

HERIOT'S DYKE

by ANGUS GRAHAM, M.A., F.S.A., F.S.A.SCOT.

I. THE TRADITION

HERIOT'S DYKE, as marked on the 6-in. O.S. map,¹ is a linear earthwork running E. and W. for rather more than a mile across Greenlaw Moor (squares 7048, 7148). The Ancient Monuments Commissioners, who surveyed Berwickshire in 1908, held it to be considerably longer, as they carried it, with interruptions, from Haerfaulds (574500), near Blythe, to the Greenlaw-Duns highway (A 6105) at a point (721484) near the demolished house of Flourishwalls² (not marked on the 7th series of the 1-in.

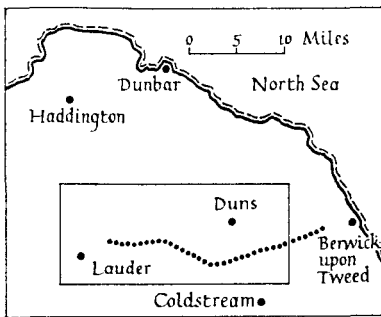


FIG. 1. Approximate position of Heriot's Dyke (dotted line) as shown on Chalmers' map of North Britain in *Caledonia*, ed. 1807, i, between pp. 56 and 57. The enclosed oblong represents the area illustrated in fig. 2

O.S. map), a distance of some nine miles. A literary tradition,³ however, credits it with a length of something like twenty-three miles, placing its eastern end on the Whiteadder Water two or three miles above the latter's junction with the Tweed – in one version at Hutton⁴ – while there is even a suggestion that it ran on to Berwick-on-Tweed (fig. 1). In view of this conflict in the record, and also of a tendency towards scepticism regarding such theories which has resulted from recent work on the principal Scottish earthworks, real and supposed,⁵ it seems desirable to re-examine all the evidence, and to see what conclusions emerge as to the Dyke's true character and purpose.

Scepticism is encouraged, in the case of Heriot's Dyke, by three principal causes.

¹ Sheet NT 74 NW of the Provisional edition. The 6-in. sheets referred to in this paper are 54 NE, 55 (the whole), 56 SW, 64 NW, 64 NE, 65 SW, 74 NW, 74 NE, 84 NW, 85 SE, 95 SW, all in 100-km. square NT; or in the older editions sheets VII SE, XIII NE, XIV NW, XIV SW, XV SW, XVII SW, XVII SE, XVIII SW, XX NE, XX NW, XXI NW, XXI NE, XXII NW, XXII NE, XXIII NW. In the 1-in. series, 7th edition, the same ground is covered by sheet 63 (Dunbar) and a small part of sheet 64 (Berwick-on-Tweed).

² *Berwickshire*, pp. 95 f., 117, 123. The spelling 'Flourishwells' appears to be a misprint.

³ The principal references to Heriot's Dyke are as follows: *Berwickshire*, xxxvi, 95 f., 117, 123; Chalmers, G., *Caledonia* (1807), i, 162, 243; ii, 211; Gibson, R., *An Old Berwickshire Town*, 248 ff.; *H.B.N.C.*, v, 114; vi, 11, 17; x, 311; xviii, 115; xxv, 201; xxvi, 360 ff.; xxix, 74; *N.S.A.*, ii (Berwickshire), 43 n., 72; *P.S.A.S.*, ix (1870-2), 469 f.; lv (1920-1), 240, 253; *Stat. Acct.*, xiv (1795), 512 n.

⁴ *H.B.N.C.*, xviii, 115.

⁵ Especially *Roxburghshire*, App. D, on the Catrail; *Selkirkshire*, No. 182, on the 'Military Road', and App. A, on the Picts' Work Ditch; *P.S.A.S.*, lxxxiii (1948-9), 174 ff., on the Deil's Dyke in Galloway; lxxxviii (1954-6), 137 ff., on the Deil's Dyke in Dumfriesshire and Ayrshire.

The first of these is the smallness of the base on which the edifice of tradition rests. It is true that a good deal of ink has been expended on the Dyke at one time and another, but, when the various reports are compared, the conclusion is plain that almost the whole story derives from a certain John Spottiswoode of Spottiswoode, whose theory of a 'long' Heriot's Dyke was first printed in Chalmers' *Caledonia*.¹ Spottiswoode is there said to have written a manuscript account of the work about the middle of the eighteenth century, tracing a 'rampart, and fosse, from a British strength, called *Haerfaulds*, on a hill, two miles north-west of Spottiswoode, throughout the country, to the vicinity of Berwick-on-Tweed. In that age, it was, in various places, very discernible, and was known to the people by the name of Herrit's-dike.' The 'survey of this curious remain' was communicated to Chalmers by Spottiswoode's son, and internal evidence suggests that Chalmers had probably seen the manuscript himself²; but nothing is known as to the source of Spottiswoode's information, and there is in fact some reason to suspect that he may simply have been repeating a piece of local lore, seeing that the minister of Greenlaw, writing twelve years before *Caledonia* was published, reproduces a 'tradition' which resembles Spottiswoode closely.³ The only other potentially important point emerging from the earlier records is that, in 1834, the 'tract' of the Dyke was said still to be visible N. of Westruther,⁴ though how far north of the village does not appear. The theory as a whole must therefore be held either to reflect folk-memory, which is unlikely to be accurate in details even if well founded on fact, or on the reported opinions of a single person of no recognised standing as an antiquary, who, moreover, lived at a notoriously uncritical period. It is easy to imagine, for example, how Spottiswoode might have been influenced by Alexander Gordon's account of the Catrail,⁵ which was published in 1726 and pictured that monument as a kind of barbarian *limes* some fifty miles in length.

