

COVE HARBOUR

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THE inlet on the Berwickshire coast (784717)¹ that now contains Cove Harbour (Pl. XIII) evidently has a longish history as a local seaport, whether in its natural state or improved. Already before 1606, Whitecove and Gutcher's Hole were recognised landing-places, where dues were exigible and which called, on occasion, for 'bettering and repairing'.² In 1617 the 'Quyte Cove' is mentioned in connection with repairs to the post road to Edinburgh,³ and Whitecove is described as 'an Harbour for Herring fishing' in a document probably datable to the turn of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.⁴ The ratification, dated 1695, of a Dunglass charter which mentions 'the Burgh of Barony of Colbrandspath with free ports for ships and boats'⁵ probably refers to Cove and Gutcher's Hole; there are numerous references to the fishing community of Cove in the later eighteenth and earlier nineteenth centuries, and a tide-waiter is mentioned in 1792.⁶ By 1963, however, the fishing fleet had shrunk to one salmon-coble and two lobster-boats. Smuggling was evidently rife on this coast in the eighteenth century, but we are invited to believe that it had been abandoned by 1834.⁷

The natural features of the site can best be understood by reference to a plan of the harbour in its present form (fig. 1). From this it will be seen that the northern side of the inlet is protected by a descending bluff, which provides, at its eastern end, a base for the North Pier. A road from Cove village to the pier has been terraced along its steep outer face. Its inner face, which consists of the natural rock, cuts off access to the pier from the rest of the inlet except at low tide, and increases in height south-westwards to form a cliff. Some 90 yds. from the landward end of the pier this cliff-face strikes inland, in a south-westerly direction, and its place is taken by a beach of shingle and sand which curves south-eastwards and extends to the South Pier. This beach is backed by a high and very steep grassy slope, largely formed of clay and evidently liable to slip; its base is subject to erosion by exceptionally high tides. East of the South Pier cliffs resume.

The rocks are sandstones and shales, with some 'foul' coals of Lower Carboniferous age; their east-west strike and steep northerly dip have led to the formation, through differential erosion, of a system of channels and jagged ridges which are exposed at low water. The general disposition of these, the 'Shore Goats'⁸ of the O.S. map, is indicated in fig. 1; and it will be noticed that a lane of deeper water, not dry-

¹ O.S. 1-inch map of Great Britain, 7th series, sheet 63 (Dunbar); 6-inch do., Provisional Edition, 100-km. square NT, sheet 77 SE.

² MS. Register of the Privy Seal, H.M. General Register House, LXXV, 127 f. The name Gutcher's Hole is applied on the 6-inch O.S. map to a small pocket of shingly beach just east of the mouth of the Dunglass Burn (772724).

³ R.P.C., XI (1616-19), 93.

⁴ Macfarlane, W., *Geographical Collections relating to Scotland*, III, 184.

⁵ A.P.S., IX, 505 a.

⁶ e.g. *Stat. Act.*, XIII (1794), 228 f.; *N.S.A.*, II (Berwickshire), 309; MS. records preserved in the Dunglass Estate Office.

⁷ *N.S.A.*, II (Berwickshire), 306.

⁸ Gote, goit, goat(e): a trench or ditch. (*Dictionary of the Older Scottish Tongue*, s.v.)

ing out at ordinary low springs, penetrates this area almost to the harbour entrance. The sandstone forming the bluff north of the harbour is soft, and would be easy to work with a pick; that beyond the South Pier is harder, but still relatively easy to work. Caves tend to form at sea-level, as erosion works along lines of lesser resistance; one considerable cave (p. 224) occurs just north of the northern end of the beach, while Tod's Hole, beyond the South Pier, and the Hollow Rock just outside it, are further examples of the process.¹

The existing harbour was completed in 1831,² after storms had wrecked the unfinished works of two earlier projects.³ It extends to just over three acres, and in its

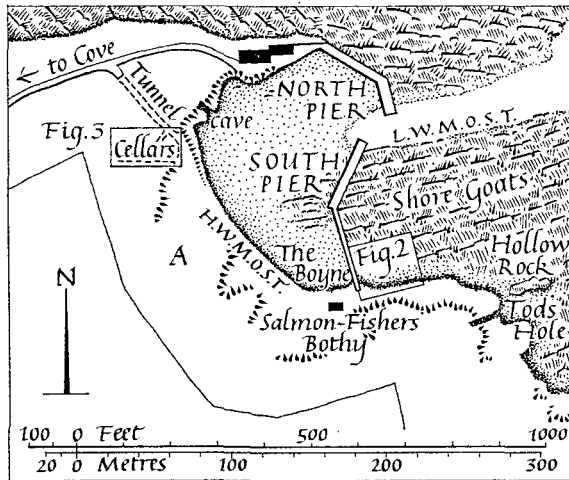


FIG. 1. Cove Harbour, showing positions of figs. 2 and 3, and of zig-zag track (A)

day accommodated craft of up to '60 tons burden'; but the entrance, 72 ft. wide, was regarded as too large, and as admitting too much sea.⁴ Today 'a heavy sea is thrown into the harbour in onshore gales. Rocky ledges extend a quarter of a mile offshore . . . close beyond which are sunken rocks.'⁵ Nevertheless, despite these rather sinister features, Cove Harbour was larger and deeper than the harbours at Skateraw, now filled up, and St Abbs, the only other landing-places, apart from open beaches, that are listed in *The North Sea Pilot*.

It is not with the existing harbour, however, that the present paper is concerned, but with earlier works of which traces can be seen on the site; and more especially with the first of the two unsuccessful projects just mentioned, as this must rank as a significant essay in eighteenth-century improvement. The published records of this project are not particularly informative. *The Statistical Account of Scotland* simply

¹ This paragraph is based on information provided by Mr A. Davies, of the Geological Survey of Great Britain.

² *N.S.A.*, II (Berwickshire), 312 f.

³ *Stat. Acct.*, XIII (1794), 229; *N.S.A.*, II (Berwickshire), 313.

⁴ *N.S.A.*, loc. cit.

