

ART. V.—“*Celtic*” *fields, farmsteads, and burial-mounds in the Lune Valley.* By R. A. C. LOWNDES, M.A.

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Introduction and Summary.

THIS article records the results of field survey during 1960-61 in the Middle Lune Valley.¹ The features discussed include a “*Celtic*” *field-system*, with included *habitation sites*, and a preliminary report upon the excavation of one of them, showing it to be *Romano-British* in date, there are also several *tumuli*, at Eller Beck, Burrow (fig. 3); a *fortified earthwork* with ditch and *external bank*, at *Castle Hill, Leck*, and a *tumulus with encircling bank* at Middleton. In addition, there is further information regarding the known sites at Borrens, Middleton; and at Howerigg, Barbon; this latter site is shown to lie across the line of the Roman road up the valley (fig. 1).

The valley of the Lune, at this middle stage of its course, consists of a strip of low-lying, level fertile land, on both sides of the river, running almost due north and south, varying in width from half a mile or so at the northern end (the junction with the Rawthey) to two miles wide at the southern end (the junction with Leck Beck). This is flanked by low hills on the west, under 800 ft. high, and on the east by the last outliers of the Pennines — Middleton Fell, whose highest point is one foot under 2,000 ft., and Casterton Fell, just under 1,500 ft.; these two are divided by the narrow Barbondale gap, leading eastward into Dentedale and the West Riding. Three counties meet in the area — Westmorland, Lancashire and Yorkshire. [It is also exactly on the

¹ Ref. O.S. Maps: 1-in., sheet 89; 2½-in., sheets SD67, SD68.

boundary between two of the Regions proposed by Prof. C. F. C. Hawkes in his *ABC of the Iron Age*² — no. 29, the North Pennines, and no. 30, Cumbria.]

The solid geology of the area is mixed; mainly Upper Silurian — Wenlock Shales and Lower Ludlow — in the north; and in the south, Carboniferous Limestone, Millstone Grit, and Coal Measure rocks. A considerable part of the area is masked by glacial deposits of boulder-clay, containing sandstone and granite erratics from further north.

Climatically the valley is relatively mild and sheltered for this part of England; there is even a palm-tree in a cottage garden at Leck!

The centre of the area lies some 20 miles up river from tidal water at Lancaster, and some ten miles inland as the crow flies from the nearest sea-shore, in the Kent estuary. It is thus well placed for penetration inland from landings along Morecambe Bay. The route through the Lune Valley was a main trunk-line on the Roman road-system;³ being probably the earliest route to Carlisle from the south, constructed by Agricola about A.D. 79; it is section 7c in I. Margary's numbering.⁴

A milestone survives at Middleton, and the important evidence from it is discussed by Prof. Birley in CW2 liii 52-62. A cross-section was cut through the road at Casterton by Miss Jane Ewbank in 1958, and published in CW2 lx 28-31. The Roman fort at Burrow was partially excavated by Col. O. North and Mr E. J. W. Hildyard in 1952-53 (CW2 liv 66 ff.).

The Roman road runs along the *eastern* side of the valley, and all the sites with which this article is concerned lie along the same eastern side; either on the higher edge of the valley floor, or on the lower slopes of the flanking hills; they are all well clear of the river itself; and none are higher than some 650 ft.

² CBA Occasional Paper no. 11, 4-5.

³ CW2 xx 1-15.

⁴ *Roman Roads in Britain* ii 109 ff.

The Survey.

The plans have been constructed to the following standards of accuracy — the methods chosen being limited by the fact that most of the sites are situated a respectable distance from roads, and that much of the equipment-carrying, and surveying, was done single-handed.

The plans of ‘homesteads’ (figs. 1 and 3) were obtained by triangulation; distances being measured by linen tape, and angles by a surveyor’s sextant. The earth-work on Castle Hill was planned by a tape and compass traverse, with offsets. For the field-system and inter-relation of sites in fig. 2, the distances were estimated by pacing, and sites related to the 25-in. O.S. Map⁵ by compass resection.

Good air-photographs would, of course, have been of the greatest assistance, particularly in planning fig. 2, unfortunately the only ones available were those of the Air Ministry,⁶ which were taken at too great a height (and not under the best light conditions), to be of much use in giving initial information — though they were helpful in checking the results of survey.

The Sites.

1. (a) *Middleton tumulus*: Map Ref. SD. 631875; 6-in. Map, SD 68 NW.; 25-in., Westm. sheet XLIV. 1.

This tumulus is built on a spur of land, 400 yds. east of Middleton Hall farm, some 450 ft. above O.D., at the entrance to a narrow valley running into the steep slopes of Middleton Fell. It is situated not exactly on the crest, but slightly down on the eastward facing slope. The surrounding land is all under grass, and the tumulus itself, unlike those at Eller Beck (see below) is entirely grass-covered with no rock showing through. Unlike

⁵ Lancs. sheet xx 2.

⁶ Ref. no. 541/525; taken 14 May 1950; *esp.* nos. 4170-71.

those at Eller Beck, it shows no apparent signs of having been despoiled.

In form it shows a superficial resemblance to a Wessex saucer-barrow, consisting of a shallow mound 55 ft. in diameter, 2 ft. high; surrounded by a bank now spread to a width of 25 ft. and height of $1\frac{1}{2}$ ft.; there does not appear to be a berm between mound and bank. One cannot say without excavation, whether or not there was a ditch between bank and central mound.

There appears formerly to have been another tumulus some 400 yds. to the SW.; see 1(b) below.

1. (b) *Middleton Settlements* (fig. 1): SD. 631874 and 627871.

The north-eastern of these two sites, here called Middleton Hall "A", was briefly reported in CW2 lviii 201 (1958). It was discovered a few years ago by the farmer, Mr Weightman of Middleton Hall, when clearing the field from bracken.

It lies on the same spur as the tumulus above, on a south-easterly-facing slope, just below the summit, overlooking Larum Gill; it is some 200 yards SW. of the tumulus, from which it is now hidden by a stone field-wall. There is much loose rock piled about; also a scooped-out depression with a short "hollow-way" leading out of it.

The generally rectangular form, with enclosures leading off a central passage, might suggest a Dark Age date; but so simple a form might well be medieval or even later; whilst its rectangularity need not rule out a Romano-British dating.⁷

The second of these sites, Middleton Hall B, 500 yds. downhill to the SW., is the only one of these Middleton Hall sites to be listed by the Royal Commission on Historical Monuments, Westmorland, where its dimensions are described;⁸ although in fact it is the least well-

⁷ See e.g. Mr B. Blake's *Cumberland Excavations*, CW2 lix (1959) 11.

