

### III.

## UNRECORDED BERWICKSHIRE ANTIQUITIES, BEING THE CHALMERS-JERVISE PRIZE ESSAY FOR 1933. By ROBERT KINGHORN.

1. *Siccar Point Fort* is situated on the promontory of Siccar Point, on the coast,  $\frac{1}{2}$  mile north-east of Oldcambus West Mains, in the parish

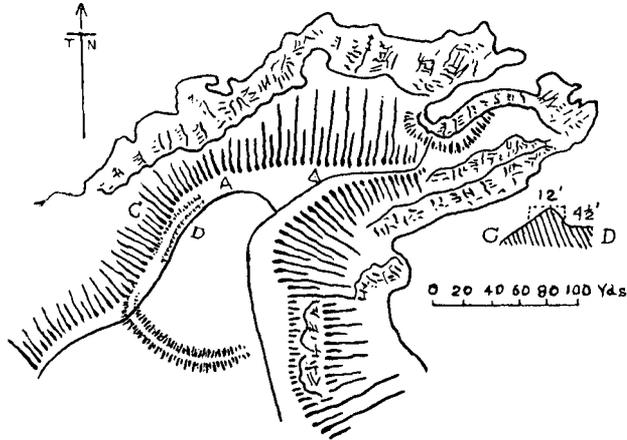


Fig. 1. Siccar Point Fort: Plan.

of Cockburnspath (fig. 1). The site is naturally a fine one, as it stands 200 feet above Ordnance datum. The fort is defended on three sides

by steep slopes and precipitous cliffs washed by the sea. On the landward side the promontory has been cut off by a broad earthen mound, the curve of which can be faintly traced in the corner of a field. The greater part of the area of the fort is now under cultivation. On the west side, and outside the stone dyke enclosing the field, the rampart runs along the edge of the slope for more than 100 yards. At the point C D on plan it shows a height of  $4\frac{1}{2}$  feet. The fort measures 160 yards long by 90 yards broad. On the slope to the north at A on plan, and about 12 feet below the top, the ground has been terraced out for about 40 yards in length and 12 yards in width, thus giving a more level site. On the inner side of this terrace hut-circles probably had their position as we may take note of nettles growing on the spot. On the outer edges of this terrace and down the steep slope to the precipitous part of the cliff a considerable part of the "kitchen midden" of the fort has been preserved. The extent of the midden can be easily traced, the dark soils of the latter contrasting strongly with the red soil of the adjoining field. The midden is exposed at several places: at rabbit scrapes, and where the turf has been broken little escarpments show food remains embedded in the soil. At one of the exposed parts the midden has a depth of 2 feet 3 inches. The friable soil at these faces is gradually crumbling landwards and continually exposing a fresh section. An examination showed numerous shells and fragments of bone mixed with the earth. Apparently large quantities of the Periwinkle, *Littorina littorea*, and the common Limpet, *Patella vulgata*, were consumed. The bones found were those of the ox and the sheep. Some years ago the antler of a deer was found. The shank bones had been split to extract the marrow. Some of the bones showed signs of having been gnawed, perhaps by dogs. Other objects found were a fragment of coarse pottery of a red colour outside and dark grey inside; the shard measured 1 inch in length by  $\frac{3}{8}$  inch in thickness. A piece of iron slag was also found. Nor were the vanities unrepresented. A bead of blue glass was found *in situ* on the face about 1 foot from the surface. The bead measured  $\frac{9}{32}$  inch in width by  $\frac{1}{8}$  inch in thickness, the perforation being  $\frac{1}{8}$  inch in diameter. This was pronounced to belong to the Early Iron Age.

2. *Corn Fort, Hareness Point*, is situated on a promontory 900 yards north-west of the town of Eyemouth (fig. 2). A narrow bay separates it from the point known as Eyemouth Fort, a sixteenth-century fortification in a ruined condition. The promontory of Hare or Hairyness, as it is variously spelt, lies between the bay just mentioned and a curious inlet of the sea known as Weasel Lock. The level part on which the fort is situated is about 80 feet above sea-level. To the east the cliff

runs steeply down to the sea, and to the north-east the rocks are broken up into rough gullies and end in natural walls going sheer down into deep water.