⁵ *North Sea Pilot*, 11th edn. (1959), II, 258.

states¹: 'About 40 years ago, an attempt was made by Sir John Hall of Dunglass, to clear a bason, and make a harbour at Cove. The wall was considerably advanced, when a strong wind from the north-east raised such a heavy sea, as almost destroyed the work, and it was not again renewed. A road had been cut through a rock, for easy access to the shore, by which carts still pass underground, about 60 yards. Cellars were also cut out of solid rock, and would have been very useful and commodious.' *The New Statistical Account* has a slightly different story,² implying that the cellars were partly of natural origin: 'These [natural excavations] have partly been taken advantage of to form a range of cellars in the rocks, and also a road or tunnel, of about 60 yards in length, through one of the rocky sides of the bay, affording at high water the only access to the shore.' An account which appeared in 1847³ adds nothing of value. An O.S. Name Book⁴ notes that the name 'The Boyne', which appears on the 6-inch map in the southern corner of the harbour (fig. 1), 'applies to the original harbour for fishermen in the neighbourhood of Cockburnspath', and this suggests that whatever small tidal basin may have existed before the improvements may have been obliterated by the landward end of the South Pier and by the sand and gravel accumulated on either side of it. It is probable that before the pier was built the scour of easterly seas would have kept this area clear; while the fact that a ridge of rock, which projects across the bay from the pier, has been cut off square, at a point opposite the boathouse, suggests the artificial widening of the access to a basin in the position of the Boyne. It is to be noted further that Roy's map of Scotland, which was being prepared just at the time of Sir John Hall's operations, carries the legend 'A new harbour' and marks, in the bay, what may represent wharfage, though the smallness of the scale makes positive interpretation impossible.

This rather scanty evidence, however, is eked out by some contemporary records fortunately preserved at Dunglass; and these, taken in conjunction with the physical remains, help us to form at least a partial picture of the work of improvement carried out in the middle eighteenth and earlier nineteenth centuries.

The Dunglass material includes the following items referring to Sir John Hall's project.

(1) An account-book relating to the years 1751, 1752 and 1754, many of the entries in which throw light on the character of the work then in progress. For example, payments were made to a certain Stephen Redpath, who evidently contracted for road-work, quarrying, and excavation in rock; masons figure largely, there are several allusions to smiths, and 'Crawford's quarriers' are also mentioned once. Other entries relate to lime, gunpowder, rope and the sharpening of picks.

(2) Two sheets cut from an account-book, which, though undated, likewise clearly refer to work on the harbour. They record payments made weekly, and show that the usual rate for labourers was 6d. per day, or sometimes only 5d. Masons mentioned by name on these sheets and in the account-book are Alexander Fender,

¹ Vol. XIII (1794), 229.

² Vol. II (Berwickshire), 292.

³ Lewis, S., *Topographical Description of Scotland*, I, 206.

⁴ Berwickshire, VIII, under date 30th January 1856. 'Boyne' means a shallow tub or dish. (*Dictionary of the Older Scottish Tongue*, s.v.)

James Sinclair and John Brown, the last perhaps a foreman as he regularly received what was called 'kitchen money'.¹

(3) A loose sheet dated 1752, showing sums due to Stephen Redpath. Items relating to the harbour include work done in 1752 and 1753 on 'hollow road and celler, £68.18.6', and on [? cart] 'road from Cove, £31.3.8.'

(4) A detailed memorandum, in the same hand as the last, of excavation work done by 'Mr Redpath', giving measurements, prices and sums due. Its principal items relate to the 'Gutt', the 'Mine', an 'Outer Cellar', four other cellars identified by numbers, and the 'Corner'. The measurements are given in feet and decimals, the volumes excavated are shown as cubic fathoms and decimals, and payment is made at the rate of 7s. 6d. per cubic fathom in the case of the cellars and of 10s. elsewhere.

Turning now to the remains on the ground, the 'wall' mentioned in the *Statistical Account* is readily located in the tidal area just east of the South Pier (fig. 2), where, in fact, Roy's map (*supra*) actually marks a breakwater. The cliffs here rise steeply from the foreshore, their bases being just above high-water mark at the South Pier and dropping to some three or four feet below it along a frontage of about 150 ft.; and for 24 ft. eastwards from a point 112 ft. east of the pier the rock-face is heavily marked with step-like ledges (Pl. XIV, 1), evidently cut as tusking for the dressed slabs and blocks of a masonry structure. The assemblage consists of two flights of these ledges, main and lateral; the latter flanks the former on the east, and the narrowness and depth of its ledges suggest that they were intended to take the ends of horizontal facing-slabs. The main flight ranges in height from about 3 ft. below to about 7 ft. 6 in. above high-water mark; the largest ledge is 8 ft. long and has been cut back at least 1 ft. 2 in. in one corner.² The lateral flight rises about a foot higher; its top ledge is 3 ft. wide by 2 ft. 2 in. deep at one end, but the lowermost ledges, which are much wasted, have probably been the largest. Beside the bottom one a hole 5 in. deep has been sunk, perhaps for an iron stanchion. As will be seen in Pl. XIV, 1, the tusking is flanked on the west, on the other side of a fissure, by two flights of cuttings of a different character, which are marked as 'steps' in fig. 2; these rise to about the same height as the tusking, and are pretty certainly stairs for access to the top of the structure. Rock-cut stairs of this kind, though now repaired and altered, can be seen leading up from the tidal basin of the harbour to the footway of the North Pier at a point just east of the houses, where also another flight, unaltered, rises to the top of the parapet, itself cut out of the rock. Others again occur at a coastal quarry north-west of the Bilsdean Burn (Otter Hole; 764729), giving access to the working faces.

That the structure received on the tusking was in fact a breakwater is proved by foundations on the foreshore (fig. 2).³ Immediately below the main flight, a kerb of largish stones has been set along the base of the cliff, and outside this a deposit of

¹ Money paid to farm servants and others in lieu of food perquisites. (*Scottish National Dictionary*, s.v. Kitchen.)

² All measurements here are affected by the weathering of the rock.

³ The extent to which these remains on the foreshore are visible varies with changes in the depth and disposition of the shingle.

irregular cobbling. Again, about 20 ft. out from the cliff and extending outwards for a further 18 ft., as far as the first transverse rock-ridge, there is a well-defined strip of cobbling carefully kerbed with blocks along its western edge; its eastern, or seaward, edge has been eroded by the waves, but a breadth of from 11 ft. to 13 ft. can be measured. The original breadth here may have been about 18 ft., but there are some signs that the western edge curved out to coincide with the end of the tussing, which would have made the breadth at the cliff-face about 24 ft. This causeway-like setting was evidently the foundation of the breakwater's core, the stonework, and in particular any dressed facing-blocks, having no doubt been removed both from here and from other parts of the structure for re-use in the existing piers. Further traces of the breakwater are to be seen in two deposits of very large boulders, thinly scattered to a breadth of about 20 ft., which occur between the second and third, and again between the third and fourth, ridges of tidal rocks, about 82 ft. and 103 ft. (centres) respectively from the base of the cliff (fig. 2); these deposits are aligned with the causeway and tussing, and no doubt represent the heavy bottoming required where the water was deep at high tide and the force of the waves considerable. The second and third rock-ridges both show slight traces of battering at a few points, as if in preparation for masonry, but beyond the outer deposit of boulders nothing further can be seen. The original length of the breakwater, as built or begun, must thus have been well over 100 ft.

