

FIG. 1. EARTHWORKS ON WESTERN SPUR OF PLUMPTON PLAIN.
Six-inch Ordnance Survey, Sussex, Sheet LIII, N.E.

MISCELLANEOUS EARTHWORKS NEAR BRIGHTON.

NOTES AND SURVEYS BY H. S. TOMS.

EARTHWORKS ON WESTERN SPUR OF PLUMPTON PLAIN.

THE Plumpton Plain earthworks were briefly described at the Annual Meeting of the Society, March, 1917, when it was stated that the group seems unique in type as far as Sussex is concerned. This remark still holds, for, with the exception of two other embanked enclosures, not half-a-mile to the south-west, one has failed to trace similar ditchless earthworks in the South of England. Moreover, repeated visits, since 1914, have convinced the writer that these ancient earthworks form one of the most interesting groups in Sussex. Recent mutilation indicates the need for active interest in their preservation from further destruction.

The group was first noted by the writer and his wife on the 17th May, 1913, but it was not until the following year that arrangements could be made for a plane-table survey.¹

Though the writer seems to have been the first to draw public attention to the existence and interest of the Plumpton Plain earthworks,² the group appeared on the earlier, 1909, revise of the ordnance survey; but the latter was inaccurate, owing doubtless to the impossibility of making a proper plan until much of the scrub and overgrowth had been cleared away. By

¹ The survey was carried out by the writer during March and April, 1914, with the assistance of the following members of the Brighton and Hove Archaeological Club's Earthworks Survey section:—Messrs. C. Brazenor, W. R. Gregory, W. J. Jacobs, G. Russell-Davies, S. Pierre Smith, and Armand H. Toms.

² *Sussex Daily News*, 19th May, 1913.

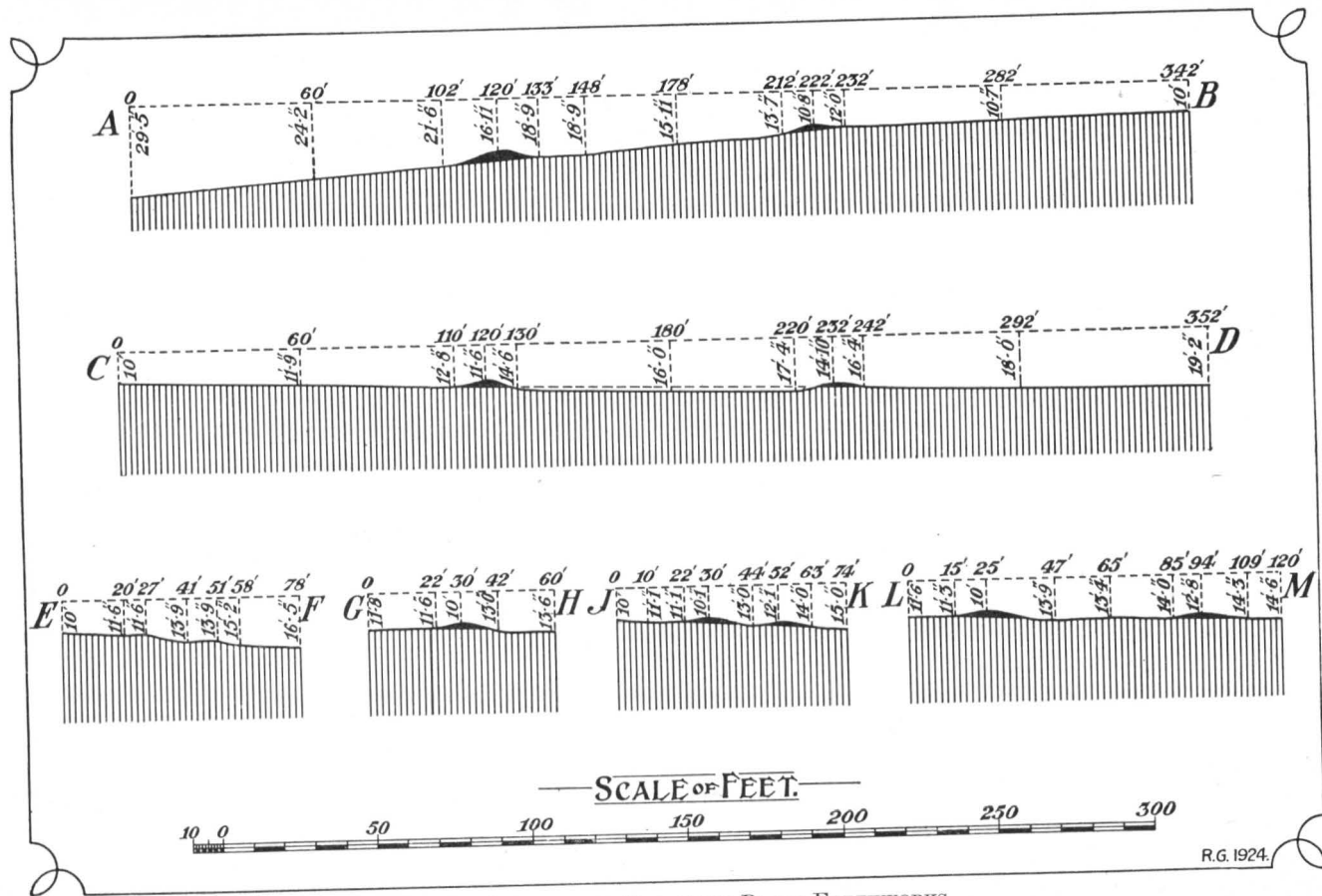


FIG. 2. SECTIONS OF PLUMPTON PLAIN EARTHWORKS.

instruction of the Director General of Ordnance Surveys, the six inch sheet, liii., N.E., has now been corrected with the help of the writer's plan, Fig. 1.

Description.

