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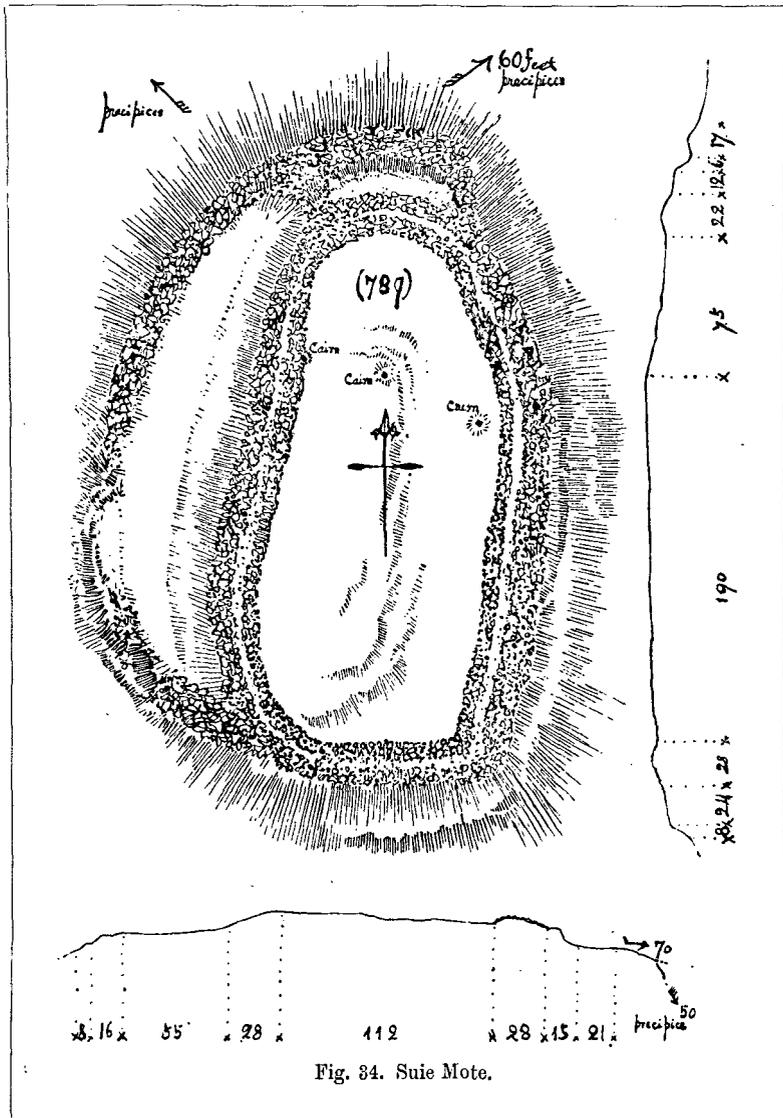
THE MOTES, FORTS, AND DOONS OF THE STEWARTRY OF KIRKCUDBRIGHTSHIRE. BY FREDERICK R. COLES, CORR. MEM. S.A. SCOT.  
(PART II.)

The present paper is a continuation of the description of the *Motes* and *Forts* of the Mid Stewartry of Kirkcudbright, of which the first portion appeared in the last volume of the *Proceedings*.

45. *Suie Mote* is the name given on the O.M. to a dry-stone *fort* of much the same general plan and construction as *Dungarry*.

It is one of our loftiest *forts*, being 789 feet above sea-level, and naturally commands a prospect of almost boundless extent, comprising as it does the unbroken line of the English coast, a great part of the Dumfries coast with Criffel, and, besides Wigtownshire, the whole mass (even Merrick) of our Galloway Highlands, excepting the Cairns mores of Carsphairn. There is little doubt but that with a good field-glass one could discern dozens of the *forts* and *motes*; or that, in days of yore, the beacon blazing on *Suie Mote* was seen at numbers of other heights inland, and responded to by answering fires.

In its general form (fig. 34) an irregular oblong, lying with its long axis due N. and S., this large dry-stone *fort* measures 265 feet by 112 within its summit walls, which, to judge by the enormous amount of shapeless ruin lying over a band of about 30 feet wide, must have been very strong and lofty. In no fraction of this band of fallen stones, however, is there any vestige of standing wall—nothing at all comparable to the walls on *Dungarry*. *Suie Mote* has been too well known to rambles in the surrounding districts.



Beyond the summit wall—some of the stones of which are fully 2 and 3 feet square—at the N. end is a deep-curved enclosure, rising up into the summit from an outer wall of dry stones, and this is carried round, helped here and there by rock, in a long sweeping curve along the W. side, reaching a breadth of 55 feet at its widest. On



Fig. 35. Suie Mote from the S.E.

the E., no need for such protection exists, on account of the almost perpendicular rocks which form the base of the *mote* on that side (figs. 35 and 36).



Fig. 36. Suie Mote from the N.

It is needful to bear this specially in mind, since it disproves the theory of *Suie Mote* being only a cattle-kraal, as some hold. Had the

inclosing of cattle merely been the object of such a wall, there was all the more need of a wall-barrier on the precipice-top to prevent the cattle from falling over.

There are no "flanking-towers" or similar strengths at the corners or middle of the sides, as at *Dungarry*, and no sign of a well or spring either within the walls or on their outside bounds. Lower down, at the foot of the western ledges and slopes, and the eastern precipices, the ground becomes damp, and likely contains springs.

The three cairns on the summit are small modern landmarks, probably, even, put up in a freak by visitors.

From a point 2 miles S. (see fig. 37), *Suie Mote* has the appearance of a veritable *mote*, as will be seen from the adjoining sketch.

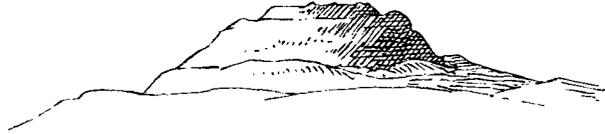


Fig. 37. Suie Mote from the S.

Pont's spelling of the name is Suachtoun Hill. Subhach *pron.* soogh = a place of berries (Maxwell).

46. *Castleyards, Port Mary.*—This is the name given to part of a field which terminates in a narrow promontory some hundred yards E. of the granite boulder pointed out as the last stone touched by Queen Mary when embarking for England. The rudely-triangular space here on the cliff-summit is flanked on the E. by a small stream for a length of about 150 feet, and on the W. by a steep "heugh" for a similar length—the inland side being formed by what has apparently been a pretty strong rampart of stone and earth, measuring N. and S. over the curve 24 feet, and extending across E. and W. for 135 feet. This rampart has been much broken into near the middle. Other than this, I could find no traces of structure whatever.

The site is about 100 feet above sea-level. It is named and drawn on the O.M.

47. *West Fort, Spouty Denmans.*—This and its almost contiguous *East Fort* form a remarkable couple of structures. They may be said to spring like two trees from a common root or base, the only division between them being a ravine which, narrowing as it approaches the cliff-edges, sunders the two forts like a knife-blade and forms a water-

fall, which, doubtless, has given the curiously hybrid name to this strange site—the Forts of the Waterfall.<sup>1</sup>

Both are formed on the very summit of the massive beetling sea precipices, so close that there is merely a bare 30 feet—and that steeply sloping—of grassy ground between the actual rock-front and the dike which runs along the cliff-crest. Both are irregularly semi-circular, or semi-oval, and both have some peculiarities of structure which are worth noting.

The *West Fort* (fig. 38) is long and narrow, measuring 200 feet by

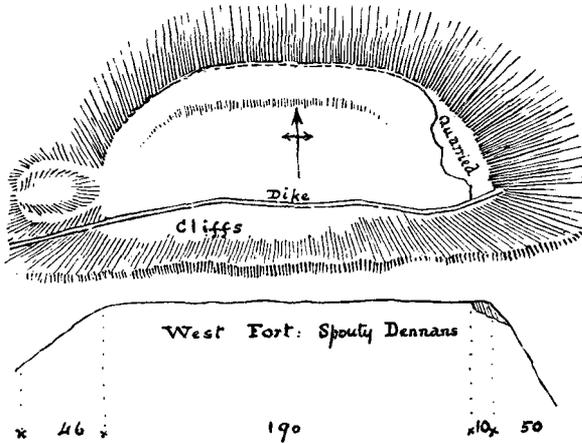


Fig. 38. West Fort, Spouty Deunans.

55—*i.e.*, from the dike inland. It is just possible, however, that a low rampart was carried along the cliff-edge in a more natural line than that of the dike, to build which, perhaps, its stones were used. It is, in the present state of encumbered growths of briar and whin, difficult to ascertain this; and, as only some 20 to 30 feet of cliff-crest remain on the seaward side of the dike, the difficulty of examination is not *unattended with danger*.

There are two features in this *fort* which merit special notice:—First, the use of uncommonly large blocks of stone, the mill-stone grit of the shore, to make a foundation for the broad 18-foot terrace-edge on the landward curve; and, secondly, the deep sloping oval space at the extreme

<sup>1</sup> "The marshy ground of the forts" (Maxwell).

W. end. This latter may prove, on excavation, to be purely natural; but it has an oddly unnatural appearance.

At the E. end the *fort* has been greatly damaged by quarrying. Its slope there is very bold and unbroken down to the tiny rill, forming the cascade over the cliffs, from which point of demarcation the conjoined

48. *East Fort, Spouty Dennans* (fig. 39), takes its rise. Here a very much broader natural bank has suggested a wider enclosure; and here

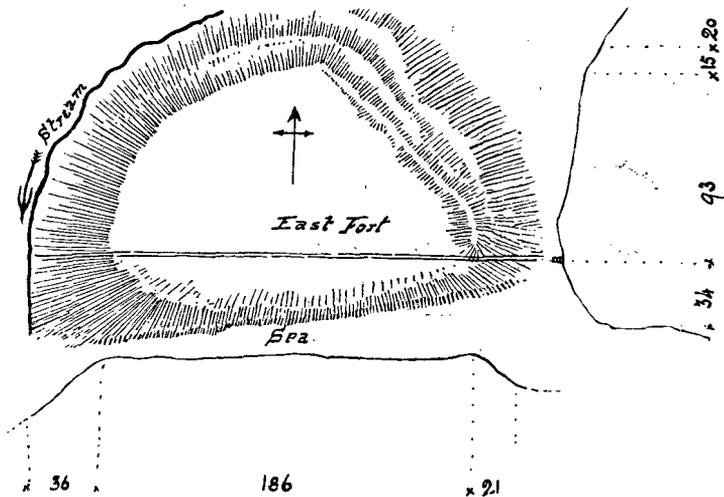


Fig. 39. East Fort, Spouty Dennans.

too, perhaps, a more disintegrated and less stony surface has caused true ramparts of earth to be fashioned. This rampart, distinct enough for 40 or 50 feet inland from the dike at its E. end, can be traced more or less satisfactorily for another 50 feet, where the one side of the *fort* becomes complete; thence a terrace-like edge is all that remains throughout the curve westwards of 150 feet. Below are faint remains, near the widest part of the structure, of a lower terrace, or ridge, from which a rapid slope of 30 feet brings one to the stream-level.

There is no evidence of the use of such large blocks of stone as in the *West Fort*.

49. *Castle Muir*.—This, M'Kerlie gives as being 67 yards in trench

circumference, and longitudinal area 54 by 40 yards, adding "probably Norse."

Being unable, through illness, to examine the spot myself, I wrote to the tenant of Nether Hazelfield, Mr Robert Sproat, for further details. He wrote in reply :—"Castle Muir is so much overgrown with low whin bushes, that to take an accurate measurement is next to impossible. I measured it as carefully as possible under the circumstances, and made it out to be 130 paces in circumference round the top of the ridge—the greater part of which (80 paces) is on the verge of the cliff, or point, as we call it—and 50 paces on the land side.

"The ridge is very low on the side facing the sea, and almost imperceptible in places where the cliff has worn away. It is also very irregular in shape on that side. But, on the land side, it is crescent-shaped and in good preservation. There is a sort of dry moat round it from 10 to 12 feet wide, on this side, where the earth has been taken to form the mound, which rises in a gradual slope from the bottom of this to the ridge, and will be about 15 feet deep. I measured this moat, which stretches from one side of the cliff to the other, and made it out to be 60 paces in length, while the top of the mound which rises from it is 50 paces as before mentioned. Inside the mound the ground is pretty level, with no enclosures of any sort, so far as I could see; but it is all very much overgrown with rubbish."

It will be seen, from a comparison of the above two measurements, that great difference exists :—

Mr M'Kerlie's "trench circumference" = 201 feet.

Mr Sproat's (pacing allowed for) being = 360 feet.

Mr M'Kerlie's landward side = 120 feet.

Mr Sproat's landward side = 141 feet.

Utilising facts from each account, we conclude that here is a ram-parted irregular cliff fort having a curved landward trench, and measuring 162 by 120 feet along its two axes. Now, it is clear, if these two axes be true, and the trench measurement of 141 feet be also true, that the remainder of the circumference—even omitting its great irregularity—must measure quite 300 feet. This is at once proved by forming a diagram on the given data.

Whether the *fort* called *Castle Muir* be Norse or not, still remains doubtful; but it appears to be devoid of any of those peculiar enclosures frequently found on the sea-board *forts*.

As regards the name, M'Kerlie has the following suggestive remarks:—  
 "Previously, it appears that the land and bay (Rascarrel Bay) had the Gaelic name *Ros-caer-alt*, from the nameless fortress on the height, and since corrupted." Castle Muir Point is on the S.W. extremity of Rascarrel Bay.

50. *Fort, Nether Hazelfield*.—A nearly circular once double ramparted structure like that at *Wraiths* (54), much despoiled by agriculture, so that only a third of its trench and outer rampart are extant. The two diameters are N. and S. 159 feet, E. and W. 171 feet, each measured within rampart base. The summit rampart averages 15 feet measured over the curve, and the outer rampart about the same. On the O.M. it is figured as partly spiral; why, I do not understand.