⁸ *RCHM Westmorland* (1936) 172b-173a, no. 12.

preserved. There was also a tumulus here in 1911, when it was described by W. G. Collingwood as 5 ft. high and 60 ft. in diameter.⁹ It has been removed, without any finds reported, before 1936 (the date of the *RCHM Inventory*).

2. *Borrens, Middleton* (fig. 1): SD. 628839; 6-in. Map, SD. 68 SW.

This site is some two miles south of the Middleton Hall group; it stands on a small knoll, 300 yds. NW. of Borrens Farm, 300 ft. above O.D., immediately west of the railway; with a level approach from the south, and a fairly steep slope down to the NW. and north towards a stream, Sowermire Beck. At one time the site was covered with a small plantation of trees, some of whose stumps remain.

To judge from the ground plan, the site seems to be an Iron Age/Romano-British tribesman's kraal, with circular hut surrounded by a walled enclosure with two inturned entrances, with a possible second hut constructed against the eastern entrance.

Here also there is a scooped-out hollow.

The site is listed by the RCHM;¹⁰ its condition is rather better than one would expect from the account there given (no plan).

3. *Howerigg, Barbon* (fig. 1): SD. 624819; 6-in. Map, SD. 68 SW.

This interesting site, some $1\frac{1}{4}$ miles south of the previous one, is situated on a small rise, height about 280 ft., which drops down to the north, in a field which lies at the junction of two minor roads, just south of Barbon village.

An important aspect of this site is that it lies across the line of the Roman road up the valley.

⁹ CW2 xii 411.

¹⁰ *RCHM Westmorland* 173, no. 13.

The actual course of the road is not visible on the ground at this point; nor was it shown on editions of the 6-in. O.S. Map *before* the present (1956) Provisional Edition.

The conjectural restoration as now shown was obtained by the Archaeology Division, Ordnance Survey¹¹ from "P. Ross" in 1916 (presumably Percival Ross, author of *The Roman road from Ribchester to Low Borrow Bridge*).¹²

This site, too, has a large and deep-scooped depression; another noteworthy feature is the set of three roughly equal rectangular enclosures, backing on to the perimeter wall.

A Romano-British stone spindle-whorl was picked up a little less than a mile away, at the junction of the Barbon-Dent road with the Fell Terrace road (638835) in August 1937.¹³

A quern, of unrecorded type was found in 1911 "in removing stone from a British Settlement on the neighbouring farm at Howerigg".¹⁴

The site was listed by the *RCHM Westmorland*;¹⁵ though its connection with the Roman road was not mentioned, possibly because the O.S. Maps did not then show the course of the road at that point.

Though the actual course of the road is not established with complete certainty to the yard, the local geography, coupled with the neighbouring known alignments, make it reasonably certain that some part of this settlement must overlie the road. This fact, together with the rectangular nature of the structures, make it seem to be more likely to be Dark Age than Romano-British in date. Excavation here might shed light on the processes leading to the abandonment of the road as a major highway

¹¹ Information from Mr C. W. Phillips, in a letter to the author, 4 April 1960.

¹² *The Bradford Antiquary* n.s. vi (1916).

¹³ CW2 xxxviii 310.

¹⁴ CW2 xii 431.

¹⁵ *RCHM Westmorland* 35, no. 9.

— (even if this process may have started in Roman times with the establishment of the York-Stainmore-Brougham route to Carlisle).

4. *Eller Beck, Burrow* (figs. 2, 3): O.S. 6-in. Map, SD. 67 NW; 25-in. Lancs. sheet XX. 2.

(a) GENERAL.

This site lies upon the low southerly flank of the hills that line this stretch of the Lune Valley; it is mostly situate between about 450 and 650 ft. above O.D. Through the centre of it runs Eller Beck, providing an ample permanent water-supply; the beck has cut itself a steep-sided miniature "valley", some 10-20 yds. wide, and 40 ft.-odd deep in places, affording plenty of wind-shelter besides the bank of the stream.

A few hundred yards to the SE. runs the bigger and steeper watercourse of Leck Beck; less than a mile downhill to the west runs the Roman road up the valley; and the Roman fort at Burrow (possibly "Galacum") lies about $2\frac{1}{2}$ miles SW. Behind the site, the moorland opens up toward the pot-holer's country of Leck Fell, Lancaster Hole, and Bullpot of the Witches.

The fields and farmsteads lie upon a south-westerly-facing slope; most of the tumuli lie over an intermediate crest, further up the fell-side. The area is just beyond the edge of present-day arable, being part permanent grass pasture, part moorland pasture, part bracken.

The underlying geology is a junction between the Millstone Grit and the Coal Measures.

The site covers a total area of some 150 acres, and includes six "farmsteads", i.e. groups of small enclosures within perimeter walls, together with a number of possible isolated huts; a well-preserved field-system of small fields of the "Celtic" type, mostly rectangular; and at least four, probably five, tumuli.

The author is engaged in excavating one of the farm-

steads — Site C (fig. 3). A preliminary report on the excavation is included in section 4(c) below. From this, it would appear that this farmstead at least is of Roman date; and the field-system appears to be contemporary with it.

Several field-walls are aligned on to the tumuli, which would seem evidence for the tumuli being older than the fields — a fact that one would expect on general grounds.

Anyone intending to visit the site would be advised to seek the permission of the land-owner, Lt-Col. R. H. Ogden, of Park House, Leck (639770) (to whom I am greatly indebted for his generous help and assistance in very many ways).

(b) THE TUMULI.

Four of these tumuli, T₁, T₂, T₄, T₅, are very nearly, but not quite, in line. This circumstance is probably accidental, due to these four all being sited along the same spur. The probability that the alignment is accidental is strengthened by the fact that T₅ is out of sight of the other three, being over a crest; and if it *was* sited in connection with the other three, two intermediate "stations" would have been needed. T₅ is in fact slightly to the west of a line connecting T₁-T₄, and T₂ is slightly to the east.

T₁, Map Ref. 646786, is the most impressive one of the group; it also occupies the "king-pin" position highest up the fell-side — at a height of approx. 770 ft.