A second reason for caution in accepting Spottiswoode's theory is its own intrinsic thinness. Whatever may have been visible in the middle of the eighteenth century, and Chalmers' use of the words 'in various places, very discernible' implies that the work was not even then 'discernible' as a continuous unit, since the coming of the Ordnance Survey, at any rate, the gaps have far outrun the remains of walling or earthwork. Details will be found in Part II, but, to anticipate results, it may be said here that, in the twenty-three miles of the Dyke's supposed length, all the actual structure that can be seen today extends to an aggregate of less than a mile and a half, and that of this more than a mile constitutes one self-contained unit.

These doubts are reinforced by the evidence of Roy's map of Scotland. As this was made during the period 1747-55, it must be closely contemporary with Spottiswoode's paper, and consequently the conditions that it records should presumably correspond with those with which he was familiar. However, it by no means suggests that most of the ground on the line of Spottiswoode's dyke was then unimproved moorland; cultivated land is differentiated by the conventional indication of rigs,

¹ Ed. 1807, I, 243, with footnote f.

² *ibid.*, footnote g.

³ *Stat. Acct.*, XIV (1795), 512 n. This note places the western end of the work at Boon, not at Haerfaulds, but this is probably due to confusion with the 'Black Dyke' recorded in *Berwickshire*, No. 246.

⁴ *N.S.A.*, II (Berwickshire), 72.

⁵ *Itinerarium Septentrionale*, 102 f.

and on this showing much of the area would seem to have already been under the plough. The main exception is the moorland lying between Hallyburton and Marchmont.¹ It is particularly important here to note the large amount of arable ground shown SE. of the Blackadder Water, in the stretch downstream from Greenlaw, as this tends to undermine Spottiswoode's value as an authority for the former extension of the Dyke all through this region.

Yet another source of suspicion exists in the frequent failure of observers to distinguish between ditch-and-bank earthworks and old roads. It is true that these two classes of remains may sometimes be puzzlingly alike, especially where the ditch of an earthwork happens to have been used as a track and consequently shows marks of wheels, but experience should eliminate doubt in the majority of cases.² However, the literature shows that the two are constantly confused,³ sometimes to an extent which suggests that the writer in question failed to realise that any difference existed between them.⁴ In the present case it is impossible to feel confident that Spottiswoode could have made the distinction, or even that the necessity for doing so would in fact have occurred to him.

A final item in the tradition which calls for consideration is the name 'Heriot's Dyke'. The form 'Heriot', actually 'Herriot', is first used in the *New Statistical Account*,⁵ written in 1834 but not published until 1845; and it was adopted by the Ordnance Survey, though only after the revision carried out in 1898 – the monument being shown on the first edition of the 6-in. map simply by a fine line, to which no name was attached. The Survey's authority for the name cannot now be traced, as the Name Books of the revision were destroyed during the second World War.⁶ The form appearing in the *Statistical Account of Scotland*,⁷ in Chalmers' version of Spottiswoode's report,⁸ and in the *R.C.A.M.* articles⁹ is 'Herrit' or 'Harrit', and it may consequently be asked whether 'Herrit' may not really be something distinct from the well-known surname Heriot, and, if so, perhaps contain a hint as to the earthwork's true background. All the evidence, however, points in an opposite direction. Thus, although the earliest recorded form of the surname,¹⁰ which dates from the period 1164–74, is the trisyllable 'Heriet', the disyllables 'Heret' and 'Herote' likewise appear as early as the sixteenth century,¹¹ while the equation of 'Elliot' and

¹ The principal cultivated areas seem to be as follows, when allowance is made for the deficiencies of Roy's topography: Between Blythe and woodland flanking the Brunta Burn; round about the policies of Spottiswoode House; E. of Raecleugh, through square 6151; all over what is now Westruther village; some further to the E., perhaps between Westruther Mains and Cammerlaws; on the left bank of the Blackadder Water N. of Hallyburton; probably in square 6948, W. of the Fangrist Burn; between Marchmont and the Blackadder Water, and thence pretty generally eastwards through the low ground of the Merse.

² Useful criteria are (i) that roads adapt themselves to gradients while linear earthworks do not; contrast, for example, *Roxburghshire*, fig. 607 (old road on Outer Cock Law) and fig. 615 (the Catrail): (ii) that, on reaching a steep-sided gully, linear earthworks stop, usually just below the lip, while roads descend to a crossing-place, obliquely or on a twisty course.

³ Typical examples of such confusion are noted in *Roxburghshire*, Nos. 119, 129, p. 483; *Selkirkshire*, Nos. 95, 104, 116, p. 126.

⁴ e.g., *P.S.A.S.*, xxxii (1897–8), 62 ff.

⁵ Vol. II (Berwickshire), 43 n.

⁶ I am indebted for this and other information regarding the Ordnance Survey's record of the monument to Mr A. L. F. Rivet, M.A., F.S.A., of the Survey's Archaeology Division.

⁷ Vol. xiv (1795), 512 n.

⁸ *Caledonia*, loc. cit.

⁹ *Berwickshire*, loc. cit.

¹⁰ Black, G. F., *The Surnames of Scotland*, s.v.