The position of this *fort* is high, being 39 feet higher than *Airds*

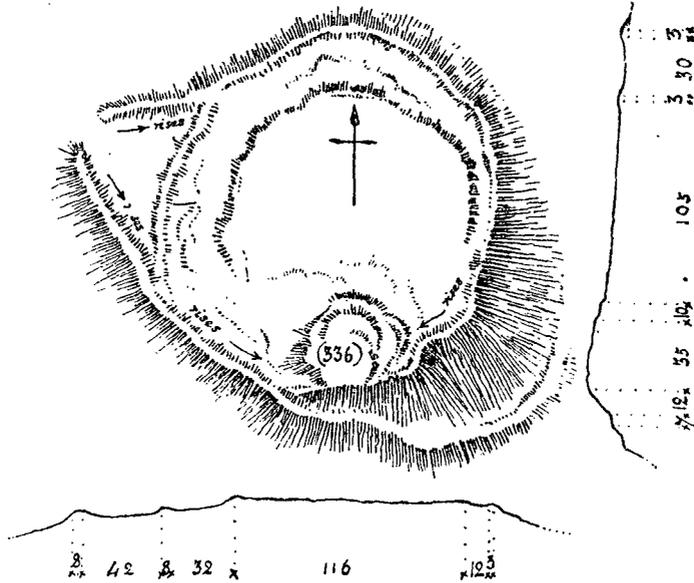


Fig. 40. Airds Point Fort.

*Point Fort*, and it commands four others and a *cairn*, between which last and the *fort*, on the farm premises at Nether Hazelfield, there was found last year a very archaic clay cinerary urn containing bones,

51. *Airds Point Fort*.—Distant from the last 2 miles nearly due E., on a fine hill springing up from the cliffs a third of a mile away.

Its highest point (fig. 40), a mass of rock with abrupt side seaward, has apparently suggested the immediate circular contour of the main structure, though its construction is of the rudest. Outside of this, with a space between of from 12 to 32 feet, a second equally irregular circle of rampart work has been built, which, at its lowest northerly point, branches off into a separate rampart 60 feet long, and, after a gap of about 20 feet, is again carried S.E., rising into the main mass a few feet below the summit-rock, from which it is once more continued, still irregularly and steeply downwards, to the base. The contour is such as to suggest the notion that this place was really a *mote*. And, the nature of the ground below the summit-rock being the same on all sides, it is puzzling to account for this curious triangular ramparting.

The remains, such as they are, have, however, been so sadly torn and ransacked for the sake of dike-material, that speculation on the subject becomes rash.

Construction, earth and granite boulders.

52. *Fort, Auchenfad*.—Still another instance of pitiless destruction, plainly evident from the annexed plan of the dikes enclosing (?) this circular structure, about the meaning and use of which one may well pause in doubt. For, in addition to the usual stone and earth "rampart"—here no more conspicuous than in scores of so-called *forts*—we find large boulders of granite, and the remnant of a central cairn.

It is very probable that this rampart was originally a perfect circle, since on the W. (fig. 41), where the distance from centre measures 42 feet instead of 54, the rampart-stones have been scattered abroad in an undefinable litter for some considerable space.

The oblong boulder N.E. of the cairn is 12 feet from it. There are also great numbers of stones, many of them large, scattered about outside of the N.E. dike, and, beyond these, a few which lie in such a curve as to suggest the point, whether they may not have formed an outwork to the *fort*? The interior is level, with here and there scattered stones. The site, not many score yards from Auchencairn Moss, is by no means conspicuous, and, being now planted with trees, is not easy to find.

53. *Fort, Woodhead, Auchencairn*.—Much the same remarks may apply to this dike-enclosed *fort*, which is situated on the very edge of the old road between Auchenfad and Auchencairn, distant from the

latter half a mile. It is only 330 yards distant from the *fort* last described, and is now a dark and gloomy spot. The remains here show only as a very much destroyed single rampart. Parts of it, however, are still between 3 and 4 feet high, and appear to be composed of huge granite boulders, many of them 2 feet square and more, the

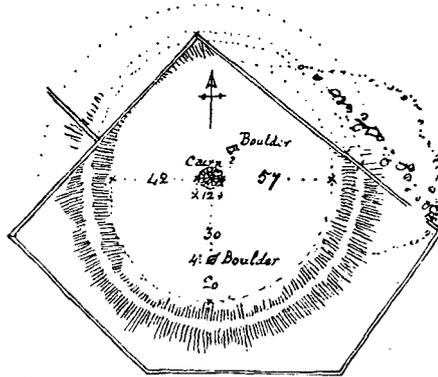


Fig. 41. Auchenfad.

dike obliterating all satisfactory means of measuring the outer, at places even the inner, slopes of the rampart. The two diameters are approximately 110 feet N. and S. and 93 feet E. and W. Along the latter diameter several large boulders lie, but not at regular distances.

It is somewhat remarkable that the existence of such widely-different structures as the nine last described, within a comparatively small area, should never have been noted and recorded hitherto.

Far from simplifying matters, a careful study of these *forts* and comparison of them with those nearer the estuary of the Dee serves to deepen the impression that no one race originated them all, and that, even taking into account every structural peculiarity due to contour of ground and nature of site, several, perhaps many, characteristically distinct races have on these wild hill-tops and cliff-crests of Rerwick left their mark as a mystery which it may yet take generations to solve.

54. *Wraiths Moat, Collin Bridge*.—Near Auchencairn, this place is so called on the O.M. But I find no allusion to it in any of my works of reference.

There is one comprehensive statement, however, in the N.S.A., which,

as it refers to Rerwick in general, may be quoted here as fitly as elsewhere, since the majority of the structures described belong to that parish. The writer says that Rerwick contains "traces of two Druidical temples and of no less than twelve camps, Saxon, Danish, and Roman."

Omitting the two temples, we have in the above words a specimen of the scientific mind in times past.

The compiler states the number of the "camps" erroneously, while he is certain that some were Saxon, some Danish, others Roman.

We may state that from actual observation the number of *forts* and *notes* together is either 23 or 24; but whether Saxon in the main, or Danish, we dare not yet affirm; this much we may be almost safe to assume, that not one is Roman. This structure at Wraiths is really a double ramparted *fort*, having no conspicuous mound in the centre at all. From what I gather in M'Kerlie's *Galloway, Ancient and Modern* (p. 290), it is identical with the Irish *raths*<sup>1</sup> (of which word *Wraiths* may be a form), of which type Mr M'Kerlie conceives that Galloway possesses but one example, and that at Chippermore, in Mochrum, Wigtownshire.

It will become clearer, in the course of the present inquiry, that *forts* of this type, circular, with double or treble ramparts and fosses, are a great deal more frequent than is generally believed.

We must suppose that absolute circularity is not requisite: that being granted, *Wraiths Fort* fulfils the conditions (fig. 42). It is 150 feet wide across its flat and depressed central disc, in one direction, and very nearly the same, perhaps one or two paces less, in the other, the greater portion of the space being so crowded with bushes that pacing becomes difficult in the extreme.

The ramparts are bold and strong, of stone and earth, the fosse varying slightly from 12 to 15 feet, and the stone-ridge of both ramparts still remains at some points well visible above their more earthy base.

Towards the S.W. arc are two irregular, heaped lines of large stones, disposed partly crosswise, their directions being nearly N.W. and N.E. The circumference of the outer rampart is 675 feet, part of which, near the N.E., is only just traceable, the stones having been removed for dikes. The whole site is crowded with trees, saplings, and bushes. There is no small stream or water-supply discernible nearer than the Collin Burn.

It is a fact not to be overlooked, that, in this small district, the

<sup>1</sup> *Wraith*, Rerwick, from *Rath* or *Raith*=circular earthen fort (Maxwell); and the same root appears in *Wreaths*, pron. *Wraiths*, in Kirkbean (F.R.C.).

eastern corner of Rerwick, four well-marked circular *forts* exist almost identical in form and construction, two of them being doubly ramparted and nearly of the same size (*Wraiths* and *Nether Hazelfield*), the other two singly ramparted and of the same size (*Woodhead* and *Auchenfad*).

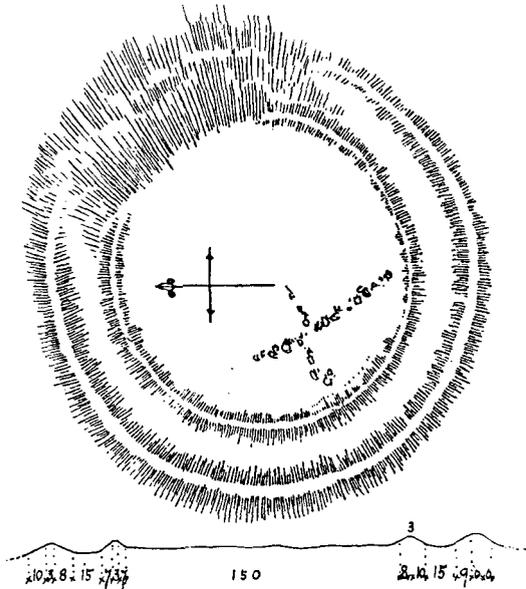


Fig. 42. Wraiths, Auchencairn.

55. *Fort, Nethertown of Alcorness*.—A very different work from any of those lately described. This *fort*, on the landward end of a rocky promontory between Orchardton Bay and the Urr mouth, has several special points of structural interest (fig. 43). The comparatively-flat summit of the hill is ramparted off into a distinct long and narrow oblong-oval, the extremes N. and S. rather straight and nearly twice as thick as the defence on the long sides E. and W. Within this enclosure, close to the S. end but not touching it, are two of the curious irregularly circular-rhomboidal or hexagonal rims of stone-work, not unlike those noticed on *Craig Raploch* and other *forts*. The outer defences on the S. arc consist of a 9-foot terrace supported by a steep bank of stones and earth, succeeded by a lower and broader terrace similarly

banked up ; below this, though stone-work appears sparsely, most of the slope is rock.

The upper of these two terraces, as well as the lower, merges on the E. into the very rocky abrupt slopes there ; but on the W., the upper terrace widens to 12 feet as it follows the line of summit, till at the

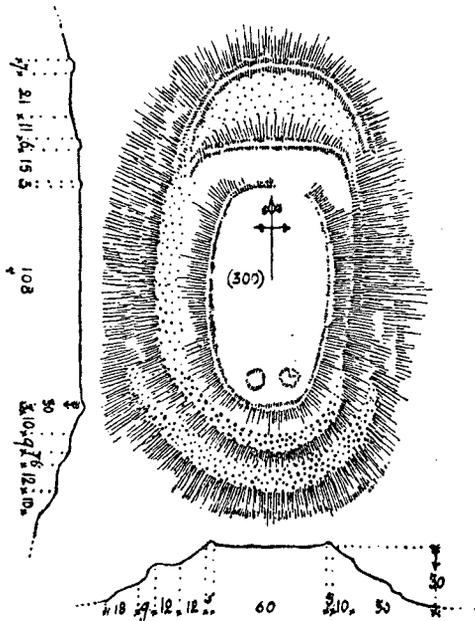


Fig. 43. Nethertown, Almorness.

N.W. corner it joins the strong rampart, which almost squarely cuts off the broad and flat summit beyond the main rampart. Here, on the N., a second terrace is developed into a broad and well-curved-in plateau 21 feet by nearly 80. All around, from this point outwards, the natural slopes of the hill remain untouched.

*Nethertown Fort* commands sea and land S., W., E. by S., and N.W., the other points being shut in by the summit of the Castle Hill itself. There is no water near in the nature of either spring or stream.

56. *Potterland Wood*.—Somewhat vague report of a “mote” or “mound” here reached me through Mr Corson. The suggested site is  
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so densely wooded and rocky withal, that on the only visit I paid to the locality I could be sure of nothing. There is a mound hard by the old road between Kirkmirran and Whitehill, but it bears little resemblance to a truly artificial work. After all, this may be an obliterated site of a *fort*, now quite beyond discovery.

57. *Courthill*,<sup>1</sup> *Kirkennan*.—This, on the maps, is the name given in plain lettering to a farm less than a quarter of a mile W. of the now unrecognisable site of the old *Church of Kirkennan*. Whether the name was ever applied to the actual hill that forms a rocky and lofty background to the Ravenscraig, seems doubtful; but there, at any rate, on the highest summit of this picturesque range of abrupt and wooded hills, and nearly equidistant from the site I suppose for the *Potterland Fort*, and from the next, *Castle Gower*, are evident remains of a rudely-oval stone escarpment.

The situation is prominent, the extent of country commanded in all directions but the W. is remarkably wide, and the abrupt and very rocky sides and *entourage* particularly are highly suggestive of this having been a *fort*, even in the absence of any true ramparts. Massive stone-work, however, may be traced from the S.S.E. end along the E. and round the curved N. end, intermingled with the ridges of whinstone which compose the summit, and with their inequalities render it very rough and irregular.

I first saw this site with Mr Wellwood Maxwell, who showed me a small dilapidated round tower which goes by the name of *The Martyr's Grave*. As we examined the *débris* here, my attention was drawn to the loose ridges of stones lying E. and N. of the tower. Following these up, I came upon the undoubted remains of this *fort*. The main axis of the rocky oval summit is 162 feet long, the direction being N.N.W. and S.S.E.; the opposite axis is very difficult to define, as on the W. all trace of the stone-work disappears, but, roughly speaking, it would be about 78 feet. The stone-work can, with breaks, be traced for a distance of about 330 feet. It is most evident in a long strip, nearly straight, of 138 feet on the E., and here measures 15 to 18 feet at an angle of about 40°. I am inclined to think that part of this at least is merely the fallen portion of a true rampart. The N. curve, and the greater part of the W. side, descend in abrupt rock-ledges and natural

<sup>1</sup> There is, on the O.M., the name *Courthill* given to a hill close to *Old Orchardton Round Tower*. I am assured by Mr Robinson Douglas, present proprietor of Orchardton, that the name is an error, the hill in question never having borne that name in reality.

terraces to a depth of 200 feet, while the *fort-summit* itself towers above the surrounding valley of the Urr nearly 500 feet.