Its construction is unusual; a long artificial spur was built out; its long axis following the natural slope, on an orientation roughly NE.-SW. It measures 175 ft. at its longest, 110 ft. at its widest, and an estimated 8 ft. at its thickest; this spur gives a roughly circular level platform 65 ft. across, on which there is a circular mound, 45 ft. across and 3½ ft. high; there being therefore a "berm" or processional way (?) 10 ft. wide around the mound. The whole is well-compacted.

Its condition is good, except that on the west side of the central mound there are signs that a small opening of some 6 ft. by 1 ft., of unknown depth, may have been made into the mound, then filled in again.

The fact that this tumulus is built upon an artificially levelled spur-platform may indicate a reconsideration of the "Druid Circle" at Casterton¹⁶ (640799), some 1,600 yds. as the crow flies to the NNW. This is a circle of 59 ft. diameter, consisting of 20 stones, in height up to 1 ft. 7 in.¹⁷ Of this circle, Sir Mortimer Wheeler wrote that it ". . . would be dismissed at once as the remnant of a tumulus but for the fact that it is sited carefully on a levelled platform . . ." ¹⁸

There is also the possibility that there was a Beaker burial at the Casterton circle site, as is discussed by Miss Fell in CW2 liii 3; the same article gives evidence for a coastal movement by B or Bell Beaker people (though Beaker finds in the Lake counties are mainly confined to the Eden Valley where the constricted or A/C type occurs).

T₂ is nearly in line with, and is visible from, T₁ and T₄. It is smaller than T₁, and is more the conventional rocky cairn-type of tumulus — there are possible traces of a levelled "berm" around the mound, but this may be accidental. It seems to have been disturbed in the centre, but is generally well-compacted.

T₃ is across a small dip from T₁. It is much robbed, and might be the remains of a circular hut (it is depressed in the centre), but for its situation at the summit of a knoll from whence the ground falls in all directions.

T₄ is the largest of all the tumuli discussed in this article, but also the most ruined. It is a large cairn of loose rock, diameter about 75 ft., height 7-8 ft.; the centre is badly cratered to a depth of several feet.

¹⁶ *RCHM Westmorland* 66-67, no. 5.

¹⁷ Not 7 ft., as incorrectly stated in N. Thomas, *A Guide to Prehistoric England* (1960) 208.

¹⁸ *RCHM Westmorland*, introduction, xxxi.

This tumulus shows impressively on the skyline when viewed from the Castle Hill earthwork (see below). In general, T₁, T₂ and T₄ all show on the skyline when viewed both from the upper reaches of Eller Beck (upstream from site C) and from the east, in the general direction of Leck Beck; which may have some bearing on the location of the tumuli-builders' dwellings.

T₅ is smaller than T₄, and is about the same size as T₂; it, too, has been opened in the centre. As already mentioned, it is out of sight of the other tumuli. Some of the loose stones upon it may have been placed there during a clearance for ploughing of a portion of the field in which it stands.

(c) THE "FARMSTEADS".

There are six "farmsteads" — here defined as several small enclosures within one perimeter wall — lettered A-F on figs. 2 and 3. In addition, there are possible single rectangular huts adjacent to the field-wall which runs SSE. from tumulus T₁, and another at the intersection of field-walls south of T₄; also a possible round hut, diameter 15 ft., 20 yds. east of site C; and another 200 yds. NW. of site A, in the corner of a field, with a small tree growing in it.

Site A (641784): this farmstead lies precisely on the county boundary, represented by the high modern field-wall which bisects the site. The remains on the Lancashire side are the better preserved; here there are three orthostats, the largest 3 ft. 6 in. high, presumably gateposts; one of the enclosures is a deep scooped hollow.

Site B: this is a particularly problematic site; the enclosures are formed by massive lines of tumbled rock; the enclosures marked 5a and 9-9a might represent dwellings; there is so much bare rock, unturf-grown, that the site may have been ruined at a later date than the others in the Eller Beck area.

Site C (642781): this consists of a long rectangular en-

closure, 105 yds. x 40 yds, with a well-preserved gateway at the short southern end, edged with two boulders 2 ft. high, and paved with cobbles; there are two more entrances on the long western side.

The whole area is built on an apparently artificially-levelled platform, cut out from the slope of the hill east of it. It is subdivided internally into eight enclosures; very close to its NW. corner lies another rectangular enclosure; and 20 yds. west of the centre of this site, there is a circular structure 15 ft. diameter, which might be a round hut.

This large site seemed the most coherent and likely to be the most prosperous of the six. I therefore chose it for excavation, in the hope of finding evidence to date it, and, since it seems to be integrated into part of the field-system, dating for that also. I also decided to uncover the widest area practicable so as to discover as much as possible of the ground plan.

The two central enclosures alone are small enough to have been roofed, so it was assumed that my dwelling-house would lie there. Accordingly, a grid of 20-ft. squares was marked out over them, and the first turf was cut on 24 June 1961. The excavation was concluded on 10 October 1962.

The first pottery (a rim-piece of *c.* A.D. 270-320,¹⁹ together with a fragment of different ware, and a square-headed nail) was found on the twentieth visit's digging. Subsequent finds include two mortaria rims, datable to *c.* 270-350, a dish rim of *c.* 160-200 and possibly later, and a cooking-pot of *c.* 160-230.

I am most grateful to Mr George Jobey for his kindness in providing the above datings.

Before excavation, it was thought possible, from the site's general appearance, that it might be Dark Age or

¹⁹ This period, incidentally, is the same as that of the major rebuilding of the Roman fort at Burrow, where all the existing buildings, the fort wall, and the north and south gates all date from the late 3rd or early 4th centuries A.D. CW2 liv 90.

Medieval (or even possibly Norse), but nothing has yet been found to indicate any occupation other than Romano-British.

Tentatively, it would appear that the smaller of the two central enclosures may be the dwelling-house proper, while the larger may be an enclosed court-yard, analogous to the rectangular structure of approximately the same dimensions, excavated by Mr Brian Blake at Risehow, Maryport, Cumberland.²⁰ This latter site produced a pottery rim which suggested "a fairly close date with the decades, *c.* A.D. 360, for the occupation".

The excavation of my site C seems to show that at least one circular hut occupied the central part of the site before the rectangular cross-walls were built. My original survey (here published as showing the surface appearance of the site) will need modification in the forthcoming excavation report.

