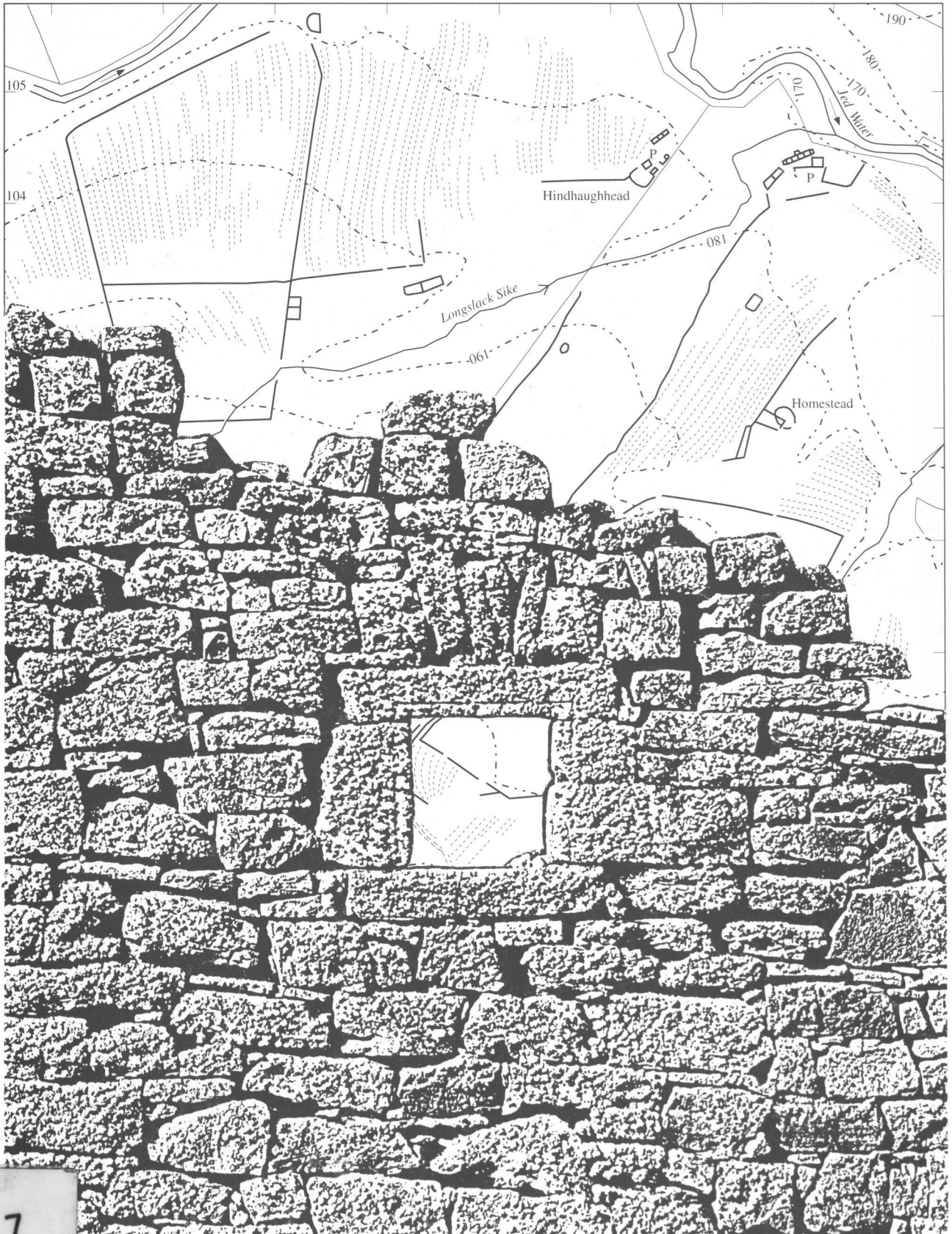




Royal
Commission on the
Ancient and
Historical
Monuments of
Scotland

SOUTHDEAN BORDERS

An Archaeological Survey



A1-7
AFF

The Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland

AREAS OF AFFORESTABLE LAND SURVEY



Map showing past and current areas of work of A L S

16580

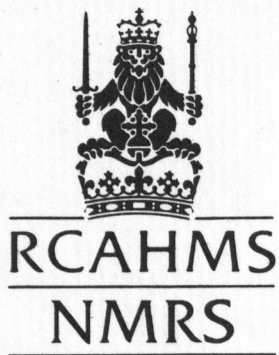
A1.7
BFF

SOUTHDEAN BORDERS

An Archaeological Survey



Slack's Tower, general view from the south-west



Afforestable Land Survey
RCAHMS

Cover, details of Fig. 10 and Slack's Tower

ISSN 0969-0694

© Crown Copyright 1994

SOUTHDEAN, BORDERS

PREFACE

This report was written by Dr P J Dixon, and was edited by Mr J B Stevenson and Mr G S Maxwell. It was based on fieldwork carried out by Dr P J Dixon, with survey and drawing work by Ms G Brown, Miss H L Graham, Mrs J Green, and Mr R Shaw, and record work by Mr P McKeague. The photographs (except Fig. 3) were taken by Mr R Adam, with in-house services provided by the Photographic Department. The layout of this publication was prepared by Mr J N Stevenson and Miss E Gilfeather.

The Afforestation Land Survey was established in 1989 to carry out archaeological survey in areas where there is likely to be new planting, and it works on the basis of a rolling programme which has been the subject of consultation and agreement each year between RCAHMS and Historic Scotland, with the advice of the Forestry Commission and Regional Archaeologists.

The Royal Commission wishes to acknowledge the assistance given by landowners who have allowed access to the monuments for study and survey, and to thank Professor D W Harding for permission to reproduce Fig. 3).

Detailed information, including plans and photographs, about sites mentioned in the text and listed in the Gazetteer is available in the National Monuments Record of Scotland at the address below:

The Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical
Monuments of Scotland
John Sinclair House
16 Bernard Terrace
Edinburgh EH8 9NX (031-662 1456)

INTRODUCTION

The survey of Southdean has provided the Commission with the opportunity to assess what evidence there might be for a medieval phase of colonisation and retreat in the uplands of south-east Scotland, a phase which has been proposed elsewhere in the south-east of Scotland (Parry 1975), as well as on the English side of the Cheviots (Dixon 1985). In the course of the survey, two phases of colonisation and retreat were identified: a 16th- to 18th-century phase, which is confirmed by cartographic and documentary sources, and an earlier, and hitherto poorly-defined, phase, probably belonging to the 12th to 15th centuries, which is represented by sites now largely confined to the higher margins and is characterised by distinctive types of settlement remains.

The Survey Area

The area covered by this survey, a little under 15sq. km, embraces a portion of the upper reaches of the Jed Water lying immediately north of the border with England and to the west of Carter Bar (Fig. 1). The underlying geology comprises sedimentary rocks of Upper Old Red Sandstone and Carboniferous ages, as well as intrusive and extrusive igneous facies associated with the Cheviot Massif, which lies to the east. Limestone from the Carboniferous Series has been quarried for lime, and, along the Carter Burn, outcropping Old Red Sandstone has been exploited for building stone, while the whinstone from Southdean Law has been used for road metal.

The land rises from an altitude of 150m along the Jed Water to 415m near Carter Bar, with the upper part of this height range imposing severe climatic limitations on the extent of cultivable land. Indeed, modern arable or improved pasture is largely confined to the gentle, lower slopes of Southdean Law as well as to smaller areas along the Jordan Sike and around Lethem, and the greater part of the land is used for rough pasture or forestry.

The survey area lies in the parishes of Southdean and the outlying part of Jedburgh, both of which march on their south sides with the English border. In this sector the border is both a physical and political divide, as it follows the watershed of the Cheviot Massif, and Southdean's position immediately adjacent to the border has had a profound effect on its medieval settlement history. Furthermore, its incorporation in the Royal Forest of Jedburgh, a medieval hunting reserve, has given rise to particular features of land-use not found elsewhere in the Cheviots.

In common with some other parts of the Border counties, the Southdean area has been extensively afforested since the Second World War. This has taken its toll on the relict archaeological landscapes, including the important prehistoric settlement and field-system at Tamshiel Rig, which lies immediately south of the survey area (RCAHMS 1956, 426-7). Despite this, a well-preserved medieval and later landscape was still extant in 1991, when the area was selected for survey by the Afforestable Land Survey (ALS). Although monuments of all periods up to the last century were included in the survey, such was the quality of the late medieval remains that analysis has been concentrated on the medieval and post-medieval landscape.