The centre of the group lies on the ridge, above the 600 ft. contour, about 2300 ft. eastwards of Streathill Farm. The plan, Fig. 1, shows three embanked roughly oval enclosures with an entrance to each; one quadrilateral earthwork; parallel and approximately right-angled banks; and associated portions of ancient roads or ways.

The terraceway, VI., connecting enclosure III. with the central earthwork (see section E.F.), is of the same type as that running obliquely up the western side of Faulkner's Bottom.³

The remarkable feature of the Plumpton Plain enclosures is that there is no indication of ditches running exteriorly to the banks. The interiors of the earthworks, too, are appreciably lower than the ground outside (this is well shown in section C.D.). The latter feature is, however, not so obvious in the north-western work (I. on plan), and it may probably be accounted for by this enclosure having been in use until quite recently as a rick-yard or cattlefold.

Mode of Construction.

The original method of construction of these ditchless earthworks is revealed by section C.D., taken across the perfect enclosure III. Obviously the turf and soil covering the interior were pared off down to the undisturbed chalk under-surface, and then this material was piled round the interior to form the enclosing bank. This means that the slightly sloping floors of the interiors were of exposed solid chalk on which rain would very quickly accumulate and flow to the lowest points of the enclosures.

³ Described in the *Brighton and Hove Archaeologist*, 1926, p. 49, and partly shown on the plan of Faulkner's Bottom Valley Entrenchment, Fig. 3 of the present article.

In this connection it is interesting to note that the depressions, marked "pits," on the plan, are situated at these lowest points. That the oval enclosures could not have been ponds will be readily understood by reference to section A.B., taken across enclosure I.; though the writer entertains the idea that they may have been constructed, or served, as catchments for rain-water, of which the pits at the lowest points acted as reservoirs. Very careful excavation of the "pits" may however explode this idea.

The dotted rings in earthworks III. and V. roughly mark the sites of what appear to have been very shallow excavations in order to make the floor more level at these points; but this is a question which must be decided by the spade.

One would infer from the plan that the embankments J.K. and G.H. formerly extended south and east respectively; but there is now no trace of such extensions. It is, too, open to question whether the plan represents all the enclosures which formerly existed on the ridge.

The perfect enclosure III. is obviously of later date than the terraceway VI. (section E.F.), for it intersects the line of terraceway in such a manner as to show that the latter was cut into and partly destroyed during the construction of the enclosure.

Finds.

Since the original construction of enclosure III., about three inches of turf mould have formed over the chalk floor; and, from the mole heaps and rabbit scrapes inside this earthwork, we have gathered, during the last 13 years, a few pieces of sandstone, burnt flints, flint flakes, flint scrapers, and fragments of a rough Bronze Age type of pottery. Nearly all this pottery exhibits grains of flint on both sides and in section.

Turf removed in recent years from the interior of enclosure II., at "b." has exposed the chalk floor. On this floor, and from mole heaps in the adjacent floor soil, many fragments of the same type of coarse pottery

have been gathered, as well as scores of flint flakes. From a very recent disturbance by digging at "c," on the west side of the bank forming the western end of the entrance to this work, there came a rough flint celt, many flint flakes, portion of a sarsen grain-rubber, the sherd of a punch-marked Bronze Age Beaker with part of the base of same, and a few fragments of pottery, probably of the same Beaker. The punch-marks on the Beaker sherd are in parallel lines and quite typical of this class of ware.

Mutilation of the bank forming the N.E. angle of earthwork V., at "a" on plan, has also revealed great numbers of fragmentary burnt flints, flint flakes, a flint scraper, and also (*in situ*) a sherd of hand-made pottery. The latter has the exterior soft with few flint grains in its composition, the interior surface being much darker and containing more flint. The ware resembles that of the softer paste urns (Pitt Rivers's "No. 2 quality British pottery") found in Bronze Age tumuli with cremations.

The mass of broken burnt flints mentioned above, with other burnt flints exposed during recent mutilations, may be taken as indicative of habitation; and the flint flakes and flint tools, coupled with the pottery fragments which are characteristically of Bronze Age type (and obviously of later date than the first exposure of the chalk floors), most strongly suggests that the Plumpton Plain earthworks belong to an early phase of this prehistoric period when the use of flint implements still continued⁴. It is, too, worthy of note

⁴ There appears to have been no embanked enclosure associated with the Early Bronze Age (Beaker) settlements near Peterborough (*Archaeologia*, Vol. 62, p. 333); but the "pit-circles" of the same age found at Taplow, Bucks, "were constructed by delving into the ground from 3 to 7 ft., and throwing the removed earth round the surface of an opening from 14 to 20 ft. in diameter" (Sir John Abercromby's *Bronze Age Pottery*, Vol. I., p. 26, footnote).

The soils removed to make the chalk floors of the Late Bronze Age platforms on the Park Brow hill slope, near Cissbury (see *S.A.C.*, Vol. 65, p. 251), may have been banked round the platforms, leaving an opening or entrance, as in the case of the Taplow "pit-circles." Before subsequent cultivation of the hillside at Park Brow, such encircling banks would have been thrown over the platforms to level the ground. If so, then the Park Brow platforms were formed in very similar fashion to the larger "oval" works, I., II., III., on Plumpton Plain, and also the enclosure near Horseshoe Plantation, Fig. 5.