58. *Castle Gower*.—Site, nearly 2 miles W. of the last on a fine isolated rocky eminence, the S. side of which is very precipitous, 476 feet above sea-level. It is one of the few *forts* called “vitrified,” and certainly shows a greater quantity of fused matter cementing the stones which compose its N. and E. side, than is usual; but in all, so small a quantity as not to justify the theory that this fusion was really intentional and structural. It is to be noticed, however, that the rock here cropping up into a crag is not of the very hard “blue whinstone.” It appears lighter in colour, as if limey, and is certainly more brittle, therefore it is to be supposed the more readily fused. Again, the locality has to be taken into account as bearing on this question of “vitrification.” If we suppose, as is very likely, that the fusion is the result of ordinary beacon-fires, then this *fort* of *Castle Gower* has probably done duty as a signalling height more frequently than others; for it commands the deep and sequestered Glen of Yerrock, and beyond it a portion of the Rerwick coast and sea to the S., and is itself visible for a vast distance northwards.

*Castle Gower* (fig. 44), though in the main a natural rock, presents one or two points of interest. At its N.W. end is a flattened space (H in diagram) cut out of the rock in a deep curve, as shown. This ceases abruptly instead of being carried, terrace-like, round the N.E. side.

The nearly-straight shallow ridge running N. and S. across the summit obliquely is almost suggestive of shaping and building, especially when viewed with the uneven small ridges on the N.E. edge, where the “vitrified” stone-work is best seen. The summit itself falls 7 feet 6 inches from Q in a N.W. direction.

One distinct terrace, broadest on the S.E. arc, goes round the smooth slopes of the N.E. side; and, lastly, at the base of the lowest rock-cutting at M there is the only vestige of a trench, which has been hollowed out of a partly natural double-ridge, and falls S.W. (from M to N), a distance of 105 feet, the last 50 feet being on a distinctly steep incline. The outer rampart (more natural N. of M) follows the curves of the hillock which here spreads out into gentle slopes.

There is a strange air of antiquity about every part of this *fort*, and little really tangible material to help to eke out its figure; and the more it is examined, the less artificiality appears about its rocky shoulders and thickly-turfed summit.

It is casually mentioned by Harper, and drawn on the O. M. The

descriptive name may be, as M'Kerlie suggests, from *gobhar* (gowar) goats.

59. *Baliol Castle Mote, Old Buittle*.—Not often, perhaps, in the course of an investigation like the present, does it fall to the lot of the

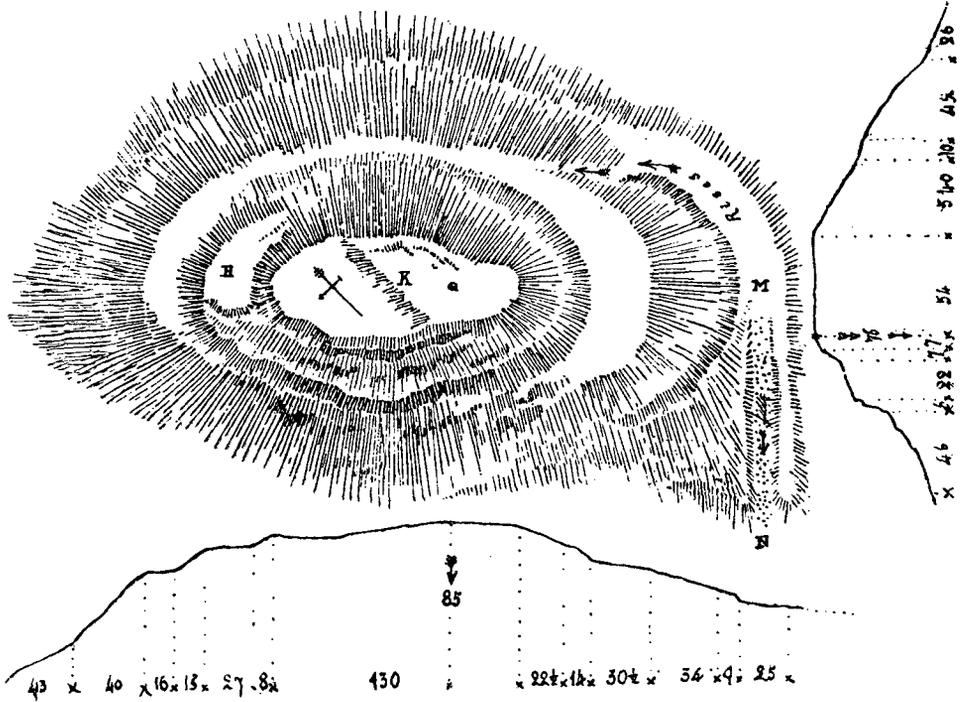


Fig. 44. Castle Gower.

antiquary to meet, in the small compass of a few acres, with so much material as is crowded into this sequestered and beautiful nook on the banks of the Urr.

For here, set in a most charming environment of woods, hills, and streams, we can trace back the landmarks of time, through an old, now ruined, road and bridge, to the Old Place of Buittle, thence to the devastated castle of John Baliol on its mote, thence again to a second

entrenched mound past which flows a brook deriving its waters from one of three wells famous in Buittle legendary lore.

So concealed, however, by buildings and foliage are the two *motes* here, that one might be pardoned for passing them—the larger one, indeed, which I have named *Buittle Mote*, I actually did overlook, mistaking its long riverside edge for a natural bank. Being told by an old resident, Samuel Fletcher (his name as an observer of local antiquities

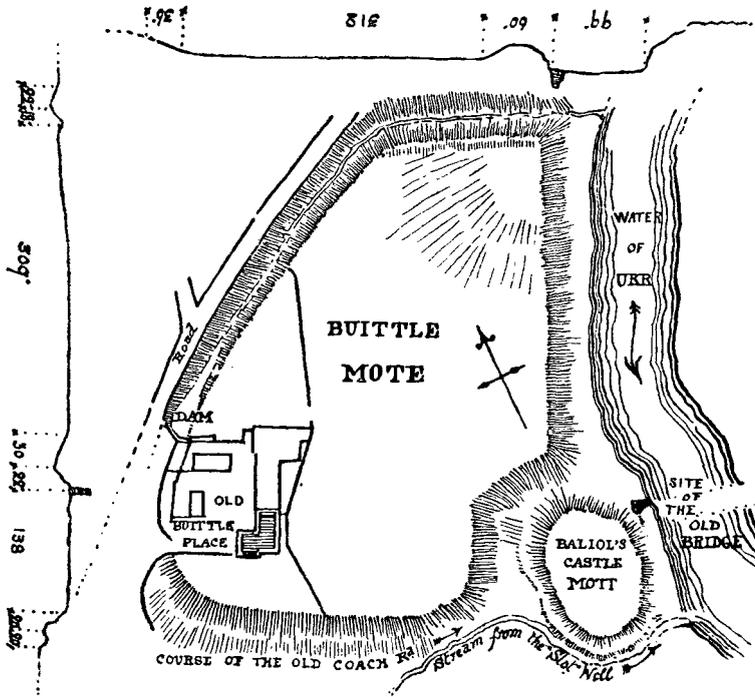


Fig. 45. Old Buittle Motes.

is worthy of record), that this lofty rampart was carried round four sides of a mound, I hastened to the spot and found this really to be the fact.

On re-examining the whole site, the theory gains strength that all the space, now occupied by the two *motes* (see fig. 45), was originally an

unbroken surface—a broad, roughly-triangular area measuring nearly 600 feet N. and S. by 500 E. and W. This, possibly, was trenched all round—the high river-bank having suggested the selection of the site as a *mote*.

In after times, when John Baliol built the Castle, *circa* 1275 A.D., his men, in order to insure strength and privacy, cut off an oval space (138 by 99 feet), dug a trench round it—still extant on the *Slot Burn* side—cemented it with mortar, and so converted the original point of land into a mediæval moat-surrounded castle.

Coming nearer our own day, the roadmakers carried a bridge across the Urr just at the lowest and most convenient spot between Meikle Dalbeattie Farm (E. of Urr Water) and the hollow between the two *motes*; and thus their trench became a roadway connecting Dumfries and Kirkcudbright, passing, too, not far from the *Slot Well*.

Again, on the large *mote*, the building, once a strong one, its walls over 4 feet thick, now called *Old Place of Buittle*, was erected, no doubt the stones from Baliol Castle having been freely used for both bridge and tower.

This tower is figured in Grose's *Antiquities*, but with hardly due feeling for its height. The author, though mentioning the oval *mote*, has nothing to say of the *Buittle Mote* itself.

A fragment of the old bridge still abuts from the edge of the *Castle Mote*, and the bed of the river is littered with hewn stones.

As yet I have not made a fully-detailed drawing and plan of this *Baliol Castle Mote*, and prefer to postpone a proper description of it to a date when others, which are more or less indirectly connected with the Edwardian castles in the Stewartry, can be dealt with.

60. *Buittle Mote* itself demands a few words explanatory of the accompanying ground-plan. The two sections given are due N. and S. and E. and W., and therefore include both *motes*, not giving the full length of the larger structure, which measures 492 feet along its longer axis. The plan of the *Old Place* does not claim to be accurate, the shaded portion alone representing the tower, the rest the farmsteadings.

On no side but the short N. end are there any remains of a rampart on the *mote*, and there only of the vaguest. A proof of the artificiality of the surface-soil is that the walls of some of the farmsteadings have cracked apart. Yet, to a large extent, the lower portion of it must be natural sandbank, with pebbles, as can be seen near the mouth of the mill-race which runs down the W. and N. sides into the Urr.

The construction everywhere seems to be of earth; there are, at least, no stones visible or tangible anywhere about sides, slopes, or summit. Stones and lime, however, were found (and seen by Mr J. Kerr, tenant, who gave me the facts) years ago opposite the door of the *Old Place* at the base of the *mote-slope*, but so far from it that, in my opinion, their position proved nothing in connection with its structure.

Of neither of these *notes* is anything but the most casual mention made in the pages of any of my authorities.

61. *Doon Hill, Nether Torrs, Castle-Douglas*.—On ascending the gently-rounded slopes of this hill, which is 250 feet above sea-level, I found the vestiges of works, if really any at all, to be of the faintest. There is a flat summit about 220 feet long E. and W., having at either end a very slightly lower space 60 feet broad, and the approximate width N. and S. is 96 feet. Whether there ever was any cutting or flattening of this hill summit, it is now too late to ascertain; but the site is a notable one, being a completely isolated hill conspicuous for long distances on all sides, with marshes and lochs at its base on all sides but the N. It may, therefore, be classed with numbers of others in the district, which, possibly, were used, not as places of defence, but as meeting-heights only.

62. *Fort, Meikle Knox*.—This on the O.M. is given as a semicircle. Since the survey was made, much more of it has disappeared, and now scarcely anything measurable or fit to be drawn remains. By dint of much careful scrutiny, I came to the conclusion that it was a single-fossed, probably circular, work, about 270 feet in diameter, and constructed of smallish boulders and earth, open on all sides but the N., where a steepish declivity (now planted) forms a natural protection, very similar to *Wrathis* and others above described, and 300 feet above sea-level.

63. *Ernespie Mote*.—This is unmentioned in either map or book, and apparently unknown to local or other observers.

Its situation is a flat bit of ground just at the march-dyke between Buittle, Kelson, and Crossmichael; in the first-named parish, and distant from *Leath's Mill* half a mile to the W. The railway passes close to it, and it was in travelling that my attention first became drawn to it. A thick fir plantation slopes down upon it from the N.E.

A small stream flows past it on the N. and E., and several evidently

<sup>1</sup> The name *Ernespie* is, according to Gall. Topography, = *Ará an espoic*, "the Bishop's Hill;" but M'Kerlie points out that in 1627 it was spelt *Erinsbie*, which is Norse in termination.

modern ditches and turf-walls help to confuse the locality and lend suspicion to the site; but I think there is little doubt as to the authentic existence of the *mote* itself, which is oblong, with the corners slightly rounded, and has a very defined slope fairly equal on all sides of 18 feet, below which there are at least traceable vestiges of ditch and rampart. The summit measures 71 feet W.N.W. and E.S.E., the shorter axis being 39 feet. This gives an almost exactly diagonal orientation; and, should this *mote* prove, on excavation, to be purely an earthwork, such as I believe it is, its diagonal orientation must be taken into account as an important factor, when comparison with others similarly formed is made.

64. *Dunmuir*.—Originally *Dunmore*; but, I am rather at a loss to know why the epithet *great* should be applied to a hill not really larger, loftier, or more conspicuous than dozens of the like rounded heights so common in this Crossmichael district; for, on the supposition that *Dun* here indicates a *fort*, it is still more puzzling to stand on the hill-top and be unable to trace the slightest vestige of any works in earth or stone upon it.

I am assured, however, by the same Samuel Fletcher afore-mentioned, that here, in his boyhood, there were traces of some *fort*.

It, at all events, like the *Doon Hill* at Torrs, commands an extensive panorama; and from it can be clearly seen the following:—Dunjop, Trostrie Mote, Castle Gower, Crofts Mote, Carlochan Round with its cairn, Loch Roan Fort, the Doon Hill of Torrs, and Dungarry.