The fort has an over-all length of 117 yards. In width it measures 65 yards at the rampart, 38 yards just before contracting to a neck 15 yards across; beyond which it expands to an almost circular part, 32 yards in diameter. The rampart, which is 65 yards long and 15 feet wide is flat on the top, appears to be entirely earthen, and does not seem to be much reduced in height. No doubt a stockade would be added to the defence. At the point A B on plan the outer face shows a height of

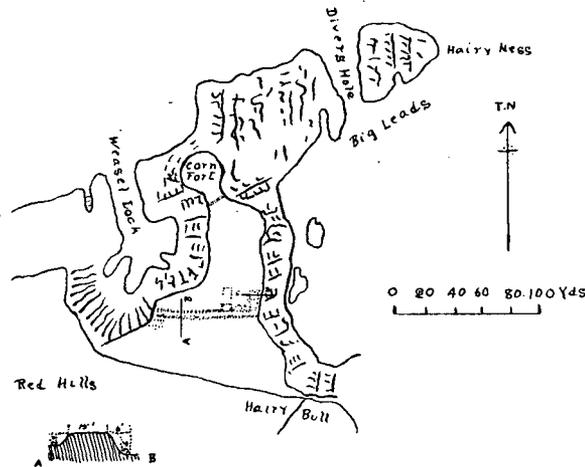


Fig. 2. Corn Fort, Eyemouth: Plan.

2 feet 9 inches, while the inner, owing to the ground being low, is 5 feet 6 inches. The entrance has been at the west end close to the cliff. Two short mounds, one 6, the other 7 yards long, have served to guard the entrance. Eighty yards north of the main rampart, a low mound 15 yards long is traceable running from edge to edge of the cliffs. Its position, a few yards inwards from the narrowest part, is obviously to enable it to make connection with a more precipitous part of the rock. Parts of the cliffs, though steep, could be scaled from the sea, and this slight defence has been designed to render the principal area of the fort more secure. In the south-east corner of the fort are four foundations, rectangular on plan. One, about 20 yards from the east end, is partly within the line of the rampart. Two, next the cliff, adjoin each other. The most northerly, having an entrance at the north-east corner. The foundations appear as banks still standing about 1 foot in height. Marks

of a larger foundation, 24 feet by 15 feet, are traceable about 20 feet north of the first mentioned one. Faint indications of two circles, 10 feet in diameter, lie between the two groups close against the rampart. The latter, as will be seen from the plan, is unlike the defensive mounds of the other promontory forts on the Berwickshire coast. It curves very little and its broad platform-like top differentiates it from the other constructions of this nature. If the rampart and huts are contemporary, the difference is more marked. Probably the fort is later in date than the others described. Reference to the *Inventory of Ancient and Historical Monuments in the County of Berwick* does not show any similar work in the county.

3. *Lamberton Shiels Fort* is situated on the sea-coast,  $\frac{1}{4}$  mile east of Lamberton Shiels, in the parish of Mordington. The position is a shelf

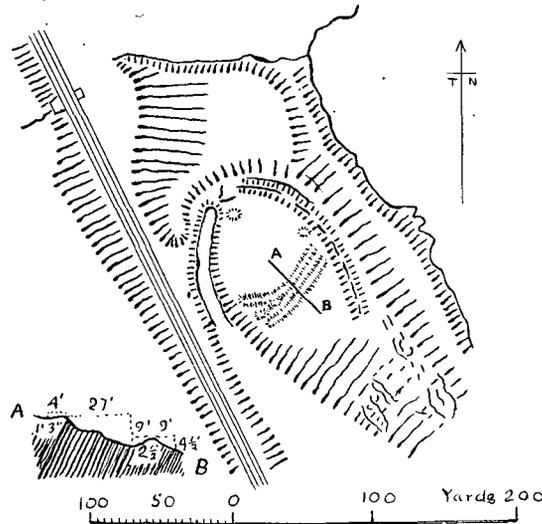


Fig. 3. Lamberton Shiels Fort: Plan.