Whether, or how much of, this structure should be attributed to Sir John Hall must naturally remain in doubt; but the statement that 'the present pier . . . was built upon another plan'¹ implies that the two earlier breakwaters shared the same 'plan' and suggests that they occupied the same site. If they did so, the existing remains may well represent both, combined in a such a way as precludes differentiation. The idea that work of two periods may be present on the same site would do something to account for the double flight of steps.

Before leaving the subject of the breakwaters, it is necessary to deal with some further traces of construction which appear a short distance to the west. Close to the base of the cliff, and 42 ft. east of the South Pier, a small patch of masonry blocks sometimes appears through the shifting surface of the sand, one of them apparently dislodged from a cavity cut for it in the rock below; while to seaward three transverse rock-ridges have been notched, evidently for masonry foundations. The notch in the innermost ridge has been battered to a width of 6 ft., with its centre 59 ft. out from the cliff; while the corresponding notch in the next ridge, centred 18 ft. further out, has had its bottom neatly squared to a width of 5 ft. and a depth of 7 in. Immediately beyond this second notch a cavity has been cut in the rock to fit the end of a dressed slab. The third notch is centred 28 ft. beyond the second, but is 10 ft. east of the line on which lie the others and the squared stone blocks (fig. 2). These notches point clearly to some masonry structure, but its nature is difficult to guess. Its thinness and curving alignment, and the absence of any tussing on the cliff-face, suggest that it was something other than a protective breakwater, yet its position among the dangerous tidal ridges would seem to make it useless as a jetty. Whatever

¹ *N.S.A.*, II (Berwickshire), 312.

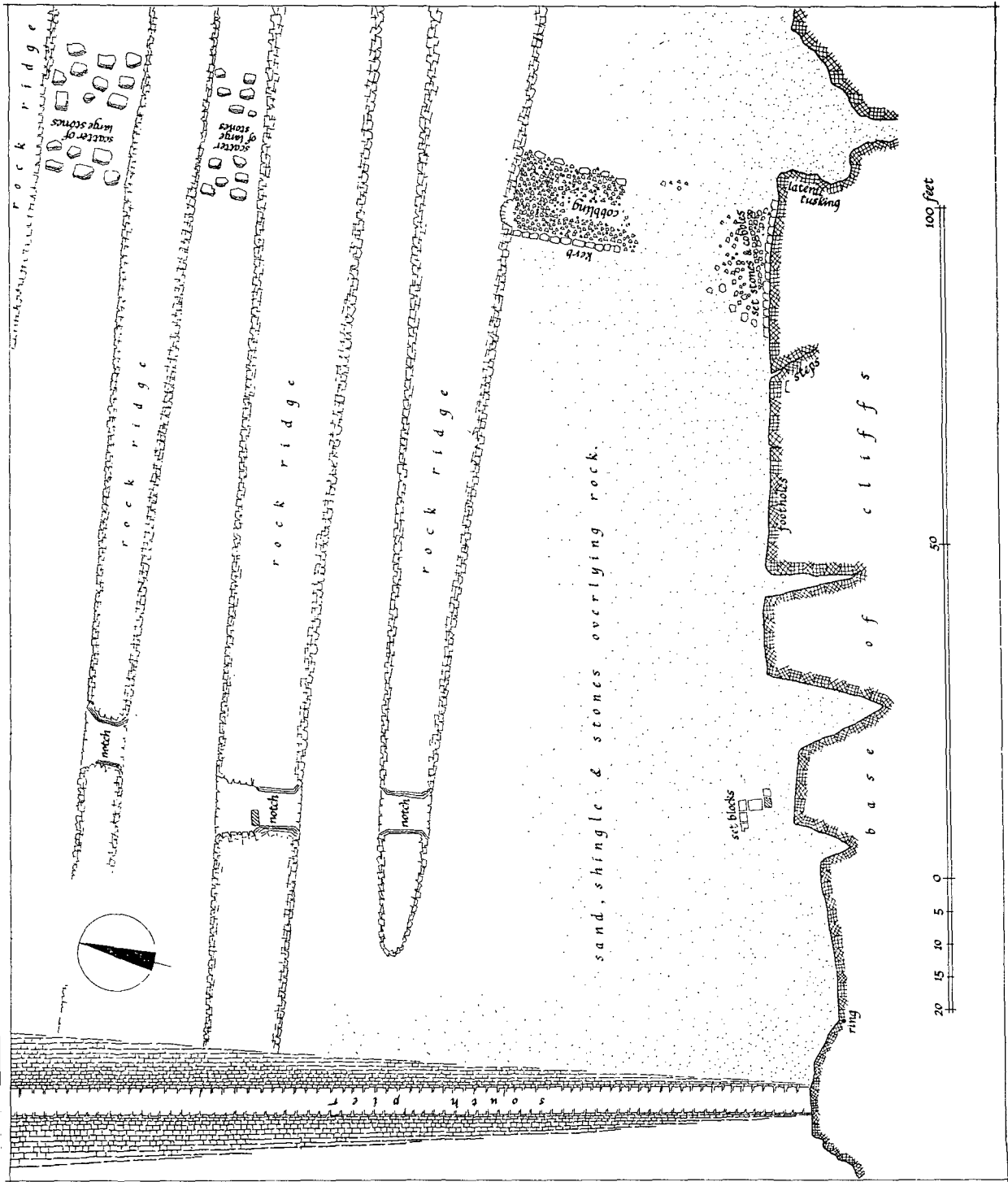


FIG. 2. Remains of earlier breakwaters near the South Pier

its purpose, it may be older than all the improvements and be connected with the Boyne (p. 214). With this structure should perhaps be associated, as evidence for the working of boats on this part of the shore, an iron ring let into the cliff 12 ft. east of the South Pier.

A final feature of this area which calls for notice is a line of footholds cut in the face of the cliff. They cross the face horizontally, about 6 ft. above high-water mark, as shown in fig. 2 and Pl. XIV, 2, and, after passing a fissure, turn upwards to finish near the top of the flights of steps. Below them the face of the rock seems to have been cut back. Similar footholds descend from the top of the lateral flight of tussing, the two uppermost being visible in Pl. XIV, 1; and these can be followed eastwards, in close association with a narrow natural ledge, as is shown in Pl. XVII, 3 at a point where one has been cut to ease passage past an obstruction. They were probably intended for the use, when the tide was high, of men working on the breakwater or on boats laid in at the base of the cliff. Beyond the end of the ledge just mentioned, a narrow pathway has been broken or worn along or across the low tidal rock-ridges of another inlet east of the Hollow Rock, a fact which points to considerable foot-traffic to the harbour from further along the coast.

