

*Not checked, as this monument has now been included in the Selkirkshire Inventory. A.G. 14/9/60.*

SELKIRKSHIRE.

ASHKIRK PARISH.

"FORT", ASHKIRKSHIEL. This structure stands on a low hill about half a mile S. of Synton Mossend. The summit of the hill consists of two parallel ridges running NE. and SW., the one to the SE. being much higher and broader than its neighbour. The NE. slope is gentle, but the rest of the summit is well protected by Nature as its SE. side is precipitous and its SW. and NW. slopes descend steeply to a loch and a marshy hollow, now partially drained. The highest point in the site lies near the S. corner, and the broken rocky ground that occupies the SE. portion descends steeply to a lower-lying and more level area on which the rampart and ditches have been traced.

The works, as will be seen from the sketch-plan, are somewhat D-shaped in plan. Starting from the bottom of the slope just mentioned, a rampart and ditch run straight to the crest of the slope overhanging the drained hollow, a distance of about 115 ft. There are traces of an entrance 18 ft. wide centred 39 ft. from the bottom of the slope. At the end of this straight stretch the ditch, which is here 24 ft. wide from crest to crest, runs out on the slope that falls to the marshy hollow; but the rampart swings NE. along the crest of this slope, again practically straight, for some 150 ft., and from the point thus reached turns E., and then SE., to run out on the precipitous SE. side of the hill-top. Throughout this latter part of its course it is again flanked by a ditch. At distances varying from about 20 ft. to 30 ft. outside the ditch in the NE. sector there lies a low broad ridge, disposed as shown in the sketch-plan; but from superficial observation alone it is impossible to say whether this is a natural feature or the remains of another rampart.

Apart from the highest-lying and rocky portion of the summit, the whole of this area, both inside and outside the enclosure/

enclosure, has been cultivated with broad flat rigs. Those outside the enclosure and discontinuous with those within it; and while those in the interior clearly stop short of the rampart, there are no grounds for asserting that this has been constructed on top of them.

25th August 1942.