

Continuation of the Clydesdale Survey 2001
Tam Ward, Biggar Museum Trust

Aircleuch, Glengieith, Elvanfoot.

Enclosure NS 95405 15594 335m OD

On the eastern flank of Coupland Gair and occupying the whole of an almost level terrace circa 50m upslope from the well defined Roman Road, there is the remains of an enclosure formed by a grassy banks up to 2m spread by 0.35m high, the bank contains earth fast boulders. The site is best preserved as a semi circular arc of c18m diameter on the SW side, another length of bank 8m long and apparently more straight is on the NE side. The site lies on the eastern edge of a significant cairn group.

On the ACFA survey - check out report

Burnt mounds (2 of) NS 95420 15646 335m OD

On the eastern flank of Coupland Gair and lying between a drain and a spring course and circa 60m upslope from the well defined Roman Road, there is pair of burnt mounds. They lie near the base of the break of slope upwards to the north. The larger of the two measures 4.5m by 2.5m by 0.4m high and the other is 2m diameter by 0.5m high. Each is covered in short grass and moss.

Burnt mounds (2 of) NS 95344 15590 340m OD

On the eastern flank of Coupland Gair and lying circa 100m upslope from the well defined Roman Road, there is pair of burnt mounds. One is a very prominent dome shaped mound which measures 6m by 5m by 1m high. A few metres to the NW the other mound is 3m by 1m by 0.4m high. Each is covered in short grass and moss and they lie on a break of slope with boggy ground below them.

Enclosure NS 95147 15674 390m OD

On the eastern flank of Coupland Gair and lying at the rear of a terrace in a slight hollow there is a stone building. It is defined by boulders some of which are covered with vegetation, there is no obvious entrance. It is sub circular and measures between 4m and 5m in diameter.

Glenochar

Cairns NS 94794 14337

On the south east flank of Coupland Gair there are two cairns. They are 3m and 5m in diameter and both are 0.5m high.

There is another possible cairn lying on the north side of a spring at NS 94799 14337. It is dome shaped and measures 3m in diameter by 0.6m high.

Coulter Waterhead

Shielings, enclosures NT 04592 26782

At the head of the south east branch of the Coulter Waterhead Reservoir and straddling the Back Burn just above its confluence with Berry Grain, there are three shieling huts and two enclosures. One hut on the east side of the fence measures 5m by 4m overall, the walls have been built with boulders, but there is no obvious entrance. Another lies 20m downslope and on the other side of the fence, it measures 3m by 2.5m internally and there is a clear entrance gap on the east side. The walls are about 1.5m thick.

Below the two huts there is an 18m length of boulder wall footings forming an arc of about 10m in diameter. Upslope from the huts there is an enclosure which

is 24m long by about 8m wide, it forms half of a pear shape on the east side of the fence and is open on the west side where the ground drops down to the burn.

On the other side of the burn there is a rectangular scooped site which measures 6m long by 2.5m wide internally. The site has been cut into the hill face on the west, and probably using the quarried material to form a bank up to 1m high on the east side. There is no obvious access into the sunken area now formed.

Immediately above the sunken feature is a small sub rectangular enclosure which measures about 15m by 15m, The banks forming this enclosure are poorly preserved.

On the summit of a prominent natural gravel knoll, and east of the corrugated sheet sheep fold, there is a circular scooped area. It measures about 2.5m in internal diameter and is about 5m in diameter overall, the hollow is about 0.3m deep.

These features, although poorly preserved in some areas, appear represent the management of sheep involving the practice of transhumance. At least two of the stone structures will have been former shieling huts with the enclosures being used for activities such as milking the sheep. Surviving shielings are rare in South Lanarkshire, although there are numerous place names to indicate that such activities were common in former times. Shielings have recently been recorded in neighbouring Tweeddale along with the open ended turf and stone buchts, which are still found in significant numbers in Upper Clydesdale, the nearest being the three examples at Windgate House bastle in neighbouring Cowgill (valley).

Concrete sheep stell

On the west side of the Back Burn and adjacent the enclosures given above, there is a poured concrete sheepfold, now almost totally ruinous. The circular fold (given on OS maps) has been built on a levelled platform and is 8m in diameter. The walls were 0.15m thick and about 1m high. They were shuttered and have vertical steel bars as supports. A 6m length of off shoot walling was built at the entrance. This unusual stell was probably built at the same time as the reservoir. A small timber hut now sits on the site.