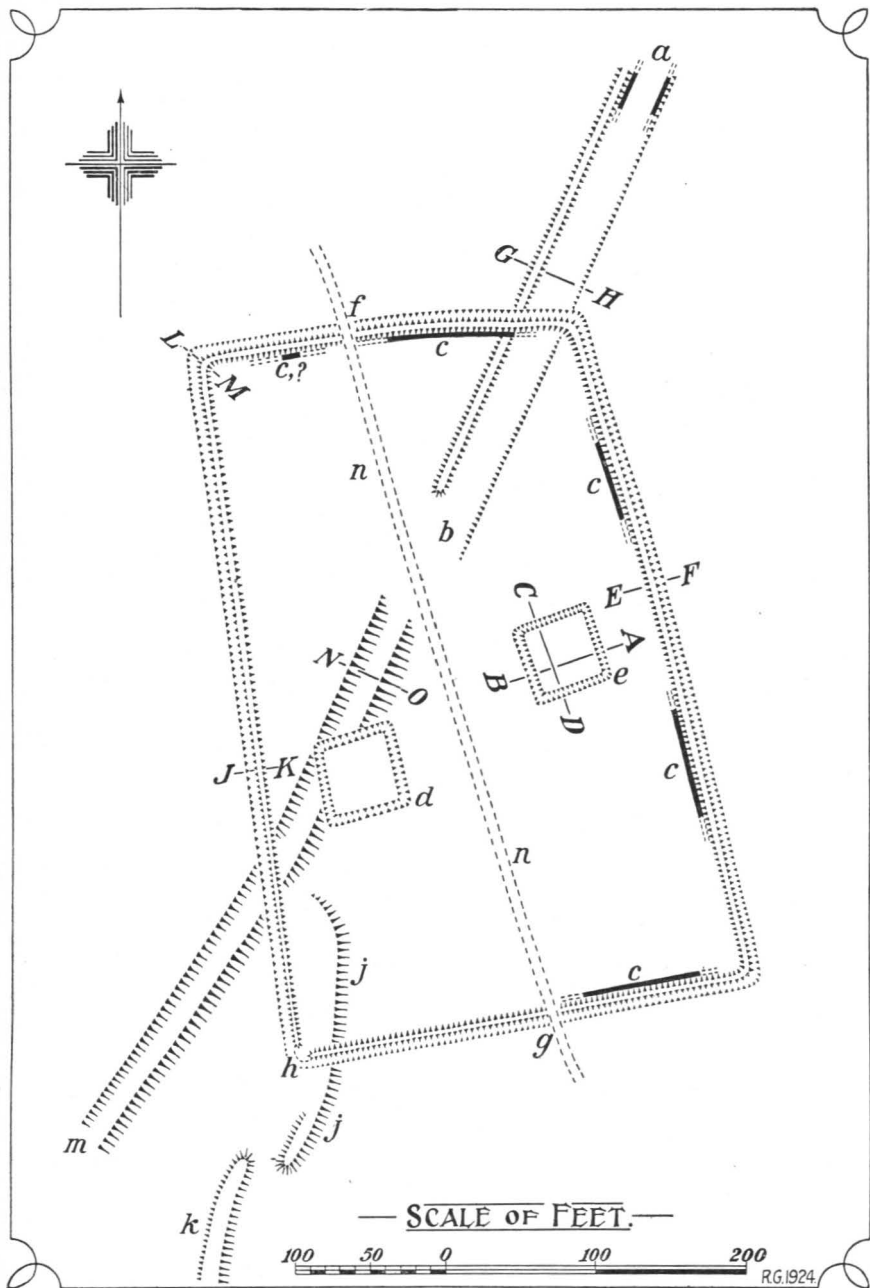


FIG. 3.

VALLEY-HEAD ENTRENCHMENT, FAULKNER'S BOTTOM, PLUMPTON PARISH.

Six-inch Ordnance Survey, Sussex, Sheet LIII, N.E.

(Reproduced by permission from "The Brighton and Hove Archæologist," 1926, Fig. 2, p. 44.)

that, so far, no fragment of pottery ornamented with finger-tip impressions has been found on the area.

THE L-SHAPED EARTHWORK, STREATHILL FARM,
PLUMPTON PARISH.

In the head of Faulkner's Bottom, immediately north-east of Streathill Farm, lies a large oblong valley entrenchment (Fig. 3), which has been built over a more ancient road ("a" to "m" on Fig. 3). A portion only of this old road is shown on the present ordnance survey,⁵ but by discerning eyes it can be traced from about 100 ft. north of the northernmost greenway (and from near the two "tumuli" marked on the ordnance survey between Streat and Plumpton Bostalls) in a direct line downhill, and south-west, to about the centre of the valley entrenchment, a distance of some 300 yards. There are indications that this portion of the old road was slightly banked on either side, with a shallow interior drain or ditch along each edge of the road proper.

From the centre of the valley entrenchment the ancient road continues up the western side of Faulkner's Bottom, not ditched and banked, but as a simple terraceway. After it leaves the western side of the valley entrenchment, its mutilated remains may be traced for over 300 yards, among furze, running in the direction of Horseshoe Plantation.

Fig. 4 shows a portion of this south-western extension of the terraceway, about 100 yards S.W. of angle "h" in Fig. 3, and also a curious L-shaped earthwork which is so built or joined on to the terrace as to show that the scarp of the latter was utilised to form one of the sides of the enclosure. The interspace between the northern end of the earthwork and the terrace evidently served as an entrance.

There is no sign of a ditch adjoining the L-shaped bank, and in this respect the enclosure falls into line

⁵ This portion of the old road, together with the compound valley entrenchment, was placed on the 1909 edition of the ordnance survey, sheet liii., N.E., by the aid of the writer's plan which is fully described in *The Brighton and Hove Archaeologist*, Vol. 3, pp. 47-51.

