

DUMFRIESSHIRE.

PARISH OF MOFFAT.

R. W. F.

FORT, WHITE HILL. The River Annan rises in the steep-sided Devil's Beef Tub and runs thence S. through an open valley for five miles to Moffat before entering the broader plains of Annandale. White Hill is a low ridge a quarter of a mile in length lying a quarter of a mile to the E. of and parallel to the river near the N. end of the valley, and this fort is situated halfway along it at a distance of half a mile SSE. of Corehead farmhouse. The fort is oval on plan and consists of two concentric systems of defences. The inner is represented by a rubble mound, mostly grass-covered, which measures about ¹⁷⁰ 20 feet from N. to S. by 125 feet ^{internally.} transversely. The mound is probably a ruined wall of unknown thickness, all facing stones having been either removed or covered in debris. The entrance about 7 feet in width is in the ESE. The outer system lies at a distance from the inner which varies from 10 feet to 30 feet, and it consists of two grass-covered ramparts with a medial ditch. Each rampart measures up to about 20 feet in width, and stands to a maximum height of 3 feet above the bottom of the ditch. That they were stone-faced rubble constructions is suggested by the presence of two stretches of outer facing stones that protrude through the turf one in the S. arc of the inner rampart measuring 22 feet in length and one in the SE. arc of the outer rampart 36 feet in length. The ramparts meet round the ends of the ditch on either side of the entrance, which is in the E. The entrance passage measures 9 feet in width and is bordered on either side by a row of earth-fast stones protruding through the turf. Those on the N. side of the passage form a line 20 feet in length, while those on the S., which run for 18 feet, appear to join on to a wall measuring 12 feet in length and 5 feet in width, which runs thence towards the interior of the fort. What may be the fragmentary remains of a further stretch of this wall appear after a gap of 8 feet, and may originally have joined it to the narrow ruinous inner defence. To the N. the space between the entrances is partly occupied by a stony heap which may conceal the ruin of a similar wall; but the use of parts of/

of the interior of the fort for depositing stones cleared from the surrounding fields has tended to obscure the details. It is impossible to say whether the two systems of defence represent one constructional phase, or whether one of them existed before the other. The differences in character might suggest that they were not contemporary, but they might still represent a modification under one continuous occupation.

075117. ix. N. E.

6th September 1955.

Dumfries.

ENCLOSURE, MEIKLEDALE NO. 2. (Inventory No. 217). A scooped
enclosure with no traces of ~~assorted~~^{associated} dwellings.

xxxvi N.E.

11 July 1955.

MSS.	KS
PLAN	.....
MAP	.....
M.R.	.....
REPS.	.....

Dumfries.

ENCLOSURE, CASTLE OER HILL. (INVENTORY NO.189). This site has been completely obscured by planting.

245929
~~245929~~

xxxv N. W.

15 July 1955.

MSS	KS
PLAN	.....
MAP	.....
M.R.	.....
REPS.	.....

Dumfries.

ENCLOSURE, "OVER RIG", (Inventory No. 175). This is probably
nothing more than a cattle enclosure.

245935

xxxv N.W. ("Fort").

15 July 1955.

MSS	KS
PLAN	.....
MAP	.....
M.R.	.....
REPS.	.....

Dumfries.

EARTHWORK, THE KNOWE (Inventory No. 178). This is not a fort,
but a D-shaped earthwork. The Inventory plan is misleading.

248923

~~xxxv~~ N.W. ("Fort").

15 July 1955.

MSS.	KS	.....
PLAN		.....
MAP		.....
M.R.		.....
REPS.		.....

Dumfries.

ENCLOSURE, ESKDALEMUIR (Inventory No. 204). A scooped enclosure
almost entirely destroyed by cultivation.

252979

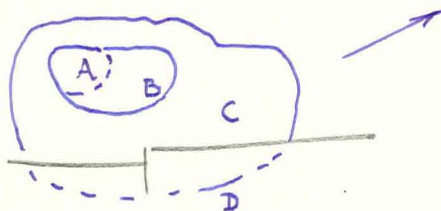
xxvi S.W. ("Fort").

15 July 1955.

MSS	KS
PLAN	.....
MAP	.....
M.R.	.....
REPS	.....

Dumfries.

FORT, CAMP HILL (Inventory No. 640). I suspect that this is a Dark Age fort consisting of a citadel (A), an inner ward (B), and an outer ward (C)



Enclosures (A) & (B) have had stone walls though in most cases these have been heavily robbed. (C), on the other hand, is bounded by a ditch with upcast banks on either side, strikingly reminiscent of the outworks at Bonchester Hill. The ditch of (C) is visible in the pasture field at D on the sketch and the rest of the missing circuit is suggested by vegetational marks on the air photographs. This is a site which should certainly be planned.