of land about 100 feet above sea-level (fig. 3). The site is defended by precipices and steep slopes to the east and north. To the west a steep narrow ridge of rock rises about 70 feet above it, and gradually to the south-west becomes a steep slope. There are traces of a ditch running from the base of the rock to a point outside the line of the ramparts. To the south-by-east the ground falls with moderate steepness. Two curved ramparts, apparently of earth, defend the fort on this side. The inner rampart bifurcates towards the west. The fort measures 75 yards long by 55 yards broad. Two small hollows, which may mark the sites

of hut-circles, lie within the area: one to the north, the other to the east. The fort is so overlooked and dominated by the ridge of rock, and the high ground to the west, that the defence of the site would seem to require some work of a flanking nature. A mound running down the steep slope may have partly served this purpose, but the ground at the top has been so much interfered with by an earthwork of later date, and the making of the adjacent railway-cutting, that it is impossible to follow out the details.

4. *Hareheugh Craigs Fort* is one of the most interesting inland forts in Berwickshire. It crowns a high, narrow, basaltic ridge of "crag

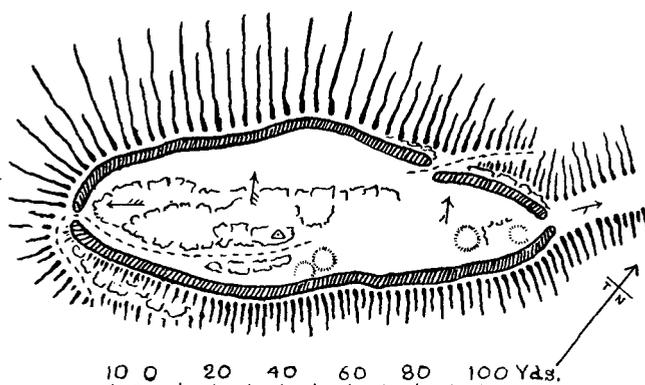


Fig. 4. Hareheugh Craigs Fort: Plan.

and tail" formation,  $\frac{1}{4}$  mile east-by-south of Stenmuir, in Hume parish (fig. 4). The highest part of the crag has a height of over 700 feet above sea-level. The sides of the crag are everywhere steep and precipitous, except at the east end or "tail," where, as is usual in formations of this nature, morainic material sheltered by the crag forms a slope. As the "crag" in this case is narrow, the "tail" is somewhat steep. The north side of the crag has the greatest fall, about 100 feet. To the south the fall is 40 feet to a depression furrowed out by glacial action. Beyond this the ground rises to another rocky knoll of smaller extent. The rock, exposed in a quarry at the west end, shows a very compact basalt, closely jointed with the columnar formation characteristic of this kind of rock. Towards the sun the rock-fissures have been widened by atmospheric influences. This would make the quarrying of the surface stone comparatively easy.

The fort measures 137 yards in length by 44 yards at the widest part. Its axis points north-east. All the summit of the crag has been

surrounded by a stone wall, the foundations of which are in places traceable, notably along the south side. A part of the rampart here shows the stones rising above the turf in so straight a line that it is evident the walls were constructed in a careful and workmanlike manner. The rampart at this part has apparently been 9 or 10 feet thick. It is constructed entirely of stone taken from the crag itself, and as it is built on the edge of the precipice no great height of rampart would be required. The stones have mostly disappeared. In all probability they would be thrown over the edge of the crag and carted away for building purposes. Only the foundations at grass-level are now visible. The fort has had three entrances, the main approach having been at the east end up the slope of the "tail." This moderate slope would easily permit of stock being taken into the fort. At the entrance the crest narrows to about 21 feet in width. The entrance, 6 feet wide, is still flanked by two large stones on the north side. Another entrance lies at the west end. The track winds upwards to it among the rocky outcrops. In parts the track, while mostly natural, seems to have been improved by quarrying the rock. No doubt all stone got in this way would be used on the ramparts. A third entrance lies to the north and would be easily defended. It is approached by a track slanting up the steep slope and continuing as a narrow path along the precipitous edge of the crag. As it is only about 40 yards from the main one it was probably used when the wider and more vulnerable entrance was securely blocked.