Method of Survey

Initially, an area about 8km in length by up to 2.5km in breadth was selected for survey on the basis of the available 1:2500 OS vertical air photographs; this area was subsequently adjusted to take in a larger tract of country (Fig. 5). For the greater part of the area, map overlays for field-checking at a scale of 1:2500 were prepared by transcribing archaeological detail from the OS air photographs, using the standard process of best-fitting the archaeological features to the map. Where no 1:2500 map existed, the relevant 1:10,000 1km square was enlarged; in

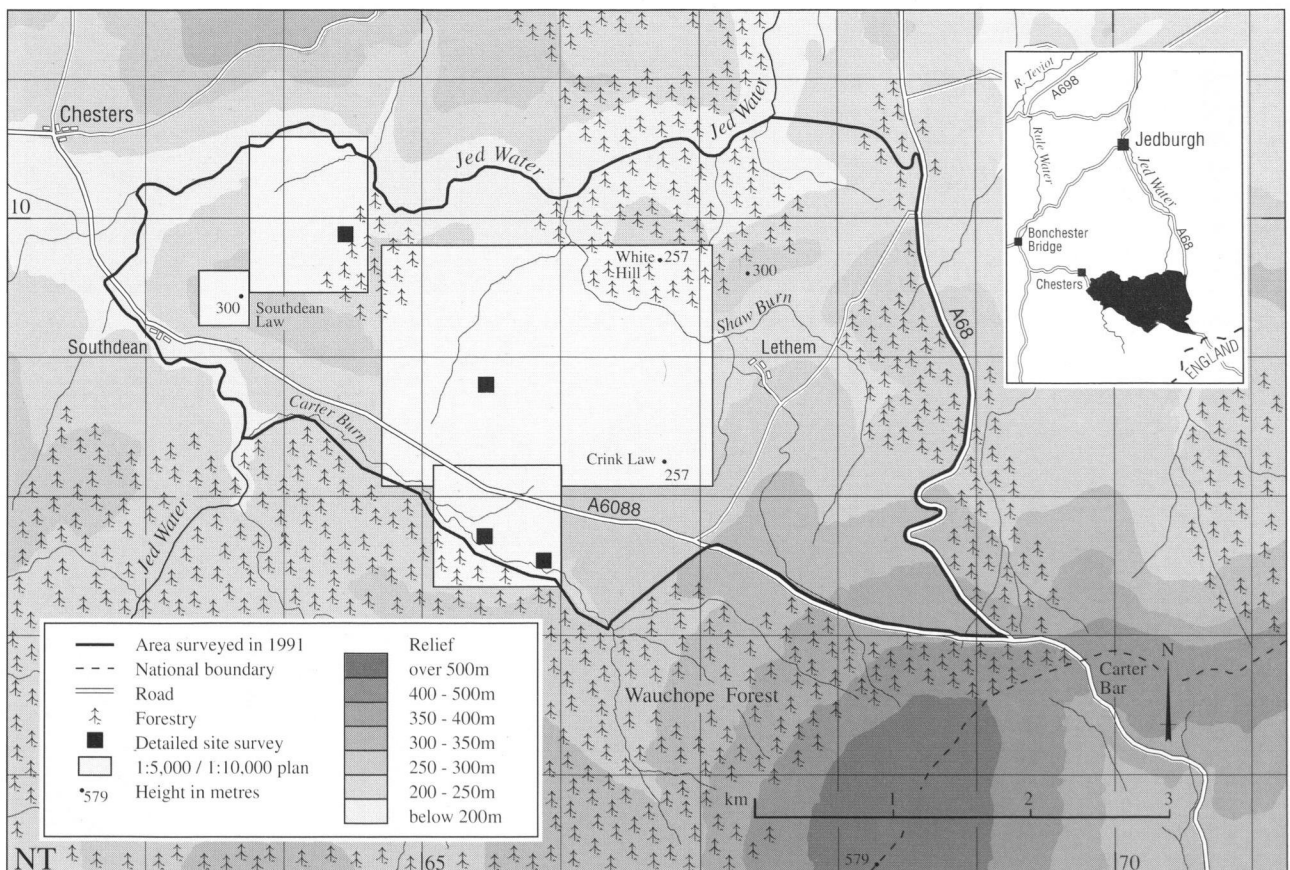


Fig. 1 Map of the survey area (based upon the Ordnance Survey map, Crown Copyright)

order to limit transcription errors, an EDM was used to provide ground control. The remainder of the area was recorded at the base-scale of 1:10,000, as the paucity of archaeological remains did not justify more detailed treatment. As on Waternish, Skye (RCAHMS 1993a) aerial photograph transcription was carried out for areas which had already been afforested, in order to record the context of the surviving remains (e.g. White Hill NT 60 NE 1).

The field-survey was undertaken by a team of two field-workers (an Investigator and a Surveyor), and was carried out on an intermittent basis between February 1991 and May 1992, with a final check of some sites in December 1992. Features were recorded in standard ALS style (RCAHMS 1993a, 5); EDM ground survey was used to supplement the areas not covered by the 1:2500 air photographs and to add detail not visible on the aerial photographs.

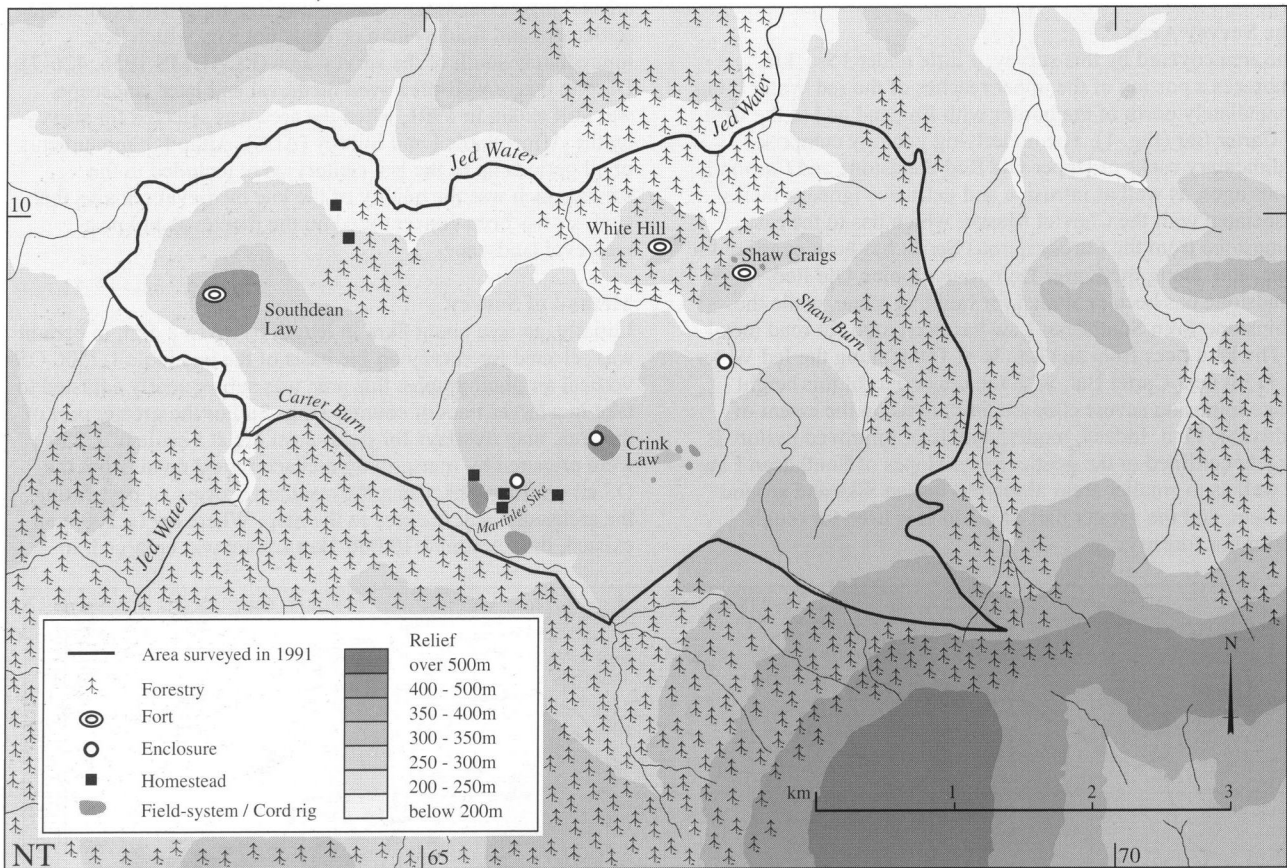


Fig. 2 Distribution map of prehistoric settlement and cultivation remains (based upon the Ordnance Survey map, Crown Copyright)

PREHISTORIC SETTLEMENT

The widespread development of medieval and later agriculture has greatly reduced the opportunity to recover traces of prehistoric and Early Historic settlement within the Southdean survey area (compare Figs 2 and 5). Nevertheless, a number of significant unitary monuments were already known, and these have now been complemented by discoveries made during the course of the present survey.

There is no direct evidence for settlement before the second millennium BC, but there is no reason to believe that the area was not exploited by man in the earlier prehistoric period. Burial sites and stray finds from adjacent parts of Southdean parish attest to settlement closeby in the Bronze Age, though the earliest direct evidence for occupation dates from the first millennium BC. This evidence comprises a variety of settlements, ranging from hill-top forts and enclosed settlements to undefended groups of houses. Examples of all these types of site had been identified before the present survey, but hitherto unrecognised was a plot of cord rig cultivation within a prehistoric field-system, as well as a number of homesteads. The dating of the settlements still remains a problem, and it is difficult to assign precise dates to particular sites. The range of structures, however, indicates that the occupation of the settlements probably extended in date from the opening centuries of the first millennium BC until well into the first millennium AD, though it should not necessarily be inferred that occupation was continuous or uninterrupted. As in other parts of Scotland, the evidence for settlement in the early medieval period is largely lacking, but the possibility remains that in Southdean some of the recorded sites may prove, on excavation, to have been occupied in the period extending from the later first millennium AD into the high Middle Ages.

Enclosed Settlements

For such a relatively small area, Southdean is well endowed with enclosed settlements, which range from three well-defended hill-top forts to three lower-lying embanked enclosures (Fig. 2). The best-defended of the forts occupies the summit of Shaw Craigs (Fig. 3) which, as at the fort on Southdean Law (Fig. 4), the defences are of more than one period. At Southdean Law the defences may all belong to the first millennium BC, but at Shaw Craigs it is possible that the final phase, which involved a major redesign of the fort, dates to the post-Roman period.

The three enclosed settlements - Chapel Knowe, Crink Law, Martinlee Sike - are typical of those in Roxburghshire that may be attributed to the later first millennium BC. Oval on plan, they range from 32m to 53m in length by 29m to 40m in breadth within stony banks up to 3.5m in thickness and 0.75m in height. In the interior of the enclosure at Chapel Knowe there are rock-cut platforms originally occupied by wooden round-houses, but all that can be seen within Crink Law and Martinlee Sike are scooped forecourts or yards.

