

Photo. by J. F. Curwen.

CATTLE HOW, KENDAL.
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ART. X.—*Three more ancient Castles of Kendal.* By W.
G. COLLINGWOOD, M.A., F.S.A.

Read at the Sites, July 12th, 1907.

THERE are not many towns which, like Kendal, are surrounded by four distinct fortified sites with remains still visible, representing four totally different stages in the art of defence, and four periods so far apart as the British, the Roman, the early mediæval and the late mediæval. From the Monument Hill we can see all these fortresses at once—the ruined castle, rising over against us across the river—this earlier mote-hill on which we stand—down the Kent the Roman camp at Watercrock—and beyond it, defined upon the skyline, the serrated ramparts of the prehistoric stronghold on the Helm.

Another site, Coney-beds on Hay Fell, was not visited on this occasion but should be added to the list of Kendal Castles.

I.—CASTLE HOW.

To proceed from the known to the unknown, let us begin with the Monument. The inscription upon the tablet reads "Sacred to Liberty, this obelisk was erected in the year 1788, in memory of the Revolution in 1688." In his book on *Kirkbie Kendall*, Mr. J. F. Curwen notes that the obelisk, 36 feet high, of hewn limestone,

was erected by the inhabitants, and executed by the benevolent William Holme from the design of his architectural partner, Francis Webster. The author of *A Fortnight's Ramble to the Lakes* (1792) visited the monument a few years after its erection, and thought that from the shortness of the column there must have been a great lack of funds. Other critics indeed felt this so keenly that for a

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considerable time it went by the name of "Bill Holme's Bodkin." The base has been sadly broken and oftentimes filled in and mended with cement, so that the following remarkable words, which are said to have been engraved on a corner-stone, are now entirely lost to us:—"that no foreign prince or potentate has, or ought to have, any power, civil or ecclesiastical, within these realms."

Nicolson and Burn, writing before the obelisk was erected, describe the site as

a large artificial mount, called *Castle how-hill*; which, from its name, seems to have been intended as a fort: It is within sight of the Roman station at *Water-crook*; and is very like the exploratory mounts, Mr. Horsley observes, which are to be seen in other places, especially near the military ways: But whether it is Roman, and relates to the station; or more modern, and erected with a view to the castle; he doth not take upon him to determine.

Cornelius Nicholson (*Annals of Kendal*, pp. 20, 21) put it down with the Castle Hill as Roman, partly because a Roman coin had been found in the ruins of Kendal Castle. Stukeley (*Iter Boreale*, 40) thought it Saxon. Housman, in his *Descriptive Tour and Guide* (1802), mentioned this "curious artificial mount called the Castle-law Hill . . . as it is believed, one of those hills called *laws*, where in ancient times the administration of justice took place." *Castle-law*, however, has nothing to do with *law-giving*; *law* or *low* in this connection is simply the Anglo-Saxon *hlæw*, a hill or mound: and *Castle-law* or *Castle-low* is precisely parallel to *Castle-how*, from the Norse *haugr*, a mound, which is the true name of the site—"Castell howe" in the *Boke off Recorde* (p. 105), in A.D. 1577; for in our old dialect *law* is replaced by *howe*. If we call it a *mote-hill*, this also has no reference to the Anglo-Saxon *mōt-hus* or *mōt-stow*, court-house or meeting-place, or the Icelandic *mót*, a meeting, but it is the *motte* of the Norman-French builders of fortified *mounts*.

There can be no doubt that the author of the article on Kendal in *Whellan* (p. 839) was mistaken when he was

“inclined to give it (Castle How) a Danish or Norwegian origin ; and to consider it to have been one of the places in which the ‘ Thing ’ was held.” The Tynwald Hill in the Isle of Man and a few other examples of rocks or mounds used like the Bema of the Pnyx at Athens—as pulpits in an assembly—do not really afford any support to the idea that so big a hill as this could be used to any purpose as a place of meeting. By a similar fallacy the doom-rings of Iceland—circles of stone seats for the judges to sit upon in their open-air court—have been supposed to countenance the theory that megalithic circles were “thing-steads.” But the analogy of flat-topped, conical, artificial mounds of this size, seen frequently elsewhere, shews us that this Castle How was a fortified mote-hill, though not of the perfectly regular form which is now assigned to the earliest Norman period.