The remaining works attributable to the eighteenth century are mentioned in one or another of the Dunglass records (*supra*). The 'road from Cove' was no doubt an earlier version of the road now leading down to the North Pier; but this can hardly represent the original work as it must have been constantly repaired, if not actually rebuilt, in the course of two centuries. This is made the more likely by the instability of the hillside both above and below the road, which was once, in fact, temporarily blocked by a landslip while this paper was being prepared (1963). The 'Gutt', the first item in the Redpath memorandum, was probably the natural channel that still gives entry to the existing harbour (fig. 1); both the word itself and the dimensions given in the memorandum suggest some kind of passage, while the depth of two feet, in particular, would suit the deepening of a navigable channel. Search for traces of work on this line is frustrated by the sand and sea-weed that cover the bottom of the harbour. The figures given in the memorandum as relating to the 'Gutt' are not consistent with themselves; the stated dimensions work out to 50.3, not 51, cubic fathoms, and though, at the 10s. rate, the price of £25 is approximately right for 50.3 cubic fathoms, 51 cubic fathoms should presumably have been priced at £25 10s. Similar inaccuracies will be noted below in connection with the other contracts.

The next item, the 'Mine', is the best-known feature of the whole harbour site. The word refers, of course, to the rock-cut tunnel, and that it should have been used in this sense is natural enough seeing that, in the Britain of 1752, tunnels must have been rare in other contexts than mining.¹ A tunnel was essential to any scheme of development at Cove, as the road from the hamlet ends on a platform of rock with an edge which falls sheer into the basin, and consequently, failing a tunnel, access

¹ The earliest tunnel on a British canal taking general traffic was that at Harecastle, Cheshire, on the Grand Trunk Canal. It was begun in 1766. (Smiles, S., *Lives of the Engineers* (1874), 1, 265 ff.) The rather earlier subterranean branches of the Duke's Canal, at Worsley, Lancs., formed part of the workings of a coal-mine (*ibid.* 177f.).

to the beach could only have been obtained at high water by way of the very steep slope that overlooks its landward side. Some faint traces of a narrow, zig-zag track, which must once have served this purpose, can be seen near the top of the slope in the area marked A in fig. 1, but the rest has evidently been carried away by the slipping of the unstable clay drift.

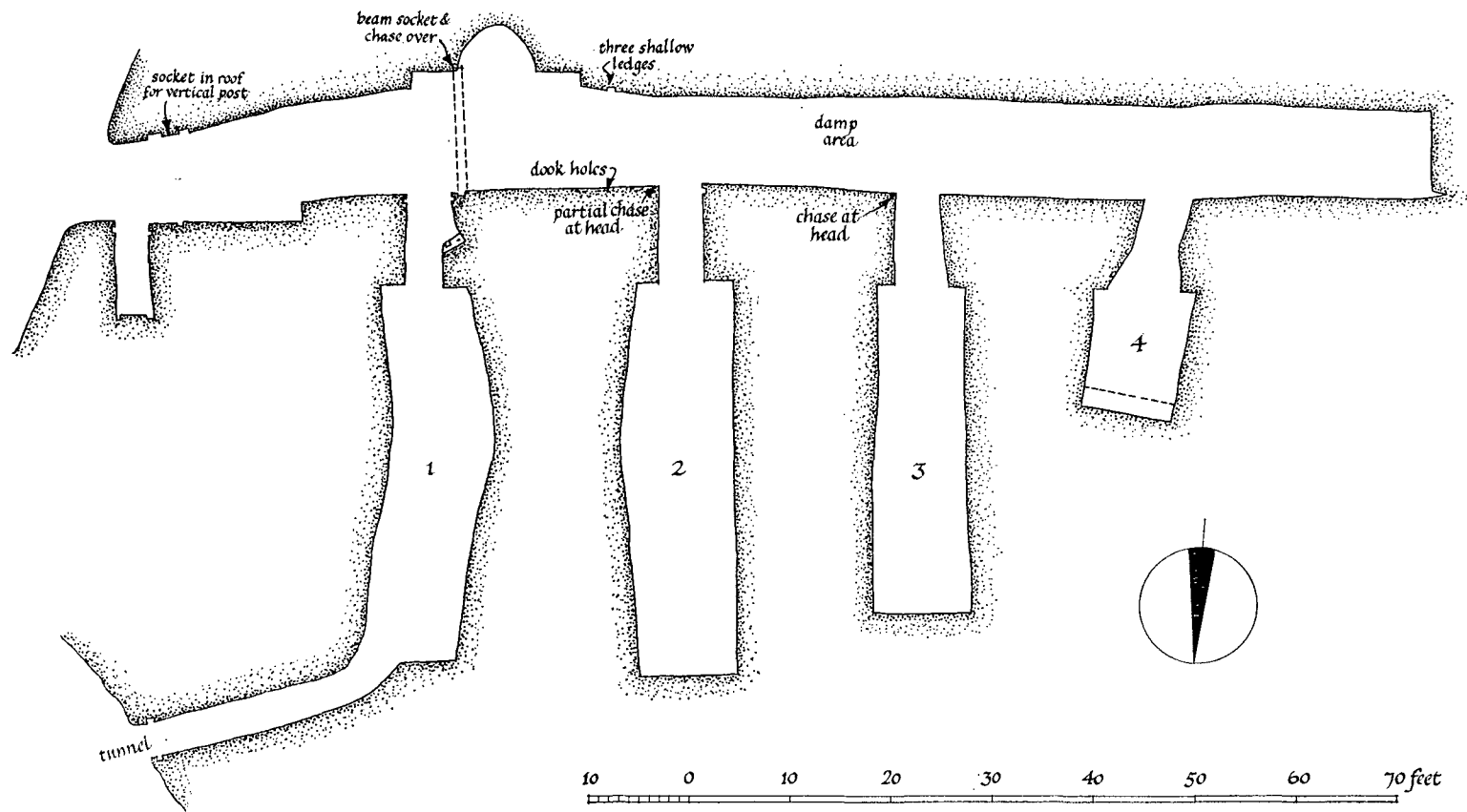
The tunnel opens off the road from Cove about 100 yds. above the latter's lower end (fig. 1), the entrance being approached by an open cutting in the hillside 32 ft. long. The outermost section of the tunnel proper, which is 20 ft. long, 8 ft. 3 in. wide and 10 ft. 6 in. high, is built in masonry and comprises a rounded vault which supports the overburden of drift that covers the seaward slope. The tunnel as a whole runs from north-west by north to south-east by south, with a fall of about 20 ft.; it is not quite regularly aligned though daylight can just be seen from end to end. Subject to minor errors arising from the irregularity of the work, a total length of 183 ft., inclusive of the masonry vault, may be taken as reasonably accurate. The same cause prejudices accuracy in the measurement of height and breadth, but heights were noted varying from 7 ft. 10 in. to 9 ft. 7 in., and breadths of from 9 ft. 4 in. to 10 ft. 9 in. at ground level; the section of the tunnel, however, nowhere approaches a rectangle as the sides curve inwards as they rise, leaving a flattish strip along the centre some 3 ft. to 4 ft. in width. Some abortive cutting just inside the masonry vault shows that this end of the tunnel was originally started on a line running slightly east of, and also rather higher than, the existing work. Pick-marks are plentiful everywhere, and many have no doubt disappeared through weathering as this rock is extremely friable. Entries for 'powder' in the account-book point to blasting somewhere in the harbour area, but no traces of jumper-holes were found. The passage giving access to No. 1 cellar (*infra*) opens 28 ft. short of the tunnel exit; beside it, at ground level, there is a triangular recess showing both pick-marks and natural fractures. The exit, measuring about 10 ft. in both height and width, opens on to the face of a cliff some 30 ft. above high-water mark. Its irregular shape (Pl. XVI, 1) suggests that the end of the tunnel has been formed, as suggested by the *New Statistical Account*,¹ in the mouth of a natural cave; and this is very probable as its elevation corresponds with that of a raised beach, where sea-caves would have tended to form in a past geological phase. A road is marked on the older editions of the O.S. maps as leading down from the exit to a point near the centre of the beach; but this has now been reduced by landslips and erosion to a rather precarious footpath, while an access to it from the cellars (*infra*), similarly marked, has been obliterated altogether.