At least five homesteads have been identified in the Southdean area - four well-preserved examples at Martinlee Sike and a much-wasted site at Slack's Tower, as well as the possible remains of a sixth, buried in peat, at Longslack Sike. Homesteads are differentiated from enclosed settlements by the number of individual buildings contained within the enclosure: sites with more than three houses are classified as settlements, while those with three or less are designated as homesteads. The relative dating of the two groups is not well understood; some enclosed settlements may date to the later prehistoric period, while the homesteads with stone-walled houses probably belong in the Romano-British period.

The four homesteads at Martinlee Sike form an unusual cluster, situated within 500m of each other. Within a single stone wall, they comprise, in each case, a roughly oval yard, about 11.5m to 21m across, slightly scooped into the slope and enclosed within a stone wall, to one side of which lies a



Fig. 3 Shaw Craigs, fort, aerial view (copyright Prof. D W Harding) A 4009

roughly circular house-platform, some 6m to 7m across. At two of the sites there is a second house situated on a terrace to the uphill side of the yard. In both cases, these additional houses measure 7m in diameter, one defined by a low bank of earth, the other by a stone wall 1m thick. Another type of round-house is visible at the more northerly of the two central homesteads (Fig. 12), where a circular platform, 7.5m in diameter, situated a few metres outside the homestead enclosure, is not accompanied by any traces of a wall, and presumably represents the remains of a different type of timber building.

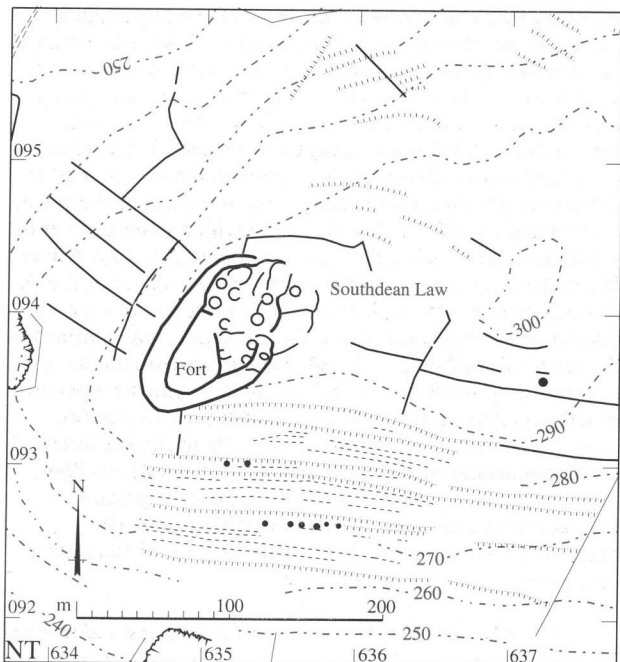


Fig. 4 Southdean Law, fort, settlement and cultivation remains (after RCAHMS 1956, Fig. 564), based upon the Ordnance Survey map, Crown Copyright

Unenclosed Settlement

No hut-circles of Bronze Age date were discovered during the survey, and the only example of unenclosed settlement is to be seen in the eastern section of the fort on Southdean Law overlying the earlier defences (see Fig. 4). The settlement comprises nine stone-walled houses (five at 4.5m in diameter and four between 5.8m and 8m in diameter) and several related enclosures or yards. There are also two circular house-platforms (7m and 7.5m in diameter), of which one has traces of stone-work around the rear arc; recent excavations of similar stone-built platform houses at The Dunion have produced radiocarbon dates centring on the period from 170bc to ad40 (Rideout, Owen & Halpin 1992, 108-09). Similar secondary settlements overlie forts at Hownam Rings, Tamshiel Rig, Bonchester Hill and elsewhere (RCAHMS 1956, 20) and are generally considered to have been occupied in the period from the end of the first millennium BC into the early centuries AD.

Field-systems, Cord Rig, and Cultivation Terraces

Much of the original evidence for early agriculture in the survey area has probably been destroyed by medieval and later farming, but what survives forms a representative cross-section of later prehistoric and early historic farming techniques. The evidence consists of either the banks surrounding ancient fields or the by-products of the process of ploughing - stone clearance heaps, cord rig (a narrow, prehistoric form of rig cultivation), and cultivation terraces, and, although abundant traces of early agriculture are visible, none can be linked with any of the settlements that appear to be contemporary. The only exception is on Southdean Law, where there is

a strong possibility that the unenclosed settlement overlying the fort is coeval with the field-system on the flanks of the hill (Fig. 4).

Field-systems, including cultivation terraces survive on the flanks of Southdean Law and Crink Law, and it is probable that later ploughing has obliterated field-banks around the cultivation terraces at Martinlee Sike and below Shaw Craigs (Fig. 2). On Southdean Law (Fig. 4) the field-banks run at right angles to the cultivation terraces and define plots measuring up to 30m by 150m, the group as a whole taking in some 10ha, comparable with the now afforested system lying to the south on Tamshiel Rig (RCAHMS 1956, 426-7). At Crink Law a curvilinear stony bank defines the south side of the field-system, but its full extent has been obscured by a gas pipeline that cuts across the site.

Before the present survey was undertaken, aerial photography by Professor D Harding had revealed two patches of cord rig on Shaw Craigs. To this can now be added four areas on Crink Law, one of which overlies part of a prehistoric field-system (Figs. 2 and 14). This juxtaposition with an earlier field-system is of particular interest for the dating of cord rig, and similar associations of cord-rig and field-systems have been observed in Northumberland - Snear Hill (Topping 1989) and Greenlee Lough (Welfare 1985) - where the cord rig was dated to the later prehistoric period.

THE MEDIEVAL PERIOD

The Documentary and Cartographic Background

The parishes of Southdean and Jedburgh were formerly part of the Royal Forest of Jedburgh, which passed into the possession of the Douglas family in 1320 and, which despite various vicissitudes, was still partly in the hands of Lord Douglas of Southdean in the late 18th century (*Stat. Acct.*, xii, 68-70). A royal forest was a hunting-reserve within which there were constraints upon any form of land-use that interfered with the maintenance of the reserve. This does not mean that settlement could not take place, but settlement and agriculture were, in general, restricted. In Southdean, however, the presence of a church, which evidently flourished from the 13th to the 17th centuries (RCAHMS 1956, No. 928), suggests that there was a population, probably agricultural, that was well-established by the 13th century.

After the outbreak of the Scottish Wars of Independence at the end of the 13th century, agriculture probably declined in Southdean, and the Forest continued to be fought over throughout the 14th century, changing hands between the Douglases and the Percies of Northumberland on numerous occasions. On their own, the devastations of warfare would have caused only a temporary setback in the development of settlement, but, during the 14th century they were accompanied by successive outbreaks of bubonic and pneumonic plague. The details of the local impact are unknown; however, the overall population of Scotland may have been reduced by as much as a third (Grant 1984). The general economic effects in Scotland as a whole were significant: in response to the reduced population, rents fell as landlords strove to keep their tenants on the land; labour costs rose, and demesnes were leased rather than managed directly. It is in this context that some retreat from the margins, as has been suggested in the Lammermuirs (Parry 1975), or at least a reduction in the extent of arable, may have occurred. At the same time, there were changes in the status of the peasantry. Unfree serfs or 'neyfs', already disappearing before the plague, were replaced by husbandmen, the yeomen of late medieval Scotland, who, in the interests of defending their lord, were expected to arm themselves according to their income. Landlords preferred

substantial husbandmen to smaller tenants because of their greater ability to pay their rents, as well as their value for military service, and sought to encourage them to stay in occupation of their tenancies in a variety of ways. Although tenancies might be short term, there developed a form of inherited tenure called 'kindly' tenure, whereby a peasant of the same kin might expect to succeed a previous tenant (Grant 1984), while, from the early 16th century, there was also a trend towards longer leases and the wider application of feu-farms, as in Ettrick Forest (Gilbert 1979).

How far these economic trends are reflected in Jedburgh Forest can only be partially addressed, given the limited documentary evidence that is available. On archaeological grounds, there is some reason - for example, the abandoned assart at Martinlee Sike - to suppose that there was indeed a retreat from the margins. The reconquest of the Forest at the end of 14th century provided an opportunity for a reorganisation of the tenancies within the Forest, whilst an expanding population and the relative peace of the 15th century may have given a renewed impetus to settlement. However, the lack of any detailed documentation relating to settlement in the Forest from the 13th to the 15th centuries makes any local trends difficult to define.

The Forest was briefly in the hands of the Crown at the end of the reign of James V, and accounts of 1537-9, as well as a rental of 1541, identify the names and occupants of the forest steads (ERS 17 1897, 129-130, 261-3, 702-4). With the exception of Lethem and a small number of unidentified sites, all the Southdean steads named in these sources were depicted by Pont (c. 1590) on his Map of Teviotdale (Blaeu 1654), which also includes a number of sites, e.g. Blackchesters, not mentioned in the rental. Thus, in contrast with the situation in Liddesdale, where a large number of holdings were vacant in 1541, all the Southdean steads were occupied (ERS 1897, 697-702). The Southdean tenants, unlike those in Ettrick, held their lands on an annual basis; nevertheless there must have been considerable security of tenure, or kindly tenure, since the same surname can be found for the tenants of Slacks, Wadeshill and Northbank in both the rental of 1541 and in the Hearth Tax return of 1691. The latter document reflects the same general distribution of settlement and records the same small size of the settlements noted in the earlier accounts - none containing more than two households (SRO E69/21/1). This indicates a continuity of settlement from at least 1541 through to the late 17th century and suggests that any major changes in the medieval settlement pattern, which may have taken place, occurred before this period.