The mote-hill must be distinguished from the artificial mound without the fosse and without the flat, circular summit. In Chancellor Ferguson’s *Archæological Survey of Cumberland and Westmorland* (Archæologia, liii.), the mound at Kendal (new) Vicarage is noted as a “moated mound” of post-Roman date, in the same class with the Castle How, and with the mote-hill at Kirkby Lonsdale Vicarage. It looks, however, more like a great barrow of much earlier age : there are several such in the district—at Watercrook, at Pennington, and elsewhere—which have never been explored.

Castle How is not a barrow. It has been made by cutting trenches across a sharp tongue or spur of hill-side, a ridge of limestone rock covered with moraine deposit. The loose earth has been thrown up from the excavations upon the central height, raising it, as one can reckon by comparing the 36-foot obelisk with the hill, to about 50 feet above the flat field below upon the east, or about 30 feet above the rock ridge down to which the trenches were dug. There is no fosse to east and west,

the scarp of the natural hill giving sufficient protection ; and in this respect it is not a perfect *motte*. But the top is flat and roughly circular : it has been about 60 feet in diameter, protected, like Irthington Mote, by a low breastwork or rampart now hardly traceable but described by writers of one hundred years ago, who also noted a slight ditch following the breastwork, and a trench struck through the centre of the summit from east to west, which may possibly have been the result of attempts at exploration. The remains of the spur of hill to south-east and north, left after cutting the fosse, have been described as bastions ; but they are no part of the fortification as such. The intention was to surround the crown of the hill with a palisade, inside which the wooden hall of the owner, and any smaller buildings—such as bower, smithy, etc.—were safe from assault. Below, to the east, was the usual base-court occupying the flat field from which our view is taken—the intrenched farm-yard (“basse cour”) of the homestead which, though intended to be defensible, was essentially a farmer’s home.

“Immediately below Castle How Hill, says Pennant, is a spot called *Battle Place*. Why—he has not informed us. We can find no spot now of the name”—is the comment of Cornelius Nicholson ; though in the same book (*The Annals of Kendal*) he reproduced Speed’s map of 1614 upon which *The Battail Place* is marked to east of the *Mount*—on ground occupied in John Todd’s map of 1767 by the *Bowling Green* and *Bowling Fell*. Mr. Curwen in *Kirkbie Kendall* (p. 85) cites a deed of 1667 describing a property as “adjoining and butting upon . . . Battell Place” : and he tells us that another property, at the top of Captain French Lane on the north side, sold in March, 1864, was described by title deeds of 1767 and 1796 as “called Catcastle, situated under a certain place called Battle Place.” “Catcastle” in local dialect is the second figure in the game of Cat’s-cradle ; but there was an earlier use of the word. Joinville, in

his *Histoire de Saint Louis*, describing the action at Damietta, 1250, tells us: "Fist faire le roy deux beffrois que l'en appelle chas-chastiau; car il avoit deux chastiaus devant les chas et deux massons darrières les chastiaus, pour couvrir ceulx qui guiteroient, pour les copz des engins aux Sarrazins." The cat was a covered machine driven up to castle walls to sap them, to fill up the ditches and assist the advance of the towers (beffrois). The tower, or cat-castle, was a covered gallery, with turrets, made of wood and pushed forward on wheels, from which attackers shot at the beleaguered walls. In this manner the siege of a stronghold was carried on in the thirteenth century and earlier: for similar machines are described by Frankish chroniclers as used by the Danes in their siege of Paris so far back as 885.

Now the survival of the names "Battle-place" and "Cat-castle" seem to indicate that the fortress on Kendal mote-hill was once besieged, though all historical notice of the event has been lost. We know of a battle on Kendal Heath, on May 13th, 1648, but Speed's map is dated thirty-four years earlier, and the type of fort and the word "Cat-castle" point to some event in the early middle-age. Such an event would be possible at the alternate invasions of the north by the Scots and by King Stephen in 1138, followed by the battle of the Standard; and again in 1139 during King Stephen's second incursion into Scotland. Henry II. or his troops invaded Westmorland and forcibly occupied the country after the death of King David (*Tracts relating to the English Claims; Chron., Picts and Scots*, p. 255), and at any rate in 1157 the part of the county till then held by the King of Scots was surrendered to England.

