb

*Editor – This section is the combination of emails and extracts from a separate article Peter created before successfully finding the Auchernack stones. He speaks at length about the naming convention of the stones.*



John (Stewart) rose to the rank of Captain in the 53<sup>rd</sup> Regiment, and retired on half-pay. He was called the oichear mor, the big officer, from his great size. It was said he had no equal in Strathspey for strength. There are two boulders that lie near the gate of Achernack, Clachan neart, which were used as tests of strength. One man out of ten might lift the smaller over the dyke, but not one in a thousand could do this with the other. The big officer could toss them both over, one after the other, with ease

In the shadow of Cairgorm, Rev W Forsyth, p.196-197, 1900.

Instantly it should be seen that the published work clearly alludes to the fact the stones were still in place in 1900. Further texts on these two stones repeat the affirmation of the strength of John Stewart and the fact that both stones were used as traditional tests of strength, but they also pinpoint the location of the stones to the gatehouse at Auchernack.

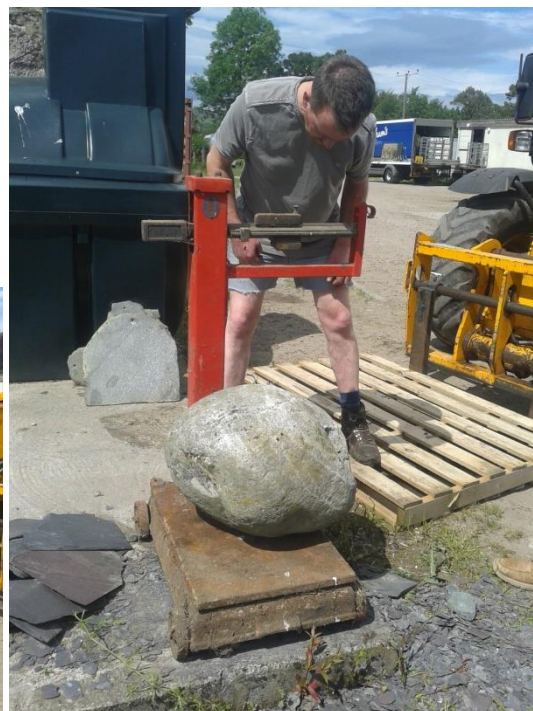
The reference to both stones calls them “Clachan neart” and again it should be emphasised that these were no putting stones. There is more than a hint that as the stones were required to be thrown over a dyke wall and not placed on top, that the actions of John Stewart was an emphasis of superior strength.

The lifting and throwing over a recognised plinth is not a unique style and is also replicated with the Wallace Putting Stone.

The Barevan Stone, was also known as Clach Neart – the Putting Stone of the Clans. In addition to this, the Clach Neart of Strathmore of Durness is again a heavy stone, a lifting stone that was also expected to be thrown. The inclusion of these stones of Auchernach strengthens the evidence that the Clach Neart was not simply a putting stone as used in today’s modern Highland Games.

Rather, it strengthens the argument that such stones were so named only because they were expected to be thrown, regardless of actual weight.

*Editor - Peter subsequently found the stones were located at Auchernack Farm in Grantown Upon Spey. The first visit to this location was in 2013 with James Grahame and Martin Jancsis. After some rudderless wanderings, we found a farmer who shared his knowledge of the stones and proceeded to weigh them. As the apparatus was being dragged in to position, it was explained that the stones originally sat at the entrance to the farm.. However, they were moved farther in to the driveway as people returning from a night’s drinking were injuring themselves in impromptu attempts to lift the stones.*



Stones being weighed, 2013 at Auchernack Farm



Peter Martin and James Grahame

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