

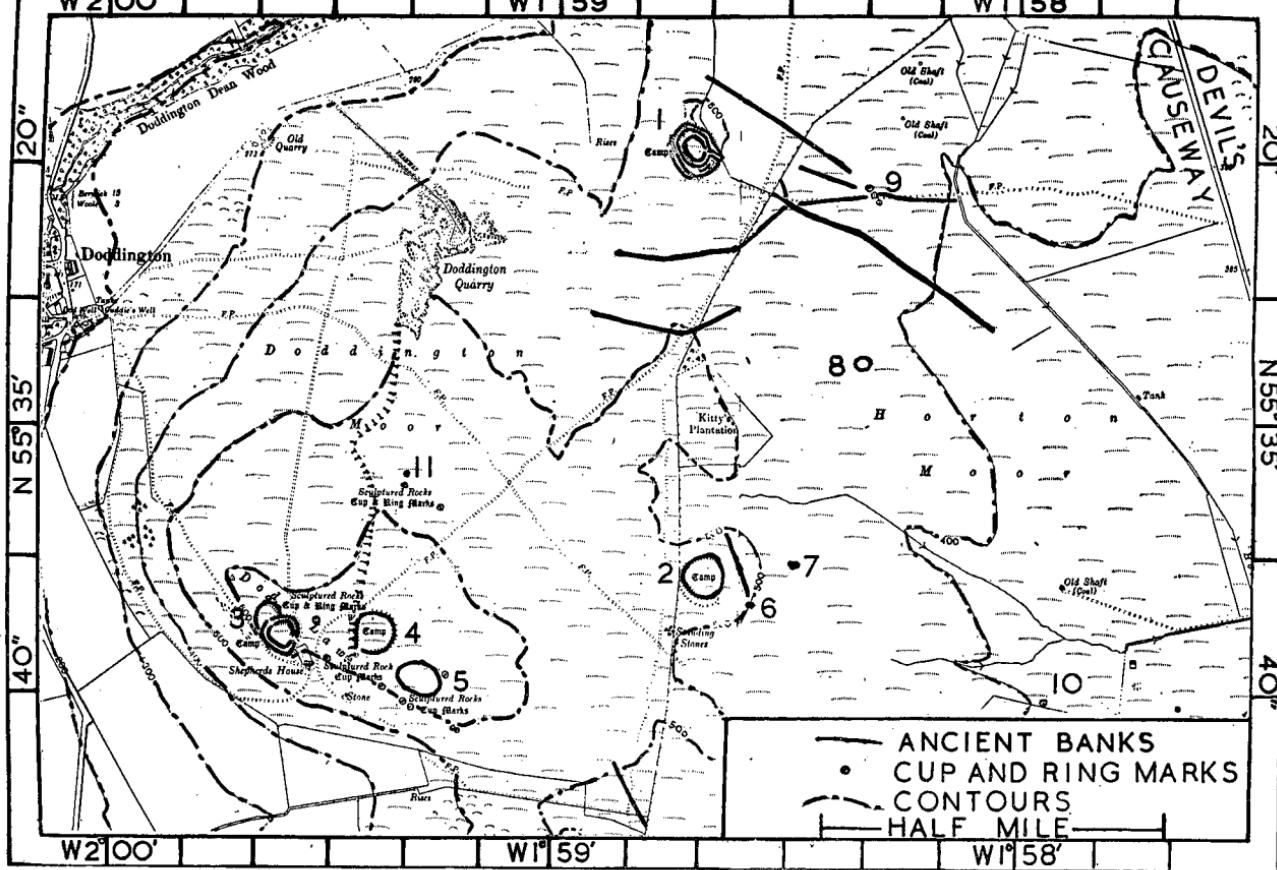
## XII.—DODDINGTON AND HORTON MOORS.

By A. H. A. and N. HOGG.