Hyndhauchhied	- 25 shillings,	Margaret and Gilbert Oliver, and son, paying yearly
Slakkis	- 22 shillings,	Thomas and John Oliver ditto
	- 11 shillings,	Charles Oliver ditto
Wattersyde	- 22 shillings,	James Oliver, Mariote and Robert Young ditto
Waldoishill	- 22 shillings,	Andrew Laidlaw ditto
Northbank	- 22 shillings,	Belle Thomas and Bennete Laidlaw ditto
Rownetrehil	- 22 shillings,	John, Margaret and Adam Oliver ditto
	- 11 shillings,	John and Richard Oliver ditto
	- 11 shillings,	Robert Oliver, alias the schireff
Waldospindillis	- 44 shillings,	John Laidlaw ditto
Lethame	- 22 shillings,	Thomas Laidlaw ditto
	- 22 shillings,	Lawrence and James Laidlaw ditto

Table 1 Extract from the Crown Rental of Jedburgh Forest of 1541 (ERS 1897, 702-4).

It was during the 16th century that farmers, such as the Olivers of Slacks, found it prudent to build themselves

defensible houses or peles against the still unsettled conditions, exposed as they were to raiding across the border (Dixon 1976, 65ff). That the majority of pele-houses and towers belong to the later 16th century is well established, but there are some towers which predate this period; for example, there is a record of the destruction of 'peles' by the English in Southdean in 1513, when the towns of Southdean and 'Hindhalghehede (Hindhaughhead) with its tower' were burnt (Orig. Par. Scot. I, 365). Dixon (1976, 215) has argued that 'stone houses were usually built and occupied by men of more than normal wealth', but in Southdean, if not elsewhere, there is a case for suggesting that pele-houses were occupied by relatively small farmers who, in view of the type of tenant evident in the 1541 rental and the density of the distribution of peles in such a small area could not be described as being 'of more than normal wealth' for men of their class (see below).

An examination of the cartographic sources, from Pont's map of Teviotdale (Blaeu 1654) to the present, indicates that there has been a considerable change in the settlement pattern of the area since the 16th century. Pont recorded a pattern that was centred close to the Jed Water but with a small number of settlements, such as Watties Spindles, situated at some remove from the valley floor. By 1863, when the 1st edition of the OS six-inch map of Roxburghshire was published, settlement in Southdean parish, to the east of the Jed Water, was confined to the farms of Southdean and Lethem, and a small-holding at Southdeanrig; there was a similarly limited settlement pattern in Jedburgh parish, which was reduced further in the 20th century with the abandonment of Shaw Farm (now afforested) and Broombauks Farm. A comparison of the maps of Pont, Roy (1747-55) and Stobie (1770) illustrates the gradual contraction of settlement during the 18th century. The *Statistical Account* for Southdean confirms the abandonment of agriculture on the upland fringe:

From tradition, as well as innumerable vestiges and ruins of houses, population must have been considerable about a century ago, and from general opinion, it is greatly diminished. In a late measurement of the Forest estate in this parish, the arable land is computed at 4865 acres, the evident traces of former times; the present arable ground is limited to a few hundred acres. It is said, the examination-roll in 1724, amounted to upwards of 1600. An accurate list of the inhabitants was taken about 17 years ago, and fell short of 900. This decrease became rapid, from the junction of farms. (Stat. Acct., xii, 68).

This 'junction of farms' is a key trend in the farming history of Roxburghshire and Berwickshire in the 18th century and, with the reduction in the number of tenants, it has been recognised as a common factor in the gradual abandonment of runrig cultivation, preparing the way for the improvements of the later-18th century (Dodgson 1972, 121-137). However, the amalgamation of farms took place as agriculture became more commercially orientated during the later 17th and 18th centuries (Whyte 1980, 177ff): rents and services were being commuted, and written leases were replacing tenancies at the will of the landlord. This led to the emergence of large capitalist farmers who could respond to the market and who could select the product best suited to the type of land on the farm. The process is reflected in the upland areas of southern Scotland by the conversion of arable to pasture (e.g. the Lammermuirs, see Parry 1980) and it was accompanied by the abandonment of what had become redundant steadings, seven examples of which were identified during the course of the present survey.

THE MEDIEVAL AND LATER LANDSCAPE

The medieval and later landscape of Southdean comprises scattered farmsteads associated with swathes of ridge-and-furrow cultivation, which, in general, are enclosed within head-dykes defining the bounds of the farms. By and large, the farms are concentrated on the low-lying ground along the Jed Water and its tributaries, and are separated from their neighbours by expanses of open ground. The following discussion is divided into five parts, which cover the principal components of this landscape, i.e. the overall settlement pattern, the settlement remains themselves, the head-dykes and assarts, cultivation remains, and Improvement-period structures.

Patterns of Medieval and Later Settlement

The pattern of settlement suggested by cartographic sources for the later medieval period, and, by implication, for the medieval period as a whole, is one of farmsteads scattered along the sides of the valley of the Jed Water and its main tributaries. The present survey has demonstrated that medieval settlement remains are far more widespread than was previously thought, extending on to the hill ground and into the upper reaches of the Carter Burn (see Fig. 5).

There is little direct dating evidence for the settlement sites, but the settlements depicted on Pont's map correspond, for the most part, with the sites of pele-houses and towers and their ancillary buildings. There is no reason to believe that the outlying farmsteads, had they been occupied, would have been deliberately omitted from Pont's map, nor do they appear in the Hearth Tax returns of 1691 (SRO, E69/21/1). It is therefore probable that they represent an earlier phase of medieval settlement, superseded to some extent by the pele-houses of the late medieval period. If this is the case, the identification of the outlying farmsteads represents a significant breakthrough in the search for medieval rural buildings.

The remains of medieval farmsteads may not be confined to the upland fringes. In at least two instances, Northbank Tower and at Hilly Linn, there are the remains of subrectangular houses, with walls built either solely of turf or of turf set on a stone base, adjacent to the sites of the pele-houses. Without excavation it is not possible to establish the chronological relationship between farmstead and pele, but in these two cases there are *prima facie* grounds for suggesting that the pele was situated at, or adjacent to, an earlier steading.

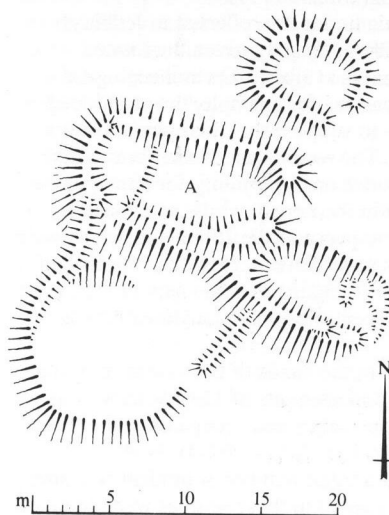


Fig. 6
The eastern farmstead in the assart at Martinlee Sike (see Fig. 12)

The Settlement Remains

Despite its relatively small size, the survey area contains a surprising variety of settlement and building types. The settlements range from farmsteads to individual buildings, and include a single shieling site. The buildings of which they are composed include four types of structures: pele-houses or towers; rectangular stone-walled buildings; subrectangular

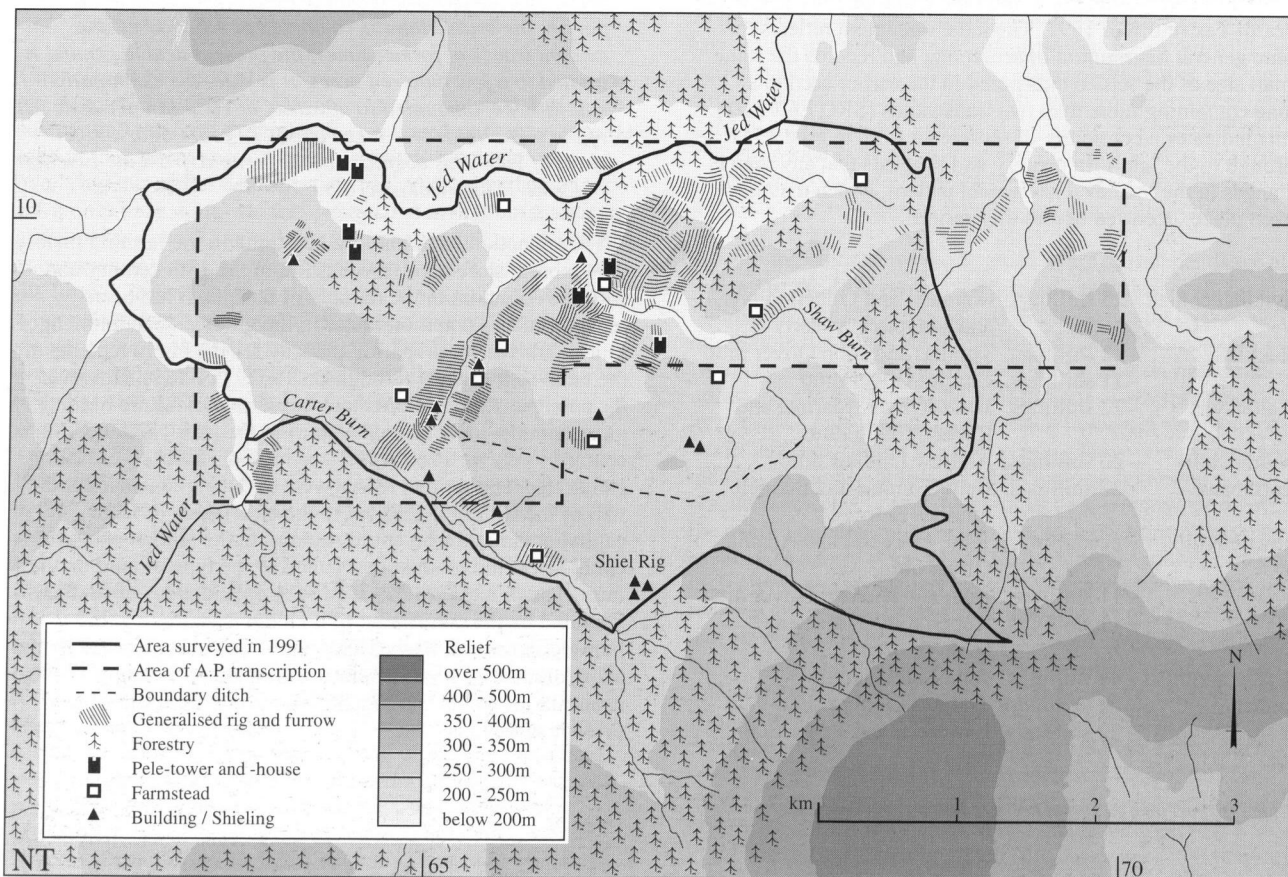


Fig. 5 Distribution map of medieval and later settlements and areas of rig cultivation (based upon the Ordnance Survey map, Crown Copyright)

stone-walled buildings; and turf-walled buildings.