64a. *Auld Greenlaw*, or, as the O.M. has it, *The Tower and Fortalice of Greenlaw*.—This must be relegated to another section of my survey, since it appears to be, if not wholly a mediæval work, yet largely so. What presentment to the eye the *tower* had in days gone by, I at this moment have no means of ascertaining; but the large and broad oval low mound, on a small part of which it once stood, is remarkable for its extremely narrow fosse (averaging  $4\frac{1}{2}$  feet) and excessively broad outer rampart-terrace, which, nearly 36 feet wide all round, widens to 60 feet at the E. curve. A solid rampart surmounts the mound-edge, having a slope upward from the fosse of 12 feet, and a downward inner slope of 6 feet. The two diagonals are E. and W. 456 feet, and N. and S. 255 feet, within the rampart.

This *Greenlaw Mote* is connected with the river Dee by a deeply-ramparted ditch, which, no doubt, was utilised for flooding its fosse.

The general construction is of large pebbles and small granite boulders, *plus* earth, the latter being brought from some distance up the river.

65. *The Camp, Scroggie Hill.*—Many are the memorable heights and hollows in this “auld-world” region, where almost every hill-top or field is the site of a *mote*, a *stone circle*, or *monolith*, to say nothing of relics such as the famous plane, *The Forge Tree*, at Hopehead. It was at the cottage here that I was reassured, by a very old man, of the actual existence of the remains, on the top of a wooded hill, of what may have been a large, as it certainly was a strongly-built, *fort*. Only about 30 yards or so of a compact stone and earth double-rampart remain—and that barely intact—not enough to justify speculation as to its shape or size; and this fragment was such as it is fifty-two years ago.

That it held an important post, once upon a time, may be fairly assumed, since its height (300 feet above sea-level) commands all the others in the immediate vicinity; and, moreover, it probably had some very close connection with the great and remarkable, perhaps I may say, the unique, earthwork my survey next deals with, viz. :—

66. *The Mote of Urr*: otherwise called *The King's Mount.*—Of this famous *mote*, as of other famous things, we are obliged to admit that very little is known. In itself, it is specially interesting, for it is the completest example known to me, in Galloway, of a true *mote*, according to Clarke's definition; as it comprises citadel, trenches, and base-court, and these, too, all on a scale remarkably extensive, clear, and well preserved.

It is not a little strange that a piece of human handiwork so large and imposing should be unmentioned, even in the remotest manner, in the numberless histories and volumes of tradition and legend—leaving poetic effusions out of account—throughout our libraries. What has been recorded by former observers, and printed in the transactions of scientific societies, &c., does but scant justice to the reality, as I shall hope presently to show.

To Dr Christison's indefatigable researches on the subject of Scottish *motes* and *forts* it is that the future will be most indebted.

But even so keen an eye as his fails as yet to find any record beyond the latter half of the 15th century relative to our unique *Mote of Urr*. In his admirable *Introduction to the Study of Scottish Motes and Forts*, Dr Christison says:—“The only motes mentioned in the *Exchequer Rolls* are Urr and Earlstoun. The numerous references between 1456 and 1503 are to annual rents drawn from them as farms.” And in the *Reg. Mag. Sig.* we find two entries connected with grants of land by King James, “1535 Moite de Wr,” and “1541 Moit de Ur.”

In Grose's *Antiquities* it is crudely described and cramped drawn,

so much shortened as to give an utterly misleading idea of the length of the base-court, which is the salient feature.

In *Lands and their Owners* the mote fares hardly better, the drawing being poor and the dimensions faulty.

In *Harper*, though no drawing is given, an interesting "tradition respecting the gift of this mote to a woman named Sprotte, for her loyalty and hospitality to Robert the Bruce," is noticed. Hence the name, the *King's Mount*, an appellation dear to many a staunch Gallovidian still.

This tradition is also given in *Lands and their Owners* with the following remarks:—"It greatly resembles that of Tinwald in the Isle of Man. . . . Skene, in his *Celtic Scotland*, terms it a *mote* and a very remarkable stronghold. Being entrenched, we would come to the same conclusion, only that in other respects it has much in common with the Scandinavian thing-steads mentioned at p. 260" (Dingwall, Tingwall, Tinwald, and Twynholm Doon).

In reference to the identification by Skene of this *mote* with Ptolemy's *Caer-bantorigum*, Mr M'Kerlie continues:—"Whether correct or not, it is evident that subsequently it must have become a *Thing* or *Mote*, and from what is left, it must have been fortified at some period; therefore the term *mote* is not inaccurate, although its latest use seems to have been a court, &c." (V. 331).

It may be interesting to those concerned in the almost insoluble problem of identifying Ptolemy's sites, to know that there are at least three other hill-sites in the Stewartry with remains of forts, each of which has been claimed as the *Caer-bantorigum* of Ptolemy.

In the midst of a wide alluvial loop formed by the originally double stream<sup>1</sup> of the Urr (fig. 46), a rocky, oval hillock, measuring some 206 yards N. and S. by 133 yards E. and W., rises to the height of about 60 feet in the main bulk of it, sloping off very gradually,

however, on the S. end, but remaining very steep, here and there nearly perpendicular, on the N.

The base-court level (60 feet perpendicular height), it is suggested,

<sup>1</sup> In the accompanying diagram, DE represents the present course of the Urr, DICE the original course.

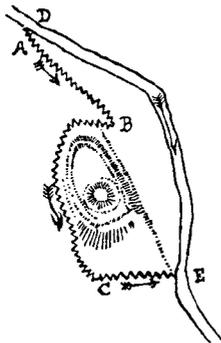


Fig. 46. Mote of Urr.

may have been formed by glacial detritus. Above it rises the citadel fully 25 feet higher (see fig. 47).

From the plain on the N. end, the great bulk of partly-natural, partly-packed embankment rises in a steep curve which measures 96 feet. Its summit, now rounded and smooth, bears traces of having been prepared for palisades all along the edge, this being especially marked on the S. end, and distinctly seen with the sun favourably low on the horizon. So that I have no doubt that Grose's description of 'ramparts' was correct.

The level of this rampart-top may be roughly estimated at about 4 feet wide; its inward slope, also steep, is 18 feet, the fosse, 6 feet, varying here and there to about 9 feet (fig. 48). The outer slope of the base-court scarp is 33 feet, and the length of its level summit 223 feet, in a line bisecting it very nearly N. and S. From its edge, the inner scarp (sloping to the citadel fosse) inclines steeply for an average depth of 14 feet—16 in places—with a fosse of 10 to 12 feet, from which springs the citadel in, I think, an entirely artificial mass of earth and stones, having a slope of 46 feet on the average. It is unbroken, very compact, and little damaged as yet, although the plough has been carried all over the base-court for many scores of seasons.

The two diameters of this *mote-summit* are N. and S. 100 feet, E. and W. 92 feet. On it, but not occupying a markedly central site, there used to stand a large rounded granite boulder. It was extant forty, or perhaps thirty, years ago; but when, why, or by whom removed, I am unable to ascertain.

Continuing our line of section, we find the dimensions to the S. of the citadel to be these:—Its slope, 46 feet; fosse, 12; outer slope, 16; level narrow continuation of base-court, 33; its outer slope, 22; fosse, 16; counter scarp, 11, from the edge of which the ground very gradually, in the manner of a glacis, slopes off into the level of the afore-mentioned alluvial land.<sup>1</sup>

*The Base-court* (fig. 49).—The dimensions of this broad and striking feature in the *Mote of Urr* are 228 feet E. and W. in a line touching the edge of its slope towards the citadel, and 223 at right angles to this.

<sup>1</sup> It is this space, only some 400 by 300 feet wide, which the O.S.A. mentions as showing at or about the year 1760 "outworks seemingly erected by the Romans, . . . . which have been," concludes the writer, "within the last twenty years obliterated by the plough." It is to the same writer we owe the very imaginary picture of "Roman Legions" encamping on this very spot, as if 17,000 men and horses could be accommodated within an area of 12,000 square feet!

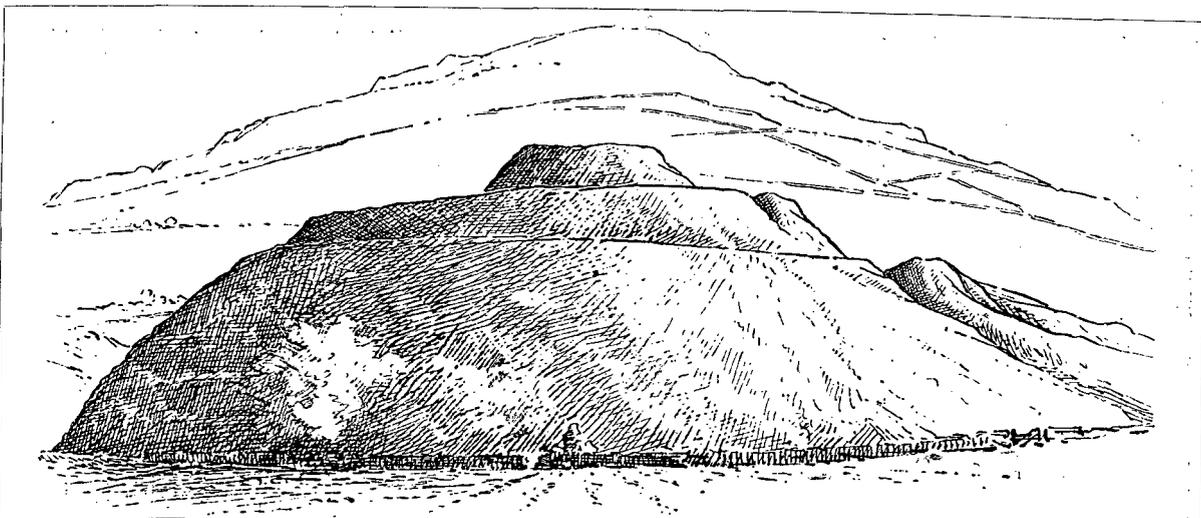


Fig. 47. Mote of Urr, from the North.

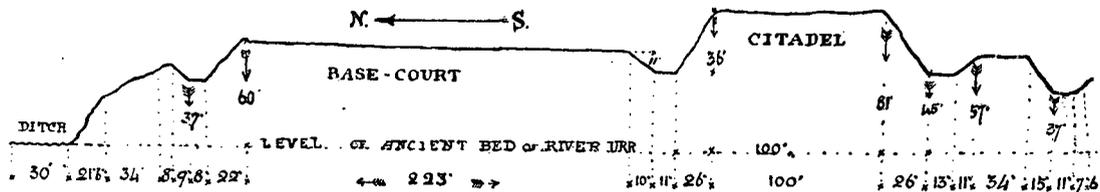


Fig. 48. Mote of Urr. Longitudinal Section.

It is quite flat, has been evidently frequently ploughed, and bears traces, most clearly along its W. side, of having had ramparts. This W. side is curved at both ends, slightly on the S., where the line speedily becomes straight, forming at the S.E. corner a right angle. On the N. end it is curved throughout, and the peculiar direction of the curves irresistibly reminds one of the lines of a ship, the likeness to which is more strongly borne out than would be thought possible, after frequent and lengthened surveys of the *mote* have been made.

There are two openings or approaches to the base-court level—one at the N.W. arc (fig. 50), the other at the S.E. (fig. 51). The N.W. one is carried through the outer rampart also. It is extremely doubtful, however, whether the approach at the S.E. be not quite a recently made one—cut by the Milton farmer for ploughing purposes.

It is neither so broad in its mouth, smooth in its fall-off on the sides, nor so compact in its main mass, as the one at the N.W. Close to which last, and on the base-court (fig. 52), is a mound apparently of smallish stones; but as the level here has been frequently ploughed, I am sceptical as to this being anything more than an ordinary heap of stones, piled up out of the way of agriculture.

The general construction of the *Mote of Urr* appears to be mainly of earth; but large and small stones protrude in sundry places as well, some of them pebbles of considerable weight and size, and it has always, on each fresh visit, caused me more and more doubt as to whether the main bulk of the whole *mote* be not in reality a natural mass of stones, gravel, and sand.

The mound stands, now, with only one stream of the Urr flowing past; but of the existence of the older channel on the W. there exists visible proof in the river-bank contours, and in the fact that the parish boundary to this day runs in the channel of this western stream.<sup>1</sup>

The circumference of the outer fosse is 1455 feet, of the citadel-base, 537 feet; and the greater part of the base of the whole mound has been broadly ditched on the N. and E. A very small moist spot situated close under the slope of the base-court outer rampart, on the S. end, indicates the existence of a spring.

<sup>1</sup> As a proof of the rapidity with which time, helped by agriculture, can obliterate objects, it is well to remember that at the S.E. corner of the ground that extends down to the river from the rampart, there are shapeless grass-grown mounds and hillocks and ridges. When the O.M. was made there was a house here, Stepend, the house at the ford, and that only fifty years ago!

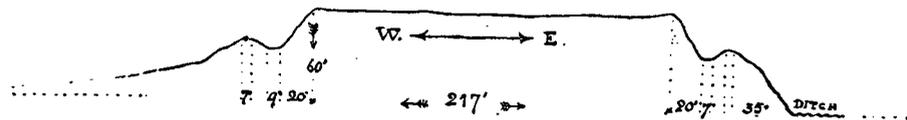


Fig. 49. Mote of Urr. Section across Base-court.

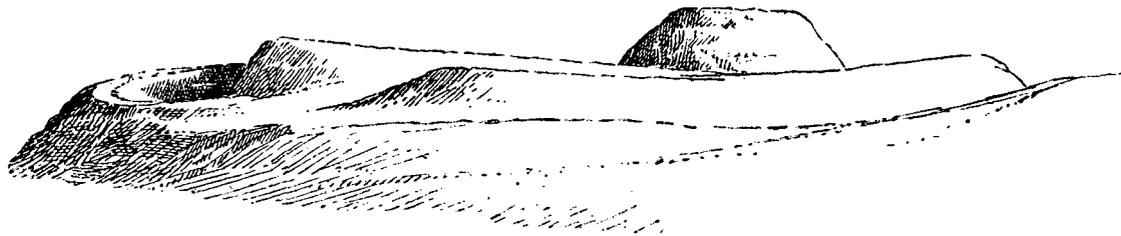


Fig. 50. Mote of Urr, from the West.

