

ART. VIII.—*Buttermere Settlements*. By THOMAS HAY.

IN these *Trans.* N.S. xxxvi Mr. Nicholas Size called attention to the foundations near Scale Beck. These remains are situated on both banks of the two distributaries that form the rough delta at the mouth of this stream. The site itself, like so many others, is smothered in bracken during summer and autumn and only clearly visible during the early part of the year. The position is given in Mr. Size's map in the volume referred to but the site itself is not shown in detail on any map known to me. This is unfortunate as it is a very interesting and extensive settlement.

The track from Buttermere to the west shore of Crummockwater goes right through the old village. The remains are situated on the exceedingly rough ground constituting the delta in question. Nearly all the boulders are composed of granophyre. The blocky fragments of this rock, with their edges and corners half worn down by stream and weather action, have given the primitive inhabitants a plentiful supply of building material. Local analogy suggests that the remains are possibly a British settlement modified by subsequent Norse occupation.\* Many traces of the usual British walling occur, and in addition there are at least four rectangular foundations such as those described by R. G. Collingwood in his article on "Prehistoric settlements near Crosby Ravensworth" (these *Trans.* N.S. xxxiii). He there described a survey, carried out by Mrs. R. G. Collingwood, Miss K. S. Hodgson and himself. They found several cases in which a rectangular building had

\* It should however be noted that rectangular structures of prehistoric date are now known.—E.D.

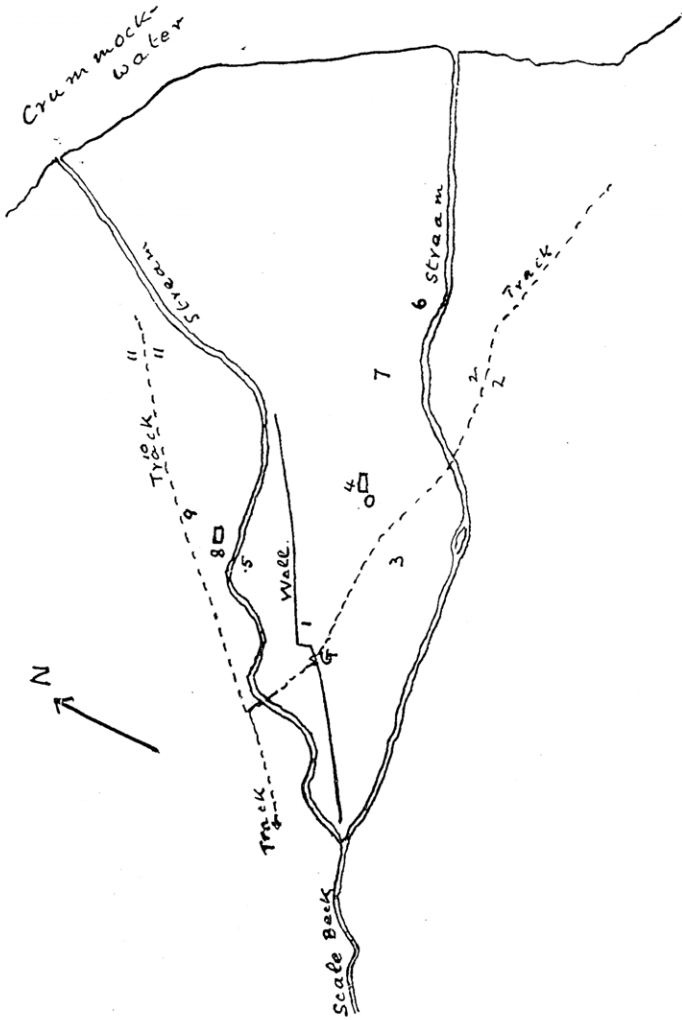
been inserted into an earlier British settlement. About such a building at Ewe Close Professor Collingwood says "C is in shape and size quite comparable to early Teutonic houses of well-known types (cf. Gerda Boëthius, *Hallar Tempel och Stavkyrkor*, Stockholm, 1931)". At Ewe Locks there were two later rectangular buildings about 20 ft. by 15 ft. internally. At Cow Green there was a later house measuring 30 ft. by 16 ft. internally with a porch or entrance room, perhaps a secondary addition of 13 ft. square. Collingwood continues "the rectangular shape, the cut off corners and the door at one end connect this with early Scandinavian and Teutonic houses and the construction of the walls suggests that it, like them, had low walls supporting a high roof." The article ends with these words "At some time or other Ewe Close, etc. underwent a change, ceasing to be British settlements and becoming "medieval farms."