The farmsteads comprise one or more buildings, with a yard or enclosure normally attached to the buildings, see Figs 6 and 7. In some cases the farmsteads include pele-houses or towers, which, in this context, should be seen as defensible structures used by the farming community. There are also one or two farmsteads where, instead of a yard attached to the principal building, there is an adjacent enclosure which probably served the same function, e.g. Crink Law (NT 60 NE 5.02). Other

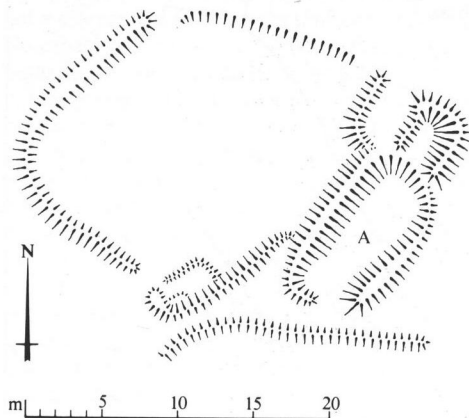


Fig. 7 The western farmstead in the assart at Martinlee Sike (see Fig. 12)

buildings, which have not been classified as farmsteads, are interpreted as belonging to cottars, labourers, or herdsmen. Amongst these are, on the one hand, buildings which lie wholly within enclosures on the fringes of the farmlands, such as those at Southdeanrig (NT 60 NE 20.06), and, on the other, single buildings or huts which are scattered within the farmlands (e.g. NT 60 NE 70.02). Finally, there is a single cluster of unenclosed buildings, probably shielings, situated at some remove from the farmlands on a stretch of rough pasture called Shielrig; these comprise four turf, possibly stone-footed, structures associated with a number of garden plots, together with several turf pens and stock enclosures (NT 60 NE 24).

Peles

The present survey has added four newly identified pele-houses or towers to the list of three (Slack's, Hindhaughhead and Northbank) that were previously known, and has filled out the distribution to the point that peles have been found at all

but two of the sites depicted in c. 1590 by Pont (Blaeu 1654). No distinction has been drawn between the two building types (pele-houses and towers) as, with the exception of Slack's Tower (itself a pele-house), all are so ruined that it is not possible to differentiate the remains, and this Report follows the classification adopted by the Commission in the *Inventory of Roxburghshire* (RCAHMS 1956, App. E, pp. 483-5). Two

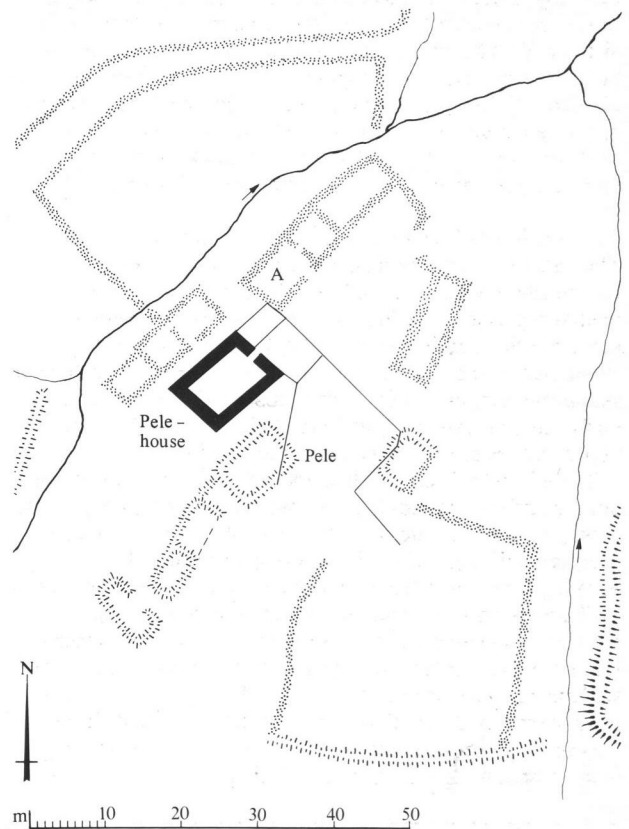


Fig. 8 Slack's Tower, pele-houses and farmstead

of the peles, Longslack Sike and the newly identified site beside Slack's Tower (Fig. 8), are reduced to grass-covered footings, whilst Watties Spindles has been almost completely robbed, leaving barely discernible robber trenches, with the occasional foundation stone in place. Only Hilly Linn (11.5m



Fig. 9 Slack's Tower, view from the NW

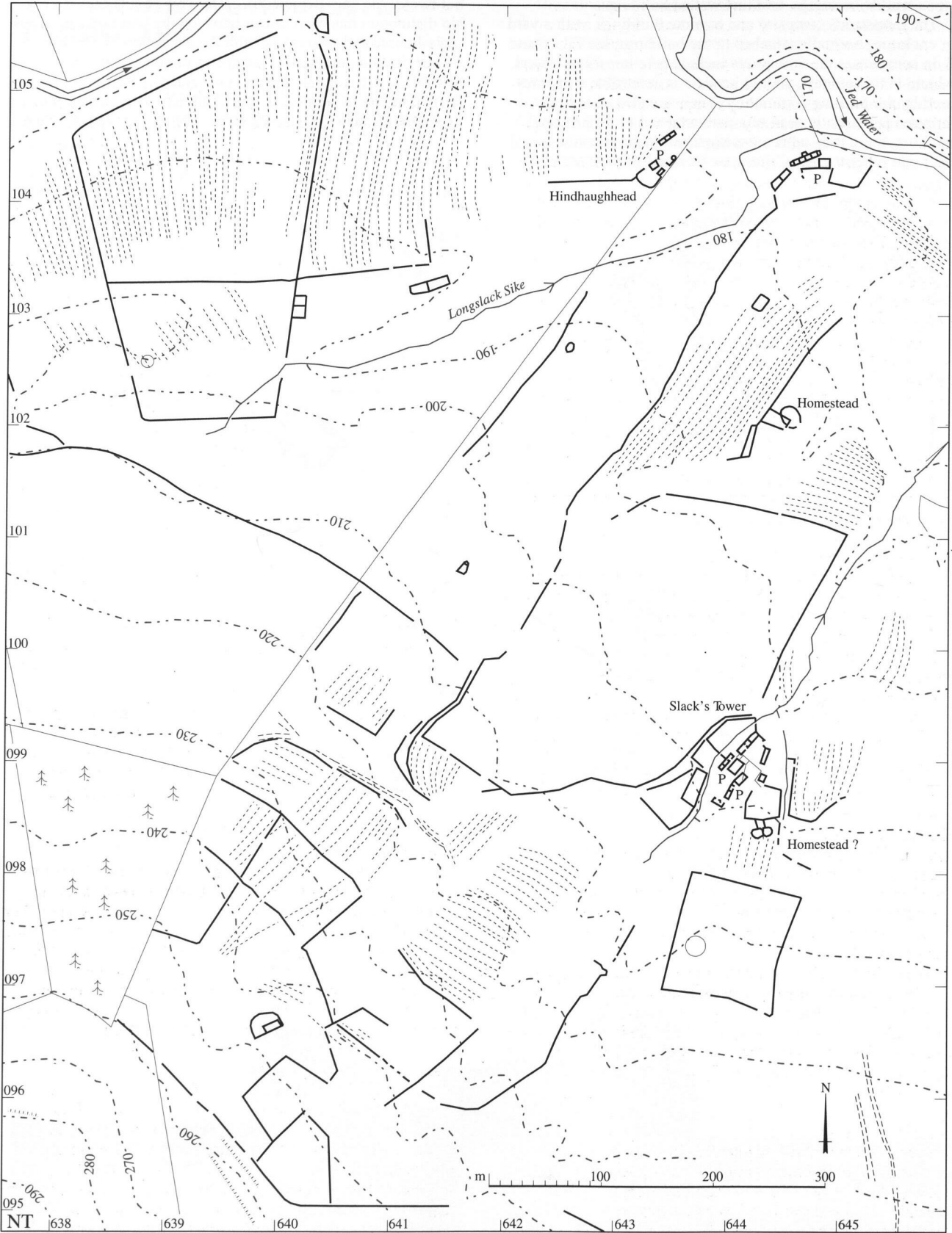


Fig. 10 Buildings and field-systems around Slack's Tower and Hindhaughhead (peles labelled P on plan), based upon the Ordnance Survey map, Crown Copyright

by 7m) is comparable in size with Slack's Tower (11.8m by 7.45m); the rest are small with ground-plan proportions of 1:1.5 in comparison with Slack's Tower at 1:2 (Fig. 8). The peles range in size from 5m to 8m in length by 3.8m to 4.9m in breadth within rubble-faced earth-bonded walls between 1.5m and 1.8m in thickness, and they compare well with others in adjacent parts of Southdean parish (Mervinslaw and Kilnsike, 8m by 3.9m within walls 1.8m thick and 5.4m by 4m within walls 1.2m thick overall respectively, RCAHMS 1956, nos 931-2). None of them show any trace of a vaulted basement, but a scarcement to support a timber first floor is visible at Northbank and Slack's Tower, and the latter may have had a separate first-floor entrance on its E side.