¹¹ *ibid.*

'Ellot' can be cited as an exact parallel.¹ Again, 'Herrit' was very lately, and presumably still is, in vernacular use for 'Heriot'²; and finally 'Herrit's Dyke' does not suggest to a place-name expert derivation from any probable descriptive expression.³ It therefore seems safe to take 'Heriot' at its face value, as the family surname, whatever it may actually imply.

II. THE REMAINS

A review of the remains that can actually be seen on the ground may best be based on the full and careful statement of Spottiswoode's theory published in 1928 by the late Mr J. H. Craw, F.S.A.SCOT.,⁴ which embodies his own observations made in the field at the time. The notes that follow accordingly deal with the items set out in his paper, taken serially from W. to E.

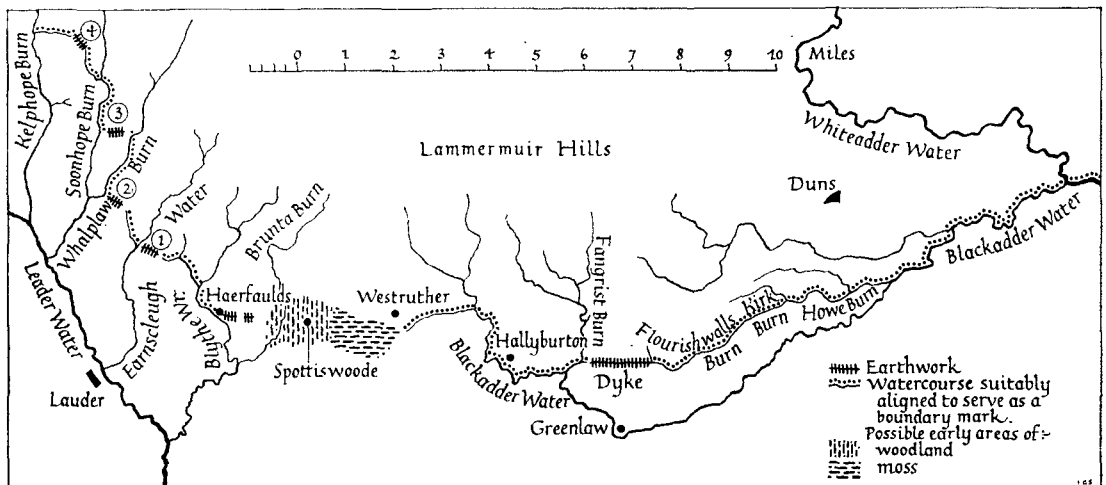


FIG. 2. Map illustrating possible boundary-lines of Catrail type in Lauderdale and the valley of the Blackadder Water. Circled numerals refer to the serial numbers of earthworks in the 'Note on Cross-dykes' (p. 239)

1. *Haerfaulds*. The first piece of structure noted by Craw is a linear work running eastwards for 320 yds. from the north-eastern arc of the fort of Haerfaulds⁵ (574500). At its point of departure, the S. side of the N. entrance, the work, which is here a boulder-built wall 4 ft. high and 4 ft. thick at the base, overrides the ruins of the fort-wall and at the same time curves towards the N., as if to allow its line to be produced anti-clockwise by the northern arc of the latter. And here Craw failed to notice a significant fact, namely that a rickle of boulders, 26 yds. long, extends from the SW. arc of the fort to the lip of the deep and steep-sided, ravine-like valley in which runs

¹ I am indebted for this point to Mr W. Beatty, C.B.E., LL.D.

² I am indebted to Mr W. Park, M.A., for the information that Heriot's Hospital football team was known in Hawick as 'Herrit's' in the very recent past.

³ I am indebted for this information to Mr W. F. H. Nicolaisen, DR. PHIL., B.LITT.

⁴ *H.B.N.C.*, xxvi, 359 ff.

⁵ *Berwickshire*, No. 218, p. 117, where, however, the length of the work is given incorrectly as about 250 yds. Fig. 107 on p. 116 shows the relationship of fort and dyke.

the Blythe Water, and to realise that the linear work thus ends not on the fort itself but on the adjacent, and very important, natural feature. It is unnecessary to suppose that the remains of the wall that cross the interior of the fort played any part in this process, as they do not connect either with the rickle or with the main work; their ends, that is to say, touch the fort-wall respectively 28 yds. S. of the latter and 50 yds. N. of the former.

After leaving the entrance of the fort, the linear work quickly degenerates into a rickle of boulders spread to a width of some 8 ft.; and about 90 yds. out this turns into a spread turf bank in which occasional boulders appear. The boulders were no doubt derived from the ruins of the fort, and fewer of them were used as the distance from their source increased. The bank, in turn, fades off into a low lynchet, with a field track on its upper side bounding rig-cultivation; and still further on the line is marked by little more than a slight difference in the vegetation, associated with the barest vestige of the bank and a few boulders at wide intervals. All traces are lost just short of the stone dyke bounding the Blythe enclosures, at a point 35 yds. SW. of a gate (578500), though in its last few yards the bank again becomes visible, as it here contains a good number of boulders. In the enclosed ground within the dyke nothing whatever has survived. Apart from a slight angle 60 yds. out from the fort, made necessary by the lie of the ground, the work is fairly straight; its curves are long and gentle, and differ altogether from the small and sudden irregularities that result from careless gang-work. The 'trench' recorded by Craw¹ does not exist.

