

IV.

NOTICE OF THE EXCAVATION OF THE CAMP OR EARTHWORK AT
RISPAIN IN WIGTOWNSHIRE. BY JAMES BARBOUR, F.S.A. Scot.

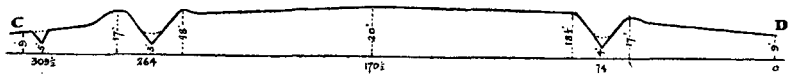
The camp was excavated by the Society in 1901, with the aid of a gift of £50 for that purpose by the Right Hon. Sir Herbert Maxwell, President, and with the permission of the proprietor, Mr R. Johnston Stewart of Glasserton, and of the Commissioners of H.M. Board of Works, who are its guardians under the Ancient Monuments Act. It occupies the north-east slope of an isolated ridge running south-west to north-east, the up-hill end being on the highest ground. The site affords extensive prospects, and dominates the surrounding lands, except westwards, where, separated by a considerable hollow, a ridge rises to a higher altitude.

The form of the camp (fig. 1), is rectilinear, three of the sides being straight throughout, and one, the north-west, is slightly kneed near the centre; and as regards the interior and the main entrenchments, the east corner is square and the others are very little, if at all, rounded. From whatever circumstance the shape may have arisen, it is obviously better adapted to the nature of the site than a curvilinear form. If the latter were adopted, the defences would suffer in efficiency, as, owing to the saddle-back contour, the extremities at the minor axis would be depressed below the level of the flanking up-hill ground outside.

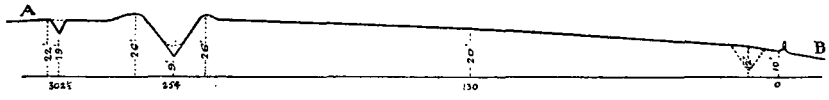
The plan, as presented before the commencement of the exploratory works, exhibited a great ditch on three sides with a rampart in front, and traces of another in the rear. On the fourth side, the north-east, the ground was levelled, but the line which the ditch had traversed remained sufficiently marked.

In the centre of this last-mentioned side is the gateway, the only one giving access to the camp.

The condition of the camp showed that the works had been greatly damaged. As before stated, the north-east defences are levelled, the rear



SECTION C. D.



SECTION A. B.

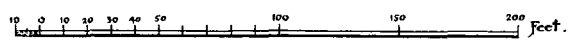
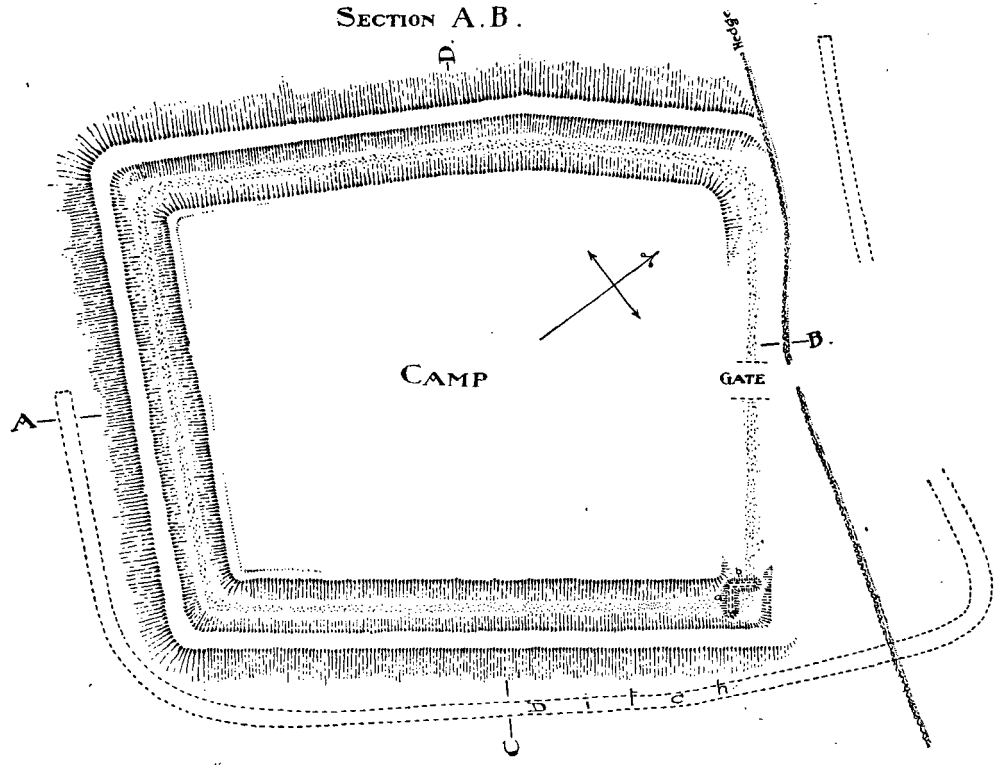


Fig. 1. Ground Plan and Sections of the Camp at Rispaia, Wigtownshire.

rampart is almost obliterated, and the front rampart also is evidently much reduced. The ditch on three sides, however, owing to the ground in which it is dug being hard boulder clay, remains in excellent form. The silt in the bottom is about 5 feet deep. The interior has been drained more than once, the last occasion being in 1851, and both there and round the exterior the ground has often been turned over by the plough.