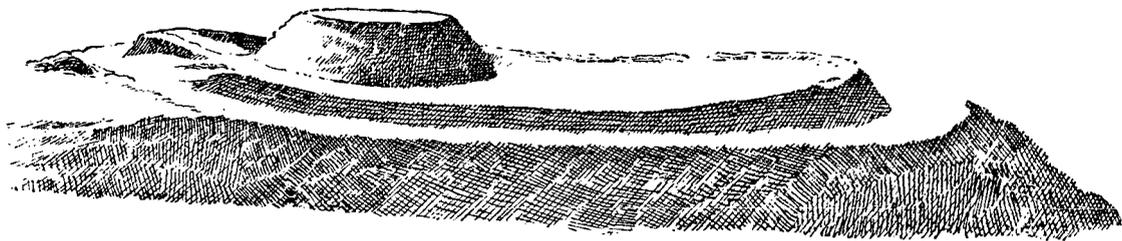


Fig. 51. Mote of Urr, from the East.



Though in itself so striking and impressive an object (figs. 53, 54), the *Mote of Urr* is one of the least open to view, least conspicuous of all in Galloway. In lieu of crowning a hill-summit, its large and strangely-built proportions occupy a very lowly site in a meadowland, closed in abruptly, except towards the N., with rocky cliff-like hills and rugged moorlands, five or six times loftier than the *mote*. Curiously enough, too, except in the direction just indicated, there are no heights, whether near or distant, upon which any substantial remains of other *motes* or of *forts* can now be traced.<sup>1</sup>

After long and careful scrutiny and catechetical examination of all likely persons in the neighbourhood, however, the best result obtainable in this direction seems to be the very shadowy remains on

67. *Camp Hill, Milton Park*.—Here, on a well-rounded height (200 feet above sea-level), ploughed vigorously for more than half a century, is a nearly circular depression; but how once trenched it is impossible to say. Ordnance maps take no notice of it, not even giving the hill the name of *Camp* or *Castle Hill*, which, I was assured by a very old resident, is its proper name. This same patriarchal cottager had, fifty-two years ago, ploughed the *Camp Hill*, and declares it was then, as it is now, as devoid of trench or rampart and as smooth.

The hill is distant from the *mote* over half a mile, and may possibly have been the means of communication from it to the horseshoe-shaped *fort* on the E. of the Urr at *Waterside*, and thence in a zigzag course up the whole farther valley of the Urr.

68. *Dunjarg, Corbieton*—our next example, keeping to the W. bank of the Urr—though a small one, presents some interesting points. It is marked as *mote* on the small O.M., and the name is pleasantly free from that common vagueness of epithet attaching to so many Gaelic names. It is the *Red Fort*, or *Red Hill*.

Its site is the summit of one of the smoothly-rising, easily-ascended hills so characteristic of Crossmichael, 275 feet above sea-level. It consists merely of a disc and rim—the disc being 108 feet across at all points, and the rim, hardly high or strong enough to be called a rampart, is the merest ridge, devoid of a trench within as well as without.

<sup>1</sup> If, granting credence to the Ptolemy-hypothesis, the *Mote of Urr* had really been the formidable British town supposed (and afterwards a Roman camp), we should naturally look for, and most likely find, some evident relics of forts, watch-towers, or beacon-hills upon the many favourable heights environing the *mote*. Or, failing that, some vestige of verbal association with structures of that kind still extant in the names of hill and hollow hard by.

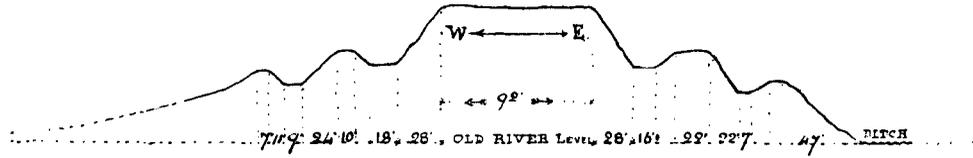


Fig. 53. Mote of Urr. Section across Citadel.

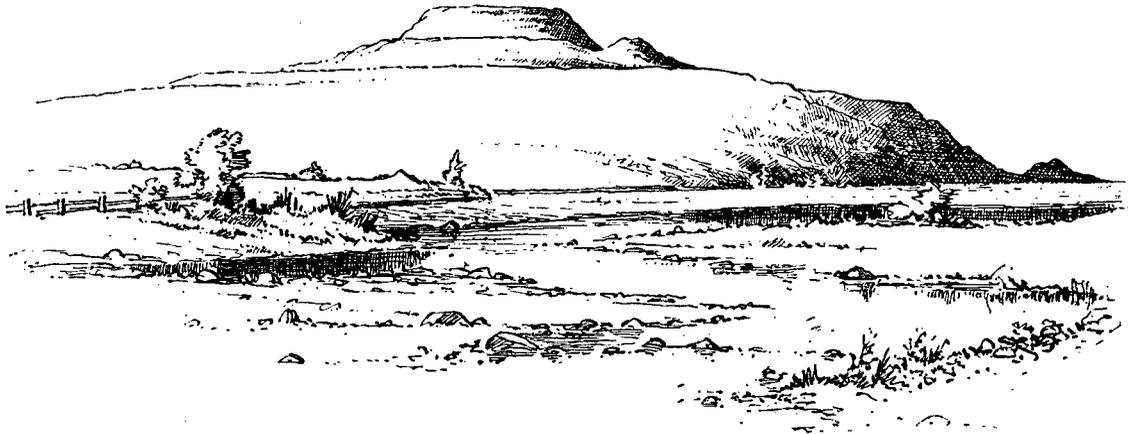


Fig. 54. Mote of Urr, from the South.

There is a slight swelling or mound in the centre of this rim-encircled *mote*, but below it, no trace of any terrace or other shaping of the slopes, which are left in their natural inclines, and fall a considerable depth before reaching level ground.

Saving this central rise, the *Dunjarg Mote* is very similar to other structures a little to the N., except in size. Whether, like them, *Dunjarg* should be classed as a *doon*, distinct from both *forts* and *motes*, is a matter that must be left to my summary.

69. *Mote, East Gerranton*.—Very little remains of this; merely enough to show that a roundish mound was once made here in conjunction with a small jutting rock southwards, the whole measuring in circumference about 360 feet. Even this estimate must be received with caution, as pacing on heavy wet ploughed land is not likely to produce accurate results. What the trenches and ramparts were, no one can now assert; the very materials, if other than the common soil, have all disappeared under the claws of modern improvement.

This *mote*, apparently, connected the *fort* on *Scroggie Hill* (65) with *Halferne Mote* (73), both being visible from it.

70. *Clarebrand Mote*, or, *the Round*.—Concerning this spot, irrespective of its peculiarities of structure, there are one or two noteworthy points.

It is distinctly known under the two names above given, there being once a small farm at the foot of it called *Moat*, which is now included in the large one named *Fordhouse*. It may be well to bear in mind, further, that the name "Round" is more than once applied to heights in this district having remains of earth, or earth and stone, handiwork on their summits.

The summit of the gently-rising hill on which these remains are found is now thickly planted with trees, like other similar spots in this quarter. The wood is enclosed in what would be a circle if complete; but the actual remains of terraces, &c., form a true oval, 172 by 150 feet, with diagonal orientation, which is mainly dependent upon the lie of the ground.

From the accompanying drawing (fig. 55) it will be at once evident how very slight is the fall of the ground from summit to first terrace, thence to a second terrace, and, in parts, to the very trivial remnants of what probably never was a lofty or strong rampart, rather, a low ridge. This ridge, which measures but 12 feet over the curve, is much more distinct round the N.E. curve. I think this is explained, simply, by the fact that on that quarter there has been no dike built near the

ridge itself ; hence, while the ridge was ransacked on all other sides for the surrounding dike, this part escaped. This ridge is succeeded by a second, which runs somewhat irregularly round either side for some 570 feet, merging into the upper ridge about half-way round the *mote*.

We have here, therefore, a trench, old and worn-looking, succeeded

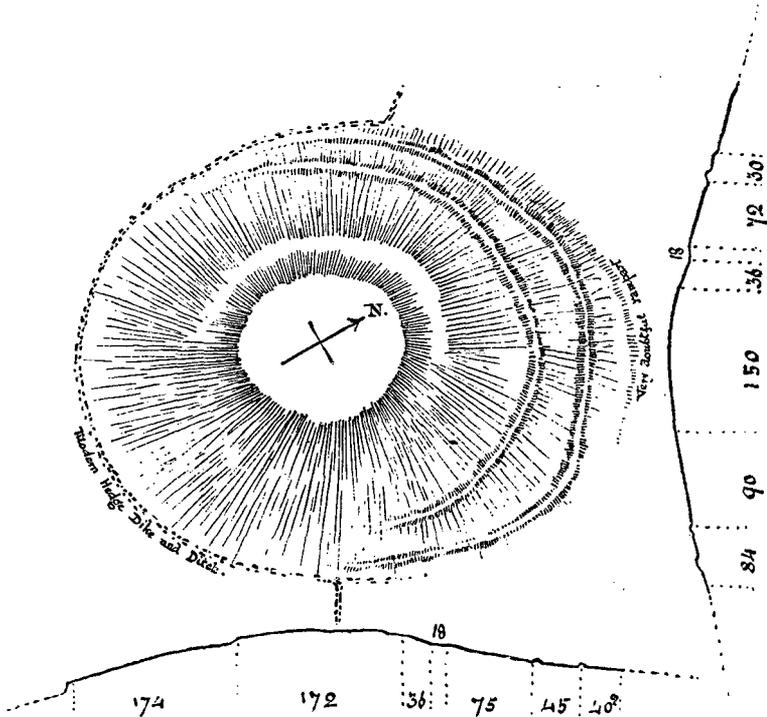


Fig. 55. Clarebrand Mote.

by true terraces and a nearly flat, quite unprotected, summit ; the special features of a disused *mote* or place of refuge being discarded for those of a *moot-hill*, possibly, or with equal probability, one may hazard the opinion that this *Clarebrand Round* had never been a *mote* in the sense of a *fortress* or *place of refuge*.

71. *Crofts Mote, Crossmichael*.—This conspicuous and large structure

is one of the half dozen prominently known and frequently mentioned Galloway *motes*.<sup>1</sup> Its sharply-defined summit and edges, clear-cut against the sky, crown one of the innumerable eminences hereabouts, within a mile of the river Dee, some 350 feet above sea-level, and may be seen for considerable distances on all sides. Add to which, that, from it a number of other *motes* are visible in this specially-mote-building district, and it is little wonder perhaps that visitors, in search of our antiquities, run away with the impression that this is our beau-ideal of this class of structures.

Probably it was from seeing this *Crofts Mote*, that Muir in his *Lighthouse* ventures the conjecture that "all the motes in the Stewartry are merely terraced mounds." He gives a sectional view of it, which is copied into *Rambles in Galloway*. This section shows a mound with two terraces, which is far from exact. *Crofts Mote* has one trench, and one terrace, probably had two terraces up to no very ancient date, since portions of a second one may still be traced; and for all we can tell, these, even, may not originally have been mere terraces, but true trenches like the uppermost one now extant.

Apart from this, however, the assumption as to the other motes in Galloway being terraced is very misleading. On the contrary, my examination of them shows that only a proportion of one-seventh are "merely terraced." Further, there are points of structure in *Crofts Mote* which differentiate it certainly into a very small group, if not, indeed, into complete isolation—unmatched and alone.

The construction appears to be mainly of earth *plus* stones or rock, a good deal of the rock cropping out on and across the very summit, the surface of which swells distinctly, but not in any traceable manner, towards the centre.

The general contour (see fig. 56) is a long, regular oval, the two axes lying precisely due N. and S. and E. and W. The moment the summit slope is reached, one is arrested by the peculiar *raised summit upon summit*, so to speak, which is the striking feature of this mote—a central plateau raised above the rest of the summit by 18 inches or so of dry-stone masonry. In my sections (fig. 57) I have computed this as the true summit, and given dimensions accordingly; but owing to the extremely slight elevation of this "crown" above the rest of the summit, it is best to include the strip of lower level in our estimate, and give the length over all as 294 feet, and the breadth as 192 feet. In the sections, this "crown" has been frankly exaggerated, for, except at certain

<sup>1</sup> It is "supposed to be Danish" (M'Kerlie, vol. iii. p. 378).

points, the actual appearance is scarcely perceptible till one is close to the base of the *mote* itself.