The area which forms the subject of this paper<sup>1</sup> lies about 3 miles N.N.E. of Wooler. It is now moorland, rising at its highest point to rather more than 600 ft. above O.D., and bounded by steep slopes on the S. and W., but falling away more gently on the E. and N. It is well supplied with springs and streams, but the drainage is generally good. A natural scarp facing W. runs N. across the western part, but otherwise the relief presents no extensive barriers to travel, although the valleys of the small streams running N. and E. are in places steep-sided. The natural rock lies near the surface, but much of the area has been under plough, apparently in fairly recent times. In spite of this, the concentration of surviving early remains is remarkable even for Northumberland. During 1943 the writers commenced a field survey of these. It was originally intended to publish plans or drawings of all the antiquities in the area covered by the map (fig. 1), but circumstances prevented the completion of the work on the incised rocks. Except for three newly recorded or rediscovered examples of these, the account is therefore limited to a description of the domestic structures. It is convenient to deal first with the other types of site.

The plans are based on enlargements from air photographs, but all details and the main overall dimensions have been checked on the ground.

<sup>1</sup> A brief account of the area has been given by W. P. Hedley, PSAN 4 ser. VI, p. 62, and an air photograph is reproduced in NCH vol. XIV, pl. IV facing p. 33.



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FIG. 1. DODDINGTON AND HORTON MOORS.  
1-5 forts; 6-7 huts; 8 homesteads; 9-10 incised rocks; 11 upright stones.

*Upright Stones.* A small group of four upright stones, perhaps the remains of a circle,<sup>2</sup> is already recorded on the O.S. map near site 2. To this must be added a curious small structure of two upright stones (11). Its purpose is not obvious. The stones stand about 2 ft. high. That on the N. is set vertically, the other is curved in elevation, and leans over so that their tops are touching, but there is a D-shaped opening about a foot wide below.

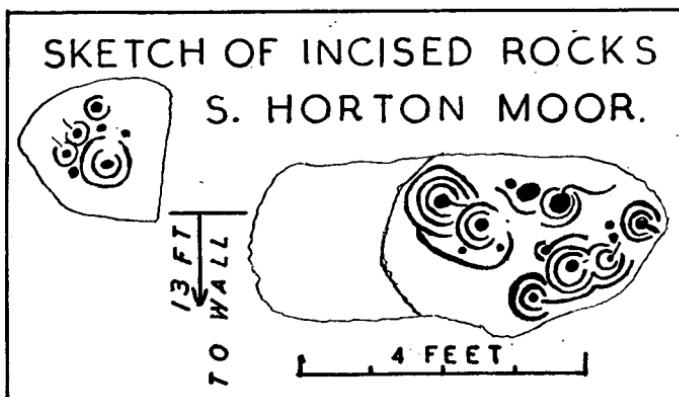


FIG. 2.

*Incised Rocks.* The group of incised rocks on this moor is one of the most notable in the county, the elaborate pattern on Dod Law between sites 3 and 4 being particularly fine. Most have been described by J. C. Bruce<sup>3</sup> and others, but it is possible to indicate the location of a carving (9) E. of the Ringses, which was believed to have been destroyed, and a new specimen has been discovered (10). The form of this pattern is indicated in fig. 2.<sup>4</sup> It is cut on a low boss of rock, now much overgrown. Another small carving not previously recorded is on a rock just E. of site 5. It is partly

<sup>2</sup> NCH vol. XIV, p. 65.

<sup>3</sup> J. C. Bruce, *Incised Markings on Stone* (1868), pls. VIII and IX. NCH vol. XIV, p. 66.

<sup>4</sup> This is a careful sketch, but not an exact measured drawing.