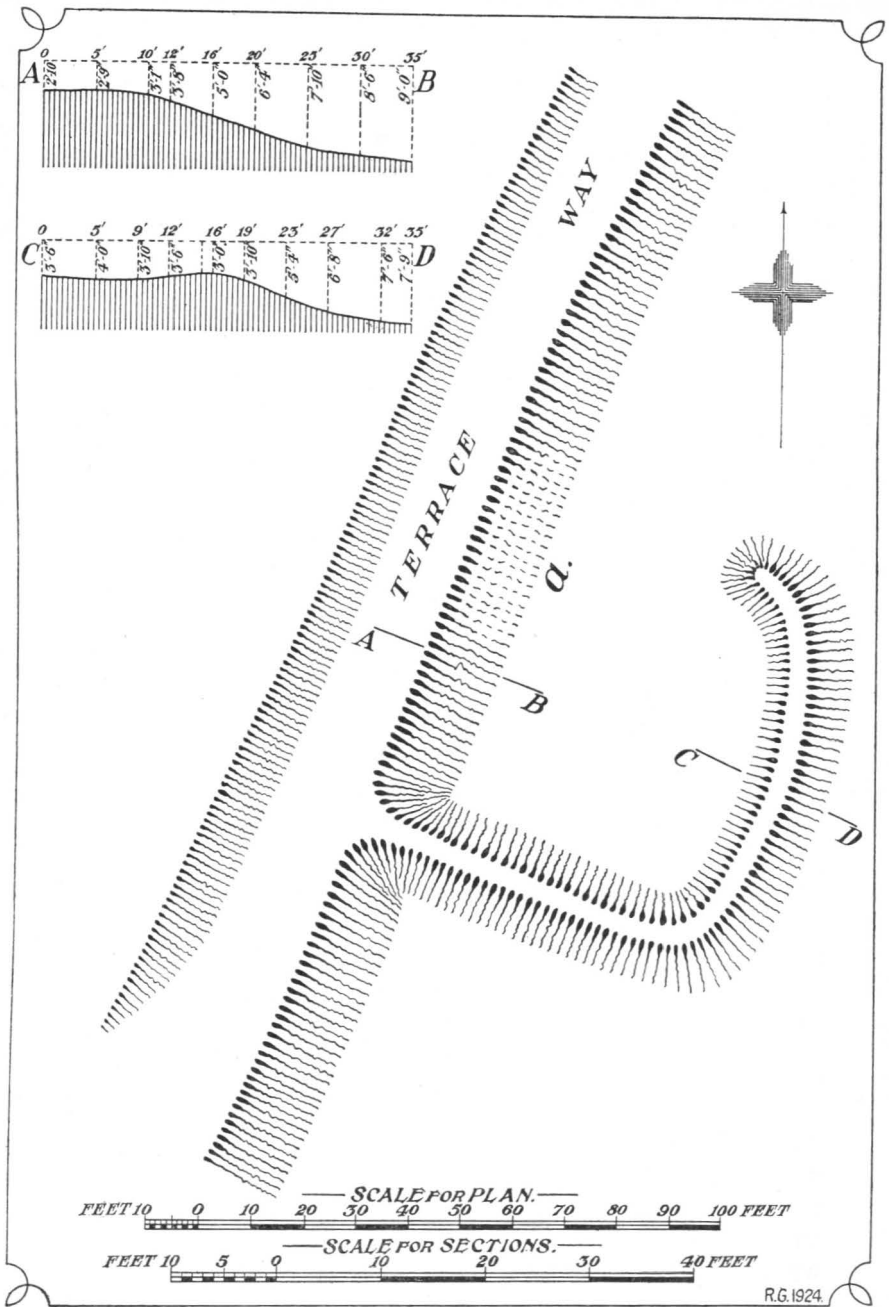


FIG. 4. L-SHAPED EARTHWORK, STREATHILL FARM, PLUMPTON PARISH.
Six-inch Ordnance Survey, Sussex, Sheet LIII, N.E.

with the ditchless earthworks composing the group on Plumpton Plain.

The scarp of the terrace is broken near "a" on plan, and it may be that this excavation furnished some of the material for the construction of the bank opposite.

So far no relics other than a few flint flakes have been observed on the very few mole casts within the enclosure.

HORSESHOE PLANTATION EARTHWORK, PLUMPTON PARISH.

About 250 feet from the northern end of Horseshoe Plantation, the downland track, from Mary Farm, divides, one branch leading to Streathill Farm, the other running nearly parallel towards the head of Faulkner's Bottom. On the eastern side of the track immediately south of the spot where it branches, one finds the earthwork represented in Fig. 5.

The western side of this enclosure is formed by a steep scarp, as shown in section A.B.; and the floor of the interior slopes from the base of this scarp to the pit adjoining the eastern bank.

In its features the earthwork resembles the enclosures of Plumpton Plain described above. Its banks have no ditch and were formed of soils pared from the interior in order to expose a chalk floor. The pit, too, is placed in the lowest part of the floor.

The dotted ring, "E" on plan, marks a shallow excavation (now covered with coarser grass), similar to the spaces enclosed by dots in enclosures III. and V. of the Plumpton Plain group.

From the three inch layer of soil now covering the floor of this earthwork, the moles have brought up flint flakes and fragments of the same coarse hand-made Bronze Age type of pottery as that found over the floors of the Plumpton Plain enclosures. The writer therefore entertains no doubt that this earthwork served the same purpose, and was constructed by the same people, as those on Plumpton Plain.

