



FIG. 1. DRIGG TOWN FIELD: strips divided by baulks of unploughed turf.

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ART. VI.—*The Town Fields of Drigg.* By MARY C. FAIR.

*Read at Ambleside, July 8th, 1933.*

DRIGG still possesses its "town field," its acre-dales, held by three owners at the present time, two using them for arable farming, while the remainder is under grass. The former are the "butts" or "butt-riggs," the formation of the ground making it necessary to lay out these shares crossways to the long, narrow strips which compose the bulk of the area, very typical of the ancient "plough's share" or "furrow-long" which originally formed the day's work of bygone ploughmen.

Drigg Town Field is marked on the 6 in. O.S. (Cumberland Sheet 82 N.W.) "DRIGG HOLME," and lies between the church and the river Irt. A narrow lonnin leads to the Holme and the river, which it crosses by an ancient bridge, thus linking up the network of old tracks which formerly crossed the common land between Drigg and Seascale with the fords of the Irt and Mite giving access to the then market town and coasting seaport of Raven-glass. The bridge at the Holme would enable the Irt to be crossed when the tide made the ford near Hall Carleton (still in use), impassable.

The Drigg Town Field shows very well the "reans" or "balks" which divided strip from strip, heavy three-foot wide raised banks with here and there a "mere-stone" (fig. 1). In several instances the strips have become terraced to a slight degree, making a still more marked difference between the strips. In 1932, when I paid my last visit to Drigg Town Field, the two arable "acre-dales" were cropped with oats and potatoes

respectively, the latter a most excellent crop as the soil here suits them well (fig. 2).

Drigg is the only Town Field, as far as I am aware, still worked as such in the neighbourhood. Indeed, except for a few place-names even the site of other town fields is unknown. In Eskdale there are two suggestive place-names, "Long Yockin How" (Eskdale Green); a Yocking or Yoakin (Yoking), meaning the day's work of a ploughman and team. And on the property of Mrs. J. H. Rea there is a field bearing the name "Two Dork" which must be Darrack or Day's Work, also in allusion to the acre-strips which no doubt formerly existed there.

Dotted about the district, on the higher ground above the valleys, the rambler comes across queer little patches of cultivated ground in the midst of the wilderness. On the gap between Raven Crag and Latterbarrow (south of the Esk Valley) for instance there is a large enclosed area mostly composed of peaty scrub-land, overgrown with bog-myrtle and bracken, in which are three oases of sound, fine, green turf bearing unmistakable signs of having been ploughed and cultivated. Near to two of these tiny plots there are three long cairns. And in many places on the upland moors where thickly-dotted cairns tell of prehistoric occupation there will be found areas of fine turf which tell of cultivation. In the Whicham Valley, clearly to be seen from the high road, is a good example of terraced fell flank, and there are also terraces on the slope of Muncaster Fell between the monument known as "Chapels" and the main high road, which can be seen, especially when the bracken has been cut, from the high road.



FIG. 2. DRIGG TOWN FIELD: harvesting potatoes on an arable "acre-dale"; in the back-ground, oat-stubble on an "acre-dale" belonging to another owner.

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