

Knowes of Lingro



One of the Knowes of Lingro (to the east of Crustan) is traditionally a resting place of St Magnus. The three mounds that form the Knowes of Lingro are considered to be prehistoric barrows and all have been investigated in antiquity. The tradition of one of these as a resting place is recorded by Ernest and Hugh Marwick and there is no reason to doubt that this tradition was known locally in the early to mid-twentieth century.

Tradition also associates Magnus with the Knowe of Crustan to the west of the Knowes of Lingro. Mooney records that Crustan was so named as it is on the ridge where the Birsay church first comes into view when travelling from Evie. The name likely derives from Old Norse Kross-steinn, Cross stone, suggesting a cross-slab or prayer stone in the vicinity. In 1852 the Knowe of Crustan was recorded as a prominent mound with a standing stone, four to five feet high, on its summit and in 1935 Mooney records that an extant mound with a stump of a standing stone at Crustan was a resting place of Magnus's coffin. The mound has been interpreted as a prehistoric barrow, but this does not preclude its later use as a cross stone and resting place.

Crustan is more widely noted as a resting place but both places have associations with Magnus and it is not implausible to see both locations as resting places.

References

Knowes of Lingro – canmore entry: <http://canmore.org.uk/site/1775>

Knowe of Crustan – canmore entry: <http://canmore.org.uk/site/1790>

Marwick, E. nd Archive Papers. Orkney Archive. D31/37/1/1 'An Island Saint', 5

Marwick, H. 1957 'Antiquarian Notes and Queries IV' in The Orcadian, 14th February 1957, p.4

Marwick, H. 1970 The Place Names of Birsay. Aberdeen University Press, Aberdeen, 34, 49

Mooney, J. 1935 Saint Magnus Earl of Orkney, Kirkwall, 202