Apart from the fact that this work is certainly later than the date when Haerfaulds became ruinous, and is earlier than two blocks of rig-cultivation which air-photographs show very clearly to be separated by it, evidence of its age is lacking. Considerable remains of occupation, not yet recorded, can be seen on the adjoining ground; these include not only huts, cairns and small enclosures but also two lengths of turf-and-boulder bank not differing greatly in appearance from the one now under discussion. None of them, however, is in actual contact with it. The place-name tells us nothing, as 'grey enclosure'² is a suitable and natural appellation for a fort built of bare boulders. A plain analogy exists, however, with a number of linear earthworks in the Cheviots, which are similarly connected with clearly defined landmarks.³

2. *Blythe*. Craw's next item is a bank of large boulders and turf – not, as he records it,⁴ a ditch and bank – which survives in a corner of unimproved ground 400 yds. NNW. of Blythe, at a point just E. of a fank (583499). It is now only 115 yds. long, both ends being cut off by enclosed arable ground, and up to 7 ft. wide by 1 ft. high. Its general appearance does not differ greatly from that of the Haerfaulds section, and, as its alignment would be in keeping with a westward course directed towards the latter round the upper part of the small valley of the Spotts Burn, it

¹ *H.B.N.C.*, xxvi, 362.

² From OE *hār*, 'hoary', 'grey' (Ekwall, E., *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of English Place-names*, s.v. 'Hār'). Ekwall remarks that the theory that OE *hār* 'had developed the meaning "boundary", "boundary-defining" ... is not well founded'.

³ For forts and homesteads used in this way see *Roxburghshire*, Nos. 58 (i), Cauldshiels Hill; 188, Blakebillend; 456 and 494, Lantoncraigs; 681 and 775, Cheviot Burn; 682 and 777, Fundhope Rig.

⁴ *H.B.N.C.*, xxvi, 362.

seems probable enough that the two once formed parts of a longer whole, as was believed by the R.C.A.M. and other earlier observers. As regards its possible connection with the fragment on the Brunta Burn (*infra*), nothing more can be said than that both, and also the Haerfaulds section, are all more or less in alignment; cultivation has razed the surface of all the intervening ground, and the available air-photographs show nothing.

3. *The Brunta Burn*. Craw next states¹ that a mound is visible on both banks of the Brunta Burn, at a point 400 yds. N. of Bruntaburn Mill. This is not altogether accurate, though there are some remains of earthwork at the place in question (597500). On the left bank of the burn a ditch with two banks runs down the short, steep slope that separates the arable field above from the narrow, marshy strip flanking the burn; while opposite this, at the crest of the right-bank slope, a slight hollow, which might represent the section of a vanished ditch, can be seen underlying the foundations of a dry-stone field-dyke. The left-bank work is 14 ft. wide over-all, the ditch being 4 ft. wide and up to 2 ft. deep from the top of the southern bank, which is the bulkier of the two. Craw assumes that these remains were once joined up with the Blythe fragment, which is distant about 1450 yds., but no evidence for this is forthcoming for the reasons given above. The form of construction seen here does not correspond with the boulder-studded banks at Blythe and Haerfaulds, the difference being evidently one of actual design and not merely the accidental result of a local lack of boulders.² Again, if the woodland marked by Roy on the right bank of this burn existed in earlier times, a boundary-line could have been run through it by blazing, entanglement, etc.,³ more conveniently than by building an earthwork. No useful inference can be drawn from such uncertain data.

4. *Craig Plantation*. It is impossible today to check Craw's statement⁴ that a ditch-and-bank work was 'intermittently traceable for over 100 yds.' in Craig Plantation, 'running from the south side of a gateway to Spottiswoode fort', as the 'gateway' cannot be identified and the area is under a dense crop of young conifers. Despite its thinness, however, this record may just possibly be founded on fact, as it is supported by an earlier one derived from a resident at Spottiswoode⁵; while the piece of hearsay that Craw adds, to the effect the earthwork 'was said to have' passed along the fort's northern rampart, recalls the manner in which the linear dyke coalesces with the wall of Haerfaulds (*supra*). It is consequently by no means impossible that Spottiswoode fort⁶ provided, at 602502, an eastern terminal for some kind of linear work; though whether, if so, this was or was not continuous with the fragment on the Brunta Burn must remain an open question. It must also be remembered that the Spottiswoode barony has had a very long life, as a Robert de Spotteswoode is mentioned in 1296,⁷ and that consequently large numbers of dykes defining fields and holdings may well have been built hereabouts in the course of the centuries. It would,

¹ *H.B.N.C.*, xxvi, 362.

² The change from earthwork to masonry noted on Broad Law (*Roxburghshire*, No. 394, p. 189) does not provide a parallel, as the masonry is really a revetment, on a steep slope, rather than a free-standing structure.

³ On which see *Roxburghshire*, 483, and other references there quoted (n. 1).

⁴ *H.B.N.C.*, xxvi, 362.

⁵ *P.S.A.S.*, ix (1870-2), 469 f.

⁶ *Berwickshire*, No. 287. No mention, however, is made of the supposed linear work by the R.C.A.M.

⁷ *Cal. of Docts.*, II (1272-1307), p. 203.

therefore, be unsafe to accept the record of this work at its face value, as supporting John Spottiswoode's theory.