In the examination the operations consisted in carrying wide longitudinal and transverse sections through the centre of the interior and the ditches, and continuing them some distance outside the camp, turning over a considerable proportion of the interior in search of evidences of occupation, and opening numerous short trenches about the exterior with the view of completing the plan of the fortifications.

The excavations disclosed the form and depth of the ditch and the structure of the ramparts, and an outer ditch of which no trace appeared on the surface was also discovered.

This outer ditch was traced continuously from about the centre of the south-west side to the south corner, and along the south-east and north-east sides of the camp, with the exception of a part opposite the gateway, and for a little distance on either side, where the trace was not discovered. No indication of it was found along the remaining half of the south-west side or on the north-west, although the ground here is naturally not more defensible than on the south-east of the camp where the ditch is found.

Generally, the outer ditch is 5 feet wide at the top and 3 feet 6 inches deep, but the dimensions are greater at the east corner and less north-west of the gateway. It runs fairly parallel with the main fosse except at the east corner, where there is an elbow-like detour outwards, showing as if there had been a small annex or outwork between the two at this point.

The interior of the camp measures about 223 feet by 170 feet within the ditches, and the area extends to .867 acre. The main ditch is V-shaped, about 25 feet in width at the top, and the depth is 17 feet at

the south-west, and 15 feet at the north-west and south-east sides of the camp, while the bottom of the filled-up ditch at the north-east side reaches 9 feet below the surface. The rear rampart, as before stated, is almost obliterated, and the front one now rises only about 3 to 4 feet above the surface. Considering the great quantity of earth the digging of the ditch would yield, the ramparts in order to absorb it must have been of large dimensions originally. The front one probably covered the space between the ditches, except where the enlargement described takes place at the east corner.

The gateway, which measures 20 feet in width, is over uncut ground. No defences of any kind connected with it have been discovered.

A peculiarity was disclosed at the east corner of the main ditch, consisting of two bars marked *a* and *b* on the plan. The first is formed of uncut ground, about 2 feet in width at the top, crossing the ditch and rising to a height of about 4 feet above the bottom. The second, which crosses the ditch at right angles with the first, and rises 2 feet higher, is constructed of stone work and finished with a stone coping of large flat undressed pieces. The square-cut pit thus formed is at the lowest point, and all the ditches, which are well supplied with water, would deliver into it, and the probability seems to be that it served as a water cistern. The earth is retentive.

Structurally the fortifications may be characterised as simple earth-works. The longitudinal section revealed thin flat stones placed on the scarp and counter-scarp of the main ditch near the bottom, and this arrangement obtained also at the east corner, but in the transverse section it was absent. This and the bar just described constitute the only stonework remains disclosed.

The camp has been of great strength, the main ditch being unusually formidable; but nothing evidencing occupation resulted from the excavations, and the only relic which was found in the substance of the south-east rampart is part of a small stone ring.

A human skull pierced at the back was found in the ditch halfway between the gateway and the east corner. Pieces of deer's horns and a

quantity of bones were got near the same place. These latter may be partly accounted for by the animals straying into and being trapped in the silt of the ditch.

It is said that during the progress of draining the camp in 1851 a bronze vessel was found. Dr Douglas possesses a bronze axe turned up by the plough just outside the camp.

REPORT ON THE HUMAN REMAINS FOUND AT RISPAIN, WIGTOWNSHIRE.
 BY DR T. H. BRYCE.

The remains consist of one imperfect cranium and the frontal region of a second. The skull has, unfortunately, the whole facial portion broken away. The anterior part of the base on the right side is imperfect, and there is an irregular hole behind, involving the interparietal part of the occipital and posterior part of the left parietal bone.

It is the skull of a person, probably, from its general characters, of a woman in early adult life.

The glabella and supraciliary ridges are very slightly marked and the forehead is vertical; the vertex is flattened, and slopes fairly steeply behind to a full and rounded occiput. The occipital point is placed some distance above the occipital protuberance. The sides are rounded and well filled, and the frontal bone is narrow.

The following are the measurements:—

Glabello-occipital length,	187	mm.
Basi-bregmatic height,	138	„
<i>Height Index</i> ,	73·7	„
Minimum frontal diameter,	94	„
Stephanic diameter,	121	„
Asterionic diameter,	114	„
Maximum transverse diameter,	144·5	„
(Lower part parietal bone).		
<i>Cephalic Index</i> ,	77·2	„
Circumference,	527	„

Vertical transverse arc,	315	mm.
Frontal arc,	135	„
Parietal arc,	150	„
Occipital arc,	108	„
Total,	393	„
Length of foramen magnum,	34	„
Basi-nasal length,	100	„

The cranial index places the skull in the mesaticephalic group, and it is to be noted that the altitudinal index is somewhat lower than the breadth index.

The frontal fragment of the second skull differs from the first in the greater prominence of the glabella and supraciliary ridges. It is possibly a portion of the skull of a man.

From the descriptions and measurements it will be seen that the type of skull with which we have to do is a neutral one. The cephalic index is approximately the same as the average of modern Scottish crania; and in the absence of the facial portion, it possesses no characters which would serve to distinguish it from a modern skull from the same district.