

## THE EARTHWORKS OF BRINKLOW, LILBOURNE, AND EARL'S BARTON.

By G. T. CLARK.

### BRINKLOW.

Brinklow, although a very prominent feature in the eastern part of Warwickshire, and a landmark for many miles around, is not mentioned in the Domesday survey. At that time it seems to have been a chapelry and a part of the superior manor and parish of Smitham, known afterwards as Smite, but now disparished, and remembered only by Smeeton or Smiteton lane, and possibly by the site of its church at Peter Hall. Afterwards Brinklow became, as now, a parish, and for a time it gave name to a Hundred. In the Pipe Roll of 1st Richard I, 1189-90, it is recorded :—"Vicecomes debet ijs et iij*d* de Brinkelawa-hundreda pro falsa present' et pro murdr'." Soon afterwards it became absorbed, as it still continues, in the larger Hundred of Knightlow, also named from a tumulus, and its separate existence was only continued as a "Leta" or Leet, so called because at Brinklow was the court for many of the surrounding manors. Whether, as at Kenilworth and elsewhere, the "Mota" was the seat of the mote or court is uncertain, but not improbable.

Brinklow has no history preceding the Conquest, and played no part in that event. Moreover, although it contains a very formidable and, for defence, convenient earthwork, this has not, like so many similar works, been converted into a Norman castle, so that post-conquestal history is also silent concerning it, and hence it follows that all that can be concluded respecting this, its most remarkable feature, must be derived from the evidence afforded by the earthwork itself, and by a comparison of it with others, elsewhere, of a similar type.

This silence of local history is the more remarkable, since the Brinklow earthwork is from position, magnitude, and distinctness equalled by few, and surpassed by scarcely any work of the same type in this country. As to that type, there can be no question that the work, as it now appears, belongs to the class of moated mounds, to which belong also those, at no great distance, of Hinkley, Warwick, Leicester, Towcester, and Rockingham. Nor indeed is there anything in the appearance of the Brinklow earthwork to lead to the notion that it is not all of one date. The only reason for the doubt rests upon the use of the word Low, which, in the Midland counties at least, usually designates a sepulchral tumulus. Here, however, the mound rises from a deep and broad ditch, evidently of its own date and intended for defence, and so connected with the work of the court, which must always have been military, as to leave little doubt as to its origin; also it is most unusual to find a sepulchral hill converted into a military mote. The Saxon nations seem to have had a superstitious feeling forbidding this. The probabilities are therefore wholly in favour of every part of the work, the Low included, being of one date.

The village, church, and earthworks of Brinklow occupy the steep slope and elevated head of a short but well defined ridge, which extends east and west about two miles, from near Easenhall, where is a depression occupied by the London and North Western Railway, to Brinklow. It is intersected near its centre by the deep and broad cutting for the Oxford Canal, and the Low or tumulus which is incorporated into the name of the parish, stands upon its western and highest point.

The low ground to the east of the ridge was formerly the site of a broad mere or pool, which extended to Newbold Revel, thence called formerly Newbold Fenny, and the reduced remains of which were probably represented by the "magnum vivarium" or fish stew, mentioned in records of the time of Henry IV. No doubt the proximity of the Low to such a sheet of water would account satisfactorily for the name of Brinklow, and is probably its true parent. Another, not impossible origin, has however been found for it. The Low stands near the side of the great Roman Foss way, which here traverses Warwick-