The figures relating to the 'mine' in the Redpath memorandum (p. 218) are chiefly notable for their inaccuracy. Even if 81 square feet can be accepted as a reasonable estimate of size of the tunnel section – and this is highly questionable – neither the 'length' of 222½ ft. nor the 'whole length' of 240.9 ft. can be reconciled with the actual dimensions. That is to say, the aggregate length of tunnel and vault amounts only to 183 ft., while the addition of the 32-ft. length of the open entrance-passage would bring the total to no more than 215 ft. Again, if the stated dimensions

are taken at their face value, their product comes to 83·44, not to 37·08, cubic fathoms. On the other hand, the payment of £18 10s. 9½d. would be right for 37·08 cu. fms. at the 10s. rate, and the cubic-fathom figure, at least, is therefore likely to be correct. If the stated dimensions are examined in the light of this hint, it will be seen that 222½, or more correctly 222·48, is the product of 37·08 × 6, and this leads on to the suspicion that this entry has in fact been faked – i.e. that the writer first arrived at his cubic-fathom total by some method not divulged, that he then desired to present this total as if calculated from measurements in feet, and that in dressing up his statement he mistakenly multiplied his total by 6 instead of by 6 × 6 × 6.

After the 'mine' come the cellars – an 'Outer Cellar', four lateral cellars numbered 1 to 4 in the Redpath memorandum, and another small compartment of which no mention is made. They lie south of the tunnel and at a rather lower level, the lintel of their entrance being more or less level with the threshold of the tunnel entrance, at a distance of 36 ft. from it. The outer cellar is aligned almost exactly from east to west, and the lay-out as a whole (fig. 3) is so neatly rectangular as to suggest the hand of a practised surveyor. Walls and roof have been dressed with the pick and the standard of workmanship is high, surfaces being even, door-checks carefully executed, and many of the door-jambs rounded off.

The original doorway of the outer cellar has been almost wholly blocked by landslips, the worst of which was caused by the great rainstorm of 1948, and entry must now be obtained by way of No. 1 cellar (*infra*). A deposit of clay from the slipped material has since been washed in through the doorway, and this extends, in decreasing depth, for at least 30 ft. into the cellar, largely obscuring its features for half this distance. The cellar (Pl. XV) is 114 ft. 3 in. long, and varies in breadth from 9 ft. to 10 ft. 6 in.; but a section of the south wall has been squarely cut back to a depth of nearly 2 ft. to produce a shallow alcove 17 ft. wide, in the centre of which a low, arched recess, apparently natural, goes back a further 5 ft. into the rock. The north wall has been similarly cut back 2 ft. at 10 ft. 6 in. east of the entrance to No. 1 cellar. Evidence of internal construction appears at several points. (i) On the south wall, close to the entrance, the tops of two broad chases emerging from the washed-in clay. (ii) Between these, a socket in the ceiling, with a similar one opposite on the north side. (iii) A beam-socket and a chase in the alcove in the south wall, above the east corner of the recess, with a corresponding chase opposite on the north. These chases suggest a main transverse partition. (iv) Three shallow notches, one above the other at 1 ft. 1 in., 2 ft. 5 in. and 3 ft. above the floor, at 2 ft. 6 in. west of the alcove, with dook-holes opposite in the north wall. (v) In the end wall, 2 ft. above the floor, a horizontal channel of triangular section, 5 ft. 10 in. long by 1 ft. 10 in. high at the wall-face, and beside it at the same level, in the north-west corner, a vertical slot 4 ft. high by 10 in. wide at the wall-face, 1 ft. 6 in. deep and showing a small cup picked in its base (Pl. XVII, 1). The floor is rather uneven, and a stretch of it between Nos. 2 and 3 cellars tends to be damp and muddy. The roof is more or less flat, its junction with the walls being rounded off, and heights of from 7 ft. to 7 ft. 10 in. were noted; but along the outermost part there runs a natural fissure and under this heights are greater. The existence of this fissure, and of cracks in the roof



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FIG. 3. The cellars at Cove Harbour

of the small unnumbered chamber, lends colour to the statement in the *New Statistical Account* (*supra*) that natural caves were made use of in the formation of the tunnel and cellars. Some small niches in the walls suggest sockets for lights, but they may not be original features as one, at least, is cut in a chase which seems to have supported a partition (*supra*).

The small chamber just mentioned opens on the north immediately inside the entrance, but has been filled up almost to the roof with washed-in clay. It is 9 ft. long by 3 ft. 6 in. wide, is checked at the entrance for a door-frame, and shows a chase at each of its inner corners.

No. 1 cellar opens 33 ft. from the entrance. Its own entrance-passage, 9 ft. long by 5 ft. 6 in. high, is 4 ft. 6 in. wide at the mouth, where it is checked for a door-frame, but it is widened in the middle to 6 ft. by a recess on its west side. This recess suggests a 'refuge' where a person could stand without obstructing traffic in the passage; it contains a shelf 1 ft. 2 in. wide which is marked by a shallow rectangular depression measuring 9 in. by 6 in. and a hole 5 in. deep, perhaps designed to hold a lamp and a torch respectively (Pl. XVII, 2). The cellar proper is 47 ft. 6 in. long, from 9 ft. to 10 ft. 6 in. wide and generally about 6 ft. high.