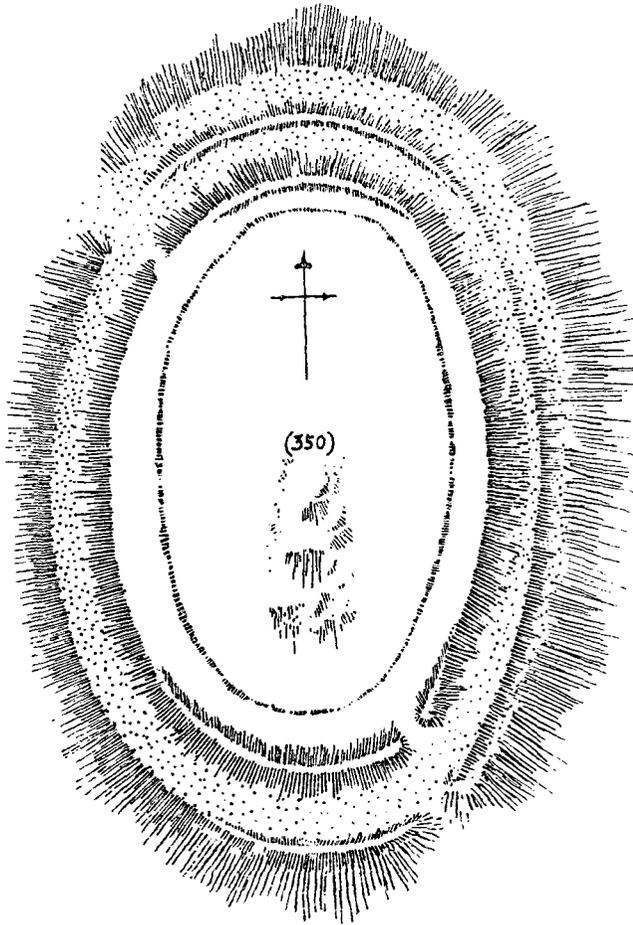
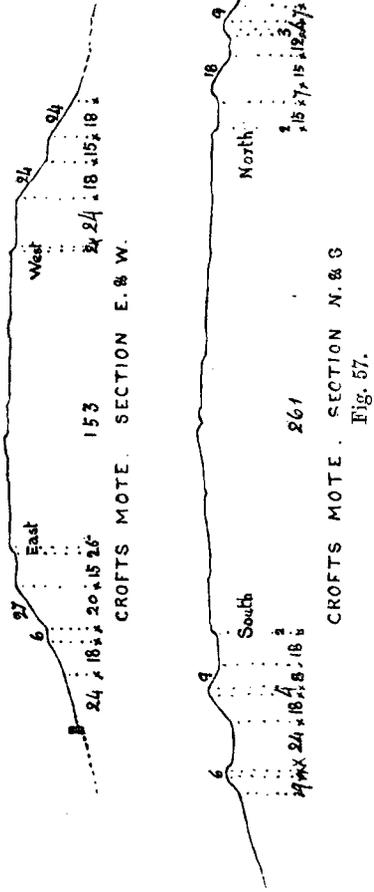


Fig. 56. Crofts Mote.

The slight rampart yet remaining on the N. and S. curves of the summit disappears totally on the sides ; and the same remark applies to

the lower rampart. Below which, again, but only round the N. curve, is the lowest terrace. From the edge of the middle terrace, which attains a maximum breadth of 24 feet at the S., the ground slopes away gradually into the surrounding fields.



There are two entrances, in much the same relative positions as those noticed on the *Mote of Urr*. Of the N.W. one, however, I am more than doubtful, first from actual investigation, and, secondly, from what reads like corroborative evidence in the N.S.A. Here, the writer, quoting Train, be it observed, says that "each of three motes has a roadway to the summit by a sloping passage towards the E." Now, if *Crofts* were one of the three *motes* indicated, which from its size we are safe in assuming to be the case, the N.W. approach could not have existed at that date, for so observant an antiquary as Train, surely, would never have passed it over. Moreover, the "passage towards the E.," though not absolutely accurate in point of direction, marks it with sufficient definiteness to permit of our identifying this approach with the actual broad and obviously-fashioned approach on the S.E. curve—an integral portion of the *mote*. Thus, comparing the two greatest—*Crofts Mote* and *Mote of Urr*—we find each possessing a probably spurious approach and a genuine one—the latter being at

the N.W. in the *Urr Mote* and the S.E. in *Crofts Mote*.

The position of this *mote* in relation to other antiquities is well-marked. A mile S.W. in a meadow washed by the Dee are the poor remains of an *abbey*, in all likelihood the *church* originally dedicated to *Saint Michael*, which gives the parish its name; while within a three-mile radius, a roughly-drawn semicircle includes no fewer than some fifteen or sixteen *forts*, *motes*, *stone circles*, and *cairns*. It is to be regretted that but a small proportion of these can now be examined at all; several are little more than mere sites, among which may be included

72. *Ernambrie Mote*.—A gently swelling plot at the summit of a high gradually-rising hill, circular, 63 feet in diameter, quite flat, apparently entirely an earthwork, and having no vestige whatever of trench or rampart. Its probable height may be 5 feet above the level of the field.<sup>1</sup>

73. *Halferne Mote*, only a third of a mile N.E. of the last, differs from it only in measuring 72 feet in diameter.<sup>2</sup>

About half a mile N.W. of this is a fir-crowned height, known as *Carlochan Round*. So far as I have been able to ascertain, this was a *cairn*. It is so marked, and so only, on the O.M. On visiting the spot, however, I was surprised to note the extensive area thus claimed for a *cairn*. Pending further investigation, and leaving the point in doubt, I proceed northwards a full mile and reach

74. *Trowdale Mote*, which, like the five or six last described, is so marked on the O.M. Here, on a high and lonely marsh-land, within near sight of nothing but a few swelling hillocks, among reeds and mosses and water, lies this strangest, most solitary, most prehistoric-looking of all our *motes*. Its central mound and double ramparts can scarcely be said to rise above the marshy ground, still wet and deep; they rather suggest the notion of their gradually sinking out of sight

<sup>1</sup> As to the name, the affix *ern* may be, suggests Sir H. Maxwell, A.S. *oern*=a house, or a contraction of *ard-an*=a height. Pont's spelling is *Ardnarnrie*. The affix occurs more than a dozen times in this one parish of Crossmichael.

<sup>2</sup> As an instance of local pronunciation, it is well to note that this name *Halferne* is always spoken as *Ha'f-yearn*. M'Kerlie connects it with the Norse *fjern*=far off, which the above pronunciation seems to bear out. Yet, in the various other instances, *e.g.*, *Ernambry*, *Ernerogo*, *Ernespie*, *Ernanity*, the *y* is never sounded, but the vowel is more like a broad *a*; which, again, gives colour to Sir Herbert's derivation. I incline to this last, as, although *Crossmichael* is "comparatively flat," compared, *e.g.*, with *Kells* or *Minnigaff*, it possesses a remarkable number of small, rounded hills with deepish hollows between, and the word *ard*,=a height, may well apply.

altogether, the whole place is such a cincture of dimpled pliancy and sponginess.

The site is not a little peculiar. If there be anything in the belief that most of these *motes* and *forts* were placed so as to be within view of each other, then, the only outlook possible in the present instance would be miles away across country in the N.E., and in that direction the nearest *mote* is between 4 and 5 miles distant.

*Trowdale Mote* occupies the marsh just above the mill-dam, and (see fig. 58) there are two broad cuttings through the "ramparts" placed in

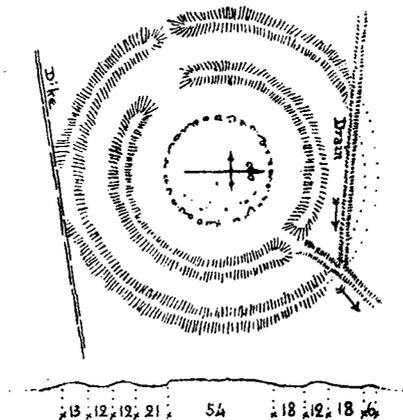


Fig. 58. Trowdale Mote.

such a way as to, I think, admit the water to best advantage. Round the central mound, which is only 54 feet in diameter, there are still large stones embedded, and the general structure seems to be of stones and earth. The place is so entirely unlike most of our *motes* and *forts*, that I am at a loss how to classify it, or by what name to call it. Arkland Mote (E. 18a) bears a strong resemblance to it.

75. *Fort above Trowdale*.—On rather high ground about half a mile W. of *Trowdale Mote* I discovered the remains of a *fort*, the nearly circular, much-levelled low rampart of which can be traced for nearly 300 feet. It is on a direct line between 74 and 76, but quite out of sight of either.

76. *Fort, Loch Roan*.—This on the O.M. occurs under the incomprehensible title of *Auld Kirk of Loch Roan* (fig. 59). M'Kerlie notices this

appellation, and describes the place rightly as the remains of a stone fort, but of the name he vouchsafes no explanation; nor can I from enquiry among old residents gather any clue to it.<sup>1</sup>

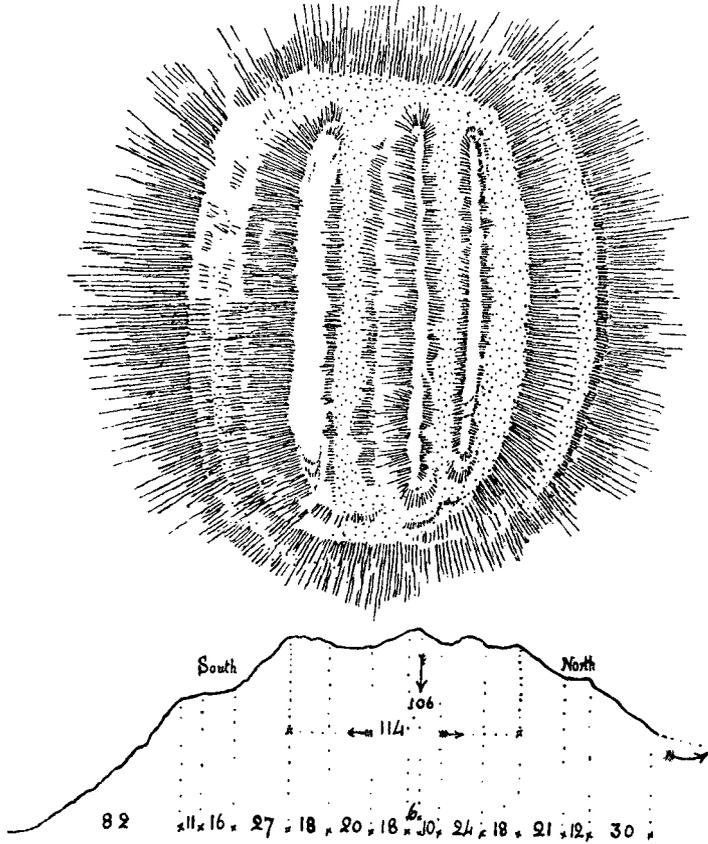


Fig. 59. Fort, Loch Roan.

The site is particularly strong, three long parallel ridges of whinstone,

<sup>1</sup> *Rhone Hill* and *Rhone Housc*. Pont spells *Ron*. Jamieson gives *Roan*, "a congeries of brushwood," as the use in Dumfriesshire. This might apply to the *Loch Roan* locality.

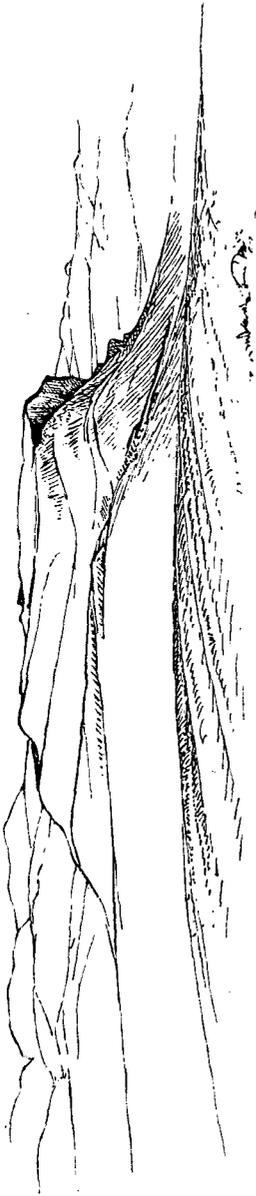


Fig. 60. Glen Roan Mote.

set on edge—like leaves of a gigantic book flapped open—and trending E. and W., have been chosen as the nucleus of a dry-stone enclosure, which forms a wall—now much broken down—in a contour approaching an oval. The middle ridge, being rather longer than the others, has directed the general form. The whole natural position is so strong itself as hardly to call for much building, since on both sides (N. and S.) the fall is considerable, 210 feet or so on the N., beyond which the ground rises again, and fully 90 feet on the S. So that I doubt if at any time the defences rose to the dignity of walls, as, for example, at *Dungarry* and *Suie*.

The length E. and W. of the tolerably flat hollow between the two longest ridges is 228 feet, the width over all N. and S. about 240 feet, while the circumference is 640 feet.

The E. ends of the ridges slope sharply down to the loch more than 100 feet below; while on the W. the ground is rough and steeply broken up also.

The panorama from this and the adjacent higher knoll to the N. is one of the most extensive and superlatively beautiful and varied in the Stewartry, and comprehends more points of interest, as well as *mote* and *fort sites*, than may be quoted here.

77. *Moat of Glen Roan, or Glengappock.*—This noble specimen of a finely-adapted, naturally advantageous rock-hill forms a most effective, and even astonishing, feature in the landscape as the rambler winds his way round the N. end of the dark-wooded, secluded Loch Roan (fig. 60). Its lines rush up in a series of rapidly-deepening curves out of a large surrounding marshy

hollow, and culminate in a beetling crag of whinstone, literally overhanging, the back of which is carved out into terrace and trench in a manner at once unusual and strikingly distinct.

These shapings of the rocky mound comprise really one broad terrace at the base, a trench 9 feet deep, a second broad terrace, and two slighter ridges, more like steps, or the peculiar summit-ledge described on *Crofts Mote*. In addition to these features (which my sketch from the W. clearly shows) there is on the E. curve (fig. 61), about 60

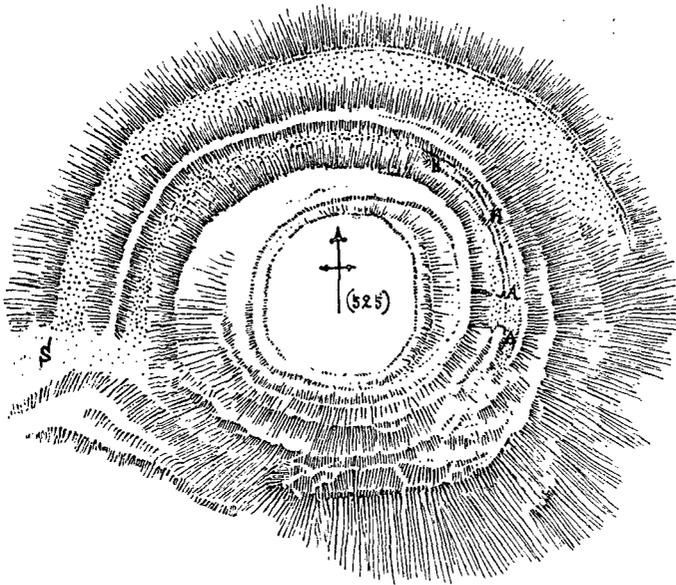


Fig. 61. Glen Roan Mote.

feet below the summit, a broad 15-feet gangway (AA), strongly built on either side, though the stones scarcely rise above the general level; while, further N.E. is a long, narrow, oval hollow, distinctly framed and helped out by rock-cutting (HH).