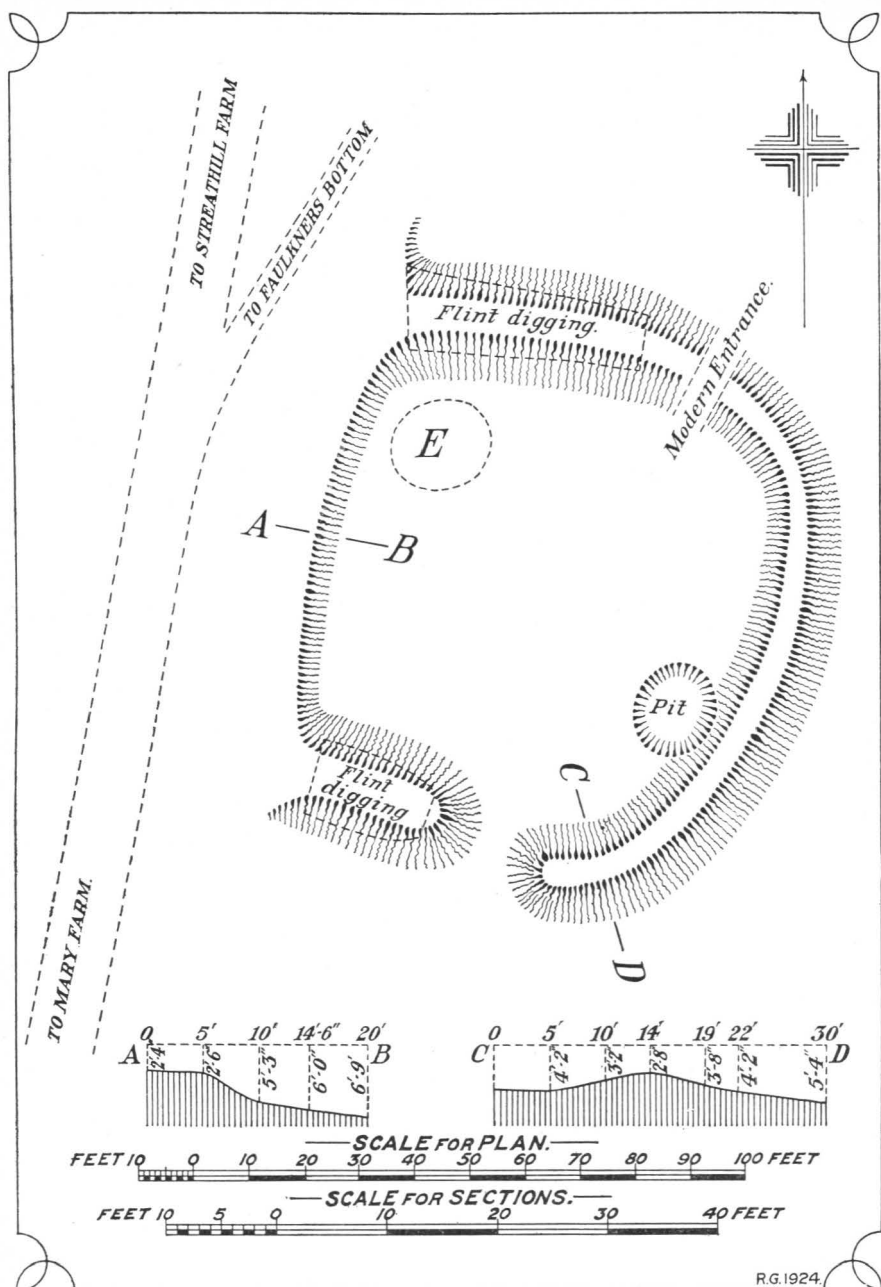


FIG. 5. HORSESHOE PLANTATION EARTHWORK, PLUMPTON PARISH.
Six-inch Ordnance Survey, Sussex, Sheet LIII., S.E.

Moreover, the fact that the western side has no bank, but is formed of a scarp which is roughly in line with (and only 1000 ft. distant from) the present termination of the old terraceway to the north-east, most strongly suggests that this earthwork also was based on the eastern edge of the old road which formerly extended to and past this point.

Flint-diggers in quite recent years were responsible for the mutilation of the banks, as shown by the dotted areas on the plan.

Both this and the L-shaped work were surveyed in June, 1912, by the writer and Mrs. Toms, with the help of Mr. W. J. Jacobs.

WESTERN BROW ENTRENCHMENT, WESTMESTON PARISH.

The oval earthwork shown in Fig. 6 lies on the southern spur of Western Brow, about 1225 yards south-east of the south-eastern angle of Ditchling Beacon hill-fort. It is also a mile due west of the westernmost enclosure on Plumpton Plain.⁶

The bank appears to have been considerably reduced in height and spread by former ploughing of the area; but, though filled, the presence of an exterior ditch (with entrance) is well marked by darker and more vigorous grass. The dotted line on the plan indicates the outer edge of this ditch.

The two dotted circles within the earthwork denote depressed spaces which may be shallow pits.

The plan is suggestive of the Plumpton Plain "oval" enclosures; but in this case the bank has been formed by excavation of material from an encircling ditch, and the sections show that, excepting the two depressions, no soil has been removed from the interior to lower the level of the original hill slope.

⁶ The earthwork is not yet shown on the ordnance surveys. Its position in the south-west corner of six inch sheet liii., N.E., may be obtained by measuring $1\frac{1}{4}$ in. from the western inner marginal line, and $\frac{3}{8}$ in. up from bottom inner margin. The point thus obtained is to the east of the bend in the 500 ft. contour.