It would seem therefore that if this place were ever besieged it may have been during the period 1138-1157. Mr. Curwen, in his article on Kendal Castle, clears up the difficulty about the succession of estates in the twelfth century by explaining that Orm f. Ketel f. Eldred removed

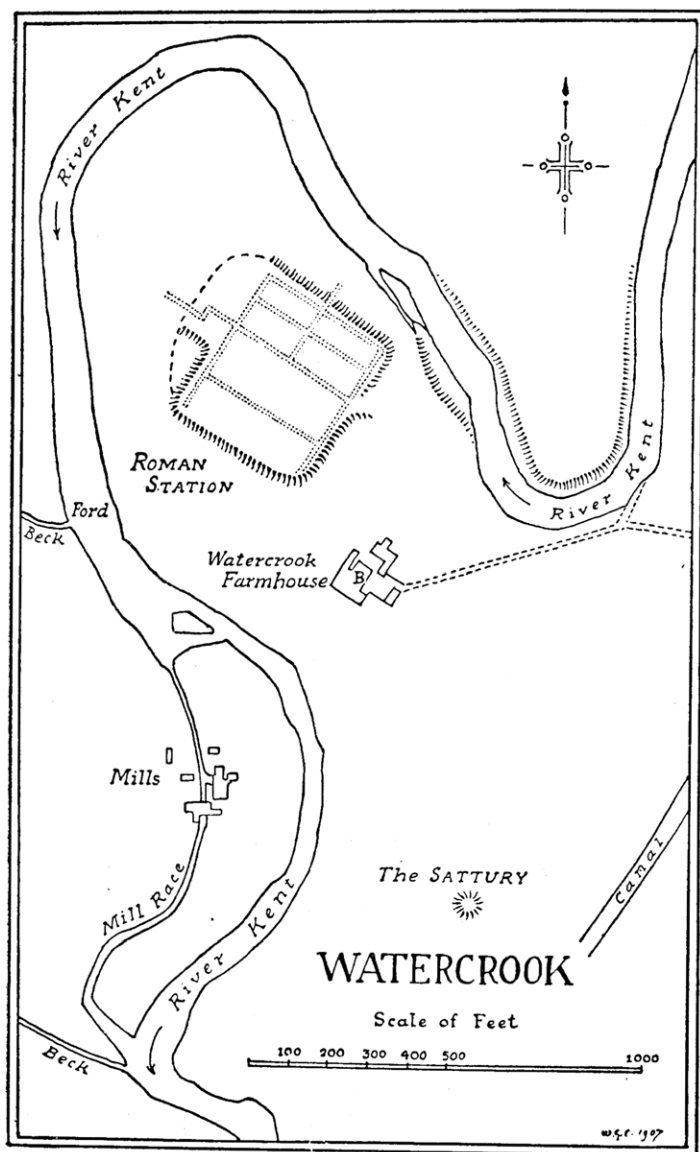
from Kendal to Workington. He died about 1156. His son Gospatric of Workington exchanged his holdings in Westmorland with William de Lancaster for other manors in Cumberland. Gospatric was the man who surrendered Appleby to the Scots in 1174, being a relative of the Scottish King and of William Fitz Duncan, Earl of Murray, and a landholder in Galloway. The Scottish leanings of the family on the Castle How may account for its siege and destruction, as they account for the removal of the family to the further side of Cumberland.

II.—THE ROMAN STATION AT WATERCROOK.

In August, 1887, after some weeks of drought, Mr. Mason of Watercrock noticed that the field in which the remains of the Roman camp are situated was marked out in straight lines. The sun had scorched the turf where the earth was shallow, and traces of something beneath the surface were revealed. Mr. Mason informed Mr. Arthur Hoggarth of Kendal, who made a survey of the markings on the camp site.

This survey was exhibited to the Natural History and Antiquarian Society of the Isle of Man, by Dr. Alfred Haviland, whose description of it was reported in the *Westmorland Gazette* for February 8th, 1890: but it has not been shewn to our Society until now. With Mr. Hoggarth's kind permission we give a reduced copy of his original, which is most valuable as showing the exact disposition of the streets in the camp, for these lines must of course be those of the solid pavement or hard metal of the roadways.

The plan, however, does not take in the whole area of the camp, still less the range of suburbs, in which relics occasionally found bear witness to a large and wealthy population. There must have been another street on the south-south-west, making the internal parallelogram 350 feet by perhaps 400 feet as against 500 by 380 feet, or according to Horsley 6 by 8 chains, *i.e.*, 396 by 528 feet,



the measurement given by old writers ; which must mean not only the whole camp including the ramparts but including also a curved addition to the north-west, of which the line is marked on the ordnance survey and copied in our map opposite, with Mr. Hoggarth's street-plan superimposed on the earth-works. The area of the space enclosed by the streets as mapped is estimated by Mr. Hoggarth at 2 acres 1 rood 26 perches : Horsley estimated the total area at about 5 acres, *i.e.*, including the curved addition ; while Dr. Whitaker, quoted by Cornelius Nicholson, said that the whole extent of ground covered by the city was 14 acres : perhaps not overstated, as the peninsula contains about 22 acres. The streets are 10 or 12 feet broad. The Via Praetoria crosses the camp from the Porta Praetoria on the east-south-east and passes through the Porta Decumana on the west-north-west, outside of which it takes a turn to the left and then continues 44 yards in a straight line towards the river. From the centre of the camp and at right angles to the Via Praetoria runs the Via Principalis going out towards the river, which winds round the site, making a peninsula of the camp and its suburbs.