When the Royal Commission on Historical Monuments brought out their inventory for Westmorland in 1936, Dr. R. E. M. Wheeler wrote an introductory article surveying the Prehistoric and Roman periods in this county. In a postscript he draws attention to a number of small and anomalous structures. These are (1) the small oblong building with rounded corners at Ewe Close, (2) another small oblong building at Cow Green where he says "Scandinavian analogies have been cited but excavation is desirable before further discussion." (3) A similar building in Glencoyndale (Patterdale). This was pointed out to the surveyors by the present writer. It is described as foundations which "indicate a small two-roomed house with a segmental W. end and a small added chamber on the W. The building is of the same type as that in Crosby Ravensworth which has been thought by Professor Collingwood to be of Scandinavian type."\* It is shown in plan in the Westmorland book and is

\* See W. G. Collingwood on Whelter in these *Trans.* n.s. xxiii, 284-5.

comparable with the similar foundations now reported in this paper at Scale Beck. (4) and lastly the foundations of two structures in the parish of Troutbeck between Ill Bell and Woundale. Both the authorities quoted suggest that these rectangular buildings, inserted in British settlements, betray Scandinavian influence but they also strongly advocate excavation. These notes should be read in reference to the accompanying map which however is not drawn to scale. The numbers on the map indicate:—

- (1) Old walling with orthostats, 2 sides of an enclosure.
- (2) Round heaps of boulders as of a cleared area and one collection of scattered boulders as of a dispersed enclosure.
- (3) Indeterminate walling.
- (4) Norse (?) house 10 yds. by  $5\frac{1}{2}$  yds. over all.
- (5) Curious horse-shoe shaped cell.
- (6) Enclosure walls and cleared area.
- (7) Large irregular elliptical enclosure 30 yds. across, containing a horse-shoe shaped cell with a smaller similar cell inside it.
- (8) Large Norse (?) foundation, internal 10 yds. by 4 yds., external 14 yds. by 8 yds., with middle division, the W. end heaped up with many boulders possibly deposited there by flood water from the beck or built up as a protection against such danger.
- (9) Much walling including a good up-standing hut 6 yds. by 5 yds. with walls standing 3 ft. high. There is a good cleared area east of (8).
- (10) 24 yds. from the hut in (9) there is a good Norse house external 12 yds. by  $4\frac{1}{2}$  yds.
- (11) 22 yds. east of 10, the largest collection of remains, including (a) Norse (?) house 10 yds. by  $5\frac{1}{2}$  yds. external with signs of a division. (b) a curious square foundation 8 yds. by 8 yds. with a corridor entrance on E. side. (c) a big square 21 yds. side with rounded corners, walls



standing 4 ft. and looking later than the other remains or possibly rebuilt later. (d) inside (c) a square hut 5 yds. by 5 yds. with entrance projecting on one side.

A few final remarks may be made. G is the gate in the modern wall through which the footpath passes. Wherever such a modern wall lies near or through an old settlement it is certain that damage has been done to the latter. One case of a noticeable heaping up of boulders on the W. side of a building has been mentioned. Other cases also occur. When one sees several examples of stream courses cut right through the settlement by the beck breaking loose in time of flood, one can realise the possibility of these heaps at the W. ends as deposits made by the beck and also as protections deliberately built to face this danger. In several parts of this settlement there are definite indications of land having been cleared for cultivation. There are the usual circular heaps of cleared boulders. Several signs occur which make it quite probable that some of the buildings have been used later than the more ruinous parts. For example to give one trivial incident, one hut has been used lately to bury an unfortunate sheep. Whilst the four probable Norse houses and some enclosures show the rectilinear method of construction, there are many foundations, especially the curious horse-shoe shaped cells which seem entirely associated with the British type. Thus Scale Beck may turn out to be a British settlement subsequently modified very considerably under Norse influence.

The next site has not been recorded before to the best of my knowledge. The road from Buttermere to Honister passes Hasness and then makes a half turn to the right just as it reaches the upper end of the lake. Before this turn, if one looks up the slope on the left hand one will see the lower half of a circular enclosure overlooking the road. The side of this nearest the road is a considerable embankment with an outside slope of 10 yards. There

has been a great deal of labour expended in making it. This has the effect of creating a more or less flat terrace on the fellside. Standing on its lower rim with one's back to the lake, some big boulders lie on the right hand of the circle. A circular building of some sort has been fashioned so as to make use of these big boulders in its walls but as it looks less ruinous than the main enclosure it may have been used for something else in later times. An indistinct circular depression will be found inside the enclosure which may have been a hut. Lying outside the enclosure beyond its upper right hand rim there lies a triangular flattish space surrounded by two wall foundations meeting at a point. Probably the whole has been a small one-hut British settlement.