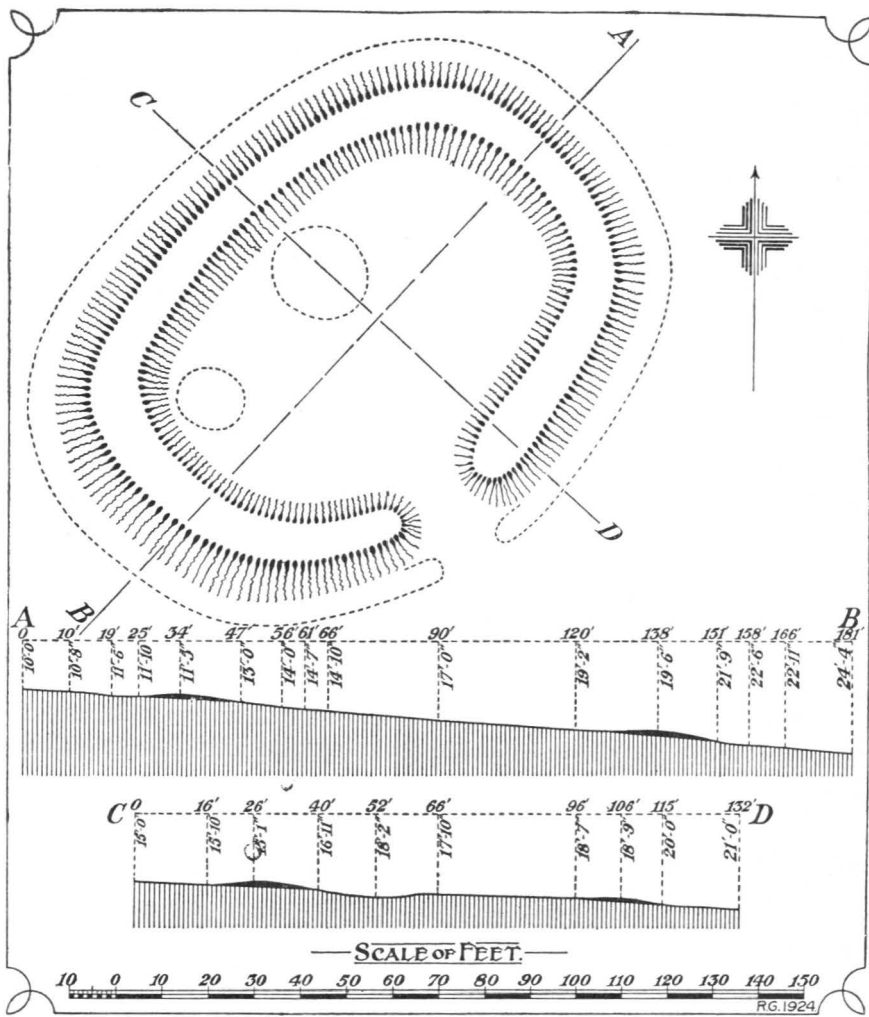


FIG. 6. WESTERN BROW ENTRENCHMENT, WESTMESTON PARISH.
Six-inch Ordnance Survey, Sussex, Sheet LIII., N.E.

Moles and rabbits have not been active here, and the grass carpet conceals any antiquities which the plough may have brought to the surface.

The earthwork was surveyed by the writer and Mrs. Toms in September, 1914.

MARY FARM EARTHWORK, FALMER PARISH.

This earthwork, Fig. 7, lies 300 yards east of the northern cottage at Mary Farm, and on the northern

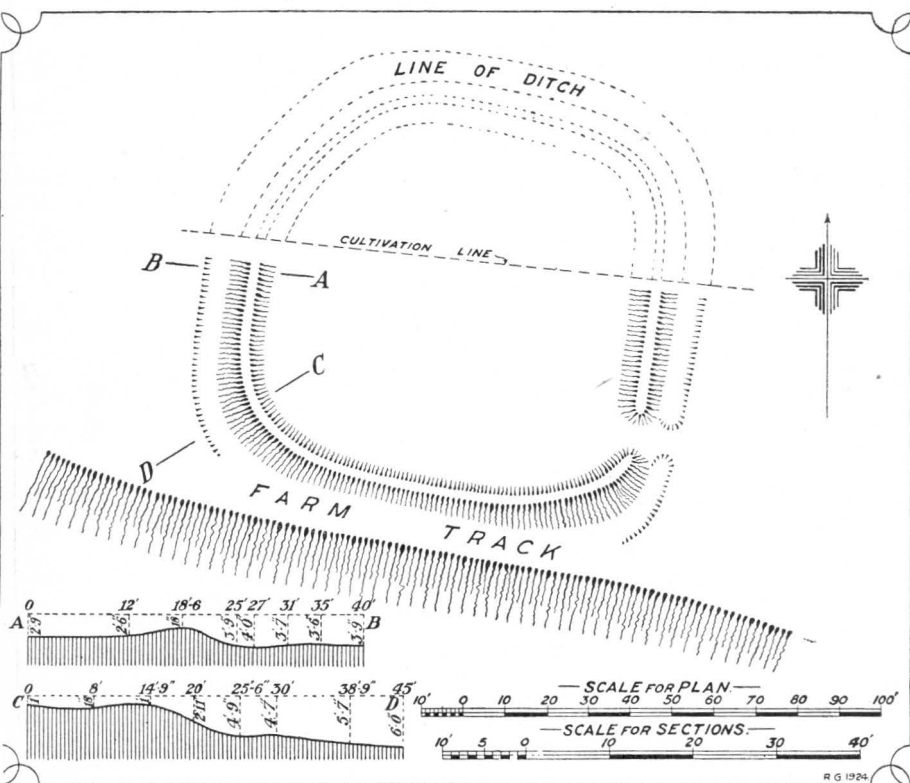


FIG. 7. MARY FARM EARTHWORK, FALMER PARISH.
Six-inch Ordnance Survey, Sussex, Sheet LIII., S.E.

edge of the farm track which leads eastwards from this cottage.

