

ART. VII.—*Lynchets and a Settlement.* By THOMAS HAY.

TWO unusual sets of lynchets have lately come to my notice, one in the Penrith area and one at the head of the Haweswater valley. These lynchets depart so far from the normal type that they have often escaped notice or their true nature has not been recognised. It happens that the Penrith set is quite near land which may shortly be developed and the Haweswater set will at once be submerged when the Manchester Corporation plans are completed. Consequently a short description of them may not be out of place.

A further point of interest in connection with the Penrith or Eamont Bridge lynchets is their proximity to the earthworks at the latter place and their association with these works in the annals of our own Society. In *Trans.* o.s. vi, a paper by William Atkinson is entitled "On some Earthworks near Eamont Bridge." The paper deals with the circle near Lowther Bridge which was destroyed at the time of the construction of the private road to Lowther Castle and also with the subject of the present article which lies on the north side of the Eamont opposite to Mayburgh. The whole paper is extremely interesting because, although the conclusions are in some cases quite improbable, yet it is the result of accurate observation and some research.

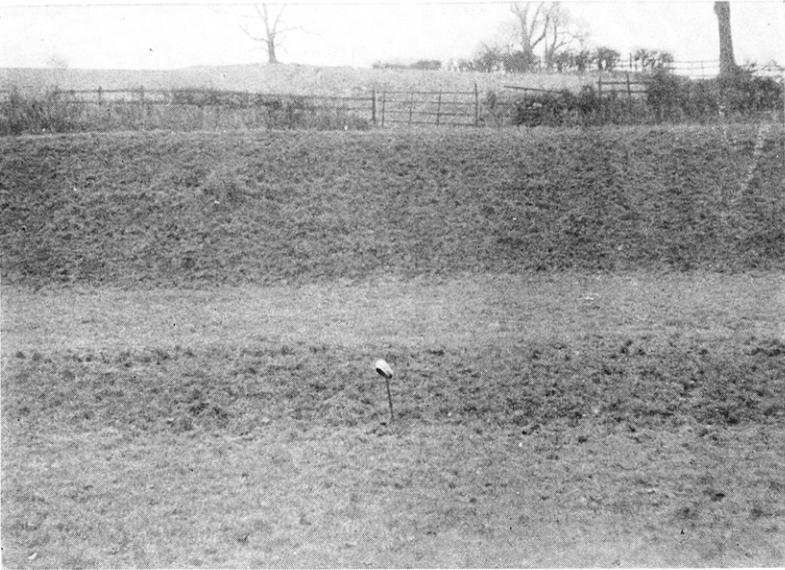
Immediately opposite Mayburgh on the north side of the river and close beside a barn there is a flat-bottomed valley running in a north-westerly direction. It gradually curves left-handed and narrows somewhat before it is crossed by a transverse wall about 430 yards from the lower end. As Mr. Atkinson remarks, it looks like a

large railway cutting which has never been used for traffic. The evidences of artificial construction are so obvious on the steep embankment which runs along the eastern side that one cannot wonder at this author thinking that the earthwork was probably a racecourse used in connection with King Arthur's Round Table and Mayburgh.

But if one looks over the wall towards Skirsgill Farm it is at once apparent that the depression is a perfectly natural one and that it is continued towards the farm gradually diminishing in depth and finally flattening out before it reaches that building. The depression is in fact a water-channel cut out by torrents running from the ice-front at the close of a late glacial episode and pouring away into the Eamont. It is comparable with, but very much smaller than, the great glacial channel opening into the Eamont at Carleton Hall and down which the small Thacka Beck now drains. The fashioning along the sides and floor of this curious depression is entirely explained by the cultivation of early or mediaeval man. The lynchets caused by the ploughing have created the regular embankment-like eastern face which has a terrace halfway up its slope and which looks exactly like the wall of an artificial cutting.

Although the physical origin of the depression was obvious yet the artificial fashioning of its slopes was just as striking. When I took Dr. Bersu and Mr. Grimes to visit the place they were quite decided in their opinion that the artificial appearance resulted from lynchets having been made all along the main eastern boundary and elsewhere in the depression.

The explanation then is that the valley is a natural glacial channel whose sides and floor have been cultivated by long continued ploughing. A few more points connected with this site may be mentioned. The whole of the slight hill lying to the west of the curving valley is covered with a system of fields some of which are long



LYNCHETS NEAR EAMONT BRIDGE.