5. *Westruther*. Craw did not himself observe anything at Westruther to be associated with Heriot's Dyke, but he nevertheless suggests that it ran by Eastside, N. of Jordonlaw Moss, and close to the village on the N. In this last point he presumably followed the *New Statistical Account*, according to which the 'tract' of the Dyke was still visible there in 1834.¹ Nothing can be seen near the village today other than a revetted bank, with a drainage ditch outside it, which is clearly designed to enclose the plots of land behind the houses, and which possesses no feature suggestive of a running earthwork; and while it is always possible that the remains of such a structure may have vanished since 1834, there are two considerations which diminish confidence in the record. In the first place, a retired shepherd now resident in Westruther, whose father and grandfather were likewise shepherds in the parish and whose family connection with the place must consequently go back approximately to the time of the *New Statistical Account*, stated that he had never heard of Heriot's Dyke as existing near the village, and in fact only knew of it on Greenlaw Moor (*infra*). In the second place, the obsolete word 'tract', used by the writer of the *New Statistical Account*, seems to approximate in meaning to both 'trace' and 'track',² and might consequently apply just as well to the traces of a disused road as to the remains of a dilapidated earthwork. It is thus impossible to be confident that the record of a 'tract' at Westruther refers to an earthwork at all, particularly in view of the frequent failure of observers to distinguish between earthworks and roads.³ The same suspicion must detract from the value of what would otherwise have ranked as corroborative evidence dating from the 1870s.⁴ The case for a 'long' Heriot's Dyke thus receives no real support from any record referring to Westruther.

6. *Cammerlaws*. The next point in Craw's list can be placed at 648499, where the farm-track from Harelaw to Wedderlie crosses a small burn running in a shallow gully. The remains seen here by Craw are not, however, those of an earthwork at all; he was misled by a group of three hollow tracks, evidently belonging to a roadway older than the existing track, which make a conspicuous mark on the south side of the gully. This piece of supposed evidence must accordingly be written off.

7. *Haliburton Hill*. Craw goes on to state⁵ that the Dyke reappears in the form of a track in the heather on the E. flank of Haliburton Hill, and that it extends to the Fangrist Burn. The R.C.A.M. likewise describes it as a 'grassy line among the heather', with no mound remaining.⁶ Both these observations are correct but the inference drawn from them is faulty; what exists in this area (squares 6848, 6948) is simply an old road, identifiable on the flatter ground by the grass marking its course and on the steep slope that falls to the Fangrist Burn by a curving hollow track of typical form. There is no question of an earthwork having ever existed on this line.

8. *Greenlaw Moor*. East of the Fangrist Burn there begins the stretch of ditch-and-bank earthwork that is identified as Heriot's Dyke on the O.S. maps. The description

¹ Vol. II (Berwickshire), 72. This statement is repeated in *H.B.N.C.*, xviii, 115.

² *O.E.D.*, s.v. 'Tract', especially §§ 10 and 11.

³ On this see p. 229 above.

⁴ *P.S.A.S.*, ix (1870-2), 469 f.

⁵ *H.B.N.C.*, xxvi, 362 f.

⁶ *Berwickshire*, p. 96.

of it, however, that is given by the R.C.A.M.¹ is somewhat misleading, as much of it seems to refer not to the Dyke but to a hollow roadway and some associated lengths of field-dyke, which are met with at and near the Dyke's western end. To make this distinction clear, it must be explained that the western portion of the earthwork, from a point just W. of the conspicuous stop-butt of an abandoned rifle-range (708484), approximates to the line of a small watercourse, the Snaw Burn, which, though now apparently dried up, was once considerable enough for farm-tracks which crossed it lower down to have required causeways. This small burn is tributary to the Fangrist Burn, which it joins, by way of a deep gully, just opposite the end of the road mentioned in the last paragraph; and a deeply hollowed track, most probably once connected with the latter, flanks its left bank in the stretch above the gully on an alignment virtually the same as that of the earthwork ditch further E. A resulting confusion between the road-hollow and the ditch has been made still worse by the presence of turf-dykes, no doubt once the boundaries of fields, along the southern edge of the former; and the published account of the earthwork should accordingly be treated with reserve.

As far as can be judged from the evidence visible today, the earthwork begins at about 705484, some 430 yds. W. of the stop-butt and fully three-eighths of a mile E. of the Fangrist Burn. Its apparent terminal is 20 ft. W. of (below) a fence running N. and S. which is not marked on the O.S. maps. It is just possible that the bank may once have extended for some 60 yds. further W., but disturbance resulting from the hollowing-out of the roadway has obscured the traces; the exact point at which the earthwork begins is not, however, of any particular importance, as it was evidently meant to give place to the Snaw Burn as soon as this had grown large enough to act as an effective landmark.² It runs from W. to E. across the moor for some 1900 yds., and, before its eastern terminal was destroyed (*infra*), it ended on the Flourishwalls Burn at 721484. Its alignment is remarkably straight, apart from some minor sinuosities, its greatest divergence from the most direct course being less than 50 yds.; and such accuracy argues both competence and care in the process of lining-out. The work consists of a ditch with a bank on its N. side, though in places, and especially in the stretch just east of the large gap at the stop-butt, there is also a slight spoil-bank on the S. side of the ditch and a shallow superficial scoop on the N. side of the main bank. The main bank varies in breadth, as more or less spread, from 9½ to 14½ ft. and the ditch from 7 to 10½ ft.; the ditch is from 2 to 4 ft. deep below the crest of the main bank, and the spoil-bank is up to 7 ft. wide. From the top of the moor the ground slopes gently down to a swampy hollow draining into the Flourishwalls Burn, and as it approaches this hollow the earthwork attains its greatest breadth and is less regularly aligned than elsewhere. At the bottom of the hollow it disappears altogether for a distance of 70 yds.; it has probably been damaged here by traffic, as tracks can be seen rising out of the hollow northwards, probably heading for the peat-hags formerly exploited in Hule Moss.³ A further gap, 20 yds. wide, which ends

¹ *ibid.*

² For the analogy provided in this respect by the Catrail, see *Roxburghshire*, 482 f.