256⁹⁰~~695~~

xxxv S.W.

14 July 1955.

MS.	KS	.....
PLAN		.....
MAP		.....
M.I.		.....
RE		.....

Dumfries.

EARTHWORK, BANKHEAD HILL (Inventory No. 634). The so-called fort here is actually a D-shaped earthwork of the type found in SW. Roxburghshire.

265927

xxxv N.E. ("Fort")

14 July 1955.

MSS	KS
PLAN	.....
MAP	.....
M.R.	.....
REPS	.....

Dumfries.

EARTHWORK, BANKBURNFOOT (Inventory No. 633). This is not a fort
but an earthwork similar to the one at Knowesouth Burn in Roxburghshire.

⁹²
268~~295~~

xxxv N.E. ("Fort")

14 July 1955.

MSS	KS
PLAN	.....
MAP	.....
M.R.	.....
REPS.	.....

Dumfries.

FORT (?) "WHITE BIRREN" (Inventory No. 639). This is an enclosure bounded by a single wall originally some 8 ft. in thickness, and composed of a stone core faced on either side with boulders. The wall has been very heavily robbed, so that the first impression is that it is simply an enclosure. On the other hand the wall is similar in thickness to that of the fort at Craig Hill, while the hill-top position, and the ditch (which is pointless for drainage) also argue in favour of including it in the fort class. In view of its wasted condition no decision is however possible pending excavation. Slight traces of two rectangular buildings can be seen attached to the outer side of the wall on the SE. arc.

91
273195

xxxv S. E.

14 July 1955.

MSS.	KS
PLAN	.....
MAP	.....
M.R.	.....
REPS.	.....

Dumfries.

EARTHWORKS, SHIEL BURN NOS. 1 and 2 (Inventory Nos. 635/636) Both these sites are best described as earthworks, since they are not sited with a view to defence and yet are more substantial than mere stock-pens. The accounts given in the Inventory are at fault in mentioning only one rampart in each case, ^{whereas} ~~since~~ in fact both sites have two. The ramparts are obviously formed of earth, although, as at Bogle Walls, the inner rampart in each case has been crowned with a stone wall. Shiel Burn No. 2 is being eroded by the burn and should be planned as soon as possible.

287918, 285920

xxxv N.E. ("Fort", "Fort") .

14 July 1955.

MSS.	KS
PLAN	.....
MAP	.....
M.R.	.....
REPS.	.....

Dunfries.

EARTHWORK, BOGLE WALLS (Inventory No. 638). The Inventory account is reasonably good, but the depressions in the interior are not convincing as huts and look more like small quarry-pits.

It is difficult to decide whether this is an Early Iron Age or mediaeval work, but I suspect the latter. The steep and well-preserved scarp ~~at~~ ^{of} the inner rampart on the S. has a fresh look about it, but, on the other hand, the shape of the work, and the narrow ditch, recall several of the Early Iron Age forts in East Lothian.

91
292192

xxxv S.E. ("Fort").

13 July 1955.

MSS.	KS
PLAN	.....
MAP	.....
M.R.	.....
REPS.	.....

Dumfries.

ENCLOSURES, HIZZIE BIRREN AND THE BOONIES (Inventory Nos. 643 & 645).

Both these works are probably mediaeval rather than prehistoric, but it is difficult to know whether to classify them as earthworks or enclosures. Structures with comparably substantial defences in Roxburghshire were classified as earthworks, but it is more difficult to draw the line in Dumfriesshire between these works and the enclosures in Ewesdale.

315900, 300905 xxxvi S.W. ("Fort"), xxxv S.E. ("Fort"). 13 July 1955.

MSS	KS
PLAN	.....
MAP	.....
M.R.	.....
REPS.	.....

Dumfries.

ENCLOSURE, WESTER HALL (Inventory No. 642). This work was not visible at the date of visit, being overgrown with vegetation.

324890

xxxvi S.W. ("Fort")

13 July 1955.

MSS.	KS
PLAN	.....
MAP	.....
M.R.	.....
REPS.	.....