Sites D, E and F: these are grass-covered, smaller than the three preceding, and less well-preserved — lying as they do close beside modern field-walls, they have probably been robbed for wall building. Site E has a scoop-depression; the outlines of its interior enclosures are somewhat doubtful, and it is possible that they may be more "rounded" and less "angular" than as shown in fig. 4.

The only other known Roman period farmstead site in the neighbourhood is the settlement at Sealford,²¹ two miles west of Kirkby Lonsdale (583789). A brief excavation there in 1945 produced pottery mainly of 2nd century date, with a possible 3rd century fragment.

(d) THE FIELD-SYSTEM.

The fields shown on fig. 2 fall into two main groups; there are the roughly rectangular, fairly level fields, with some trace of lynchets; these would all be capable of

²⁰ *Excavations of Native (Iron Age) sites in Cumberland 1956-58*, CW2 lix II.

²¹ *RCHM Westmorland 139-140*, no. 37.

being ploughed, and are marked in fig. 2 with the word "Field". The major area is that west and downhill of sites C and D; another is NW. of site C; and a further pair is north of site A.

Besides these, there is a larger area divided up by the remains of boulder-walls — mostly rectilinear, but there is a roughly oval area abutting on to site A, and a contour-following line running around T₃. Most of these "walls" delimit areas that are too steep and too rocky for ploughing to be feasible; if they were ever cultivated it must have been with a hoe, or other hand-instrument. There are no clear lynchets. An instance of this second type can be seen in the area west of the two fields (divided by a track) on the Westmorland side of the county boundary; so also is the area between T₄ and site F.

There are several intermediate areas, north of Eller Beck, that might belong to either category.

There are also, in the level modern fields downhill to the west, at the foot of the slope, traces of banks that may well mark in a fragmentary state the remains of further fields. The situation here is complicated by the effects of cultivation, and the digging of field-drains. An attempt to map the banks in the large field through which Eller Beck flows (numbered 12 in the O.S. 25-in. Map), produced no very clear picture, and I have not shown them in fig. 2. Air-photography under good conditions would probably be necessary to produce any clearer evidence.

There must be several stages of field-wall construction in the general area. Thus the primitive-looking oval enclosure adjoining site A appears to overlie and hence post-date a rectilinear line running uphill in the general direction of T₃. This rectilinear line is continued in the opposite direction, westward, by a clearly visible bank in the large level field to the west (no. 12). This is indicated by an interrupted shaded line in fig. 2, running parallel to the modern field-wall and county boundary.

This latter bank might be dismissed as a field-drain, were it not for this linking up with the line across the "settlement field", which is certainly no field-drain.

Several of the existing unruined field-walls in modern use appear to link up with, and perhaps follow the line of, the ancient field-walls. There is an instance of this to the east of site F; another in the fields north of site A; another 300 yds. south of site E.

Discussion.

It would seem reasonable to suggest that this field-system and the farmsteads represent an area of mixed farming; the areas specifically marked "Fields" would be ploughland, probably growing "spelt" wheat²² — the region being rather damp for barley. Spelt being winter-sown, there would be need for means to keep grazing-animals away from the young crop in winter;²³ this may explain the ample amount of enclosures, which must be mostly for stock, inside the perimeter walls of these sites; A, B, C in particular. There they may have been fodder fed — the scythe, to increase hay-getting, being a Romano-British introduction.²⁴

The remaining "non-arable" field boundaries may represent the division of winter grazing-grounds near the homesteads or they may, after all, have been hoe-cultivated, since steep-sloped fields were still being thus cultivated in Roman times, the iron hoe itself also being a Roman introduction.²⁵

It is possible that the Eller Beck site was concerned in supplying corn to the Roman fort at Burrow, and also for the needs of travellers along the Roman road. The arable field area at present surviving would not do much more than supply the growers' own consumption — on

²² H. Helbaek, "Early Crops in Southern England", *PPS* xviii (1952) 194-233.

²³ S. Appelbaum, "Agriculture of the British Early Iron Age", *PPS* xx (1954) 103-114, *esp.* 110.

²⁴ H. C. Bowen, "Ancient Fields", *Br. Ass. for Adv. of Sc.*, 5.

²⁵ H. C. Bowen, *op. cit.* 7.

the figures suggested by Prof. Stuart Piggott — namely, production of 10 bushels per acre, 3 bushels to be deducted for seed corn, leaving 7 bushels per acre for consumption, with $4\frac{1}{2}$ bushels being the annual requirement per head of population.²⁶

The area suggested for corn-growing in fig. 3 is not much more than 20-25 acres, of which probably half would lie fallow each year, giving say $12 \times 7 = 84$ bushels; or corn for 18 people — say two or three farmsteads; and there are six farmsteads here, though possibly not all inhabited contemporaneously.

On the other hand, it seems extremely likely that there were further fields, now almost vanished, in the lower ground to the south and west. If so, given 50 acres as the maximum to be tilled by a single household²⁷ (25 of which crop-bearing at any one time), and all six farmsteads occupied, that would give a possible maximum consumption harvest of over 1,000 bushels, or a surplus, after deducting for the growers' own needs (at 9 inhabitants to each farm), of 800 bushels — enough for 177 men, or a third of the cohort garrison at Burrow.

Perhaps too, by the 3rd/4th centuries, the Roman army's ration scale was "going native" — introducing beef or mutton into the original ration of corn, cooking-fat, and wine²⁸ — and hence the stock-raising enclosures at Eller Beck.

It is also, of course, possible that the Romano-British farmers inherited their farmlands from earlier dwellers on the site; the earthwork at Castle Hill (see below) would seem to point to earlier pre-Roman occupation in the near vicinity; also the tumuli, if their dating could be found, might throw light on this point. Even if they should prove to be Early Bronze Age, it has recently been shown by Mr Charles Thomas²⁹ (1960, at Gwythian, Cornwall) that

²⁶ S. Piggott, *Roman and Native in North Britain*, ed. I. A. Richmond (1958) 1-27, esp. 23.

²⁷ Piggott, *op. cit.* 22.

²⁸ *Ibid.* 21.

²⁹ H. C. Bowen, *op. cit.* 9; also *Proc. W. Cornwall Fd. Club* ii (1961) 5.

plough-furrows can date back as far as the 16th century B.C.

It may be relevant to note that in the large area of "Celtic" fields at Grassington, West Riding, there are three tumuli within the field-systems. Two of them proved to be of Iron Age; whereas one was Early Bronze Age, with a B Beaker burial. (*YAJ* xxxiii 171.)