At either side of the main mass of the crag, the all-destroying dike-builders have been at work, devastating the structure of the summit—injuries apparent enough from my survey, and borne out by the O.M.



On visiting this site, I found the facts now reversed, *i.e.*, the only fragment remaining which showed structure is that on the N. of the road, the rest, the much larger portion, once fit to be delineated, to the S. of the road, being now on the verge of utter extinction under the plough. As far as measurable, by pacing over the furrows and across the road, including the fragment on the loch-edge, this *mote* may have been some 156 feet long; its width is beyond computation. From the marshy levels nearly all round it, and their bordering rocky or smooth heights, I think my surmise may be near the mark, that this *mote* was probably on an island, or a peninsula at least. The *islet cairn* is due N., but is now no *cairn* but only an islet.

This *mote* is not visible from any other.

79. *Kirkland Mote, Parton*.—A fine example of the simple truncated cone, single-trenched type, and perhaps the best preserved in this part of the Stewartry so rich in works of the kind (see fig. 64).

It is situated on level ground, close to the river Dee, at 175 feet above sea-level, and has at the foot a rampart 9 feet high and 510 feet in circumference, and a narrow trench. The *mote* slopes at rather more than 45°, and attains a perpendicular height of 23 feet.<sup>1</sup> The summit measures 54 feet N. and S. by 48 E. and W. It has erroneously been called the smallest *mote* in Galloway. I have found at least four others which are smaller. In its contours this *mote* is very rounded, and gives one the impression of being entirely an earthwork, in which opinion the rabbits seem to concur, for they have riddled it, summit and slopes, with their burrowings.

79a. *Boreland Mote, Parton*.—Not marked on any map, nor noticed by any writer subsequent to Chalmers, who, in vol. iii. p. 228 of *Caledonia*, describes it as “a very large artificial mound about 200 yards in circumference at the base, with two ditches of considerable depth—exactly similar to the great barrow near Marlborough.” He mentions also the remains of a “Druidical Temple” about 200 yards distant. Of this last, I may say in passing, that there is now not even any hearsay in memory of the oldest resident.

The *mote* occupies a commanding site in Boreland Glen, filling up an oblong-oval height on the N.W. of the stream, which bends round, first S.E. then S.W., and washes the base of a friable crag, its S.E. bank

<sup>1</sup> In *Lands and their Owners*, under Parton, it is said to be 40 feet high, as measured by the late Rev. J. Pattullo. There must be some mistake in this statement. Possibly the *slope* of the *mote* was intended.



curve, and broadens to a space of 50 feet wide, thus forming a species of base-court.

80. *Fort, Little Merkland.*—Five hundred feet above sea-level. On the O.M. drawn as an irregular work, rounded on N.W., N., and N.E., with S.W. and S.E. sides forming nearly a right-angled apex. I spent over an hour in making sections for the annexed representation (fig. 65),

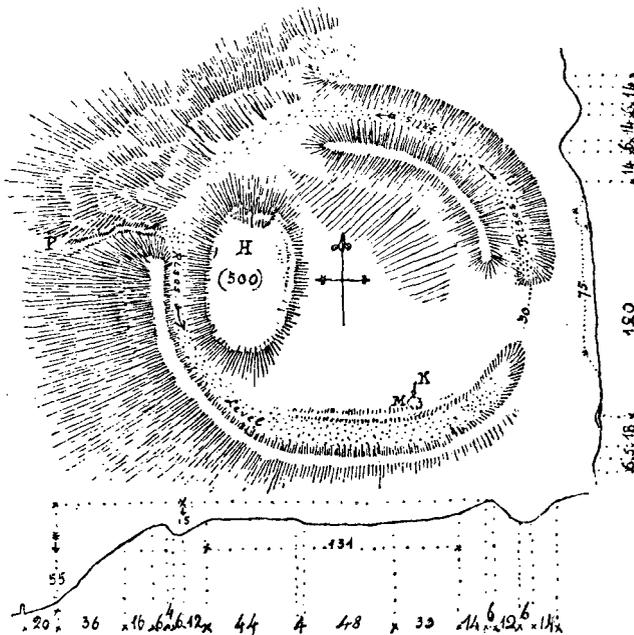


Fig. 65. Fort, Little Merkland.

and could see no such sharp angularity. The *fort* is interesting from its loneliness, the depth and narrowness of its trench, and from its having, besides the prominent oval mound (partly natural, no doubt) at H., a nearly circular hollow of stones (M), which is connected by embedded stones 9 feet due N. with a large stone (K), below the just visible edge of which there seems to be some masonry. I can hazard no guess at what these may be. In addition to this, the remarkable divergence of width in the trench is a feature; the average width being

but 6 feet, but on the S. curve reaching 18, and there very flat and full of rushes, insomuch as to justify the suspicion that here exists a spring, which, being free to run along the trench westwards, discharges itself down the steep rocky cutting which ends at P. The eastern end of this trench rises for the last 30 feet, where the approach is distinct and evidently carefully made out. No part of the interior is truly level. The general slope of the moorland being N.E. downwards to S.W. To the W. the whole country is wide and open; but on N. and N.E., heights rocky and abrupt rise to 100 feet above the *fort*. The bulk of the work is merely rock-cutting, but stone-work is evident along the S. trench, inner scarp, and, I think, along the inner edge of the mound H. A large *cairn* at Shaw is distant half a mile to the E.

81. *Balmaclellan Mote*. — This very small but prominent work occupies the crown of a rather dome-shaped hill to the N. of the village, within 100 yards of the houses. It is an earthwork of the truncated cone type, originally intended to be circular, though a careful measurement brings out the E. and W. diameter 3 feet longer than its opposite, its sides steep and convex, and the general form remarkably squat and rotund.

Traces of a trench, or, at least, a slightly hollowed terrace, are to be

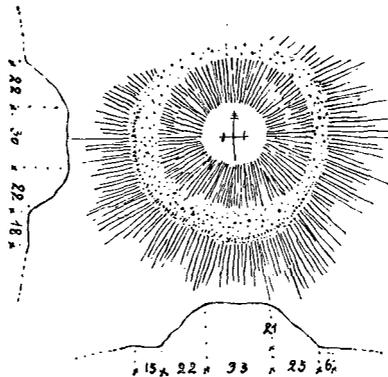


Fig. 66. Balmaclellan Mote.

seen nearly all round, differing considerably in breadth, as will be seen from the accompanying plan and section (fig. 66).

The *Mote* commands a wide expanse of the lovely Glenkens; its N. diameter pointing directly to Cairnsmore o' Carsphairn, while the W.

points to Black Craig o' Dee. From its adjoining the village, and its conspicuous position on a hill 350 feet high, this little *mote* seems to be well known. Its own perpendicular height is 21 feet; and, along with the *mote* on *mote-croft*, *Twynholm* (W. 23), is the smallest structure of the kind I have met with.

No special mention is made of it in any of my books of reference; but I am told by Mr Crosbie, Factor on Barwhillanty, that the late Dr Murray of Balmaclellan excavated it in part, but with what results I do not know.

81a. *Camp Hill, Garpolfoot*.—Site marked on the O.M. about the 200-foot level on the N. of the stream, and 300 or 400 yards above the road. The whole spot is ploughed down out of recognition. It is close to and in view of the *standing-stone* on *Dalarran Holm*.

82. *Tower Mote*.—Near Torlane Burn, a mile and a quarter E. of Dalry, there is drawn on the O.M. a very small mound, untrenched, within the farm premises. It is not far from the site of an old chapel. The map-name, however, is printed only in plain small lettering; and the mound when examined by Mr Kaltofen and myself bore not the very slightest traces whatever of any shaping, being a mere rock hillock, not even so abrupt in its general contour as scores of other drums and ridges hereabouts. From no one to whom I have spoken, including old residents and present tenants, can I obtain a syllable in confirmation of this strange nomenclature on the O.M.

83. *Dalry Mote*.—A very interesting and prominent work, abutting finely on the very brink of the river Ken, as it sweeps past the pleasant little, healthy village of Dalry.

“Near the church is an old encampment in good preservation, in the neighbourhood of which coins and urns have at various times been discovered” (Harper).

There appears no other more special reference to this *mote* than the above.

As regards the name *Dalry*, hitherto the common acceptation has been *Dal-ri* or *rie*=dale of the king. What particular king has never been very clearly announced. Mr M'Kerlie, however, makes a suggestion which is worth considering. His derivation is from the Norse *Dalr ri=glen of the ford*. Now, it is remarkable that in the harp-shaped bend of the river here, from Dalry to the Meikle Isle, about 1 mile S.E., there are no less than five fords; and an old road, still to be traced, goes down between the *kirkyard* and *the mote*, to what would long ago be called “the ford.” On Dalarran Holm there stands a huge monolith, probably commemorative of a burial.



to the summit, though never sloped up into the mound gradually as was generally done in a true approach.

84. *Craigmuie*.—"ROMAN CAMP supposed" is the reading of the O.M. for this angular (but not rectangular) work, which is flanked on one side by the Abbey Burn. The site is  $8\frac{1}{2}$  miles in a straight

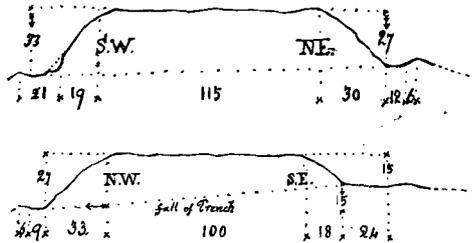


Fig. 67a. Dalry Mote.

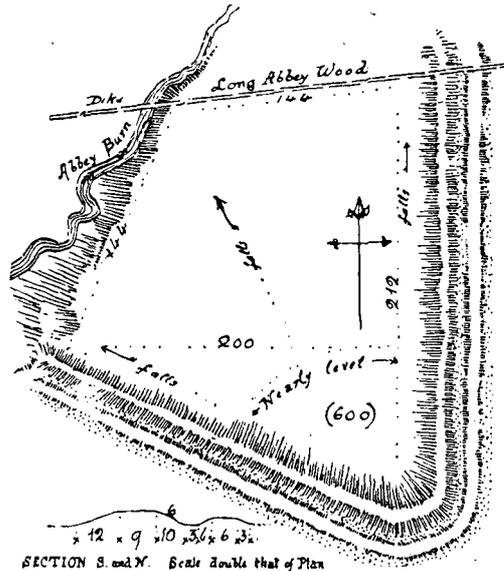
line nearly N.E. of Dalry on the very confines of the Stewartry near Loch Urr, in one of the bleakest and wildest districts, 600 feet above sea-level. Locally, it is known as *The Watch Knowe*. That it really was such, and used, probably, to signal down to the *mote* at *Loch Rinnie* from its commanding a clear view of *Tynron Doon*, 7 miles away in Glencairn, is a great deal more probable than that it was ever touched by the Romans. The accompanying plan and sections (fig. 68) will sufficiently explain the slightness of structure in this primitive work.

The Abbey Burn is too trivial a stream to be in any sort defensive; but there are no vestiges of the earthwork having been carried W. of it, the ground there rising considerably above the high corner of the *knowe*. It is possible that the N. rampart turned W. in the space now covered by the *Long Abbey Wood* and joined the stream; but this wood is too dense to allow of any useful examination.

85. *Loch Rinnie Mote*.—One mile N.W. of the last, in a crook of the land formed by Minnigryle Burn and Blackmark Burn, the confluence of the two being known as Castlefern Water. It is given on the O.M. as 525 feet above sea-level, and irregularly oblong in form; two adjacent mounds being connected longitudinally by a narrow "rampart." Close beside it, on the higher ground westwards, are also marked on the O.M. *Chapel Rig* and site of *chapel* with a *holed stone*. In no book to which I have had access is any mention made of any of these objects, so interesting to the student of antiquities.

On the occasion of my visit I was accompanied by Thomas R. Bruce,

Esq. of Slogarie, a keen antiquary; and, during the hours spent here, we saw and examined all these separate relics leisurely, with abundant time for making drawings and records of each of them.



[Fig. 68. Craigmuir Fort.

*Loch Rinnie Mote*, though by no means large, commands respect by the distinctness and neatness of its structure and the pleasant sheltered aspect of its surroundings. Much of it, no doubt, is due to natural causes, *e.g.*, action of ice and water; but the sharply-defined difference in the levels of the summits, the almost exact oblong of the higher one, a double square of 45 feet, the steepness and regularity of its sides, and, lastly, the manifest trenching on either side of the connecting approach or gangway all prove to what an extent the structure is due to the hand of man.

My plan and four sections (fig. 69) will bear me out in saying that this interesting *mote* has many marked features. From its fine situation, enclosed by beautiful shrubby hills on all sides—one of these being the *Chapel Rig*—and by two swirling hill-streams which meet a few yards below, it may also claim to have a remarkably fine “setting.”

Lastly, if we except the *Craigmuie Watch Knowe*, which I have already stated to have been probably made in connection with it, *Loch Rinnie Mote* stands almost literally alone in these remote sequestered moorlands, the nearest *mote* in Dumfriesshire being 5 miles distant, and the two nearest on the Stewartry side 6 miles, and all invisible from each other.