It is remarkable that no indications were seen of the official buildings south-west of the Via Praetoria, nor did the ramparts shew the footing of a stone wall. The absence of the usual wealth of cut stones in the immediate neighbourhood seems to give additional reason for supposing that there was no stone wall, and that the rampart was of earth ; yet in the farm-house there are a few cut blocks of red sandstone showing that some buildings did exist. Mr. Mason points out places in his shippin (at B in the sketch-map opposite) and at the corner of the house nearest to it, where there are underground cavities and the summits of arches appearing above the level of the ground. These may possibly represent the baths and hypocaust of bricks and cement noticed by Machell in the seventeenth century and described by Horsley—"in the ruins were

reservoirs for water, made with cement, and a semicircular course of vacuities, like ovens, divided by thin bricks": on which Chancellor Ferguson remarked that similar vacuities had been found at Chesters in Northumberland, and were conjectured to be places for bathers to deposit their clothes.

Of relics Horsley noticed several coins, including a large brass of Faustina; three intaglios, of which one in a gold ring represented Mercury, and another was triple headed; a vessel of doubtful use, urns found in the river bank, and four stones, namely—a small altar inscribed DEAE M . . . ; an altar without inscription but bearing festoons of grapes (now in Kendal Museum, see illustration), an imperfect statue of Bacchus or Silenus (now in Kendal Museum), and the inscribed tombstone (now in Kendal Museum, see illustration) which Bishop Nicolson noted as found in 1688 (these *Transactions*, xii., art. 6). West says that it was in the wall of the barn in his time—the end of the eighteenth century. The inscription reads:—"P(ublius) AEL(ius) P(ublilii) F(ilius) SERG(ius) BASS(anianus?—a long name is needed to fill the space broken off) Q(uaestor) DS(designatus) LEG(ionis) XX V(ictricis) V(alentis) VIX(it) AN(nos: number of years lost, also a proper name) ET P(ublius) RIVATUS LIBB. (his freedmen) ET HER (the R joined with another letter and a long name required such as Hermilianus) MS (a soldier) LEG(ionis) VI. VIC(tricis) FCC (fecerunt). SI Q(uis in hoc) SEPULC(rum) ALIUM MORT(uum intul)ERIT INFER(et) F(isco) DD. NN. (if anyone puts another corpse into this grave let him pay into the treasury of our lords," the amount is broken off). And then poorly cut in taller letters by another hand "L NAS AEL SVR I," apparently referring to another interment in spite of the fine payable.

Bishop Nicolson also mentioned a plain altar found in 1687, and inscribed " . . . DEAB . . . SACRV . . . VALENS . . . AVG. V.S.L.M." Can this be the "DEAE M" altar of



THE INSCRIBED STONE FROM WATERCROOK (Kendal Museum).
Photo. by Mrs. T. H. Hodgson. TO FACE P. 106.



THE ALTAR FROM WATERCROOK
(Kendal Museum).

Photo. by Mrs. T. H. Hodgson.

TO FACE P. 107.

Horsley, or still another one? He also gives particulars of the coins; beside the bronze of Faustina there was a gold coin of Augustus and a silver of Lucilla. These and the intaglios belonged, early in the eighteenth century, to Mr. Guy of Kendal, but are lost. In 1608 a gold coin or medal of Vespasian was found between Watercrock and the Helm (Cornelius Nicholson, *Annals of Kendal*, p. 18). In 1813 pottery works were discovered opposite the camp by the edge of the brook where it joins the Kent and a little way down the river, south of and opposite the mills; there was also found an urn without handles and with a band of broached ornament round its broadest part, containing human ashes, iron and charcoal (*Ibid.*).