³ Gibson, R., *An Old Berwickshire Town* (1905), 247. The commoners' rights to 'fail and divot' were extinguished after a lawsuit in 1836 (*ibid.*).

105 yds. short of the Greenlaw-Duns highway, is evidently associated with another belt of tracks, which mount the left bank of the Flourishwalls Burn a short distance N. of the highway; these tracks no doubt represent an old road to Duns, traffic on which has presumably contributed to the damage. Slight traces of the earthwork can be seen E. of the second gap, reaching almost to the highway; and though it has now been obliterated E. of the latter, this final fragment appears on air-photographs¹ and was also seen by Craw in 1928.² At the point where the earthwork joins it, the Flourishwalls Burn enters a small but rocky and well-marked gully, and lower down is a sufficiently important feature to act as a landmark of itself; consequently, and in view of the earthwork's relationship, on the W., with the Snaw and Fangrist Burns, the purpose of its construction would seem to have been to eke out natural landmarks where none was present.

9. *Chesters Brae*. The remains marked 'Ancient Earthwork' (741480) on the O.S. map (Provisional Edition) were regarded by the R.C.A.M. as 'of doubtful origin',³ and Craw seems to have had little confidence in their value as evidence in support of Spottiswoode.⁴ What appears today is a terrace, up to about 17 ft. wide over-all and hollowed along part of its length, which runs obliquely up the side of a wide ravine and, at the lip of the slope, gives place to what resemble three alternative hollow tracks; in spite of the superficial resemblance of the hollowed-out stretch to a ditch-and-bank earthwork, the whole may be confidently regarded as an old road. The hollowing may well have been accentuated by some slipping of the soft clay soil on the face of the slope. The stretch of 'trench' recorded by Craw⁵ about a quarter of a mile further east (746479) could not be examined in 1961, as it was obscured by young conifers and heavy herbage; but in view of what has by this time emerged regarding Craw's line as a whole, this fragment cannot be supposed to possess significance, whatever its true nature may be.

10. *Sisterpath Waulkmill*. What Craw recorded here (757479), admittedly without much confidence,⁶ turns out to be a farm-road, still in use, and tied in with a ford which connects with a public highway on the other side of the river.

11. *Winfield*. Craw's field-name 'Blackdykes',⁷ E. of Winfield (? square 8951), cannot be regarded as significant, as any linear earthwork is liable to be called a 'black dyke' in Berwickshire and northern Northumberland.

III. CONCLUSIONS

From the foregoing review of the remains as identified by Craw, it is clear that they fail to corroborate Spottiswoode's theory. The review has left us with only two certain finds—the first a turf-and-boulder bank between Haerfaulds and the Brunta Burn, probably never more than a mile and a half in length, and the second a ditch-and-bank earthwork on Greenlaw Moor, rather more than a mile in length and separated from the Brunta Burn by a gap of about seven miles. In addition there are two uncertainties – a fragment of a ditch with two banks beside the Brunta Burn and

¹ 106 G / Scot / UK 9 / 7450-1-2.

² *H.B.N.C.*, xxvi, 363.

³ *Berwickshire*, No. 159.

⁴ *H.B.N.C.*, xxvi, 363.

⁵ *ibid.*

⁶ *ibid.*

⁷ *ibid.*, 364.

a doubtfully reported length of ditch-and-bank work in Craig Plantation – but these, even if accepted and regarded as having once formed parts of a single unit, would account for less than half a mile of the gap, and that at its W. end only. All the rest of the supposed evidence has evaporated, and in particular we are faced with a gap fully thirteen miles long between the easternmost visible trace and the Whiteadder Water. Thus even when allowance is made for the destruction of some earthwork monuments since Spottiswoode's day, his statement remains unconvincing.

However, if the theory of a 'long' Heriot dyke as set forth by Spottiswoode is not supported by remains existing on the ground, these remains themselves possess intrinsic interest, and an attempt should be made to interpret them on their own merits.

It will have been noted already that the earthwork on Greenlaw Moor, to consider this first, resembles the Roxburghshire Catrail in two significant respects. In the first place it is far too slight for defensive purposes, and would hardly, for that matter, provide a serious obstacle to a 'prey' of stolen cattle. In the second place both its ends rest on burns, and burns running on courses which project its general line (fig. 2). In the case of the Catrail similar features have been taken to suggest that the function of the work was to mark parts of some boundary-line,¹ recourse being had to the earthwork in places where no burn was available as a landmark. It will be interesting to see what follows if the same hypothesis is applied to the Greenlaw dyke.