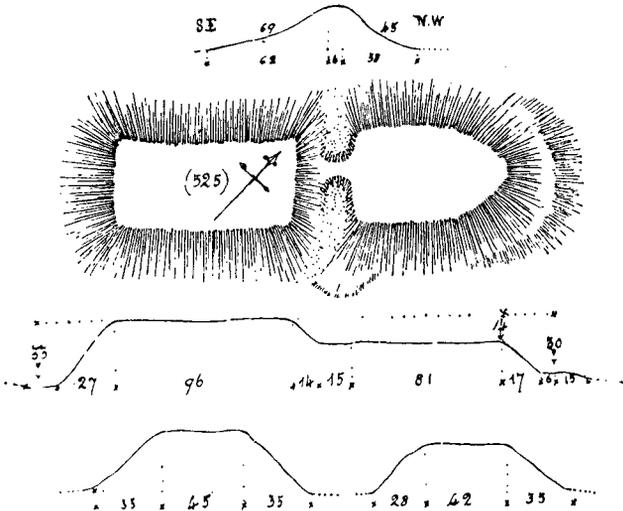


Fig. 69. Loch Rinnie Mote.

In point of structure of actual building, there is but scant indication. There is no solid ridge-work anywhere. What stones have been used are for support, as, for example, at the sharp N.W. angle, and here and there along the slopes of the S. sides.

86. *Fort, Bridgemark Hill.*—This *fort*, with a *cairn* hard by, is drawn on the 850-foot contour-line of the O.M. Remains of the *cairn* are extant, but of the *fort* not one stone remains; and it was only by dint of scrupulously exact measurement according to the map that we found what apparently may have been the site—a long somewhat oval-oblong, partly rock-girt ridge, surrounded on all sides by mossy ground, nearly flat for a great space around. From this height the next *fort* and that on Carminnow are visible (91).

87. *Stroanfreggan Mote.*—This is given on the O.M. only in plain

lettering in common with several others in this wild and hilly region where moraines are abundant on all sides.<sup>1</sup> Mr Bruce and I examined it together, and were unable to find any vestige of structure on any part of it, the summit being devoid of the slightest artificial levelling. It occupies the low ground between *Stroanfreggan Cairn*—a large one—and

88. *Stroanfreggan Fort*.—A really remarkable dry-stone work of the same type as *Suie Mote* (45) and *Dungarry* (43). It is marked on the O.M. as occupying a very precipitous site near the middle of a long and rapidly rising ridge of rock called *Stroanfreggan Craig* at a height of over 700 feet. This ridge trends N.E. and S.W., and has two breaks, one at either end of the *fort*, called respectively North Door and South Door of the craig. The latter may, I think, be to some extent artificial, as a very distinct trench, too regular to be entirely natural, forms the base of the cincture of the *fort* as one approaches the craig from the river Ken by Smeaton Bridge. There is here, within 20 yards of the river, and in view of the *fort*, the site of a *cairn*, 80 feet below the wall of the Fort.

As my plan shows (fig. 70), this strongly-positioned *fort* consists of a rudely circular summit enclosure, made of strong walls of good-sized stones, now all levelled, the diameters of which are 134 and 124 feet measured from crest to crest. A rocky crown, nearly in the centre, rises yet a few feet higher. This is flanked on the S.W. by a partly natural wing (H), which is separated from the cliff-edge by a long hollow serving as an approach from the less precipitous gaps in the craig. On the opposite side a nearly flat, oblong wing is formed by the walls. It measures 92 by 54; the space next behind 52 by 52; and these are connected with the first circular wing (H) by the long outer wall girding the base of the *fort*. Nearly all the space here between the walls, sloping rapidly as it does north-eastwards, is littered with stones, so as to render it difficult to ascertain the probable breadth of either wall. Almost due W. a strip of wall, 75 feet long, has been carried down the slope towards the grassy levels bordering the river Ken. There are no defined traces of strengthening at any salient points on the walls, nor any small hollows suggestive of wells or springs. A tiny rivulet flows down along the base of the craig, however.

As to the name, Pont's spelling was *Stron chreigan*, which Sir H. Maxwell translates "point or headland of the crag."

89. *Carminnow*.—"Roman Camp supposed" is the reading of the O.M.

<sup>1</sup> A cluster of them, near Lamford Bridge, are named Lamford, Horse, Strife, and Brandy Motes.

for this strong earth and stone triple-ramparted angular structure. The site is a very strong one ; two sides being guarded by the perpendicular banks, mainly rock, of the gorge of the river Deugh, here rushing through

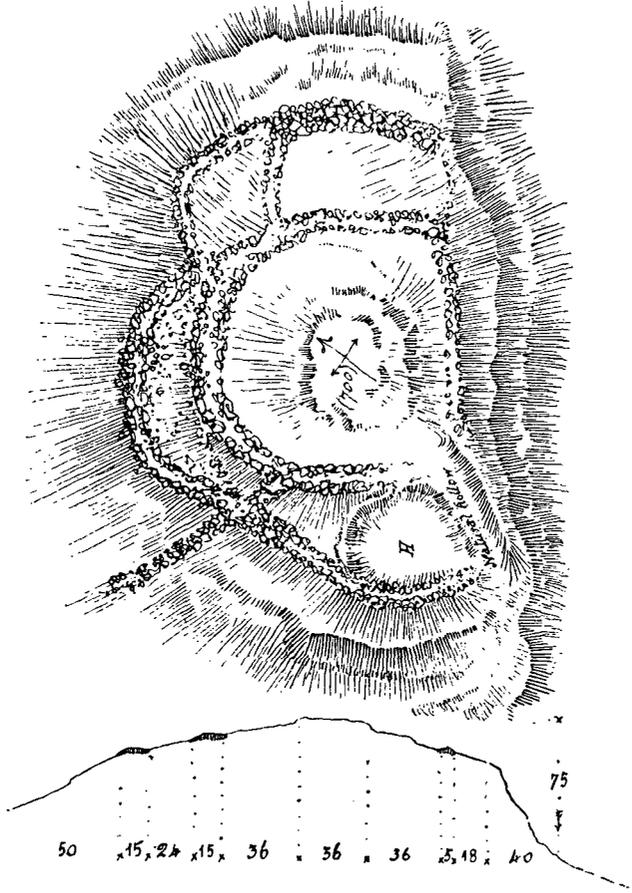


Fig. 70. Stroanfreggan Fort.

a channel but a few feet wide, and the other two sides consisting of ridgy ground and moss (see fig. 71). The space enclosed is an oblong measuring 180 by 150 feet ; but the ramparts alone run into a breadth of

nearly 80 feet, and may be traced fairly all round, but are most distinct at the N. corner, from which there is a sharp incline riverwards. The W. side is pretty nearly level.

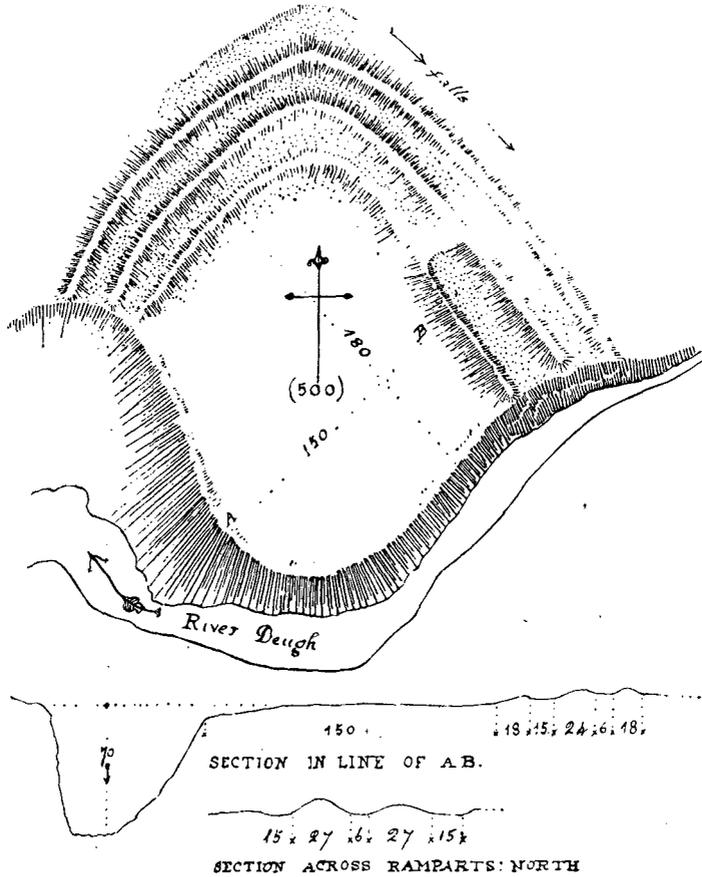


Fig. 71. Carminnow Fort.

There has been an approach, across ramparts, about 90 feet up from the river on the E. inner rampart, but I could find no trace of any other elsewhere.

It is, perhaps, worthy of note that about half a mile down the river, and close to it, there are numbers of small *cairns*, of the same size and character as those which occur in many localities in Galloway, notably on Knockreoch and Stranggassel in this district.

ADDENDUM.

25*a*. *Mote at Brockloch, Kirkcudbright*.—This, equally with the *fort* just described, comes out of place. I was not aware of the existence of this *mote* till after the numbering of my survey was nearly complete. I am indebted for it to Mr William Thompson, the original discoverer of *cup and ring marks* in the Stewartry. It is now but a fragment, but that fragment in such preservation as to supply a good specimen of what the whole must have been, before its surface was mutilated by fencing and buildings. It consists of a narrow space of summit 19 feet wide E. and W., a scarp at 45° 39 feet long, a terrace 18 feet wide, and a second scarp of 30 feet, at the base of which runs a hedge-and-dyke fence. The N. and S. dimensions of the summit are 78 feet, curving off E. for about 70 feet more, and the terrace is clearly traceable for 160 feet. The situation would have been striking, a small loch behind on the E. and fine meadows westwards below, beyond which are steep banks closing all in.

TABULAR SUMMARY OF NOTES, FORTS, &c., IN MID STEWARTRY OF KIRKCUDBRIGHT.

| Number and Name of Survey. | Number and Name of Survey.        |
|----------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| NOTES.                     |                                   |
| 15. East Kirkcarsel.       | 25 <i>a</i> . Brockloch.          |
| 27. Carse.                 | 28. Culdoach.                     |
| 31. March Cleugh.          | 33. Netherthird Wood.             |
| 35. Kirkcormack.           | 38. Ingleston.                    |
| 42. Nether Lochdougan.     | 59. Baliol Castle.                |
| 60. Buittle.               | 63. Ernespie.                     |
| 71. Crofts.                | 66. Urr.                          |
| 73. Halferne.              | 72. Ernambrie.                    |
| 79. Kirkland of Parton.    | 77. Glen Roan or Glengappock.     |
| 81. Balmaclellan.          | 79 <i>a</i> . Boreland of Parton. |
| 85. Loch Rinnie.           | 83. Dalry.                        |

| Number and Name of Survey.  | Number and Name of Survey.  |
|---|---|
| FORTS.  |   |
| 1. Craig Raploch.<br>3. Raeberry.<br>5. Drummore.<br>8. Milton Cottage.<br>10. East Fort, Balig.<br>12. Low Fort, North Milton.<br>14. North Fort, Castle Creavie.<br>19. Kirkcarsel.<br>32. March Cleugh.<br>36a. Dildawn.<br>41. Fort below Dinguile.<br>44. Ben Tuther.<br>47. Spouty Dennans, West.<br>49. Castle Muir.<br>51. Airds Point.<br>53. Woodhead, Auchencairn.<br>55. Almorness.<br>58. Castle Gower.<br>75. Trowdale.<br>80. Little Merkland. | 2. Glenap.<br>4. King William's Battery.<br>7. The Battery, Torrs Moor.<br>9. West Fort, Balig.<br>11. High Fort, North Milton.<br>13. South Fort, Castle Creavie.<br>18. Fortlet, Kirkcarsel.<br>24. Kirkland of Kirkeudbright.<br>34. Netherthird.<br>40. Dinguile.<br>43. Dungarry.<br>46. Castle Yards, Port Mary.<br>48. Spouty Dennans, East.<br>50. Nether Hazelfield.<br>62. Auchenfad.<br>54. Wraiths, Collin Bridge.<br>57. Kirkennan.<br>67. Camp Hill, Milton Park.<br>76. Loch Roan.<br>88. Stroanfreggan. |
| DOONS.  |   |
| 68. Dunjarg.  | 70. Clarebrand.   |
| "ROMAN CAMPS."  |   |
| 6. Dunrod.<br>26. Whinnylegatt.<br>91. Carminuow.   | 21. Bombie.<br>84. Craigmuaie.  |
| DOUBTFUL WORKS.   |   |
| 23. Castle Dikes, Kirkeudbright.<br>37. Auchlane.<br>64a. Greenlaw.   | 36. Moatsthorn.<br>74. Trowdale "Moat."<br>89. Waterhead, Carsphairn.   |
| FRAGMENTARY OR SITES ONLY.  |   |
| 17. Auchnabony (Fort?).<br>22. Mutehill.<br>30. Moat-brae, Kirkeudbright.<br>56. Potterland Wood (Fort?).<br>61. Doonend Hill, Kelton.<br>64. Dunmuir, Castle Douglas.<br>69. East Gerranton (Moat?).<br>82. Tower Moat (natural).<br>87. Stroanfreggan Moat (natural).   | 20. Doon Hill, Barclay.<br>29. Little Sypland Moat (Fort?)<br>39. The Ditch, Gelston.<br>62. Meikle Knox (Fort?).<br>65. Scroggie Hill.<br>78. Loch Lurkie (Moat?).<br>86. Bridgemark Hill (Fort?).<br>81a. Camphill, Garpolfoot.<br>45a. Newlaw (Moat?).   |