

The Gress Cairn

Opened in 1996 the cairn commemorates the Back district land raids of 1918-20 in which crofters who had returned from the First World War confronted Lord Leverhulme.

The cairn beside the River Gress stands below the bridge that became a focus for the conflict. Leverhulme denied access to land promised to veterans of the 1914-18 war and this prompted widespread unease amongst the local population.

The cairn takes the form of a single square pillar flanked by two curved columns. A trench planted with rowan and birch, as well as an additional circular earthwork surrounds this. The square column therefore symbolically splits a circular shape in two and represents Leverhulme's divisive influence on the community. The trench refers to the war veterans returning home to 'land fit for heroes' and their subsequent disillusionment.