Several hut-circles are noticeable within the rampart. One, 15 feet in diameter, lies within the east entrance; another, 23 feet in diameter, lies 10 yards farther in. Two more, both 18 feet in diameter, are placed near the wall half-way along the south side. The rock seems to have been quarried near the last two to provide level ground. Other depressions and levelled parts doubtless mark the positions of more. A growth of nettles marks the spots where the ground has been disturbed by habitation. The medial line of the crag is a ridge of rock with an abrupt fall on either side. Many outcrops occur in the interior, especially towards the west. The highest rises like a little acropolis, about half-way along. It is easy to visualise that this rocky elevation must have played a part in the communal life of the settlement. The view from it is a noble one: northward are the Lammermuir Hills, southward across the valley of the Tweed the Cheviots, westward are the Eildons and Border hills, while to the east stretches the wide plain of the Merse. In the foreground to the north-east the noted border stronghold, Hume Castle, arrests the eye.

As already stated, a quarry has been opened at the west or "crag"

end. The stone is of excellent quality to meet the insatiable demands of our modern roads for metal. Not much of an inroad has as yet been made on the "crag," but the electric pylons with their unlimited load of power are in the vicinity. Were electrically driven stone-crushing machinery erected, it might easily happen that the site of the fort would be seriously interfered with. It is regrettable that the ramparts have been removed. It would be more so were the rock itself to be devoured. The crag is a natural feature perfectly adapted to be an ancient place of strength, almost a ready-made fort before the ramparts were constructed. The fort was discovered by the late Mr James Hewat Crow who informed me that it was its obvious suitability for the site of a fort which led him to investigate it, and prove his surmise correct.

5. *Haly Jo Fort* is situated on an uncultivated knoll in the Shilments Field on the farm of Lumsdaine, in the parish of Coldingham (fig. 5). It is  $\frac{1}{2}$  mile north of the farm-steading and 100 yards from the sea-cliffs. As we are now approaching the highest cliffs on the Berwickshire coast, the fort has an elevation of 500 feet above sea-level. On the west and north of the knoll the ground falls sharply, but more gradually to the east, where two earthen and stone mounds defend the site. A setting of stone remaining on the outer face of the inner rampart is much reduced in height. The mounds at A B on plan show a height of 2 feet. The entrance is at the south-east angle of the fort, and from it a single rampart can be traced for some distance along the south side where the slope becomes gradually steeper. The defence measures 67 yards long by 29 yards broad.

The name Haly Jo is a rather curious one. The prefix "Haly" occurs in several place-names on the Berwickshire coast; Halydown, and Halyhole the name given by fishermen to a small bay near Lamberton Shiels, are examples.

6. *Pettico Wick Fort* occupies a small promontory 170 yards south-west of Pettico Wick harbour, which is situated at the north-west end of the valley that cuts off the great promontory of St Abbs from the high cliffs on either hand (fig. 5). The fort has an elevation of 130 feet above sea-level, and measures 47 yards long by 43 yards broad. The promontory has been cut off by a curved rampart 45 yards in length. The rampart, which is much reduced by cultivation, shows a width of 21 feet. At the point A B on plan it is  $1\frac{1}{2}$  feet in height. The entrance is close to the cliff at the south-west point. This fort has a very fine setting as the promontory, though of moderate height, is a very picturesque one. The contorted rocks with their sea-washed caves rise on the west to the great fort-crowned cliffs at Earnsheugh, 500 feet above the sea, while to