In the *Kendal and County News* for February 17th, 1890, Mr. Titus Wilson mentions finding quantities of charcoal on the site of the camp, where some digging had been done under his supervision. In the Kendal Museum are also a small urn with handles and several fragments, one of which is an amphora handle stamped "MLT." Mr. John Watson of Kendal has another amphora handle stamped "MMGSA"; and Mr. Anthony Moorhouse in 1906 found in the garden of the farm-house pieces of red ware, one stamped "ALBINI M.," by the potter who flourished 80 to 110 A.D. Mr. Mason tells us of a Roman lamp found by Mrs. Mason in the river bank, now in a private collection; and of an urn into which a cow stuck her horn in Potlands, the field where the urn of 1813 was found.

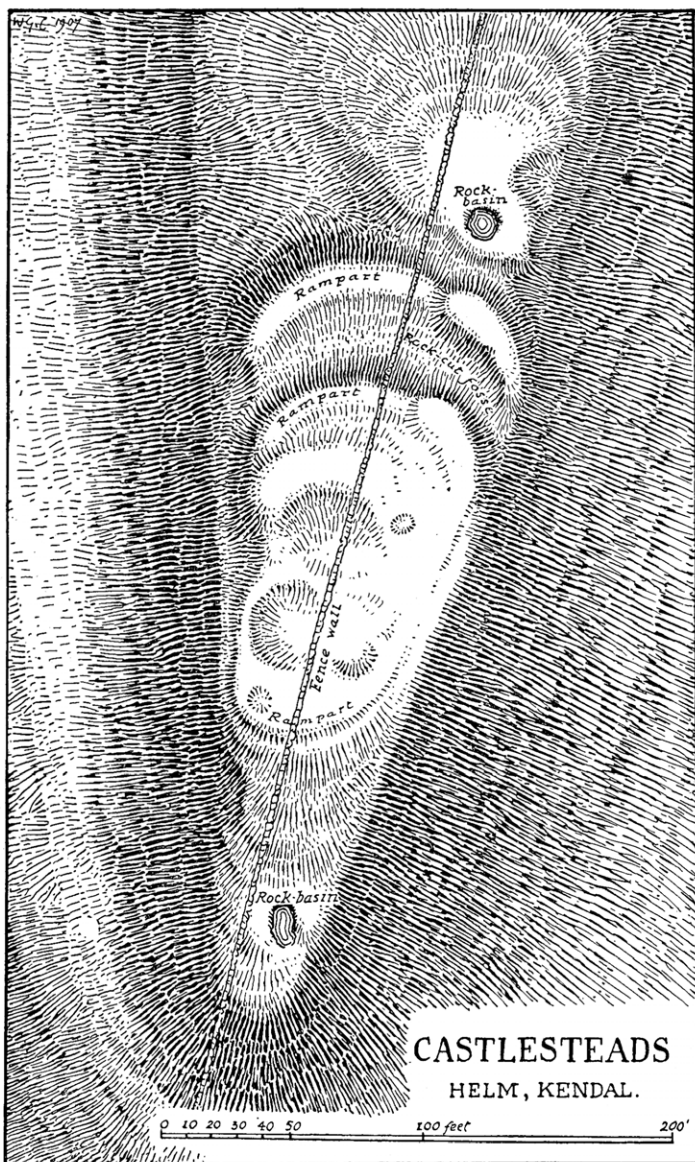
In this field is the *Mount*, or the *Sattury*, an oval barrow 165 paces in circumference and about 15 feet high. West thought it "something dedicated to Saturn." Cornelius Nicholson supposed it to be the general burial place of the garrison. It looks like a barrow of an age long anterior to the Roman occupation; but the whole of this interesting site awaits competent exploration. The name seems to resemble that of Setterah given to sites of early habitations at Bampton: perhaps from

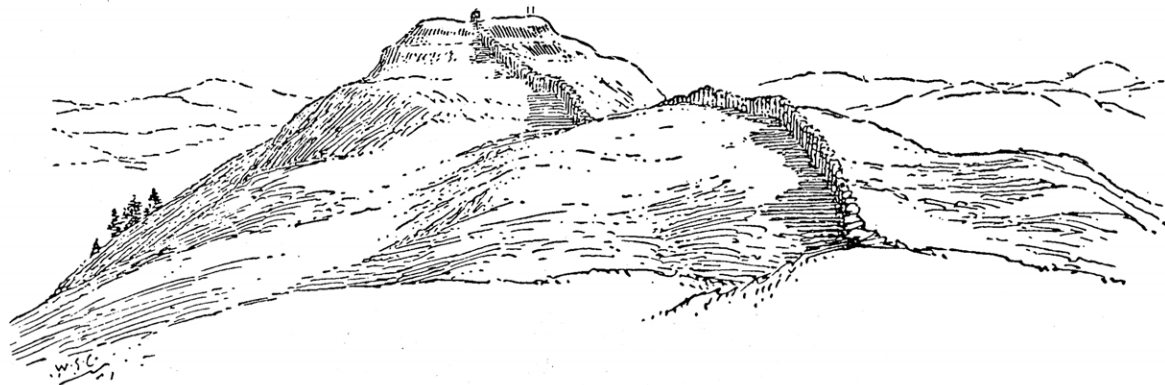
Norse *Sætr-haugr*—"Satterhow"—the mound of the settlement.