From the north-east corner of this cellar the passage communicating with the tunnel has been broken out. This is 25 ft. long, up to 3 ft. 6 in. wide and 6 ft. high, and rises about 3 ft. from the cellar to the tunnel. Its opening into the tunnel is checked for a door-frame. This passage is much later than the cellars, as it was made only in 1830; Lady Helen Hall records,¹ 'This day returned to Geo. Paterson the Cooper his sketch for the improvement of Cove Cellars - of making a door from the inner end - to the Tunnel - thro a cut of above 20 ft - to give a through draft of air - as the place is damp for want of that. Also he and Rob^t Fairbairn (who have it in C^o) expect much advantage from the use of that upper door - for taking things in and out.' The inner end of the passage is illustrated in Pl. XVI, 2.

No. 2 cellar opens 25 ft. west of No. 1. Its entrance-passage is 9 ft. 6 in. long, 5 ft. to 5 ft. 6 in. wide and 5 ft. 10 in. high; the west side is checked for a door-frame and the east side shows part of a chase at the top and dook-holes lower down. The cellar proper is 39 ft. 6 in. long and from 9 ft. 6 in. to 11 ft. 6 in. wide, the west wall being straight and the east wall bulging outwards slightly towards the centre. Heights of from 6 ft. to 7 ft. 1 in. were noted. The regularity of the west wall's alignment is remarkable.

No. 3 cellar, which opens 24 ft. west of No. 2, does not differ from it in any important respect. The entrance-passage is 9 ft. long by 4 ft. 6 in. in average breadth, and shows a partial chase at the top of the east side. The cellar proper measures 33 ft. by 8 ft. 6 in. Heights of from 6 ft. 1 in. to 6 ft. 7 in. were noted.

No. 4 cellar, which opens 24 ft. west of No. 3, differs from the others in its smaller size and irregular shape, and in the fact that its axis is not at right angles to that of the outer cellar; it cannot, however, have been an afterthought, as its entrance is symmetrically placed in the plan and it is also mentioned in the Redpath memorandum. The entrance-passage is 8 ft. 6 in. long and widens inwards from

¹ MS. Memorandum Book of Lady Helen Hall (1826-32), p. 64.

4 ft. 6 in to 7 ft.; it is not checked, but shows dook-holes at its inner end. The cellar proper is only 12 ft. 8 in. long, measured over a bench left uncut at its inner end, and from 9 ft. to 10 ft. 6 in. wide. The height in the centre of a slightly arched roof is 6 ft. The bench is 1 ft. 2 in. high by 1 ft. 11 in. deep, and 3 ft. 3 in. above it there runs a horizontal channel up to 10 in. deep and splayed to a breadth of up to 13 in. at the wall-face.

The dimensions of the cellars and the prices due for their formation, as given in the Redpath memorandum, show vagaries which defy explanation. A single example will suffice to indicate their quality. Thus the entry for No. 4 cellar¹ gives dimensions of 27·76 ft. by 9 ft. by 6 ft., totals these as 3·46 cubic fathoms, and at a price of 7s. 6d. per cu. fm. arrives at a sum of £1 6s. od.; but the measurements, if multiplied together correctly, give a total of 5·44 cu. fms., for which the price at 7s. 6d. would have been £2 8s. 9½d. On the other hand, the dimensions now ascertained, which are probably as accurate as the irregularities of the walls and roof permit, give a total of approximately 7 cu. fms., for which the corresponding price would have been £2 12s. 6d. Not only is the calculation of the volume from the stated dimensions wrong, but the dimensions themselves are incorrect and, in particular, ignore the difference in breadth between cellar and entrance-passage. The 'due' sum would seem to be too small by about £1 6s. 6d., but again, as in the cases of the 'Gutt' and the tunnel (*supra*), it would agree with the untrue total of the volume excavated. It cannot be supposed that such figures would deceive a contractor and, failing information as to how wages were arranged, it is hard to see how they could have served even to swindle the workmen.

It has been mentioned that the unit price for work in the cellars was less by a quarter than that for the other rock-cutting jobs; no reason for this difference is given, but it is possible that expert miners may have been employed in the cellars and ordinary labour elsewhere, and that, if so, the former may have been able, in virtue of their special skill, to make adequate wages at lower piece-rates than the latter. A hint that this may have happened is perhaps to be found in the excellent workmanship of the cellars (*supra*); and it is true that a force of miners was available locally at the time as, by the end of the seventeenth century, coal was already being worked at Cockburnspath by 'a regular set of colliers',² while Sir John Hall himself 'made many attempts at coals'³ and certainly had a mine in operation in 1746 and 1747.⁴

A question which remains to be asked about the cellars is that of their original purpose, and on this neither records nor remains provide a great deal of information. In view, however, of the cellars' known date, and of the lack of any evidence of habitation, they can safely be dissociated from the series of artificial caves that are found in certain parts of Scotland,⁵ as these originated earlier, probably as

¹ The other entries are as follows: Outer Cellar $87 \times 6 \times 6 = 47\cdot63$ at 7s. 6d. (whole length 137); £5 9s. 9d. No. 1 do. $45\cdot54 \times 6 \times 6 = 7\cdot59$ at do.; £2 17s. od. No. 2 do. $50\cdot16 \times 6$ [$?9$] $\times 6$ [$?9$] = $8\cdot36$ at do.; £3 4s. 9d. No. 3 do. $48\cdot84 \times 6 \times 6 = 8\cdot14$ at do.; £3 1s. od. In some cases the reading is doubtful as between 6 and 9.

² *Stat. Acc.*, xiii (1794), 226.

³ *ibid.*

⁴ Account book covering the years 1746 to 1754 preserved in the Dunglass Estate Office.

⁵ cf. *P.S.A.S.*, xlv (1910-11), 265 ff. and list 300 f.

places of refuge, and were commonly adapted for residence.¹ The language of the *Statistical Account* (p. 214) further associates them with the harbour, and it would have been natural enough, when the harbour was building, to provide storage-room either for bulk exports awaiting shipment² or for imported goods awaiting removal by the purchaser. The cellars at Gunsreen, on Eyemouth harbour, associated as they are with a substantial merchant's mansion, may well provide a parallel, the local tradition that they were made for the purposes of the smuggling trade³ being plainly incredible. Some connection with the fishing industry also suggests itself, though the Cornish 'fish-cellars' do not provide an analogy as these, notwithstanding their name, are built on the surface and are not 'cellars' in the present sense at all.⁴ The fact that it was a cooper who was interested in the cellars' ventilation in 1830 (p. 222) suggests that at that date, eighty years after their formation, they played some part in the curing and barrelling of fish – perhaps white-fish rather than herrings, as the sun-drying and salting of white-fish is a lengthy process and the fish have to be moved in and out of some suitable keeping-place as weather and circumstances demand.⁵ This idea would accord with the fact that, in the later eighteenth century, the fish caught in this parish were mainly cod and other white-fish; the herring fishery, though sometimes very prosperous, seems to have been intermittent.⁶ The cool and even temperature of the cellars would seem to make them most suitable for the storage of fish.

