

**Addendum to Crookedstane survey, near Elvanfoot, South Lanarkshire.
Tam Ward 2012**

The area of Crookedstane Farm was surveyed in 1990 as part of the M74 Project (see Ward 1992) and is given in the report as Site No 91. Much of the area of the survey has been furrow ploughed for new forestry in 2011; this new forest straddles Crookedstane Burn from the environs of the farm and up stream to the point where the recently felled forest boundary is. A considerable number of archaeological sites must have been affected as a result.

An area to the SW of Crookedstane Farm has also been ploughed for new forest; this is on each side of Blakehouse Burn which flows north between Crookedstane Rig and Brown Hill. This area was never surveyed during the M74 Project; however, the following sites are now noted in both the ploughed and unploughed land there:

Burnt mound NS 91 SE NS 95995 14199 290m OD

On the north flank of Brown Hill and lying c 130 metres directly south and uphill from a sheep stell there is a double or crescentic shaped burnt mound. The lower part of the mound is seen as a dome shaped mound 4m in diameter by 0.6m high while the upper mound is 5m long by 4m and is 0.5m high, also slightly dome shaped. Both mounds are aligned with the spring course which flows on the west side. The feature is seen as two grassy mounds surrounded by rush growth.

Burnt mound NS 91 SE NS 96153 13924 330m OD

On the NE flank of Brown Hill there is a prominent dome shaped burnt mound which measures 7m by 5m by 2m high when measured from below and 0.75m high from the upper side. The long axis is across the hill. Field drains are cut around the mound but there is no obvious indication as to where the original spring course was. Two boulders lie nearby. This mound has a direct line of sight to the prominent group of unenclosed platform settlements at Crookedstane Farm 1km to the NNE. The mound was surrounded with molehills at the time of survey and only a few pieces of burnt stone were seen in some molehills below the mound with none elsewhere, the almost perfectly formed mound taken with the absence of burnt stone scatter, indicates an amazing neatness adopted during its accrual.

Burnt mound deposit NS 91 SE NS 96571 14044 300m OD

At the base of the west flank of Crookedstane Rig and noted in a plough furrow is a deposit of brightly reddened burnt stone and charcoal typical of a burnt mound deposit. The scatter is seen for about 7m in the furrow and the upcast from it, some burnt stone is also seen in the two adjacent furrows indicating a deposit of c 7m in diameter. The main deposit appears to be about 200mm deep and there has been no previous surface indicator of its existence in the now waterlogged ground. It lies on a slope and is about 60m from the burn side showing that a spring must have been exploited beside it.

Burnt mound deposit NS 91 SE NS 96645 13789 300m OD

At the base of the west flank of Crookedstane Rig and noted in a plough furrow is a deposit of brightly reddened burnt stone and charcoal typical of a burnt mound deposit. The main deposit is seen for about 5m in the furrow and in the upcast from it, it is about 200mm deep. Some burnt stone is also seen in several of the adjacent

furrows which are also immediately down slope from a sheep fold, furthermore, burnt stone and charcoal were seen in some furrows 30m upslope from the fold indicating that the principal deposit may lie beneath the sheep fold. This deposit would not have previously been visible and like the one given above may be considered to be an undeveloped burnt mound, which nevertheless have seen extensive activity.

Cairn NS 91 SE NS 96740 13840 310m OD

On the lower west flank of Crookedstane Rig and at the base of the hill slope, some 50m from the sheep fold and on the north side of Dry Cleuch, there is a cairn which has been cut through its centre in a plough furrow. The cairn appears to measure c4m in diameter and by about 0.4m high, the furrow has cut to the underlying till. A few surface stones were visible prior to ploughing.

Cairn + cremation? NS 91 SE NS 96710 13894 310m OD

On the lower west flank of Crookedstane Rig and at the base of the hill slope, and some 50m along slope from the cairn given above is another plough damaged cairn. It measures circa 3m in diameter by 0.3m high, however, for a length of a metre within the plough cut and for a depth of c 50mm there is a dense layer of charcoal, it lies on burnt till indicating a fire site in the location. The cairn has certainly covered a fire site and may be the site of a cremation burial.

The opportunity was taken to retrieve a small soil sample and this produced 9grammes of 'platy' charcoal above 1mm in size and will be retained at Biggar Museum.

Cairn group NS 91 SE circa NS 9653 1425 290m OD

On the lower west flank of Crookedstane Rig and at the base of the hill slope there is a small cairn group of at least six cairns, they all measure about 3m in diameter and are up to 0.4m high. Three are now lying in the new forest area and have been truncated by the plough, they are at:

NS96533 14217 and NS 96513 14228 and 96549 14200.

A further three lie above the forest fence in open ground and can be seen with visible stone, they are at:

NS 96548 14222 and NS 96538 14290 and NS 96537 14270.