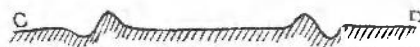
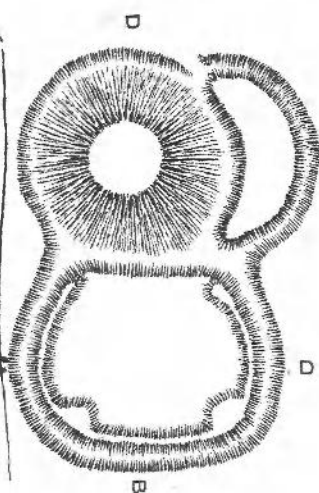
shire on its progress from Irchester and the S.S. West, towards High Cross, where it is intersected by the Watling street, and which has, on that account, been reputed the centre of England. An attempt was made by Dugdale, and has since been repeated, to connect this earthwork with a slight deviation of the Foss way which here occurs, but an examination of the course of the way, as laid down on the ordnance map, will shew that there is no connexion between them. The way generally exhibits the usual directness of a Roman road; but for a couple of miles each way from Brinklow its course is less regular, and besides, it makes a considerable angle to keep clear, not of the earthwork, but of the natural hill upon which it stands. It is true that the Roman engineers cared less for an easy gradient than is now the case, and often carried their road across an obstacle which would now be turned; but even a Roman engineer would not have hesitated to avoid a very steep rise and fall, when he could do so by a deviation not exceeding a furlong, as is the case here. The Foss way is laid out in a direct line from Gloucestershire to Leicester and Lincoln. Right in its course lay the steep end of the Brinklow ridge, to avoid which a bend has been introduced, and the hill avoided. The deviation would have been made whether the earthworks had existed or not, nor can any sound conclusion be drawn as to their date from their relation to the Roman way. It may indeed be the case that the village is named from its position upon the brink of the way; but "brink" is a term, as in Brinklow and Brinsmere, generally applied in topography to the margin of a stream or lake. Some of the advocates for a præ-Roman or British origin for the word have very needlessly derived brink from "bryn," a common Welsh word for high ground.

Brinklow is a fine and very perfect specimen of a moated mound, composed, as is usual, of a mound, and appended thereto a base court. The mound or "Mota," though wholly artificial, stands upon ground naturally rather higher than the court, which adjoins it on the west side, and intervenes between it and the parish church and village, through which runs the Foss way. The mound is regular in outline, conical, with a table top

# LILBOURNE.

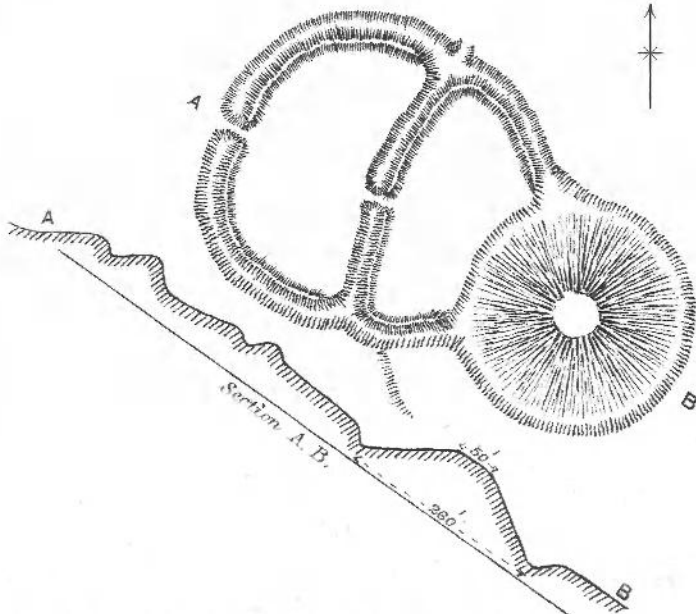


↑  
Road to Bridge.



Section C. D.

# BRINKLOW.



fifty feet in diameter, and a circular ditch out of which it rises, and the contents of which contributed to its formation. From the bottom of the ditch it is about sixty feet high, and from the adjacent ground beyond it is about forty feet, the ditch being about twenty feet deep and about forty feet broad at the level of its outer edge. The slope of the mound is about three-fourths to one, so that its diameter at its base is about 260 feet, and its circumference 780 feet. The summit is at present crowned by five well-grown elms, and the view thence is extensive and panoramic.

At the base of the mound and outside its ditch to the west is the base court, an area of irregular figure, in part governed by the configuration of the ground. This court is contained within a lofty and broad bank of earth, from ten to twenty feet high above its contained platform, and from twenty to thirty feet above the bottom of its exterior ditch. The bank is also very broad, from thirty to forty and even fifty feet, the broader and higher parts being thrown up at the bends, and at the points at which its two ends abut upon the counterscarp of the ditch of the mound. This side, towards the ditch, forms the gorge of the work, and is unbanked. It is about 150 feet broad between the banks, and with these and the ditches covers about a quarter of the counterscarp of the ditch of the mound.