The E. end rests, as has been said, on the Flourishwalls Burn, which turns, at the point of contact, from S. to E. Thereafter it is joined by other burns, the combined stream being marked on the map successively as the Swardon Burn, the Kirk Burn and the Howe Burn; and the course of this stream, though somewhat sinuous, is in general towards the NE., the Howe Burn finally joining the Blackadder Water just upstream from Kimmerghame Bridge (806512). As the crow flies, this point is about five miles and a half from the end of the earthwork, or nearly six along the waterway. The W. end, similarly, seems to hand over its function to the small Snaw Burn at a point where the bed of the latter has attained a certain breadth, though not very deep; in its lower part, however, it becomes a deep and steep-sided gully, which opens into another considerable gully, that of the Fangrist Burn, about 670 yds. below the last certain trace of the earthwork (698484). The course of the Snaw Burn is approximately from E. to W. and that of the Fangrist Burn from N. to S., but immediately below their junction the Fangrist Burn turns SW. and runs into the Blackadder Water after a further 750 yds. At the confluence, the Blackadder Water turns from its previous easterly course into the deep and narrow valley occupied higher up by the Fangrist Burn; and finally arrives, after further turns which carry it first SE. and then NE., at the inflow of the Howe Burn, as described above. This point is about six and a half miles, as the crow flies, from the mouth of the Fangrist Burn. Thus the dyke on Greenlaw Moor could be represented as the artificial portion of a boundary otherwise defined by streams, the whole enclosing an elongated strip of country between seven and eight miles long and nearly two miles wide at its head. On the other hand, and much more probably in view of the Catrail analogy, it could be suggested that the line formed by the earthwork and the burns was designed

¹ *Roxburghshire*, 483.

to 'rectify' a natural river-frontier, that of the Blackadder Water, in favour of some person or group established on the right bank of the latter but claiming, in addition, this left-bank strip, which is suitable for farming or pasture. A similar explanation has been suggested for the so-called Deil's Dyke in Nithsdale.¹

On the other hand, if a more far-reaching explanation were desired, it could be pointed out that the Blackadder and Whiteadder Waters, together with the mouth of the Tweed, would carry a river-frontier all the way to the sea, while the Blackadder Water, upstream from the inflow of the Fangrist Burn, is so aligned that, as far as 665484, half a mile W. of Hallyburton, it would serve well enough to prolong in a generally westward direction the line defined further E. by the Fangrist Burn and the earthwork. This part of the Blackadder valley is, moreover, a conspicuous natural feature, being deep and possessing steep sides. On this showing the further course of the supposed frontier might be drawn, with some approach to credibility either (i) westwards, with the help of earthworks now destroyed, or by other means through any woodland which may have existed,² or (ii) northwards, along the uppermost stretches of the river, to die out at some point so far away in the hills that the definition of a frontier had ceased to have practical importance. Something of this latter kind is thought to have happened in the case of the south-eastern end of the Catrail, on the high ground above Robert's Linn.³

Viewed in this light, the Catrail analogy makes possible a further suggestion. The Catrail is currently explained as a temporary frontier-mark, drawn by Anglian settlers as they colonised the valley of the Teviot,⁴ and the Picts' Work Ditch as a similar boundary covering the junction of the Tweed with the Gala and Ettrick Waters.⁵ If these interpretations are correct, an earthwork-and-watercourse boundary crossing the Merse and the Lammermuir foothills might equally be thought of as separating Anglian settlers, engaged in colonising the lowermost reaches of the Tweed, from natives pushed north into the moorlands beyond the valley of the Blackadder Water and westwards to the confines of Lauderdale.

Our other certainty, the turf-and-boulder bank, is difficult to interpret in a fully convincing manner. Its western end certainly rests on an important valley, which contains a large burn, the Blythe Water; but this valley lies transversely to the bank's axis, and thus suggests the end of a line rather than its prolongation. Nothing being known about the eastern end of the bank, further inferences regarding it can hardly be drawn; but if in fact it rested on the Brunta Burn, or on woodland along its right bank, the same consideration would apply. In that case, as the Brunta Burn is a tributary of the Blythe Water, the only function attributable to the linear bank would then be to mark the third side of a triangle elsewhere defined by the streams. This may well, in fact, be the true explanation of the remains, as the lands of Blythe, which occupy this area, formed a unit of landed property at least as early as 1296,⁶ while earlier occupation is attested by a fort and a cliff-top enclosure.⁷ It is possible, more-

¹ *P.S.A.S.*, LXXXVIII (1954-6), 153 f.

² *Roxburghshire*, 480.

⁴ *ibid.*, 483.

³ See p. 232, n. 3.

⁵ *Selkirkshire*, 127.

⁶ *Cal. of Docs.*, II (1272-1307), p. 203.

⁷ *Berwickshire*, Nos. 219 and 221 respectively. For more detailed descriptions see *P.S.A.S.*, xxix (1894-5),

over, to point to no less than four cross-ridge dykes, in the immediately adjoining region of north-eastern Lauderdale, which may well have been designed to fulfil an exactly similar function.¹ On the other hand, the place-name Spottiswoode,² which existed, as has been said, at least as early as 1296, suggests the presence of woodland, then or at some earlier date, on or somewhere to the E. of the Brunta Burn. The extent of such woodland cannot, of course, be guessed; but it is likely to have been larger in earlier than in later times, and the possibility must consequently be recognised that the linear work did not end on the Brunta Burn but was carried forward through woods for an unknown distance eastwards, by blazing, felling or entanglement. Such methods of marking would leave no permanent trace for the information of later ages.

