

ART. VIII.—*Trostermount-on-Ullswater*. By JOHN F. CURWEN, F.S.A., F.R.I.B.A.

*Read at the site, July 13th, 1911.*

ABOUT a mile above Pooley Bridge, on the Westmorland bank of Ullswater, there is a triangular area with its base on the lake and its two sides surrounded by marsh land. In the southern angle there is a mound of low elevation. It is marked as *Crostermond* on an old map by Gerard Mercator, dated 1599; William Camden (1600), the brothers Bleau (1655), and John Speed (1676) mark it on their maps under the same name; whilst Robert Morden, who published his map toward the end of the same century, marks it as *Trostermont*, and Thomas Machel (1678) speaks of it as *Tristermont*, the "ancient and noble fortification of Sir Tristram, the sorrowful, one of the Knights of King Arthur's Round Table."

To-day we find a site, roughly triangular, of some five acres that clearly has been fortified. It has been drained and isolated from the main land by an obtuse-angled ditch, 10 yards wide and 394 yards long, with the ends entering the lake; the inner bank of which we must suppose to have been stockaded. But Machel, who surveyed the site more than 230 years ago, tricks out on his plan (see *Transactions*, o.s., i., p. 160) a triangular foreshore projecting some 20 yards further into the lake, as he says, "to secure that side and make the Plat uniform and regular." If this were so, then it must have been a diamond-shaped site bounded on two sides by the lake and on the other two sides by an extensive morass beyond the flooded ditches.

There is no evidence of a rampart within the ditch, so

PLAN OF TRISTERMONT.

Ullswater Lake

Datum 475 ft

Ditch 30 feet wide

WESTMORLAND

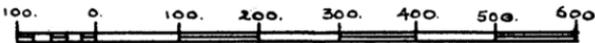
1040 FT

643 FT

538 FT

Swamp

501



Scale of Feet.

26:9:11.

that the excavated earth may have been taken to form the mound that now occupies the southern corner and rises some 26 feet above the level of the lake. A pond occupies the eastern angle.

The only historical note that I can find concerning the place is contained in a marriage settlement wherein Sir Walter Strickland settles upon his son Thomas (born in 1300) and his heirs the manor of Hackthorpe with all his estates in Over Windergh, Trostormont and Thorp. Without any further knowledge, therefore, it would be absurd to assign this stronghold to any definite period. Imagination can take one back to the very earliest days when the pastoral people required greater security for themselves and their cattle than the forests could afford them, when in the great struggle for existence they sought the water as a retreat from their natural foes, man and beast. Or with less effort one might see here a specimen of the very latest class of prehistoric strongholds which reached their greatest development in early historic times, and yet there is nothing to prevent our adopting the more rational theory that, in the mediæval age, this site was entrenched as a moated grange.

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