Only half of the earthwork remains on the uncultivated strip which borders the track; but, at the time of the

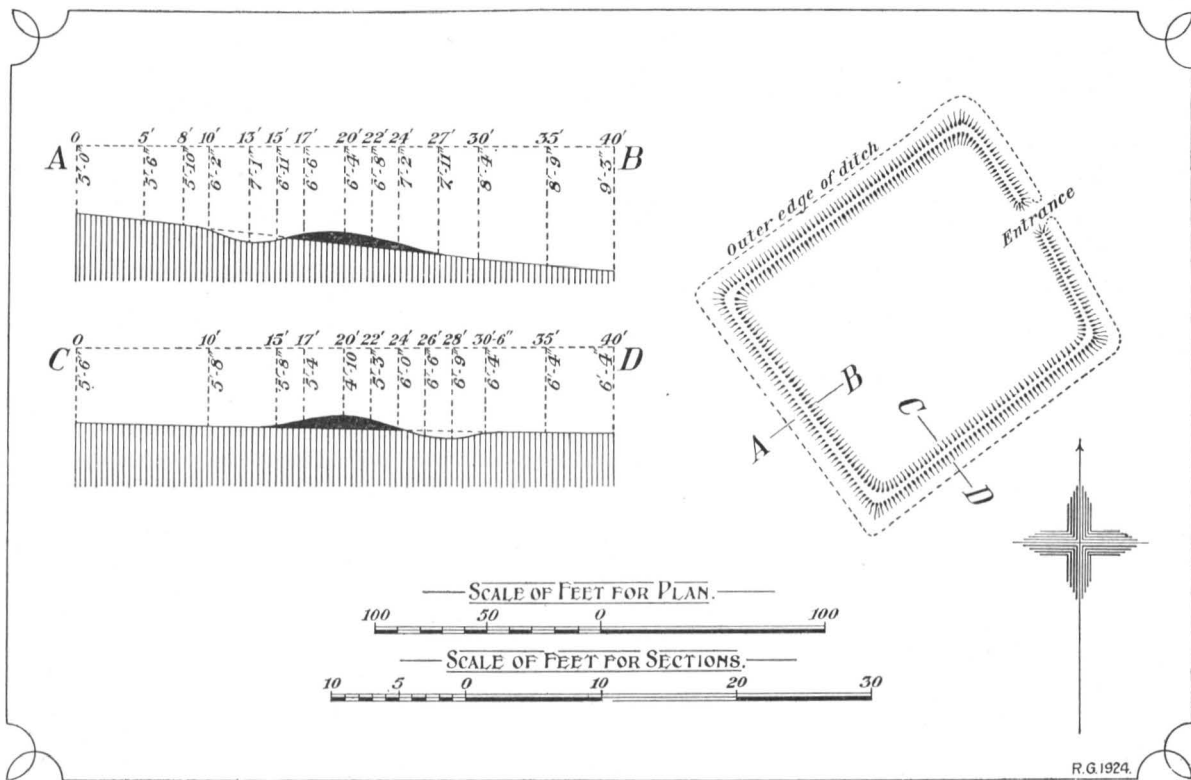


FIG. 8. ASHCOMBE RIDGE ENTRENCHMENT, PARISH OF ST. JOHN WITHOUT.
Six-inch Ordnance Survey, Sussex, Sheet LIII., S.E.

survey the ditch of the obliterated half was plainly visible as a dark band in growing corn.⁷ This band was carefully measured and, by taking average dimensions of the existing bank, the plan of the obliterated portion has been restored by dotted lines on Fig. 7.

To the south is a cultivated valley, of which the scarp below the earthwork forms the brow. Between the scarp and the earthwork runs the farm track which has destroyed the outline of the southern ditch. Another rough track borders the base of the scarp.

The existing remnant of the earthwork is in a mutilated condition, and has been used as a rick site in recent years.

The survey was made in May, 1912, by the writer, with the assistance of Messrs. A. Hadrian Allcroft, M.A., C. Brazenor, G. Russell-Davies, W. J. Jacobs, W. Law, and S. Pierre Smith.

ASHCOMBE RIDGE ENTRENCHMENT, PARISH OF ST. JOHN WITHOUT.

This small, remarkably rectilinear and perfect earthwork, shown in Fig. 8, was first observed by the writer on the 2nd May, 1914, and it was surveyed with the assistance of Messrs. C. Brazenor, E. C. Gardner, and W. J. Jacobs, a week later.⁸

The entrenchment is not yet marked on the ordnance surveys, but its centre may be obtained on the six inch sheet, liii, S.E., by locating the pond which lies on a parish boundary 1800 feet north-east of Four-Lords Burgh, and then measuring 700 feet south-east from the centre of the pond. This point is between the brow of Ashcombe Bottom and the crest of the ridge which separates Ashcombe Bottom from Broad Shackles.

From the centre of the earthwork, fine views are obtained of Caburn and Firle Beacon-with Wilmington Hills between—Seaford Head, Newhaven, and the

⁷ The greater depth of soil in the filled-in ditch caused the corn along it to grow more vigorously and darker than that on the shallower bordering soil.

⁸ Its first record appears in *The Sussex Daily News*, 9th September, 1914.