WALL NEAR EAMONT BRIDGE.
Boulders from tumulus as foundation layer.

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narrow rectangles. One of these at the north-east corner shows a well marked lynchets which points to a long period of cultivation. This field is so flat that it must have taken a considerable time for the plough selvaige to develop into such a distinct and deep lynchets. The long curving eastern embankment of the principal depression faces right into the afternoon sun and it must have afforded a combination of fertile land and favourable aspect, thus accounting for the striking traces of a long period of cultivation. Most of the physical features of this terrain have been recognised as peculiar and distinct because the hedges and boundaries conform to them in a most striking way. For example, the main depression lies embraced in the bounds of one curvilinear field running up to the wall mentioned before.

Near this wall across the upper end of this elongated field there was once a tumulus. Atkinson gives a long quotation from Stukely which confirms this and describes the whole Mayburgh-King Arthur complex as it existed about 1776. Atkinson further notes that although the tumulus has completely disappeared there are to be found on the north-west side of the transverse wall a foundation layer of huge boulders quite dissimilar from the building material used in the rest of the wall. He suggests that these have been taken from the tumulus and no doubt he is right. They are reproduced here in a photograph which gives a good example of what must often have been the fate of the boulders from tumuli. The curvilinear field formed by his hollow valley is on 6" map Cumberland LVIII N.E. where it is shown in the right hand bottom corner running towards Skirsgill Farm.

The second set of lynchets occurs near the site of the little Mardale Church which has been sacrificed to Manchester's inordinate appetite for water. To the north-east of the churchyard and close adjoining it there is a curious hill lying between the great Riggindale valley

on the west and the narrower valley of the Mardale beck on the east. It is a good example of a huge moutonnée bluff left by the converging ice streams of long ago. But the part nearer the churchyard is a grass covered hill rising to a flat platform and then continuing in a further and higher rocky bluff crowned with trees. It is on the lower grassy part that the lynchets are developed. Those who have read Whiteside's interesting "Shappe in Bygone Days" will remember that a certain queer proprietor of the Dun Bull called Thomas Lamley began to build himself a tower so that he might see over into Swindale and Patterdale. He only got 20 feet high and thus failed by a few thousands of feet but as the author states that this grandiose scheme was tried on the "eminence near the chapel" it must have been the higher rocky bluff that was the scene of operations. As a matter of fact there is no sign whatever of any building either on this upper bluff or on the grassy lower part where the lynchets lie. But it must be from this two-storied hummock that the farm on the opposite side of the road got its name of Chapel Hill.

The lynchets at Eamont Bridge camouflaged their site and made it look like a huge railway cutting. Those at Chapel Hill are disposed practically over and round a flat topped knoll. By their lines running like tracks up the slope and like terraced embankments along the sides they suggest the emplacement of a fort. This deceptive appearance results from the fact that they lie all round a small flat platform. From no one point can a comprehensive view be obtained of the whole site. The only way in which that could be done would be from an aeroplane.

The most noticeable parts of the lynchets are the long straight run of sloping bank parallel to the road with a perfectly flat terrace below it towards its eastern end and secondly the striking development of the lynchets on the steep slopes on the north side of the hill quite out of sight from the road. These lynchets are on 6" map

Westmorland XX N.W. between Mardale Church and Wood How.

If one returns through this delightful valley of Haweswater by the new fellside track made by the Manchester Corporation, one passes close below an early settlement which has not yet been recorded. It lies a few yards above the track and a few minutes walk from the end of the dam. It consists of two circles and part of the surrounding enclosure wall. The larger circle is 12 to 13 yards across and is very distinct.

The smaller circle is $6\frac{1}{2}$ yards away and is much less visible. At the time of my last visit it was traceable by a slightly more vigorous growth of bracken and it seems about eight yards in diameter. The enclosure wall runs for about 30 yards on the upper or N.W. side of the hut circles. At the nearest point to the circles it measures $7\frac{1}{2}$ feet across and must have been a substantial erection. At this point it diverts a small fellside runner and keeps the ground of the settlement dry. This site is on 6" Map Westmorland XIII S.E. above the track described and $1\frac{1}{4}$ inches west of the first "G" in "Giant's Graves."