DUMFRIES

WESTERKIRK

ENCLOSURE, "THRUMCAPS YARD", RIG. The cottage of Rig stands in the centre of a circular, walled enclosure, about 150 ft. in diameter, which is marked on the O.S. map as a "fort" bearing the name "Thrumcaps Yard".⁽¹⁾ The enclosure wall is best preserved on the SE. arc where it is 10 ft. in thickness and consists of a ^{core} ~~cove~~ of small stones, tightly packed together without earth and faced on both sides with large boulders. One of the boulders measures 4 ft. 9 ins. in length by 2 ft. in width. Elsewhere the wall has either completely disappeared, as round the NE. half of the site where its ^c ~~course~~ is marked simply by a crest line, or has been reduced to a very slight, turf-covered bank. The position of the original entrance is doubtful, and the interior, which has been ~~excavated~~ ^{excavated} on the higher, NE., side to provide a level foundation for the cottage, shows no trace of any earlier structures. The work is not strong enough to be classed as a fort, being easily assailable from the NE., but is more substantial than the Ewesdale enclosures and was probably designed for habitation. ⁽²⁾

In a pasture field 30 yds. to the N., there is another enclosure, oval on plan and measuring approximately 105 ft. from N. to S. by 75 ft. from E. to W. The enclosure wall has been completely removed in the course of cultivation, and all that remains is a scooped hollow in the ground which is bordered on the E. side by a scarp 8 ft. in height. The size and shape of this enclosure recalls the Ewesdale enclosures, and it is possible that it served as a stock-pen for the Rig site described above.

- ^{inadvertently}
(1) This structure was ~~omitted~~ from the Dumfries Inventory of Dumfriesshire, presumably in error.
- (2) The enclosure at Burnfoot ^(Inventory of Dumfriesshire, No. 641) ~~(Inventory No. 641)~~ appears to have been a kindred ^{ru} ~~structure~~.

325890

xxxvi S.W. ("Fort").

MSS.....	RS.....
PLAN.....	
MAP.....	
M.R.	
REFS.....	

13 July 1955.

DUMFRIES

WESTERKIRK

ENCLOSURE, BURNFOOT HILL. On the edge of the high, right ^{bank} of the Burnfoot Burn, 150 yds, NE. of Burnfoot House, there is an oval scooped hollow, measuring 150 ft. in length by ¹²⁰~~100~~ ft. in greatest breadth, which has undoubtedly been an enclosure although there are now no visible signs of any surrounding wall or ^{bank}. A gap in the ~~arc~~ rim of the hollow on the S. arc may represent the site of the original entrance, but the interior is featureless.

334888

xxxvi S.W. ("Birren" in ordinary type).

13 July 1956.

MSS.....	K8
PLAN.....	
MAP.....	
M.R.....	
REFS.....	

Dumfries.

FORT, CRAIG HILL (Inventory No. 637). An irregularly-shaped fort defended by a single wall and partly enclosed on the S. and W. sides by an unfinished earthwork consisting of a rampart and external ditch. The chronological relationship between the wall and earthwork cannot be determined ~~from~~ surface observation, since they are ^{nowhere} ~~in no way~~ in contact, but the earthwork ~~most~~ probably represents an earlier fort. The huts mentioned in the earthwork are illusory, the two whose dimensions are given being merely unfinished and detached segments of ditch.

338878

xlv N.W.

12 July 1955.

MSS	KS	.....
PLAN		.....
MAP		.....
M.R.		.....
REPS		.....

DUMFRIES

EWES

ENCLOSURE, PARSON'S RIG. This enclosure is situated on the edge of a natural shelf on the SE. flank of ~~the~~ Parson's Rig, 100 yds. above the sheepfold and at a height of 750 ft. O.D. Sub-oval on plan, it measures 190 ft. from NE. to SW. by 160 ft. transversely within a wall which was probably about 6 ft. thick originally, but is now entirely ruinous and has been robbed of all its facing stones. The entrance is situated at the lowest point of the wall, on the E. side, and is 8 ft. wide. Within the interior there are slight indications of what may have been a rectangular building, measuring 12 ft. by 8 ft., attached to the enclosure wall on the NE., but these indications may be misleading and could simply be due to disturbance of the ground by stone robbers. Otherwise the only other internal features are two excavated hollows near the entrance which may have been water-holes for stock penned in the enclosure: one of the pits was full of water at the date of visit.

363906

xxxvi S.E. (unnoted).

12 July 1955.

MSS.....	K.S.
PLAN.....	
MAP.....	
M.R.	
REFS.....	

DUMFRIES

EWES

ENCLOSURE, BRIERYSHAW HILL. On a gentle, NW.-facing slope, 100 yds. SW. of the fort on the summit of Brieryshaw Hill ⁽¹⁾, there is a roughly circular enclosure bounded by a single wall and measuring about 180 ft. in diameter. The wall probably consisted of a core of rock rubble and earth faced on either side with boulders, but it has been reduced to a grass-grown mound not more than 3 ft. in height and spread to a maximum width of 14 ft. There is an entrance, 4 ft. in width, at the lowest point of the wall, on the SSE. arc. The interior, which is traversed by a later turf dyke, contains no definite signs of structures, although the surface is broken by numerous shallow, scooped hollows: whether these represent quarry pits or habitation floors is quite uncertain in the absence of excavation.