POND BROW

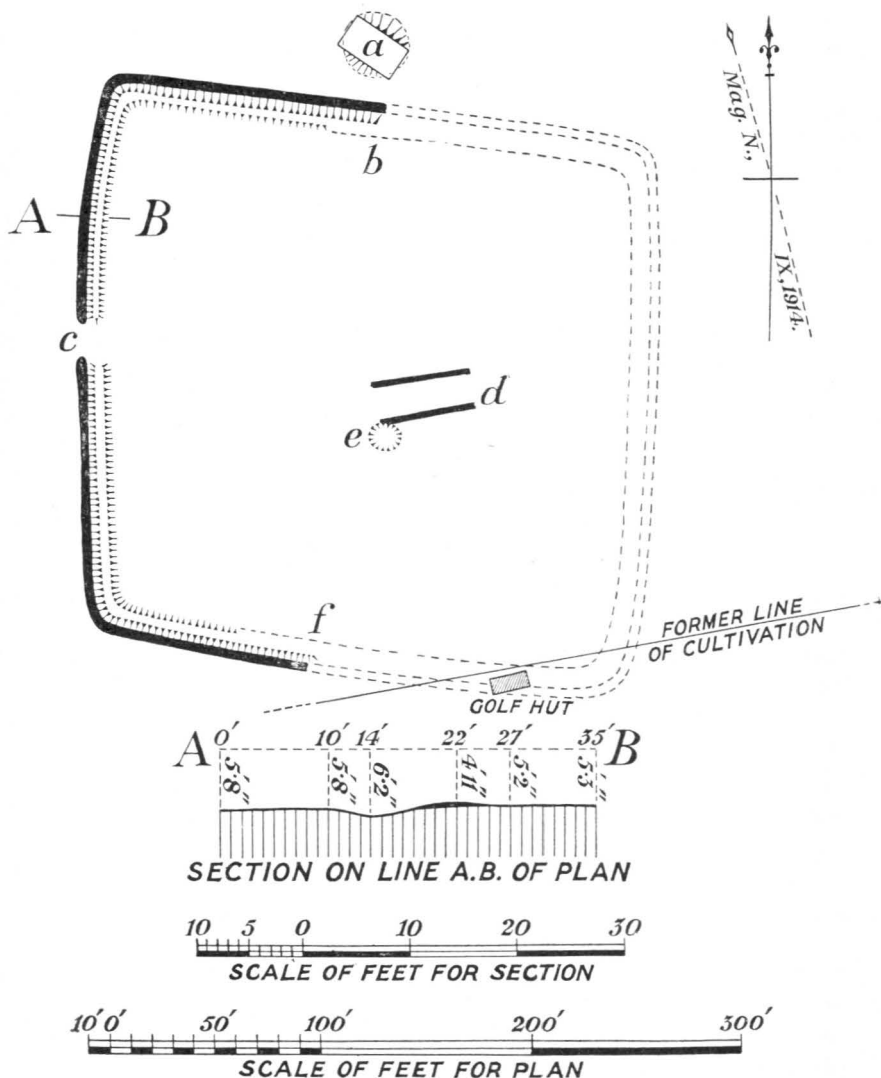


FIG. 9. POND BROW EARTHWORK, NEWTIMBER PARISH.
Six-inch Ordnance Survey, Sussex, Sheet LII., S.E.

Kingston Hills. The northern view is limited, being confined to Blackcap (2000 ft. distant), and Mount Harry; while the crest of the ridge, near which the work is situated, blots out the country south and west.

The position can hardly be considered defensive, and one imagines the earthwork (whatever its period) to have been an enclosure for habitation or for cattle. It is now covered with bracken and bushes, and is not easy to locate.

The south-western side is on the highest ground, from which the interior of the work slopes gently to the north-east. An old path, coming up from Ashcombe Bottom, strikes the northern angle.

POND BROW EARTHWORK, NEWTIMBER PARISH.

This earthwork, Fig. 9, forms part of the Dyke Golf Course, and is situated on the crest of Pond Brow, about 1000 yards S.E. of the southern entrance to the Devil's Dyke hill-fort, and also 2000 ft. east of the Dyke Station.

It consists of a nearly filled-in ditch (the thick line on the plan) running from "b" to "f," with a break at "c," and a much flattened adjoining bank.

Though no superficial evidence is now obtainable, the writer suggests that the original earthwork was a squarish enclosure, as hypothetically restored by dotted lines on plan, with one entrance at "c." An examination of the ground in the vicinity of "b" and "f" gives no indication that the eastern half of the work was obliterated by ploughing. One can, therefore only surmise that this obliteration may have been effected by intentional levelling of the bank and filling of the ditch. A few trial trenches would speedily settle this question as to the former existence, and plan, of the eastern ditches.

The northern side runs level along the highest ground the western side drops five or six feet from north to south; and there is a slight rise from the S.W. angle in the direction of "f."

Its present features suggest that the original earthwork was not defensive, but a pastoral enclosure, probably a summer fold for cattle.

The oblong "a" represents the 12th Tee of the Golf Course. This Tee was formed by levelling the top of a small tumulus which is shown on the ordnance survey about 200 feet north of the 635 ft. trigonometrical "station." The latter "station" is not shown on Fig. 9, but it is cut in the turf three yards from the south-eastern edge of the shallow pit "e." The whole area of the earthwork is situated well above the 600 feet contour.

The nearly parallel lines "d" are two narrow and nearly filled trenches which curiously resemble those of the oblong enclosures inside Cissbury. The surface of the ground to the east has been broken, probably by comparatively recent flint-digging, and it is impossible to state whether the trenches extended in this direction. The ground between the trenches is flat and on a level with the area outside.

Although it appears from the plan that pit "e" intersected or destroyed the adjoining end of the southern trench, one cannot now determine superficially which was dug first, the trench or the pit. The pit seems to be old, for the late Mr. Ernest Robinson, of Saddlescombe, informed the writer that when Stephen Pelling dug into the pit in 1903, in the hope of finding flints for road metal, he discovered a clay "hearth" on the bottom and also two flint hammerstones.

The survey commenced in September, 1914, was completed by the writer and his wife in October, 1921.

CONCLUSION.

The above notes are intended as a continuation of the earthwork articles which appear under the writer's name in *The Brighton and Hove Archaeologist*, 1924, 1926. As far as the exceptionally interesting series of earthworks in the Mary Farm district is concerned, the incentive to survey and record was supplied by the

enthusiasm of Mr. Relfe H. Verrall, who drew our attention to these earthworks in 1912.⁹

With the exception of Fig. 9, the plans in this report were drawn from the writer's field surveys by Mr. Robert Gurd for the Committee of the Brighton and Hove Archaeological Club; and the writer gratefully acknowledges his indebtedness to the Club's Committee, and to Mr. Gurd, for their interest, and also for their kindness in relieving him of the task of preparing the plans for publication.

Finally it is urged that, even if the earthworks here dealt with are finally scheduled, methodical visitation will be necessary to ensure their preservation.

⁹ On the ploughed land of Mary Farm, near Plumpton Plain and Faulkner's Bottom, Mr. Verrall found many flint implements of late Neolithic (or early Bronze Age) types, and these he presented to the Brighton Museum.