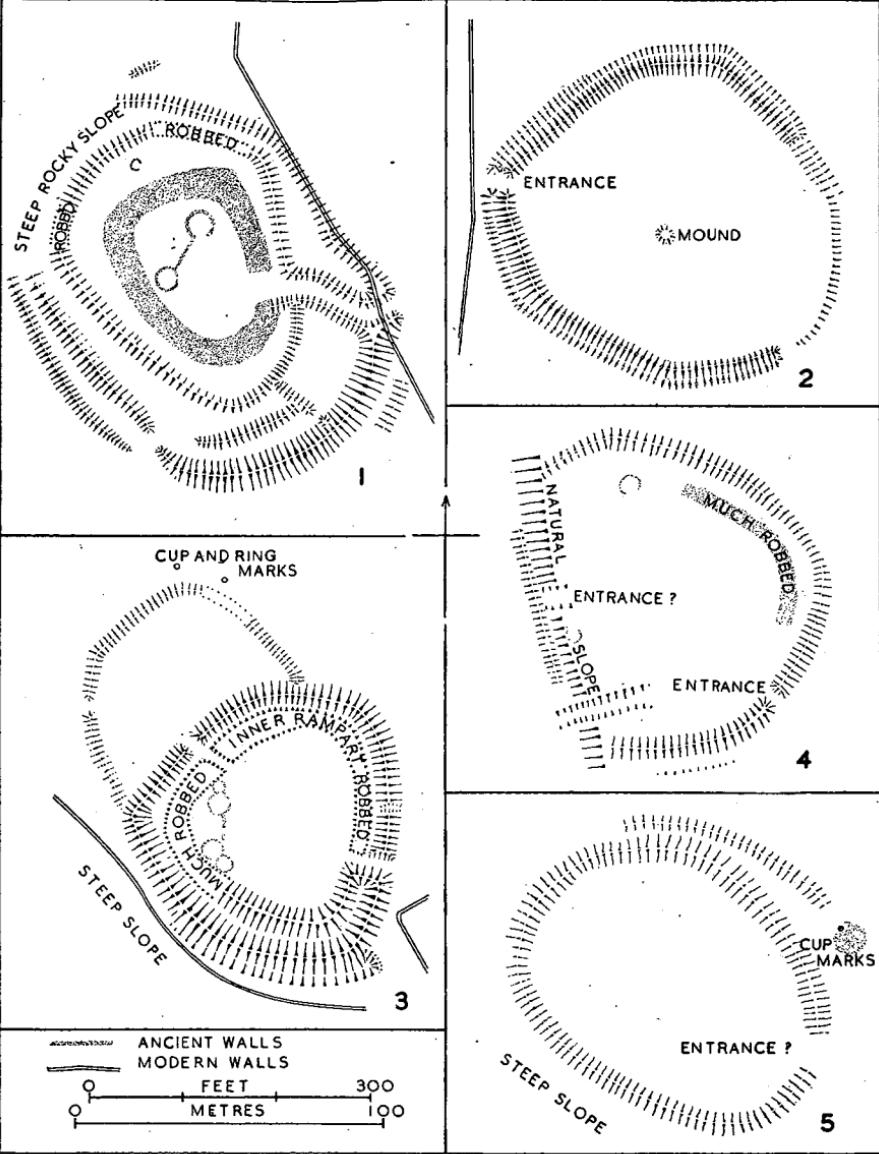


FIG. 3. SITES 1 TO 5.

covered by a low heap of stones which almost certainly formed part of the rampart of that fort.

*The Settlements.*<sup>5</sup> These comprise five fortified sites (fig. 3), two unenclosed pairs of huts, and a damaged home-stead.

(1) The Ringses (16NW1, 014327). This is the finest of these forts. It stands on a rounded knoll from which the ground falls away on all sides, gently to the N. and E., more steeply to the S., and almost precipitously on the N.W. to a small valley. The innermost rampart was of stone, now much reduced by robbing, with three further ramparts of earth and stone on the S. and S.W., two on the N. and E., and one above the precipitous slope on the N.W. The entrance shows a right-left zigzag between banks, the southern extending to join with the innermost stone rampart. There are entrances, apparently original, leading through the outer two ramparts and giving access to the space within them and to a roughly square enclosure S. of the entrance. The interior of the fort contains two circular huts linked by a thin wall, and there is another small hut between the innermost and the next rampart on the N.W.

Superficial examination suggests that in spite of the differences in construction all the fortifications are of one period, although the huts may be later. The enclosed spaces between the ramparts on the south, with their separate entrance, were probably intended for the protection of cattle. A similar arrangement, less elaborate, can be seen at Middle Dean<sup>6</sup> near Ingram.