Vegetation anomaly NS 91 SE NS 96358 14197 290m OD

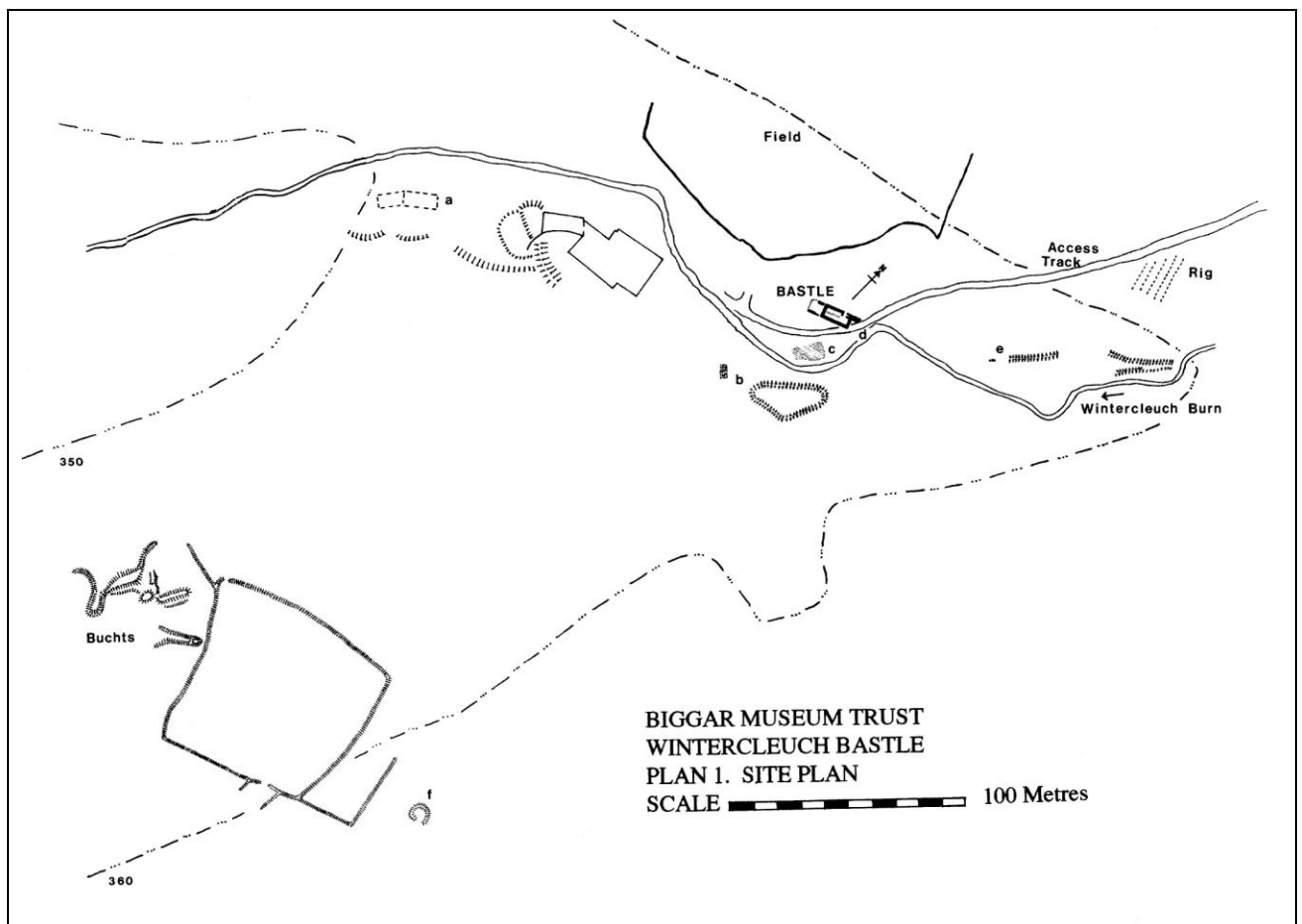
On the lower NE flank of Brown Hill there is a prominent patch of short grass and moss and which is completely surrounded by coarse tussock grass. The area which is on a gentle slope is c 11m in diameter and has two visible stones showing on its perimeter, however, probing indicates further stones around its edge. Numerous molehills were inspected but provided no further information.

Ring enclosures NS 91 SE circa NS 9620 4450 280m OD

On the lower north flank of Brown Hill and immediately on the west side of Blakehouse Burn there are four circular ring ditch enclosures. They are given on the OS map as 'Old Sheepfolds' and there is a typical drystane sheep stell on the other side of the burn to the east. The rings are seen as circular vegetation features of rush growth forming areas of grass within and all about 16 – 17m in diameter, there is no stone incorporated on the sites. Clearly the distinct difference in vegetation is indicated by ring ditches and probing indicates that they are only about 0.6m deep, the

circa 2m wide bands of rush may indicate the width of the ditches. No obvious gaps or entrances can be seen in the circuits of the enclosures which lie on level ground.

The features given here differ from other 'ring enclosures' which have been recorded in large numbers in the upper Clyde and Tweed valleys in that these are ditches while the others are banks, sometimes but not always incorporating stones. Such features remain problematic for the purposes of interpretation without recourse to excavation or other archaeological techniques. The 19th century interpretations as 'old sheepfold' may be true but no modern shepherd is able to explain why there would be a group of sheepfolds in close proximity. A pre historic function cannot be ruled out with regard to these enigmatic sites.



The enclosures and sheep milking buchts in the bottom left side of this plan may be in the area of development and if so should be investigated archaeologically.