The last major item in the Redpath memorandum is the 'Corner', and no physical remains can be cited to suggest its nature or position. The comment that it was 'esteemed 11 fathom, but far too much' suggests that its shape may have been too irregular for measurement, and it may therefore perhaps have been some rocky projection which obstructed building or road-work. The large recess in the cliff-base by the Salmon-fishers' Bothy might fit the description as a 'corner' but should not have been impossible to measure. This job was priced at £5 10s. od.

The foregoing account of the earlier harbour-works has pointed to nothing analogous with the North Pier. It seems likely, in fact, that the whole of this latter structure, including the landward section with its remarkable rock-cut parapet, was built new in 1830, as the pier-head is known to have been.⁷ Sir John Hall, on this showing, like all earlier users of the inlet, must have looked for protection from northerly winds to the tidal rocks on which much of the North Pier is founded.

In addition to the works connected with the harbour projects, the inlet contains an interesting tidal cave which deserves to be put on record. The cave opens just north of the northern end of the beach and, though clearly of natural origin, has

¹ *Stat. Acct.*, x (1794), 295 n. can probably be taken as sound.

² For exports of 'corn and meal' from Eyemouth after the construction of a harbour there, see *Stat. Acct.*, III (1792), 115 f.

³ M'Iver, Rev. D., *Eyemouth* (1906), 137.

⁴ *Antiquity*, XVIII (1944), 38; for photo, Jenkin, A. K. H., *Cornish Seafarers* (1923), plate facing p. 161. I am indebted for these references to Mr A. C. Thomas, M.A., F.S.A., F.S.A., SCOT.

⁵ I am indebted for this suggestion to Mr C. Burns, foreman curer, Newhaven.

⁶ *Stat. Acct.*, XIII (1794), 228 f.

⁷ Somerville, A., *The Autobiography of a Working Man* (1848, repr. Turnstile Press, 1951), 79. I am indebted for this reference to Mr M. R. Dobie, C.B.E., B.A.

evidently been adapted as an underground berth for boats – a precursor, as it were, of the bomb-proof U-boat pen. It is 21 ft. long, tapering internally (Pl. XVIII, 1); the mouth is 12 ft. 6 in. wide by about 14 ft. high. The sea enters it at every high tide, and the mouth is fully exposed to easterly seas driving in from the harbour-entrance; the soft sandstone walls are thus very heavily weathered, and the traces of human work are consequently much smoothed off. However, it is possible to point, on the right-hand side, to a kind of irregular ledge (Pl. XVIII, 2), formed some 5 ft. above the floor, by the running-together of a series of footholds similar to those on the cliff-face east of the South Pier (p. 218); and at its outer end this ledge expands into a small shelf (3 ft. 6 in. by 2 ft.) on which is fixed an iron ring with a few links of stout chain attached. At the inner end of the cave four footholds mount to the level of the ledge, and on the left-hand side several more run back towards the entrance; associated with these latter is an aumbry-like recess, 2 ft. 9 in. wide, 1 ft. 5 in. deep and 2 ft. 6 in. high in front, suitable for holding a lantern. The incised initials that cover the walls of the cave all appear to be the work of fairly recent visitors. The footholds and aumbry differentiate this cave markedly from Tod Hole, a larger cave 90 yds. east of the South Pier; this shows no sign of adaptation to human purposes, perhaps because access to it from the sea is obstructed by the Hollow Rock, which stands in front of its mouth.

The choice of such an awkward and dangerous berth, in preference to the adjoining smooth, shingly beach, would suggest a desire for privacy; while provision for artificial lighting, if this is the correct explanation of the aumbry and shelf, may be further evidence of a shrinking from the public view. It is consequently tempting to suspect some relevance to Cove in two passages about the local smuggling trade in the *New Statistical Account*.¹ One of these (1834), which relates to the next parish, Coldingham, mentions 'numerous caves and fissures, formerly the haunts of smugglers', some of which, 'of considerable dimensions, excavated out of the solid rock, are inaccessible by land, and can only be approached at low water, and in the calmest weather. Their narrow entrances are completely blocked up by the rising tide, and a gentle breeze from the east speedily creates a dangerous surf.' The other (1835) states that the coast of Mordington parish, between Ayton and Berwick, 'exhibits a continued unbroken line of abrupt rocks, which contain some caverns that were much used by smugglers in foreign spirits before the erection of a Preventive Station at Burnmouth'.

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¹ Vol. II (Berwickshire), 279 f., 338.