There is another piece of evidence as to earlier occupation. In 1912, CW2 xii 431 reported that there had been ploughed up in a field near Park House farm, Leck, a "grey-green volcanic ash cobble, trimmed and pierced in a style of an axe-hammer, with one end blunt and the other pointed; but it weighs only 8 oz. and measures $4\frac{1}{8} \times 2\frac{1}{4} \times \frac{7}{8}$ in." Miss Fell kindly comments as follows: ". . . it sounds like a perforated adze or axe-hammer — usually Bronze Age in date, but few are closely dated. [It] is much smaller than the usual axe-hammer except for the 'Beaker' type which has a cylindrical and not an hour-glass perforation."

Mr H. C. Bowen's very valuable Bibliography in his "Ancient Fields" (already cited) does not show any previously published "Celtic" fields for Lancashire.³⁰

5. *Castle Hill, Leck*: Map Ref. SD. 651779; O.S. Map 6-in., SD. 67 NE.; 25-in. Lanc. sheet XX. 2.

This earthwork lies upon a flat-topped spur, with a wide and splendid view south and west over the lower courses of the Lune Valley and Morecambe Bay. The ground falls away steeply to the west, with a sharp drop down to Leck Beck, on the far side of which the ground rises even more steeply up to the settlements and tumuli of Eller Beck, less than a half a mile away in a straight line. This steep climb in both directions, and the fording of Leck Beck — often dangerous — would seem to rule out any question of the Castle Hill earthwork being used

³⁰ An article by J. D. Bullock, *L. and C.A.S.* for 1954, in sec. XII of the Bibliography (*op. cit.* 74), deals with possible "Celtic" fields, NOT in Lancashire, as stated, but in Kelsall, *Cheshire*.

as a refuge by the settlers at any period from the Eller Beck area. Fighting-men could do it, but not, in a hurry, cattle, children, and old people.

Castle Hill earthwork (the name but not the site itself is marked on the O.S. Maps) stands at a height of some 650 ft. above O.D. It consists of a roughly circular enclosure of nearly two acres, surrounded by a ditch and an external bank. There is a simple causeway entrance to the south, and another to the NW. The bank and ditch are best preserved in the SW.; the ditch is traceable right round — much of it rush-filled; the bank has several gaps in its northern half.

Inside there is a circular enclosure, diameter 60 ft. (and therefore presumably too large for a hut), and a number of incoherent banks and hollows on the western side — which *may* indicate habitation sites. The width from outer bank across the interior to the opposite outer bank is approximately 125 yds.; the width across the bottom of the ditch is some 6-9 ft.; the depth of the ditch varies, but at its deepest it is some 4 ft.; the distance from the top of the outer bank to the inner level is some 10-12 yds.

This site is presumably that referred to in CW₂ xii 411-412 (1911). On that occasion “. . . Carriages were then taken to Cowan Bridge . . . and the drive up the lane as far as possible left a considerable piece of walking to be done before reaching Castlefield [*sic*], which nevertheless was visited by a large company. Mr [W. G.] Collingwood described the remains as those of a remarkably complete earthwork of the British Settlement type, *and mentioned the wealth of such sites in the neighbourhood* [my italics]. Later, during the meeting, arrangements were made to attempt the exploration of this earthwork, but owing to the severe and long-continued illness of Mr Moorhouse, the attempt was postponed” — and never subsequently renewed.

This site was again briefly mentioned by W. G. Colling-

wood in 1924 (CW2 xxv 367): "At Castle Field, Leck, was a ramparted British village site, with hut circles." And in 1939, Dr A. Raistrick briefly referred to "Castlefield, Leck" as a "village settlement" (YAJ xxxiv 119).

If this is the same site, as it presumably must be, then the hut circles are now no longer visible — with the uncertain exception of the banks and hollows on the west, and the large isolated circle on the east, already referred to.

The unusual aspect of this site, namely the bank being *outside* the ditch, can be paralleled in North Westmorland, notably at Dufton. There, there is another Castle Hill,³¹ whose bank and ditch are of the same character and general dimensions; its size is smaller, just under one acre; it contains the foundations of seven circular huts, and a roughly square enclosure. A quern, probably of late pre-Roman date, was found on the site.

At Croglin Castle,³² near Kirkby Stephen, there is a roughly oval enclosure of c. $1\frac{1}{2}$ acres, surrounded by a ditch and outer rampart. At Waitby Castle³³ there is an oval enclosure, surrounded by the remains of a ditch and outer rampart .

The Castle Hill, Leck, site would also in general appearance fit in among the thirty thousand, or forty thousand ring-forts³⁴ which adorn the landscape of Ireland — not so far away across the sea-highway. In particular, in the Co. Limerick marshlands, and perhaps elsewhere, there occur ". . . forts in which the fosse is *inside* the bank. Some of these have water-filled fosses at present and this would have been true in most cases when they were constructed. It has been suggested that these earthworks, none of which has been excavated, were intended as cattle enclosures, for which purpose

³¹ RCHM *Westmorland* 94-95, no. 8 (includes plan).

³² *Ibid.* 143, no. 9.

³³ *Ibid.* 234, no. 8.

³⁴ Sean P. O. Riordáin, *Antiquities of the Irish Countryside*, 3rd edn. (1953) 1.