The dating of the construction of Slack's Tower is generally placed in the later 16th century. The characteristics of the building (Fig. 9), which match those of the nearby pele-houses of Mervinslaw and Kilnsike, and the quirky roll-mouldings that decorate the window-openings point to a date in the mid to late 16th and early 17th centuries (Dixon 1976, 168). However, this does not mean that all of the seven peles belong to this period. An earlier pele is situated immediately to the east of Slack's Tower (Fig. 8) and there is the documented tower at Hindshaughhead that was destroyed in 1513. Whilst it has been demonstrated by Dixon (1976) that the surviving examples belong to the period following the war of the 'Rough Wooing', there is a case for pele-houses and towers originating in an earlier period.

Rectangular Stone-walled Buildings

The rectangular stone-walled buildings are generally associated with the pele-houses and towers (Watties Spindles, Hilly Linn, Fig. 14, C, D, Slack's Tower, Longslack Sike, and Hindshaughhead, Fig. 10) and a number are divided into two, three or four compartments. They measure from 6m to 22.6m in length by between 2.6m and 4.25m in breadth within rubble-faced walls 0.7m to 0.9m in thickness. However, with the exception of two long ranges, the majority are 9.6m to 15.9m in length, with a few smaller examples at 6m to 8m; all the visible entrances are in the side walls. Two of the buildings at Slack's Tower (Fig. 8) and one at Hindshaughhead have a single side-entrance into one of the two compartments of the main structure, with access *via* an entrance in the party wall to the inner chamber. The internal entrance of one of the buildings at Slack's Tower (Fig. 8, A) has a door rybat with a recess for a draw-bar which matches that of the pele-house itself; in size, this building is only slightly less substantial than the pele and may be contemporary with it. Long ranges with three or four rooms are to be found at Hilly Linn and Longslack Sike.

The architecturally most distinguished of the rectangular buildings, and the only one that can be dated with any certainty, is the relatively late house at Waterside (RCAHMS 1956, 424). Its three bays and chamfered dressings around the openings place it towards the end of the 17th century, perhaps replacing a pele-house, and thus lying at the end of this phase of settlement.

Round-ended Buildings

At least fourteen subrectangular buildings with rounded ends or corners were recorded during the survey (e.g. Fig. 6); they measure from 5m to 26.5m in length by 2.8m to 4.6m in breadth within walls now reduced to banks 1m to 2m in thickness. The longer buildings, i.e. the ten exceeding 8.5m in length, are probably the remains of byre-houses. Seven of them were entered through the end wall, while two of the larger buildings have entrances in the side wall, as well as in the end (Fig. 6, where an internal subdivision is indicated by a change of floor level). Buildings comparable in size and shape to these byre-houses, but without end-entrances, have been excavated at Springwood Park, near Kelso, and dated to the 13th or early 14th century (Dixon 1988), providing the closest parallel, at present, both for this type of structure and for a

medieval phase of abandonment.

One of the long subrectangular buildings at Steele Knowe stands out from the rest in both size and shape (NT 60 NE 38.02). It measures 26.5m in length by 3.6m in breadth within a stony wall now spread to a thickness of 1.5m and standing up to 0.4m in height (Fig. 11). This building is divided into three functional zones: the north end may be a threshing barn with opposed, wide entrances, and a small room at the south end may be domestic, whilst the middle area, with opposed but narrower entrances, may be a byre.

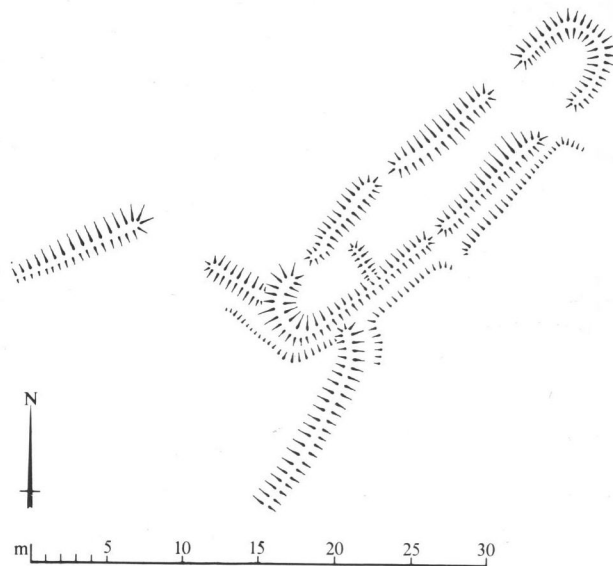


Fig. 11 Steele Knowe, round-ended building

Turf-walled Buildings

The turf-walled buildings include three at the shieling ground on Shiel Rig, two near Northbank Tower and two on Crink Law. They range in size from 8.8m to 16.3m in length by 2.8m to 4.1m in breadth within turf walls which may be set on a stone base 1.5m and 2.2m in thickness; where visible the entrance is in one side.

Other Buildings

Excluded from the above analysis are the two parallel buildings at Southdeanrig (A on Fig. 14), which appear to be a small Improvement-period steading, possibly for a shepherd or cowherd. The two buildings are of similar dimensions (9m and 9.9m in length by 3m and 2.7m in breadth within stony banks spread to about 1.2m), both have two compartments, and the longer building has rounded corners. One of the buildings abuts the head-dyke of the rigged land on which the farmstead is built, and a small enclosure is attached to the other.

Head-dykes and Assarts

A striking and unexpected feature of the survey has been the identification of a number of head-dykes which, with the exception of the steading and rig below Shaw Craigs, enclose all the settlements. Head-dykes are a common feature of Highland townships (Perthshire, RCAHMS 1990; Skye, RCAHMS 1993a; Sutherland, RCAHMS 1993b) but are often relatively late features in the archaeological landscape. Other examples have been recorded in the Borders (cf. Old Tinnis, a stead of Etrick Forest, in the Yarrow valley, NT 32 NE 16) but, despite the extent of rig, they are not a feature of the Bowmont valley in the Cheviots (Mercer forthcoming).

In the context of the present survey, the presence of head-dykes requires an explanation. The closest parallel for the style of head-dyke recorded in Southdean is to be found at Alnhamshales, Northumberland, also in a forest (PRO, C134/41/1), where a bank with an external revetment and ditch bounds the cultivated ground of a late-13th to early-16th



Fig. 12 Martinlee Sike, prehistoric settlements and medieval assart (based upon the Ordnance Survey map, Crown Copyright)

century township and its succeeding demesne farm, abandoned in the 18th century (Dixon 1985, ii, 32; Dixon 1984, 16). Further afield, boundaries known as 'corn-dykes' enclosed the cultivated ground of upland farms on the edge of Dartmoor. There, the construction is attributed to the strictures of Forest Law, requiring an assart (land reclaimed for agriculture from designated forests) to be enclosed so as to prevent ingress, but not egress, by deer, and it is dated to the 12th century, during the *floruit* of the Royal Forest on Dartmoor (Ralph and Fleming 1982).

Assarts are rarely mentioned in Scottish documents, and the few references to assarting occur in the period from 1189 x 1190 to 1312, but none is concerned with Jedburgh Forest (Gilbert 1979). This does not mean that assarts did not occur, or were not policed by foresters, since in Ettrick Forest, where ditched boundaries have been recorded (Gilbert 1983), 'illegal ploughing and sowing might lead to forfeiture of a tenant's holding or the escheat of his corn and goods' (Gilbert 1979, 112). In the absence of more compelling evidence there is no reason to believe that settlement and agriculture were not



Fig. 13 Martinlee Sike, bank and ditch surrounding the assart



Fig. 14 Northbank Tower, medieval and later settlements and rig, showing the development of the head-dykes (labelled I-V) to the south (based upon the Ordnance Survey map, Crown Copyright)