(1) Inventory of Dumfriesshire, No. 210 .

368915

xxxvi N.E. (unnoted).

11 July 1955.

Dumfries.

FORT, BRIERYSHAW HILL (Inventory No. 210). A circular fort with double ramparts (or walls) and ditches situated in a commanding position on the end of a spur overlooking Ewes Water. It is possible, however, that it is unfinished, since the ramparts are insignificant on the N. side, but very substantial on the S. side - and there is nothing in the lie of the ground to account for this. The so-called hut in the interior is a but-and-ben, and no original structures are visible.

370917

xxxvi N.E.

11 July 1955.

MSS	KS
PLAN	.....
MAP	.....
M.R.	.....
REPS	.....

Dumfries.

ENCLOSURE, TARRONA (Inventory No. 209). This is not a fort, but simply an enclosure like those on Parsons Rig and Brieryshaw Hill. The wall has been of stone, and probably not more than 6 ft. in thickness, but it appears more impressive on the air photographs owing to the fact that the interior has been scarped on the upper side. The assumption in the Inventory that the ground outside has been scarped for defensive purposes is erroneous, the scarp on the W. and N. side being simply the result of ploughing round the base of the wall. The side could hardly be in a less defensive position and is plainly visible from the floor of the valley. Former cultivation has destroyed any internal features.

373871

xlv N.E. ("Fort").

12 July 1955.

MSS	KS
PLAN	.....
MAP	.....
M.R.	.....
REFS.	.....

R. W. F.

DUMFRIESSHIRE.

PARISH OF MORTON.

PALISADED SETTLEMENT, MORTON MAINS HILL. This structure is situated on the summit of Morton Mains Hill at a height of 1,076 feet O. D. and at a distance of three quarters of a mile NE. of Morton Mains farmhouse. The hilltop is gently rounded on all sides except the ENE. where it drops steeply to the Kettleton Burn. The Settlement is oval on plan and measures 280 feet from N. to S. by about 200 feet transversely within a double palisade. This appears as a pair of shallow depressions about 6 feet apart each of which measures about 2 feet in width. The hill is covered with coarse pasture and patches of rushes, but most of the course of the trenches can be followed except for a stretch 50 feet in length in the S. arc. The entrance, which measures about 11 feet in width, is in the SSE. arc; it was to some extent obscured by rushes at the date of visit and it was not possible to be certain whether or not the trenches met on either side of it or whether they came to simple terminations. A single palisade trench of similar appearance to the others lies outside them at distances varying between 30 feet and 45 feet. Its entrance conforms with that of the double line. The NNW. arcs of both the single and the double trenches have been under cultivation and the depressions are consequently less easy to follow through these sections than round the rest of the course. No trace of a second entrance could be seen opposite the one in the SSE.

Both the double and the single trenches die out a little short of the steep ENE. face of the hill, and it is impossible to say what form the boundaries of the Settlement took in this sector. It is quite possible that the steepness of the hillside has led to erosion during the last two thousand years, and that the Settlement was originally a perfect oval.

An incompleated earthen rampart with an external quarry ditch lies at distances varying from 12 feet to 25 feet outside the palisade trench. A shallow setting-out trench was used to determine its line, and short stretches of a work of this kind can be distinguished in the S. and SE. arcs between isolated sections of the incomplete rampart. The rampart and the ^{ditch} ~~ridge~~ together measured 40 feet in width; they lie on the sloping flanks of the/
the/

the hill and although the rampart is slight its crest stands to as much as 12 feet above the bottom of the ditch. The ditch measures about 10 feet in width, and the earth and rubble excavated from it have been taken some 25 feet up the slope to be dumped on the line of the setting-out trench. A gap which probably represents the entrance conforms with those in the palisade works. No circular hut sites of the ring-ditch or ring-groove types, such as might be expected within a structure of this type, could be detected in the interior; but it is possible that some might have been hidden by the large patches of rushes, some of them circular, which grow on the hilltop. A stony mound of indeterminate nature stands on the true summit of the hill at a distance of 130 feet N. of the entrance in the double palisade. Its ruinous state is such that it is impossible to be sure whether it is a dilapidated hut-circle or, as seems more likely, a demuded cairn.

The striking similarities between this structure and the palisade settlement at Hayhope Knowe in Roxburghshire^I, must be mentioned. At both

1. Inventory No.

places there is a double palisade of similar proportions with a single palisade outside it. At Hayhope Knowe the incompleting bank appears to have been constructed with the single palisade trench marking its inner limit, instead of the setting-out trench used at Morton Mains Hill. The latter feature was first described as appearing at an incompleting fort in Hampshire², and has since

2. Antiquity, v. (1931), 474-485.

³
been noted in Banffshire.

3. Durn Hill.