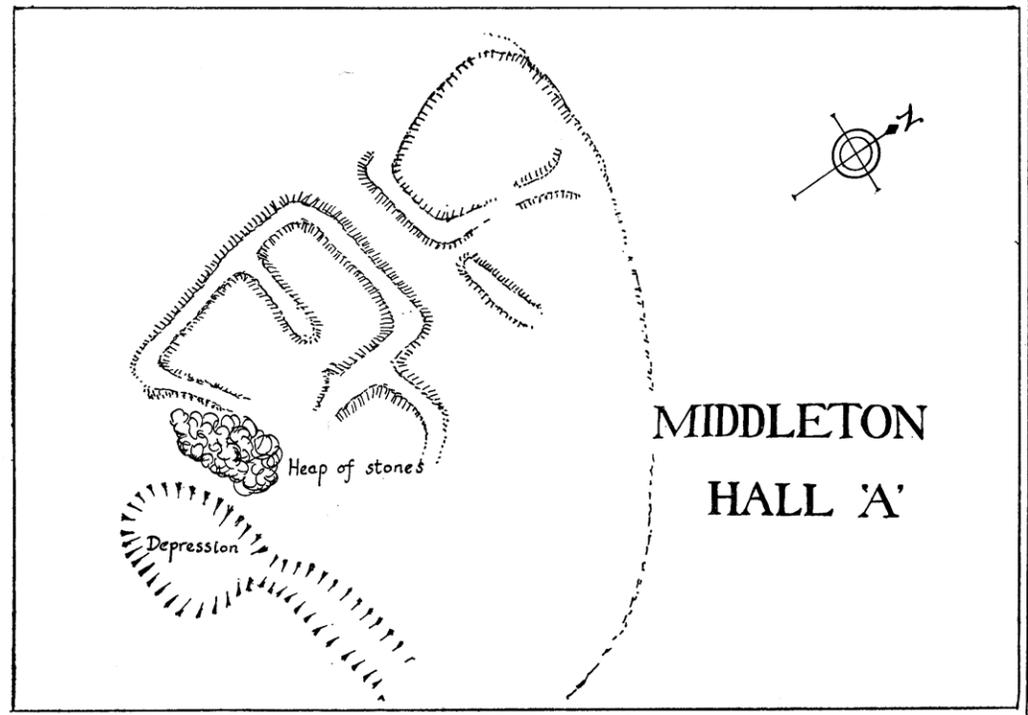
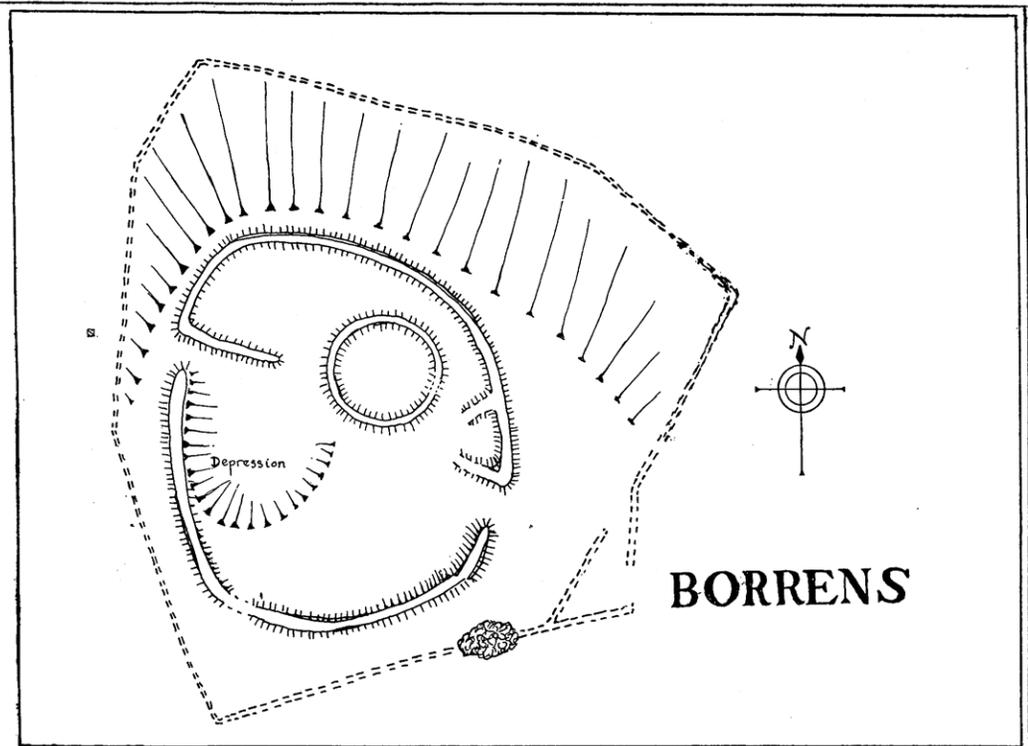
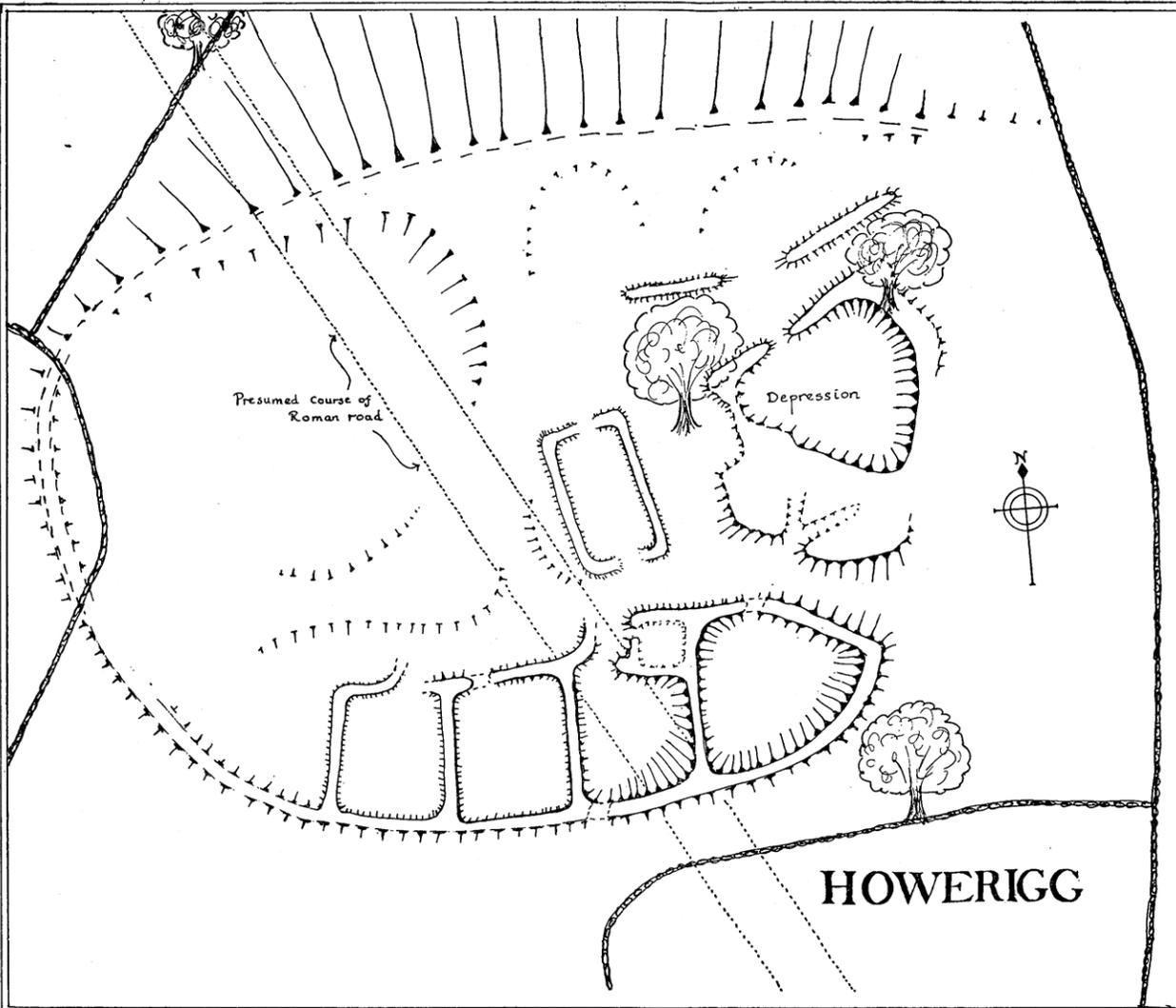
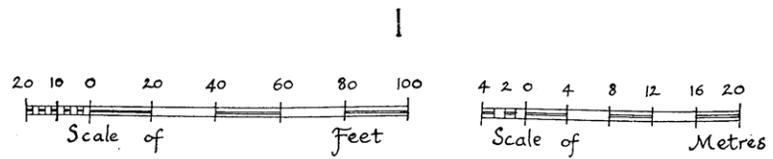