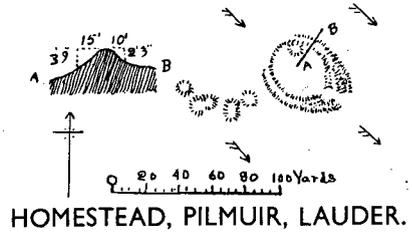
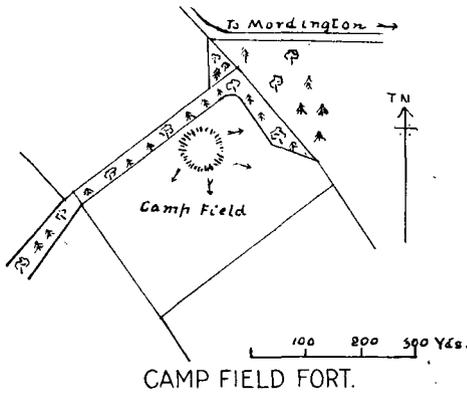
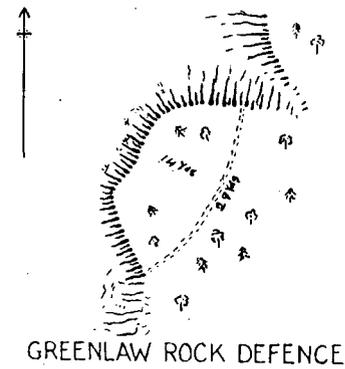
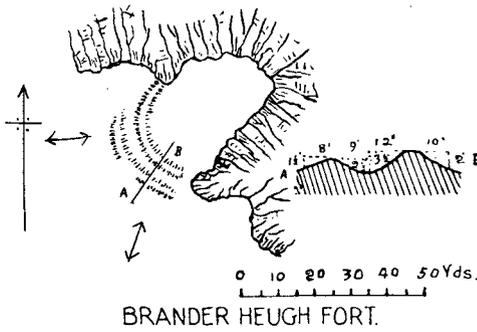
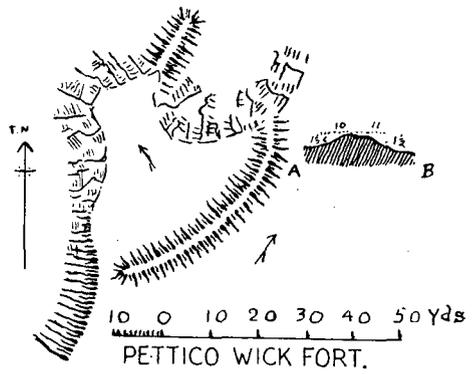
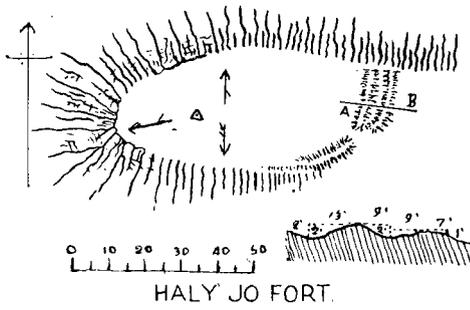


Fig. 5. Plans of Haly Jo Fort; Pettico Wick Fort; Brander Heugh Fort; Greenlaw Rock Defence; Camp Field Fort; and Homestead at Pilmuir, Lauder.

the north rises t e noble headland of St Abbs. This fort has not been recorded before.

7. *Brander Heugh Fort* is situated on a promontory on the wild sea-cliffs known as Brander Heugh, near Lumsdaine, and 400 yards east of the mouth of Dowlaw Burn, in Coldingham parish (fig. 5). The site has an elevation of 400 feet above sea-level. The fort measures 40 yards long by 23 yards broad. The promontory has been cut off on the landward side by an earthwork consisting of two crescent-shaped mounds measuring 38 yards and 24 yards in length. The mounds are separated by a trench  $3\frac{1}{2}$  feet deep at the point A B on plan. The entrance was probably close to the cliff at the south point.

This fort, like those at Siccar Point and at Haly Jo, is recorded in the *History of the Berwickshire Naturalists' Club*, but it has not been described or figured.

8. *Greenlaw Rock*.—This is a “crag and tail” formation about 800 yards south-east of Press Mains Farm, in the parish of Coldingham (fig. 5). It is a prominent feature on the north side of the valley of the Ale Water, as the crag rises about 100 feet above the level haugh. The rock facing north-east has been made more precipitous by quarrying. The site is an ideal one for a fort, and it was somewhat surprising to find only slight traces of a small defensive work on the summit. A curved line, chiefly marked by nettles and thistles, with traces of a ditch at the north end, indicated that a small place of security—hardly to be dignified with the name of fort—had been constructed on the top of the crag. The curved line measures 29 yards in length, and the area within it 14 yards across at the widest part.

9. *Camp Field Fort* is situated on a knoll in the Camp Field, Greenfield Farm, in the parish of Foulden (fig. 5). It is distant about 800 yards east-by-south of the farm-stead, and has an altitude of 620 feet above sea-level. An almost circular single rampart 79 yards in diameter has been nearly obliterated by cultivation. The ground falls steeply to the south-east and a wide view is commanded by the fort in this direction. The camp was reported by me some years ago, but it has not been described or figured before.