The court is traversed by a bank, and on its outer or western side, that further from the mound, is a ditch. Both bank and ditch are of inferior dimension, as was to be expected, from those of the exterior defences. Of the two subdivisions of the court, formed by this line of defence, the outer or western, somewhat triangular in shape, is rather the larger. The ditches of the mound and court communicate freely. The cross ditch, being shallow, falls at each end into the outer ditch.

The level ground to the south of the mound seems to have been protected, on one side at least, by a scarp or slope about six feet high, which, however, ceases towards the south east. Probably this enclosure was an addition intended for the safe pasture of cattle. Also, beyond the outer ditch, towards the north-west, is a small triangular and slightly elevated platform, which is encroached upon

by the lane which comes up from the Foss, and probably was the ancient approach. There is no well or spring within the enclosure, but the ditches still contain water, and no doubt if cared for and ponded up would retain more. The ascent of the mound was probably by steps, as at Lincoln and Tickhill. There are two or three openings in the banks, but they seem modern and made for agricultural purposes. The entrance to the court was no doubt at its junction with the mound ditch, on the east side.

The parish church is placed on the slope of the hill, a little outside the ditch of the court, which is abutted on by the church yard. The church stands between the camp and the village street, near the Foss way. It has a good Decorated tower, but nothing of earlier date.

The whole character of this earthwork resembles those thrown up by Æthelflaeda and Ædward at the close of the ninth and early in the tenth centuries, of which Warwick was, and the moated mound at Tamworth still is, an example. Brinklow, however, more closely resembles Rokingham, as it stood in Leland's time before the mound was lowered. There is no trace of masonry in any part of the works, and no reason to suppose that the Normans ever made use of the place as a stronghold.

Brinklow soon after the Conquest seems to have belonged to Earl Alberic, whence, through d'Albini and Mowbray, it descended to the Estotevilles. Probably they had a dwelling upon the property, for Henry III was here in 1218. 30th March, by a writ tested Oxford, "ipso Comite" by the great Earl Mareschal, the king ordered the Sheriff of Warwickshire to give Nicholas de Stuteville the full seizin of the Manor of Brinkelaw, which Eustace de Stuteville had held as bailiff to Nicholas the father, and which has now descended to Nicholas his son; and on the 25th July, by a writ also tested by the Earl Mareschal from Brinklow, the king permits Nicholas de Stuteville to hold a weekly Monday market here, and an annual fair on S. Margaret's Day, according to a charter granted to Nicholas by King John. This is from the Close Rolls. In the Hundred Roll, 4th Edward I, 1275-6, Joan de Stotevill has enfeoffed Albreda de Wytlebur in Brinklow, by the tenure of one sparrow-

hawk annually, Joan holding Newbold Fenny in capite. The Earl of Leicester also held two courts annually in "Brinkel."

## LILBOURNE.

In the parish of Lilbourne, in the northern part of the County of Northampton, very close to the border of Leicestershire, and at no great distance from that of Warwick, is seen a somewhat peculiar earthwork, known locally as Lilbourne Castle. That it is entirely artificial and wholly of one date and of a military character cannot be doubted, but while its moated mound and the solidity of its other earthworks point to an English origin, its rectangular outline is unusual, though probably not without example, in works of that class. The character of the mound and the solidity of the earthworks, combined with the smallness of the included area, remove it altogether from the remains recognized as Roman, and although the site seems at one time to have been occupied by a Norman Castle, the earthworks must have been at the least a century old before they were capable of supporting safely either a wall or towers.

The work is placed at the lowest part of the southern slope of a rather high ridge, just above and at the edge of a spacious and level meadow, across which flows a tributary of the Warwickshire Avon, here but a few yards from the earthwork, and just about to join the main stream at a point about four miles above Rugby.