Fig. 1



A. Lowndes 1960

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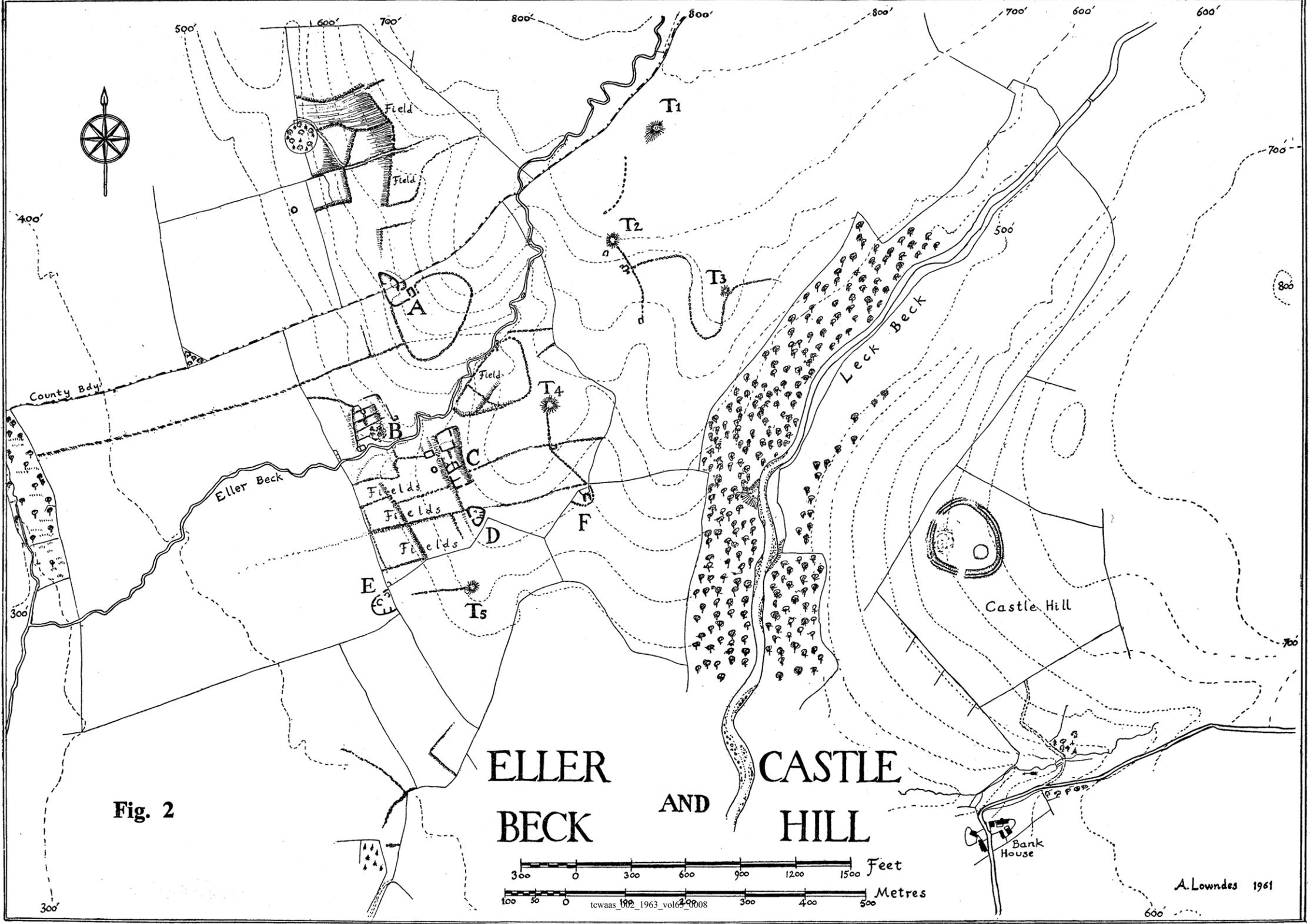
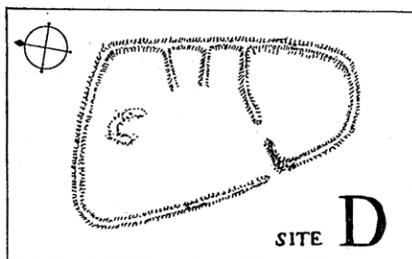
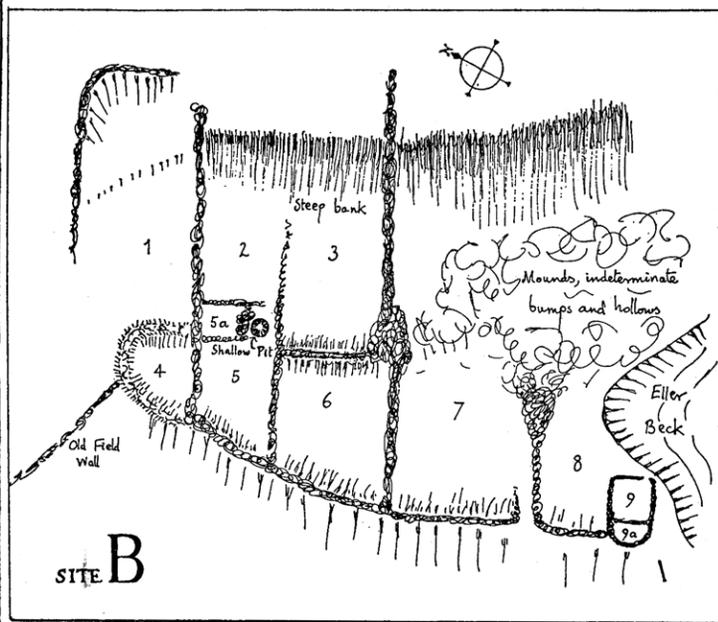
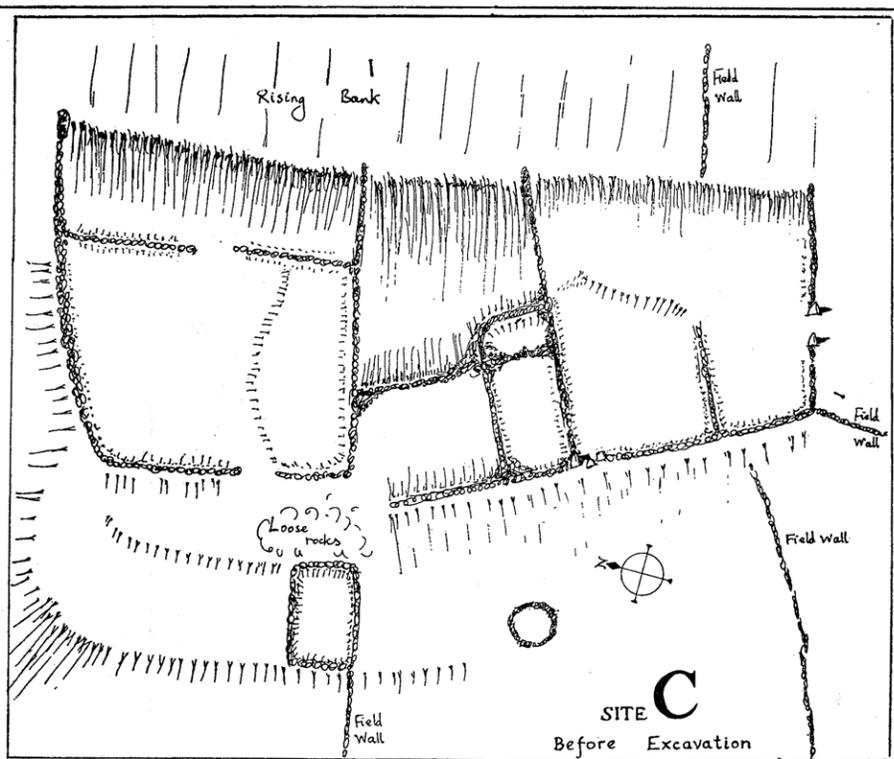
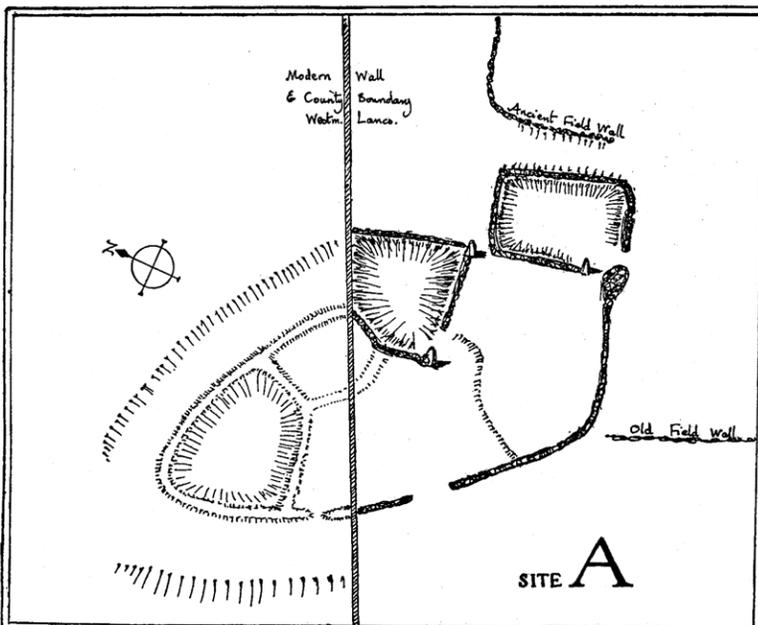


