

ART. VI.—*An earthwork in Kirkbampton Parish.* By
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ERIC BIRLEY, F.S.A.

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FOUR-FIFTHS of a mile south from the village of Kirkbampton, on a low ridge rising just above the 175-ft. contour, lie the remains of an earthwork marked on the Ordnance maps with the legend "Foldsteads (site of)" (Cumberland 6-in. Sheet XXII. N.E. 1926 edition). The features recorded on the 25-in Sheet are outlined by hachures and comprise two banks in field 523, each approximately 120 ft. long and 18 ft. wide, meeting at an angle of 96 degrees. Nothing is shown in field 522 to north or in field 525 to south and west, but a recent survey shows that there is more to be seen than the Ordnance sheet suggests. My purpose in writing this paper is simply to put on record all that can be made out on the ground, because, in this machine age, waste land can be made into fields in a very short time and an earthwork, like this one, could be obliterated in a few hours. Indeed, as I write, Mr Blamire of Oughterby is draining part of field 525 after grubbing and ploughing it.

The earthwork lies a little to the north of the highest point of a low ridge with excellent views to north and east, but views to south and west are obscured by trees, and rising ground on which stands the abandoned Orton aerodrome; it is concealed beneath a canopy of alder and birch and stunted oak. Three distinct ramparts may be seen separated by two ditches; they are still 3 ft. high, the innermost being the highest, and they are about 20 ft. apart, measuring from crest to crest. The south-east angle of the inner rampart has a curve of small radius and close by, in the south rampart, there is an entrance

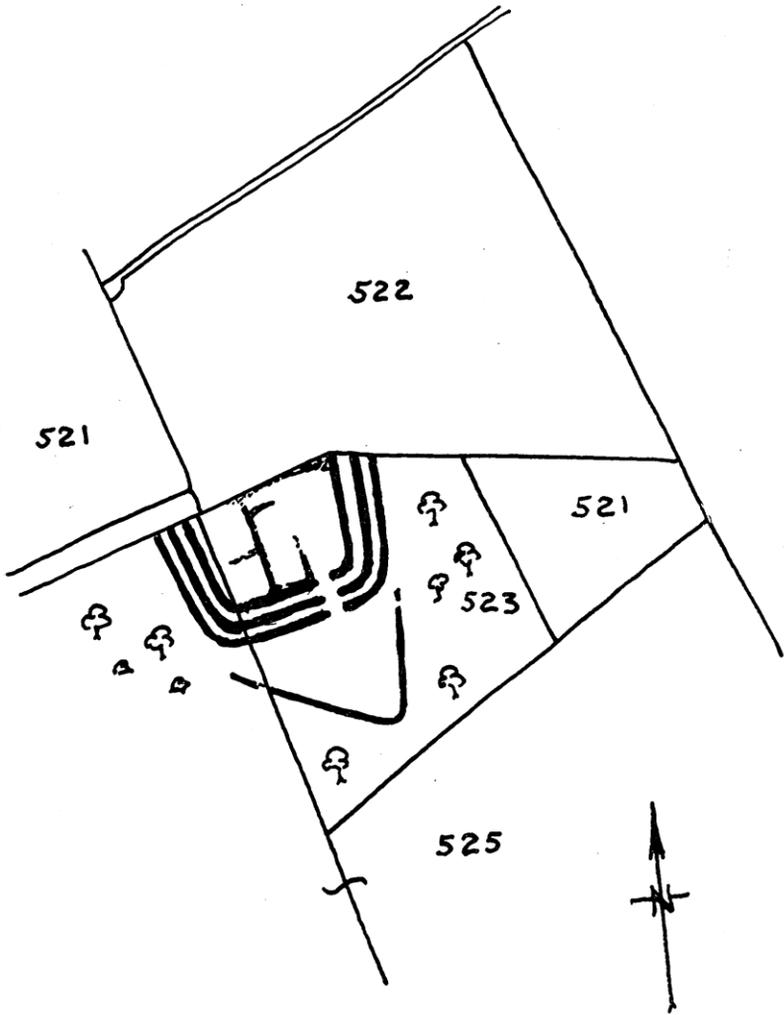


FIG. 1.—Sketch plan of Foldsteads, based on O.S. 25" sheet, Cumberland, XX. 7. 1925 ed.

opposite which the second and third ramparts are interrupted. So far as can be made out, without excavation, the ramparts are earth banks with distinct remains of cobble revetment. Within the square formed by the ramparts and the north and west fences of field 523 clear traces of internal banks may be seen; they also contain earth and cobbles; about a third of the interior is permanently waterlogged.

Search among the trees and bushes in the adjoining field to west proved that the ramparts turn north where they cross the boundary between fields 523 and 525, diverging slightly from the line of the fence and disappearing when they reach the lanning; they are very low, but the lines of the two ditches which give them definition, though very slight, are clear enough. Three sides of the earthwork may thus be planned; of the fourth side, no traces can be seen in field 522, which has been in cultivation for many years, so it is impossible, from surface indications, to estimate its position and hence the size of the enclosure. However, the north hedge of field 523 appears to have been formed on a pre-existing bank incorporating many cobbles which could have been either an internal division or part of the north rampart. Only excavation, by proving the ditches in field 522, can settle this question.