The earthwork is massive and substantial, rather than large. It is in figure roughly four sided, about ninety yards north and south, and sixty east and west, taken between the counterscarps of the containing ditch, which is deep and wide at the upper end and tolerably perfect at the lower or northern end. A cross ditch, running east and west, communicates with the main ditch, and divides the work into two parts. The southern, or upper part, measures about sixty yards north and south by fifty east and west. Its east, south, and west faces are defended by straight banks, which at the south-east and south-west angles are expanded internally into mounds, as though to carry towers. There is no bank

on the fourth side, which is divided from the rest of the work by the cross ditch only. The ditches range from fifteen to thirty feet broad and five to twenty feet deep, and the banks are about twenty feet high from the bottom of the ditch, and ten from the level of the internal platform.

The northern and lower half of the work measures about thirty yards north and south and sixty east and west, the extra width projecting on the east side. The whole western portion of this part is occupied by a large conical mound, flat topped, steep, and surrounded by its proper ditch, of which, however, the parts to the south, west, and north are common to the main and cross ditches. The eastern and remaining part of this half is occupied by a small earthwork something in the shape of a comma, of which the tail points to the northern face of the mound. The mound is fifteen yards in diameter at the top and about thirty-seven yards at the base, and about twenty-five feet high. There is no trace of masonry visible.

A road, probably an ancient one, lies close west of the castle, and leads down to the river; and resting upon this road, on the further side, is the church-yard, and within it the parish church, a small but complete building, mostly of Decorated date, and having some windows in the chancel in that style, very good, and very suitable for imitation.

Lillebourne is mentioned in Domesday, but there is no allusion to the earthworks. In the reign of Stephen the Barons Camville, according to Dugdale, had a seat here, where, in his time, were the *vestigia* of a castle. The Camvilles were a considerable family, and founders of Combe Abbey. Lilbourne was settled upon a younger son, whose male line ended in the reign of King John, and the manor was held by the heiresses in purparty, and finally centred in Grey Marquis of Dorset. Walter de Esseby had lands here 33rd Henry III, and Wm. le Butiler held one fee 25th Edward I, as did, as shewn in the Testa de Nevill, Richard de Curton, Thomas de Estlega, and William de Estly. There is, however, no mention of the castle, and if one really existed it must have been of very small dimensions, and probably was adulterine, and destroyed in the reign of Henry II.



Lilbourne is just a mile east of the Watling Street and about the same distance from Catthorpe, supposed to represent the Roman Tripontium. Near this part of the road are several *tumuli*, probably sepulchral, but there is one on a high ridge between Lilbourne and the Street road which seems of a different character. It is called "Round Hill," and is a moated mound about thirty feet high, and fifty feet across at the top. This has been flat, but has been trenched so as to present a tricuspid outline. The concentric ditch is very perfect and seems made for defence, but there is no trace of a base court, and outside the ditch, to the south-east, is a smaller and apparently sepulchral tumulus.

#### EARL'S BARTON.

Northamptonshire contains many earthworks, which have been little studied, and for the most part are not noted in the Ordnance map. Of these, one of the most interesting is at Earl's Barton, seven miles east of Northampton, celebrated for its ancient church and still more ancient tower, a very fine example of Long and Short work, with pilaster strips vertical and oblique, very much resembling timber in their dimensions and arrangement. On the boundary of the churchyard, a few yards north-west of the church, is a large moated mound, of which the moat outside the yard is perfect, that inside filled up, no doubt by burials. The churchyard was evidently the base court to this mound; its boundary is still strongly marked, especially to the south, where it is a steep slope or scarp.

It is evident that upon this mound stood the dwelling of the English lord, who built a church within its court yard for the use of the tenants of the lordship, no doubt originally a much smaller structure than that now seen, the tower of which, however, is certainly of much earlier date than the Conquest.

Baurton, or Burton, is named in Domesday, but its prefix of "Earl's" is derived from the Earls of Huntingdon, the heirs of Countess Judith, the Domesday landowner. The tenants of the Honour of Huntingdon within this manor paid suit to a court called the Baron's Mote, held, not improbably, upon the above mound or mote.