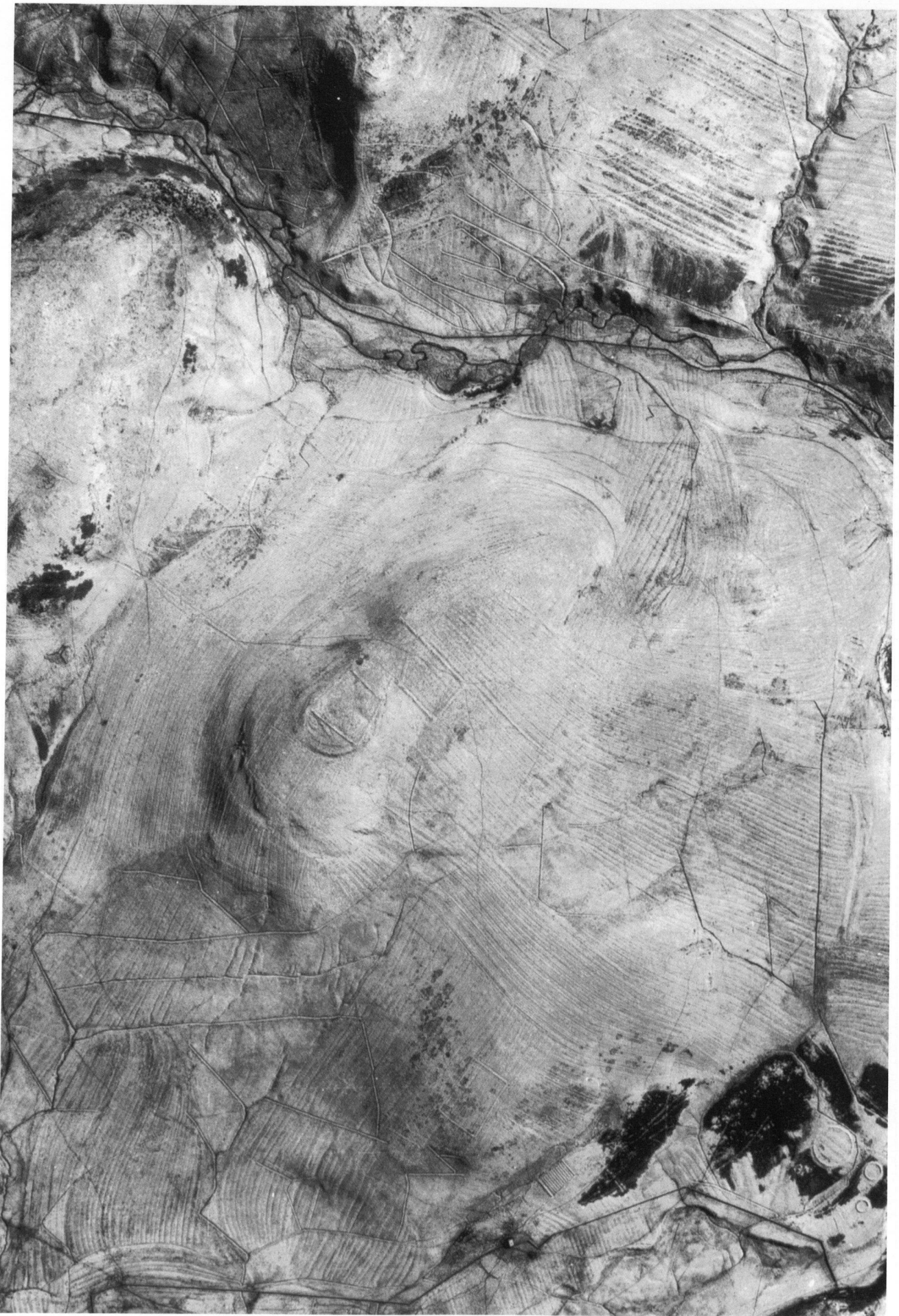


Fig. 15 White Hill and its environs, aerial view, showing differing rig types

controlled in the Royal Forest of Jedburgh, or subsequently by the Douglases, until the Forest Laws were relaxed in the late- or post-medieval period.

Be that as it may, nearly all settlements throughout the area of survey are enclosed within a head-dyke, comprising a bank accompanied by an external ditch (Figs 12-13). It is inferred that they were colonised and defined during the application of Forest Law. Not only are they a characteristic element of the landscape, but they also show development. The best example of this being the dykes to the south of Northbank Tower and running along the east side of the Jordan Sike (Fig. 14, I-V); this interconnected system has at least five phases of development, involving both increases and decreases in the extent of the ground under cultivation (NT 60 NE 38).

A particularly complex sequence can be seen on Steele Knowe to the south of Northbank Tower (Fig. 14) but, more typical of the group as a whole, is the example to the east of Martinlee Sike (Figs 12-13), where the head-dyke, comprising a bank and external ditch, encloses an area of 7ha on the north side of the Carter Burn. The bank runs in an arc from the edge of the river terrace to enclose a D-shaped area within which there are the remains of two undocumented farmsteads accompanied by broad-rig cultivation. Although some later earthen-banked stock enclosures impinge upon the west end of the site, it has remained largely undisturbed since the settlement was abandoned. An additional and larger enclosure (21ha) has been added to its west side, which includes both cultivated ground and rough pasture. Both the farmsteads comprise round-ended buildings and include a main building (Fig. 6, A on plan), an attached subsidiary building and an enclosure, with an additional outbuilding at the eastern farmstead.

One of the more remarkable monuments of the area is a boundary ditch, some 5m across with traces of upcast on both sides, which runs from the top of the Jordan Sike, a tributary of the Shaw Burn, for about 3km to the head of another small sike, also a tributary of the Shaw Burn (Fig. 5). Together, the ditch and its associated water courses enclose an area of some 3 sq km. There is little evidence for dating the enclosure, but the ditch is earlier than the adjacent head-dyke and the rig cultivation along the Jordan Sike. In construction, the ditch does not resemble the prehistoric linear earthworks typical of the Border area, and, given its location within the Royal Forest, the most likely context for the enclosure is as an early assart.

Rig Cultivation

Three principal types of rig have been identified in Southdean: curved or reverse-S shaped broad rig; low-profiled and grooved, reverse-S broad rig; straight, narrow rig. The first two can be seen as variations of the same type, both of which are likely to have been created by the Old Scotch Plough, a heavy mould-board plough drawn by a team of oxen or horses, or a combination of the two (Parry 1976).

Broad rig normally measures more than 4.5m in breadth, but in Southdean it ranges from about 3m to 10m, and measures from 50m to 300m in length. Developed broad rig, here as elsewhere, has a high back, produced as the result of a long period of cultivation, normally as infield; examples of this form of ridging can be seen to the west of Watties Spindles (Fig. 14). Individual rigs are arranged in furlongs of contiguous ridges, and, in Southdean, the total area of cultivated ground belonging to a single settlement ranges from as little as 4ha at Shaw Craigs to some 70ha at White Hill. The narrowness of some of the rig may be accounted for as a result of the subdivision of broad rig, as may be seen on the hillslope to the west of Watties Spindles (Fig. 14), a process adopted from the first half of the 18th century in the interests of improvement (Parry 1976).

The second rig type resembles standard broad rig on plan but has a distinctively low profile and is normally identified in the field by the groove of its furrow, since a ridge has not been

built up as a result of the short period of use. This type of ridging is probably the result of a relatively brief period of cultivation, as might be expected in an outfield. Before recent destruction by afforestation, the best examples of this type of cultivation lay on White Hill (see Fig. 15), but there were other examples to the south of Northbank Tower, where the low rigs had been imposed obliquely on an earlier furlong of standard broad rig.

Narrow, straight rig is an Improvement period phenomenon introduced with the advent of light, swing ploughs in the later 18th century (Parry 1976). In the survey area, the only example of this type of cultivation to survive destruction by later agriculture lies immediately south of Northbank Cottage, where about 4ha of it is enclosed within an earthen bank (Fig. 14).

Improvement-period Farming Structures

The establishment of pastoral farming in the 18th century introduced a range of associated structures, including small pens, stells, and lambing shelters, all typically enclosed by earthen banks. In some parts of the area small rectilinear earthen-banked enclosures were built, generally less than a hectare in extent, but often two or more are grouped together. A good example of this lies to the east of Croft Plantation on Steele Knowe (B on Fig. 14), where there are several phases of enclosure on the same site, of which the latest was depicted as a sheepfold in 1863 (1st ed. OS 6-inch map, Roxburghshire, sheet 34), while another occupies the summit of White Hill, overlying the fort (Fig. 14).

The Improvement-period farmstead on Southdeanrig (A on Fig. 14) appears to be a pastoral farm. Comprising a pair of parallel buildings, it lies to the west of a small earthen-banked enclosure, within which all trace of the rig that covers the rest of the area is gone, indicating a more recent episode of cultivation. At about one sixth of a hectare, with a slightly raised interior, it is probably a garden plot or kail-yard. One of the buildings of the farmstead is built against the head-dyke and post-dates it. The rigged ground to the north and south of the steading, which has been subdivided into three fields by an earthen bank, is separated by a drove-way from similarly enclosed ground to the north.

CONCLUSION

The present survey has demonstrated the special character of the medieval and post-medieval archaeology of the Southdean area which has been determined in part by its location within the Forest of Jedburgh and its position adjacent to the border with England. Both these factors have combined to produce a unique archaeological landscape, and one which is greatly at risk from modern changes in land-use.

The identification of the archaeological remains of a medieval horizon of occupation marks a significant development in the understanding of rural settlement in that period, not only in the Southdean area, but for the Borders as a whole. This, combined with the discovery of so many lost pele-house and tower sites of late medieval date, demonstrates not only the chronological complexity of the settlement remains to be found in this type of landscape, but also the value of further field and historical survey in adjoining parts of the Borders.