A further bank and ditch may be seen to south of the earthwork; they form an acute angle and seem to have been intended to cover the entrance by forming an annexe or courtyard. The bank is of earth with a well-formed ditch. I can give no opinion on the question of the age and purpose of this site, but certain features of it remind me of the enclosures on Aughertree Fell.

APPENDIX: by Eric Birley.

Mr Bellhouse's study of the Foldsteads site deserves to be supplemented by a note on its antiquarian history. The earliest reference to it in print comes in Mannix & Whellan's *History*,

Gazetteer, and Directory of Cumberland (1847) 200, in a communication by the Rev. William Pattinson (1817-1891), rector of Kirkbampton 1845-1878; he also furnished the publishers with a plan of the earthworks, which they acknowledged but could not make room for. Pattinson noted three items, namely:

(a) "a strong enclosure covering more than 1A. 1R. of ground. The greatest portion of it appears to have been defended by a double rampart of earth and a double ditch; the other portion, which probably was appended to the principal work, was surrounded by a single rampart and ditch. Tradition says that the cattle of the district were driven to this place for protection, on the appearance of the mosstroopers; and, in consequence, the work is commonly ascribed to the time of these freebooters."

(b) But the discovery of a Roman altar (of which more presently) "in the adjoining field, in the year 1843, seems to connect the Romans with this locality."

(c) "Further examination may probably establish a connection between this and works of a similar character in the neighbourhood; or, at all events, may show that a line of defence, consisting of an earthen rampart and a ditch, extended from it to a considerable distance, as they can be clearly traced in the adjoining field, which is called 'Fold-steads'."

From this it appears that the main work had no name, "Fold-steads" applying to "the adjoining field", in which the Roman altar was found. The site was next examined in 1901, by Canon James Wilson (1856-1923), assisted by Mr E. W. Stead of Dalston Hall, his report being buried in *Addenda Antiquaria*, CW2 ii 413-416 with a sketch-plan at 415; they surveyed the visible remains, testing one or two features by a little trenching, and came on balance to the conclusion that the earthworks were no earlier than the moss-trooping period, connected with a vanished farmstead called the Folds or Faulds of which the parish register makes frequent mention, and that the Roman altar had been brought there from the Wall for use in a modern building. Canon Wilson's conclusion seems less likely now that we have Mr Bellhouse's fuller plan of the earthwork, which bears no resemblance at all to a medieval or later steading; and indeed, reference to Pattinson's account implies (what Canon Wilson seems to have missed) that the name *Foldstead* applied to the next field, in which the vanished farm had once stood, and not to this earthwork itself.

The altar too deserves a short note. It is one of the smallest

inscribed altars ever found, only 3 7/8 in. high by 2 7/16 in. across (CIL VII 938, *Lap. Sep.* 518, Tullie House Catalogue² 11 no. 25), with the simple dedication *deae Lati Lucius Ursei* — that is to say, “To the goddess Latis, Lucius (son) of Urseus (dedicated this).” Pattinson was evidently the authority for its date and place of discovery, and his reading of the text was accurate except for the last word, which he could not decipher satisfactorily. In 1872, when Part iii of the *Lapidarium Septentrionale* was published, the altar (as Bruce duly noted) was in the possession of Mr Richard Hodgson, of Kirkbampton; in 1886 it was exhibited to the Pilgrims at Gilsland by the Rev. W. Lowthian, of Kirkbampton (PSAN² ii 215), but thereafter it was lost to sight until 1918, when it was dug up in “a rough little box” in ground near a cottage at Kirkbampton. Its rediscovery was recorded in a short paper by Canon Rawnsley (1851-1920), printed in CW² xx 151-153, with an excellent half-tone plate from a photograph by Linnaeus E. Hope (1864-1944); Rawnsley was unaware of the 1886 appearance, and was therefore led to suppose that “the little box in which it was re-discovered is the one in which it may have been packed for sending to — probably — London or Newcastle, in order to be drawn for engraving; and that on return it had not been opened and was eventually cast into a refuse hole as worthless”. All the same, it would be interesting to learn more of its fate between 1886 and 1918! Fortunately, the altar is now safely in Tullie House, to which it was presented by Canon Rawnsley shortly before his death.

Mr C. Roy Hudleston, F.S.A., kindly supplies a note on the Rev. William Pattinson as follows: he was the son of Thomas Pattinson of Kirkbampton, farmer, born there in 1817 and educated at Coldale Hall near Carlisle. He was admitted sizar at Peterhouse, Cambridge, 27 June 1835, matriculated Michaelmas 1835, took his B.A. in 1839 and proceeded to M.A. in 1850; he was ordained deacon in 1842 and priest in 1843, in the diocese of Ely, and served as curate of Snailwell, Cambridgeshire, from 1842 until 1845, when he became rector of his native parish. In 1878 he was preferred to the rectory of Patterdale, where he died on 25 November 1891 and was buried five days later.

He was never a member of our Society, but his continued interest in Roman antiquities is attested by Bruce's reference in *Lap. Sep.*, p. 262: Pattinson had drawn his attention to the fine slab inscribed by a vexillation of the Sixth Legion, found during the restoration of Kirkbampton Church in 1870, “and aided him in his investigations in this district.”