The name of "Concangium" found on the maps was suggested by Camden at a guess from the resemblance of the *Can* to the *Kent*: and though he withdrew the suggestion it has been popularly adopted down to the present time in spite of the protests of antiquaries. Reynolds in 1799, General Sir John Woodford, and R. S. Ferguson in 1876 proposed "Galacum"—but for the present we must call the site by its modern name of Watercrook. We can, however, infer from the coins and pottery that it was fortified at an early period of the Roman occupation, as a station on the line of road from Lancaster by Ambleside and Hardknott to the port at Ravenglass. Its lack of stone walls suggests that it was never an important fortress in war, and the curved addition to the plan may mean that it became a populous centre, administrative and residential.

III.—CASTLESTEADS ON THE HELM.

Our Society visited these earth-works on September 25th, 1893, when "several of the party climbed up to see them, and the opinion formed was that they were not Roman, but British; the site is not such as the Romans were wont to select, nor do the works in plan or profile seem Roman." They have been mentioned by Stukeley, Housman, and Hodgson. West imagined the signalling operations of the Romans from this "Castellum" to Warton Crag, and Whellan said it was "supposed to have formed a summer station for the garrison of Galacum." Cornelius Nicholson (*Annals of Kendal*, p. 18) gives a fancifully drawn plan, saying that the place is no doubt an exploratory fort, and adding as a reason for the opinion that the gold coin of Vespasian found in 1806 was discovered "in a lineal direction from Concangium to the castrum exploratorium. . . . It seems probable that it had been scattered by one of the soldiers in passing





CATTLESTEADS ON THE HELM, NEAR KENDAL :
SEEN FROM THE NORTH.

from one place to the other." The 25 inch ordnance survey shows a mere conventional oval lettered "Castrum Exploratorium."

The sketch opposite represents the general appearance of the site and with two figures on the summit to suggest the scale. The plan on p. 109, though not instrumentally surveyed, is from careful measurement and shows the chief features of the fort. To the north are two considerable ramparts formed by cutting across the ridge of the Helm; in one place the fosse is cut through rock, or rather through the looser surface-layers of the weathered stone (Upper Silurian, Kirkby moor flags), giving a deep ditch from which the inner rampart now stands about 7 feet high. The outer rampart also stands about 7 feet above the ground just north of the word "Rampart" upon it in the plan—but where the modern fence wall crosses the outer fosse it has been partly filled up with rubbish. The summit of the fort measures 139 feet along the fence wall, and in breadth across the widest part a little under 80 feet. The rampart has been continued as a slight breast-work, now partly destroyed, along the east and west sides where the edges of the hill are very steep; but at the south end it broadens into a substantial bank 25 feet across. In this and on the area of the summit east of the fence wall are two small pits apparently made by attempts at digging in modern times: but there are also three shallow depressions which once may have been more or less circular, and suggest hut-circles. The largest would have contained a building of the same size as that found in Urswick Stone Walls, which measured about 40 feet externally, and 22 feet inside: though the surface here shows no signs of a stone building. Some exploration ought to prove interesting.

On the north and south outside the ramparts are two rock basins apparently cut as wells or dew-ponds. In the ancient hill-fort at Canna (Hebrides) there is a similar basin, and a small one in Dundomhnuill at Oransay.

But here the basins are outside the walls; and it might be suggested that the reason was to prevent fouling in such a confined space as this tiny fort would give for its inhabitants. There would be no difficulty in getting outside the fort to draw water, because no attackers could sit round the top of the hill for long together under the shot of the besieged; any attack would be, from the nature of the ground, an attempt to storm it, not a close blockade.

This fortress is a small example of the type seen in Cumberland in Dunmallet near Pooley Bridge, and Castle-head at Peel Wyke, Bassenthwaite, and has some resemblance to Buckcastle in Shoulthwaite Gill and Reecastle near Lowdore as being a hill fort protected by ramparts and ditches.