GAZETTEER

LIST OF SITES RECORDED

(The sites are listed by OS 1:10,000 quarter sheet and by NMRS number)

NT 60 NW			
2	NT 6350 0938	Southdean Law	fort, settlement
3.00	NT 6440 0988	Slack's Tower	archaeological landscape
3.01	NT 6440 0989	Slack's Tower	pele-house, tower (possible), farmstead
3.02	NT 6443 0984	Slack's Tower	enclosures
3.03	NT 6410 0970	Slack's Tower	rig, stock enclosures, plantation bank, boundary banks
3.04	NT 6400 0966	Southdean Law	building, enclosure
11	NT 6365 0936	Southdean Law	cultivation terraces, rig, field-systems
23	NT 6480 0925	Croft Plantation	quarry, trackway, hollow-ways
NT 60 NE			
1.00	NT 6680 0973	White Hill	fort, rig, stock enclosures, tower, farmsteads, boundary banks (possible)
1.01	NT 6680 0973	White Hill	fort, stock enclosures
1.02	NT 6628 0969	Hilly Linn	tower, farmsteads
1.03	NT 6660 0960	White Hill	rig, boundary banks (possible)
2	NT 6727 0945	Shaw Craigs	fort
5.00	NT 6616 0828	Crink Law	archaeological landscape
5.01	NT 6615 0832	Crink Law	settlement: scooped
5.02	NT 6612 0836	Crink Law	buildings, rig, field-bank, boundary bank
5.03	NT 6625 0840	Crink Law	field-system, cord rig, house platform (possible)
6	NT 6570 0801	Martinlee Sike	settlement: scooped
7	NT 6597 0793	Martinlee Sike	homestead
8	NT 6714 0896	Chapel Knowe	settlement, enclosure, chapel site (possible)
9.00	NT 6609 0987	Northbank Tower	archaeological landscape
9.01	NT 6609 0942	Northbank Tower	pele-house, buildings, stock enclosure
9.02	NT 6610 0930	Northbank Tower	rig, boundary banks, pen
9.03	NT 6610 0977	Hilly Linn	building
10.00	NT 6675 0908	Watties Spindles	archaeological landscape
10.01	NT 6675 0908	Watties Spindles	tower, farmstead
10.02	NT 6650 0900	Watties Spindles	rig, boundary bank, stock enclosure
13	NT 699 098	Knock Hills	cairn, rig
15	NT 6990 0938	Knock Hills East	plantation bank, cultivation terraces
16	NT 6956 0935	Knock Hills West	plantation bank
17	NT 695 093	Knock Hills West	cord rig, cultivation terraces
18	NT 6721 0953	Shaw Craigs	cord rig
19	NT 698 092	Knock Hills East	cord rig
20.00	NT 655 076	Martinlee Sike	archaeological landscape
20.01	NT 6554 0762	Martinlee Sike	farmstead
20.02	NT 6589 0755	Martinlee Sike	farmstead
20.03	NT 655 076	Martinlee Sike	rig, cultivation terraces, small cairns, pens, stock enclosures
20.04	NT 6550 0790	Martinlee Sike	building
20.05	NT 6530 0792	Martinlee Sike	road
20.06	NT 6500 0815	Martinlee Sike	building, enclosure
22	NT 6620 0757	Millstone Sike	turf stell
24	NT 6655 0727	Shiel Rig	shielings
26	NT 6670 0815	Crink Law	plantation bank, cord rig
28.00	NT 6691 0835	Crink Law	archaeological landscape
28.01	NT 6690 0828	Crink Law	boundary bank
28.02	NT 6691 0825	Crink Law	buildings, huts, enclosures
28.03	NT 669 084	Crink Law	rig, stock enclosures
30	NT 6705 0891	Chapel Knowe	farmstead
32	NT 6852 0815	Huntford	stock enclosure (possible)
34	NT 6795 0835	Bught Knowe	boundary bank
36	NT 6555 0870	Steel Knowe	stock enclosure
38.00	NT 6535 0875	Jordan Sike	archaeological landscape
38.01	NT 6535 0880	Jordan Sike	boundary banks, rig, shooting butts, stock enclosures
38.02	NT 6543 0893	Steel Knowe	buildings: round-ended
38.03	NT 6531 0856	Steel Knowe	huts
40	NT 6560 0794	Martinlee Sike	homestead, hut-platform
42	NT 6830 0970	The Hass	field banks, rig
44	NT 6549 0808	Martinlee Sike	homestead, rig (possible), field banks, quarries
46	NT 6815 0995	Broombauks Burn	stock enclosures, rig
48	NT 6570 0854	Steel Knowe	small cairns
50	NT 6630 0746	Millstone Sike	quarry
52	NT 664 071	Shiel Rig	boundary bank
54	NT 6670 0862	Crink Law	enclosure
56	NT 6737 0937	Shaw Craigs	farmstead (possible), rig, cultivation terraces
58	NT 6645 0890	Watties Spindles	stock enclosure
60	NT 6826 0806	Bught Knowe	stock enclosures (possible)
62	NT 6835 0826	Bught Knowe	rig, boundary bank, stock enclosure
64	NT 6560 0885	Steel Knowe	boundary bank
66	NT 6562 0789	Martinlee Sike	homestead
68	NT 660 081	Crink Law	boundary bank
70.00	NT 6505 0860	Southdeanrig	archaeological landscape
70.01	NT 6484 0866	Southdeanrig	farmstead
70.02	NT 6505 0860	Southdeanrig	building-platforms, quarry
70.03	NT 6500 0965	Southdeanrig	boundary banks, stock enclosures, rig, shooting butts
72	NT 6500 0960	Shiel Cleugh	rig, boundary bank, field bank
74	NT 6560 0949	Northbank	cottage
NT 61 SW			
15	NT 6432 1042	Hindhaughhead	tower, farmstead
24	NT 6390 1040	Hindhaughhead	rig, stock enclosures
25.00	NT 6448 1043	Longslack Burn	archaeological landscape
25.01	NT 6448 1043	Longslack Sike	tower, farmstead, bank, rig, stock enclosures
25.02	NT 6445 1021	Longslack Sike	homestead
NT 61 SE			
19	NT 6556 1005	Waterside	building, enclosure, rig, boundary banks, hut
32	NT 662 102	White Hill	turf stells
33	NT 665 100	White Hill	rig
45	NT 6803 1026	Broombauks	farmstead

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Blaeu 1654**
— *Atlas Novus*
Amsterdam
- Dixon, P J 1984**
— Alnhamshelles, Northumberland
Medieval Village Research Group, Annual Report
31 (1983), 16
- Dixon, P J 1985**
— The Deserted Medieval Villages of North Northumberland
unpublished Ph.D. thesis, University of Wales
- Dixon, P J 1988**
— *Springwood Park Excavations, An Interim Report*
Borders Architects Group
- Dixon, P W 1976**
— Fortified Houses on the Anglo-Scottish Border
unpublished PhD thesis, University of Nottingham
- Dodghson, R A 1972**
— The Removal of Runrig in Roxburghshire and Berwickshire
1680-1766
Scottish Studies
16 (1972), 121-37
- ERS 1897**
— *The Exchequer Rolls of Scotland*
vol. 17, 1897
Edinburgh
- Fleming, A and Ralph, N 1982**
— Medieval Settlement and Land Use on Holne Moor,
Dartmoor: The Landscape Evidence
Medieval Archaeology
26 (1982), 101-137
- Gilbert, J M 1979**
— *Hunting and Hunting Reserves in Medieval Scotland*
Edinburgh
- Gilbert, J M 1983**
— The Monastic Record of a Border Landscape 1136-1236
Scottish Geographical Magazine
99, pt. 3 (1983), 4-15
- Grant, A 1984**
— *Independence and Nationhood, Scotland 1306-1469*
Edinburgh
- Mercer, R J 1991**
— The Highland Zone: Reaction and Reality 5000BC -
2000AD
Proc Brit Academy 76 (1991), 129-50
- Mercer, R J forthcoming**
— An Archaeological Survey of the Bowmont Valley,
Roxburghshire
- Orig. Par. Scot. 1854**
— *Origines Parochiales Scotiae*
- Parry, M L 1975**
— Secular Climate Change and Marginal Agriculture
Trans Institute Brit Geographers
64 (1975), 5-11
- Parry, M L 1976**
— Typology of Cultivation Ridges in Southern Scotland
Tools and Tillage
3 (1976), 3-19
- Parry, M L 1980**
— Changes in the Extent of Improved Farmland
in *The Making of the Scottish Countryside*
Parry, M L and Slater, T R (eds)
Montreal
- PRO**
— Public Record Office, England
Kew
- RCAHMS 1956**
— *An Inventory of the Ancient Monuments of Roxburghshire*
Edinburgh
- RCAHMS 1990**
— *North-east Perth: an archaeological landscape*
Edinburgh
- RCAHMS 1993a**
— *Waternish, Skye: an archaeological survey*
Edinburgh
- RCAHMS 1993b**
— *Strath of Kildonan: an archaeological survey*
Edinburgh
- Rideout, J S, Owen, O A, and Halpin, E 1992**
— *Hillforts of Southern Scotland*
Edinburgh
- Roy, W 1747-55**
— Military Survey of Scotland
photocopy in NMRS
- SRO**
— Scottish Record Office
HM General Register House
Edinburgh
- Stat. Acct.**
— *Statistical Account of Scotland*
1791-7, Edinburgh
- Stobie 1770**
— Map of Roxburghshire
- Topping, P 1989**
— Early Agriculture in Northumberland and The Borders
Proc Prehist Soc
55 (1989), 161-79
- Welfare, A T 1985**
— Excavations at Greenlee Lough, Bardon Mill,
Northumberland
Archaeological Reports for 1984
Universities of Durham and Newcastle-upon-Tyne
- Whyte, I 1980**
— The Emergence of a New Estate Structure
in *The Making of the Scottish Countryside*
Parry, M L and Slater, T R (eds) 1980, 117-136



Royal
Commission on the
Ancient and
Historical
Monuments of
Scotland

PUBLICATIONS AVAILABLE

Afforestable Land Survey

*Waternish, Skye and Lochalsh District,
Highland Region (1993)*

Strath of Kildonan: an archaeological survey (1993)

Glenesslin, Nithsdale; an archaeological survey (1994)

Catalogues of Aerial Photographs

Published annually since 1976

Scottish Industrial Archaeology Survey

Brick, Tile and Fireclay Industries in Scotland (1993)

The above publications can be obtained from:

The Secretary
The Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical
Monuments of Scotland
John Sinclair House
16 Bernard Terrace
Edinburgh EH8 9NX

Other Royal Commission publications are available from
Her Majesty's Stationery Office.