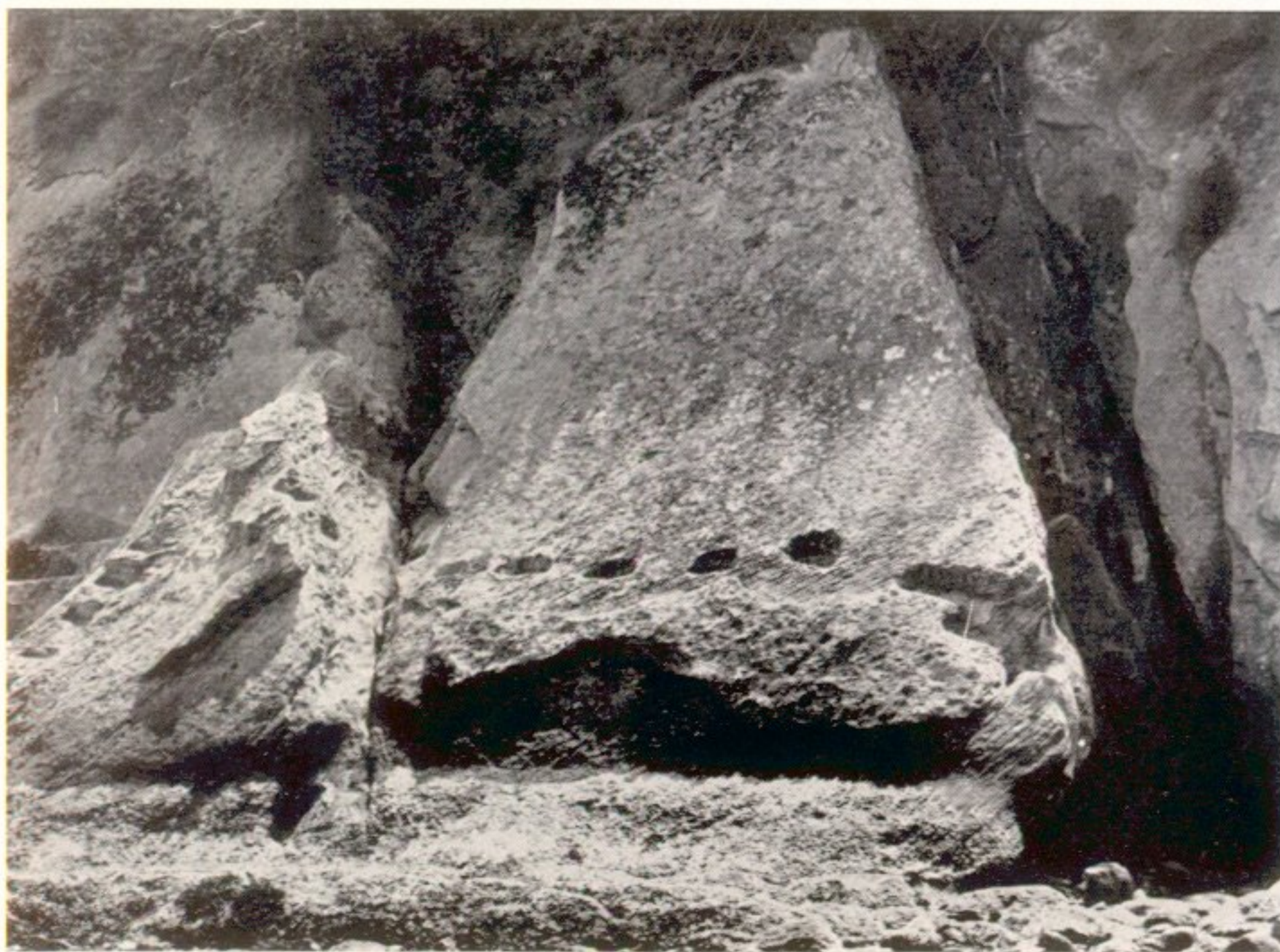
1. General view showing mouth of tunnel



2. General view showing North and South Piers



1. Tusking and steps at site of earlier breakwaters



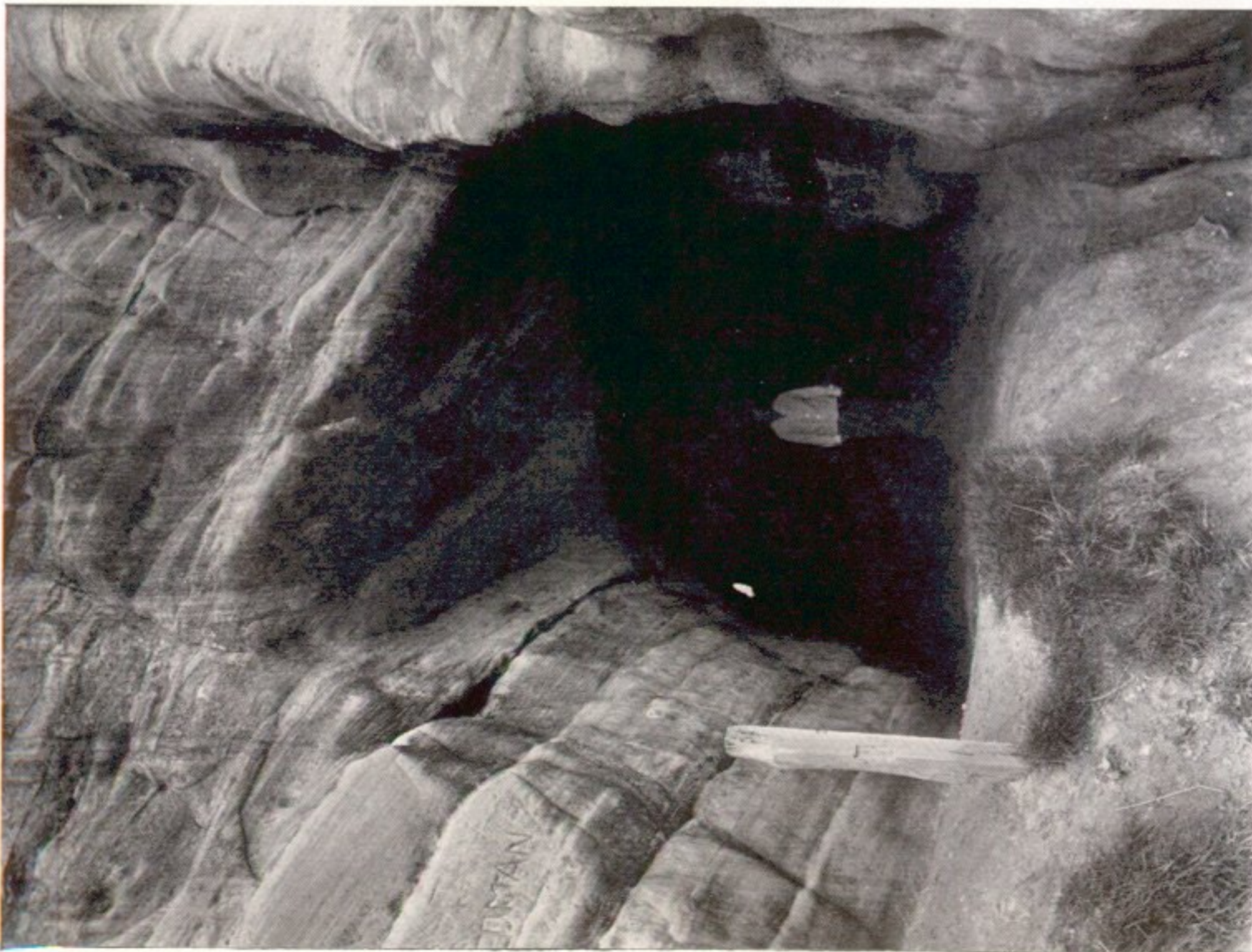
2. Footholds on rock face



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Main cellar looking inwards

Photo R.C.A.M.



1. Mouth of tunnel. The white spot is daylight showing at the outer entrance



Photo R.C.A.M.

2. No. 1 cellar, with mouth of passage from tunnel

Crown copyright



Photo R.C.A.M.

Crown copyright

1. Inner end of main cellar



Photo R.C.A.M.

Crown copyright

2. Recess with shelf in entry to No. 1 cellar



3. Pathway and foothold on rock face



1. Interior of tidal cave



2. Shelf and footholds in tidal cave