Fig. 2

ELLER
BECK AND
CASTLE
HILL

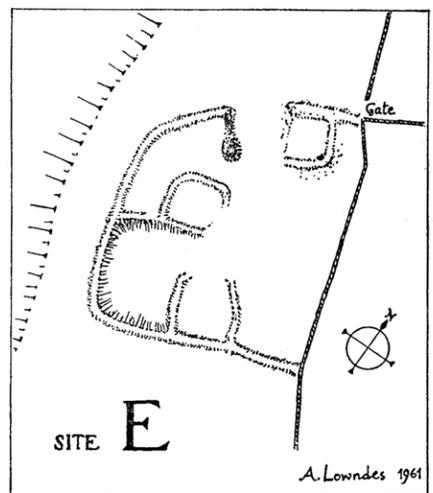
A. Lowndes 1961

tcwaas 1802_1963_vol64-9808



ELLER BECK

Fig. 3



the fosses would have provided a convenient water-supply.”³⁵

This hypothesis, of cattle enclosure, could well be tenable at Castle Hill, Leck; but it would seem to be contradicted by the hut circles inside Castle Hill, Dufton. Certainly the “defences” of Castle Hill, Leck, like many of the Irish raths, do not seem ever to have been particularly formidable; and likely to have been chiefly intended to enclose domestic animals and exclude wild ones — either a settlement, or simply a stock corral.

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I am also grateful to the many volunteers, including members of this Society, members of the Sedgwick Society of Sedbergh School, and boys of Cressbrook School, who have done a great deal of hard work with cheerful enthusiasm in the Eller Beck excavation.

³⁵ *Ibid.* II.