The limits of legitimate inference having now been reached, what remains to be said is no more than an exercise in guesswork. We have arrived so far at the possibility of two separate boundary-works, one coming from the W. and ending in a forest somewhere between Spottiswoode and Westruther, and the other beginning an eastward course on the Blackadder Water at, or perhaps somewhere N. of, the sharp bend W. of Hallyburton. It may now be asked whether these two ends may not have been linked together, across the intervening gap some two or three miles wide, to produce a continuous frontier reasonably comparable with the Catrail. That this might have been effected without recourse to earthworks will appear from a study of the ground S. of Westruther. A great deal of this is flattish, lying just below the 700-ft. contour; it has evidently been reclaimed by the canalisation and straightening of the small streams that drain north-eastwards past Westruther Mains, while Jordonlaw Moss, which lies a few feet higher, still remains uncultivable. An undrained swamp in this area, closely adjacent to the supposed Spottiswoode forest, would have obviated any need for artificial frontier-works, and in fact might well have made their construction impossible; and at the same time, from a point NW. of Westruther Mains to the Blackadder Water at 661501, the natural hollow that carries off the drainage of this ground is a sufficient landmark in itself. On this showing Spottiswoode's story might claim some credit as reflecting an authentic tradition of high antiquity.

Finally, if anyone wished to out-Spottiswoode Spottiswoode himself, he would be free to point out that the cross-dykes mentioned above, in combination with their associated mosses and burns, could be thought of as extending the supposed Catrail-like boundary to the head of the Kelphope Burn (fig. 2), some seven and a half miles NNW. of Haerfaulds. Such an extension, if it existed, would naturally be a matter of great interest, as it would enlarge the supposed area of Anglian colonisation to include not only the region previously discussed, along the valley of the Blackadder Water, but also the whole of north-eastern Lauderdale to the main Lammermuir watershed.

¹ For a description of these works see 'Note of Cross-dykes' at the end of this paper. I am much indebted to Mr A. MacLaren, M.A., F.S.A. SCOT., who visited them on my behalf, and who also discovered the third of the series on an air-photograph. The others are mentioned briefly in *Berwickshire*, No. 236, and *P.S.A.S.*, LXXXII (1948-9), 203.

² With which cf. Spotts Burn (p. 231), a mile and a half W. of the modern Spottiswoode. The name 'de Spot', on record in 1296 (*Cal. of Docts.*, II (1272-1307), pp. 201, 213), is derived by G. F. Black from the lands of Spott in East Lothian (*The Surnames of Scotland*, s.v.).

However, before too much is built on the mere existence of these cross-dykes, it should be recalled that such works are not uncommon elsewhere in Berwickshire and are plentiful in the Roxburghshire Cheviots, and that other, undiscovered, examples might accordingly exist hereabouts in positions of no significance. Cases in point can be seen, for example, in two works which link the headwaters of the Soonhope and Kelphope Burns, respectively, with those of the Hopes Water¹; these works, though no more than a mile from the northernmost member of the series now under discussion, would not find a place in the suggested Catrail-like boundary as the Hopes Water flows in an entirely different direction, down the northern slope of the Lamermuir and into the Tyne.

Note on Cross-dykes

The first of the four cross-dykes mentioned above runs from a moss communicating with a headwater tributary of the Wheel Burn (*c.* 555523) to a point about 50 yds. below the lip of the steep eastern side of the Earnsclough valley and 1200 yds. NE. of Earnsclough itself (*c.* 553526). Its length is thus about 400 yds. Towards its south-eastern end it changes direction noticeably; the angle occurs at what is now a small quarry, but originally this was no doubt an outcropping rock such as might have constituted a convenient landmark. The material of the bank has been obtained from quarry-pits, not all of which have been joined up into a regular ditch. This dyke, with its connecting moss and streamlet, completes the enclosure of a large block of land otherwise defined by the Earnsclough, Leader, Boondsleigh and Blythe Waters and the Wheel Burn.

The second dyke crosses a neck from a moss (*c.* 541536) at the head of the Trow Burn, a tributary of the Earnsclough Water, to the head of the Gladesclough Burn (*c.* 537538), which in turn runs down a steep slope to join the Whalplaw Burn some 1500 yds. approximately ENE. of Longcroft. This work is about 500 yds. long, and similar in construction to the first; in its case the circuit is completed by the Cleek-himin Burn and the Leader and Earnsclough Waters.

The third dyke crosses the tongue of land lying between the Whalplaw and Soonhope Burns, which coalesce at Longcroft; one end rests on the head of a small stream which enters the Whalplaw Burn just below Glenburnie (*c.* 542560), and the other on that of a nameless tributary of the Soonhope Burn (*c.* 536560), its length being about 550 yds. and its course slightly sinuous. This work consists of a bank of earth and small stones taken from a quarry-ditch on its northern side; the bank is spread to a breadth of 12 ft. and stands up to 18 in. above the ground and 3 ft. above the bottom of the ditch, which is 6 ft. wide.

The fourth dyke runs NW. from a moss (*c.* 531587) at the head of the Bellhill Burn, a tributary of the Soonhope Burn, to the steep south-eastern side of Crib Cleugh, out of which a stream flows westwards to join the Kelphope Burn at a point 1100 yds. N. of Kelphope. Its length is about 750 yds., and it is similar in dimensions and constructions to the one last mentioned; it encloses the northern end of a con-

¹*P.S.A.S.*, LXXXIII (1948-9), 202 f.

siderable area of land which is otherwise defined by the Leader Water and the Kelphope, Soonhope and Cleekhimin Burns.

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