10. *Homestead, Pilmuir, Lauder*, is situated in a wood known as the Under Cover, 600 yards east-by-north of Pilmuir farm-stead, and at an altitude of 850 feet above sea-level (fig. 5). The position is a fairly steep slope, half-way along the wood and 63 yards from its southern edge. The homestead measures 42 yards by 37 yards, the longer axis being parallel to the slope. The interior is much hollowed out; the excavated material forming a rampart of earth and stones 3 feet 9 inches

above the interior and 2 feet 3 inches above the exterior. There is no outer trench. A hut-circle at the north side is 21 feet in diameter. The entrance is to the south-east and is protected by an additional mound springing from the main rampart some 20 yards from the entrance on either side, and bifurcating so as to form a triple defence to the entrance. To the west lie five circular or oval huts, much hollowed out from the steep bank. This homestead, which was discovered by the late Rev. Wm. M'Connachie, D.D., has not been reported before.

11. *Black Dyke, with Pitted Trench, Lamberton Moor.*—A black dyke with this curious form of trench runs across the easterly part of Lamberton Moor. The dyke can be traced from a point on the somewhat rough road which goes by Catch-a-Penny over the moor, some 320 yards in a southerly direction from where the small burn crosses the road and enters the little ravine down which it flows. This water-course is often dry as part of the water is diverted to feed a pond, but the spot is easily found. The dyke goes in a south-by-east direction, and ends abruptly at a bare part of the moor. Across the road it has been levelled by the reclamation of the land, but it could not be much longer as a little farther down the land has once been a swamp. The dyke has a length of 276 yards and a breadth of 10 feet, and the trench with the pits, which lies on the south side, about the same. These pits are about 9 or 10 feet apart, and still show a depth of from 10 to 14 inches. About 64 yards from the south end of the dyke there is a gap 15 yards wide. This form of trench seems to be of an early as well as a scarce type. No satisfactory explanation of the use of the pits has ever been given. The late Mr Craw in his paper, "The Black Dykes of Berwickshire," *History of the Berwickshire Naturalists' Club*, vol. xxvi. p. 361, suggests that "the pits may have been formed for the purpose of conserving water." Some of the pits in other trenches where the ground is level would seem to suggest this, but the one on Lamberton Moor would not be suitable for such a purpose. Moreover, there are copious and unfailing springs near both ends.

12. *Cultivation Terraces, Chester Hill, Ayton Parish.*—In the east-most corner of the field in which the fort of Chester Hill—illustrated in the *Inventory of the Ancient Monuments, Berwickshire*, No. 10—is situated, there is a group of cultivation terraces (fig. 6). They begin at the foot of the hill below the annex to the fort, and extend upward to the plateau on which the fort is placed. They have been obliterated by cultivation on the top of the bank and also beyond the hedge to the east. The lowest terrace measures about 80 yards in length by 17 yards in width. The others gradually shorten and are from 5 to 9 yards broad.

There are eight terraces in the group. Farther to the west, to about the end of the ramparts of the main fort, the land lies below the craggy summit like a talus with a slope of about 40 degrees. All this part shows

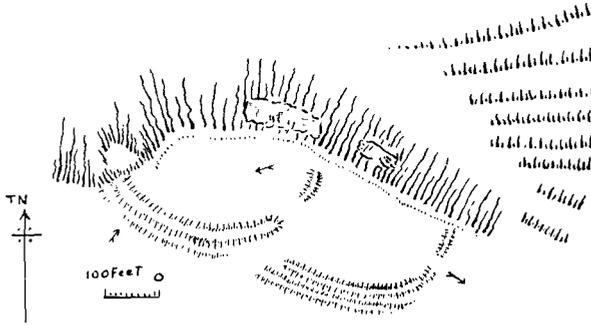


Fig. 6. Cultivation Terraces, Chester Hill Fort: Plan.

narrow terrace markings from 6 feet to 10 feet wide. A road has led down to them from the west end of the fort. The terraces are clearly visible from the great north road near Greystonelees Farm, Burnmouth.

13. *Small Cairns, Wheelburn Law.*—On the south slope of Wheelburn Law, in Lauder parish, about  $1\frac{1}{4}$  mile south-west of Broadshawrig, there is a group of about a dozen small cairns among the heather.