To the E. and S. are several earthen banks, now much reduced by cultivation. These also were probably connected with cattle rearing. Three of them converge on a group of incised rocks (9). This suggests that the carvings were a known landmark when the banks were built.

(2) Horton Moor (16NW5, 014318). This is an irregular

<sup>5</sup> The numbers which follow the fort names refer first to "A New List of Native Sites", PSAN XI, p. 156, where references are given, and then give the six-figure National Grid co-ordinates.

<sup>6</sup> Antiquity XVII (1943), p. 139.

octagon in plan, surrounded by a single bank and ditch of no great strength. The position, on the top of a rounded knoll, is suited to defence, but is not naturally strong. The only structure in the enclosure is a small mound near the centre, probably a barrow. The E. quarter of the rampart is very much slighter than the rest, but does not seem to have been damaged by recent ploughing. Its condition is probably to be taken as evidence that the fort was never finished, or may possibly be due to slighting.

To the E., near where a low earthen bank crosses the knoll, are two pairs of huts (6) and (7). The entrance to the enclosure, however, lies on the side away from the huts, and there is no reason to associate them with it.

(3) West Dod Law (16NW2, 004316). Next to the Ringses this is the finest fort on the moor. It is defended by two strong ramparts, with a ditch on the S. The inner rampart, which is much robbed, seems to have been mainly of dry masonry, the outer of earth and stone. The entrances are simple. That on the N.W. leads to an annexe, surrounded by a slight bank, with two small cup-and-ring marks on the N. Inside the main enclosure are two pairs of huts connected by a slight wall with a central gateway. These huts look as though they were later insertions.

(4) Middle Dod Law (16NW3, 006316). This has a fairly strong but much damaged outer rampart of earth, and a short length of stone inner rampart, heavily robbed. Possible traces of two huts are visible. In locating this fort, advantage has been taken of a steep natural scarp on the W., at the foot of which is a strong spring.

(5) East Dod Law (16NW4, 008316). The rampart of this fort has been reduced to a faint bank, barely visible on the ground. The S. side was protected by a steep natural slope. On the N.E. the ruins of the rampart partly overlie a rock-carving (see above).

The remaining sites are less impressive, but the hut groups (6) and (7) are of interest, as unenclosed huts are not very common in Northumberland. Their plans have been

published elsewhere.<sup>7</sup> Site (8) appears to have been an egg-shaped homestead of the usual Cheviot type, but the interior has been cleared. The Roman road known as the Devil's Causeway crosses the E. edge of the moor, but its course here is straight for many miles, and is therefore unlikely to have been directly influenced by the presence of these earthworks.

It remains to try, as far as is possible without excavation, to fit these remains into the known archaeology of the region. Recent work in Scotland by Mrs. C. M. Piggott<sup>8</sup> has provided a framework which is likely to be applicable to Northumberland also. In S.E. Scotland the earliest habitations, probably dating from the 2nd and early 1st centuries B.C., consisted of timber huts in palisaded enclosures. Towards the beginning of our era, invaders arrived from the S.W., bringing very little material equipment, but introducing new methods of fortification. The first forts were single-walled, but after one or two generations these were superseded by multiple defences. These forts were abandoned or dismantled under Roman authority, and irregular settlements of round huts with low stone walls spread over their sites.

With one exception, this scheme fits the remains under discussion perfectly. Horton Moor (2) and probably East Dod Law (3) belong to the earlier single-ramparted phase of the intrusive forts. The Ringses (1) and West Dod Law (3) are excellent examples of the later type with multiple defences, though neither shows any sign of dismantling. In West Dod Law there are two pairs of intrusive huts, probably of Romano-British date. This leaves Middle Dod Law unaccounted for. The difficulty cannot be resolved by making East, Middle, and West Dod Law correspond to palisaded enclosures, single-walled, and multiple-walled forts respectively, for East Dod Law shows definite traces of a rampart and ditch, and Middle Dod Law of two ramparts.

<sup>7</sup> *Antiquity* XIX (1945), p. 81.

<sup>8</sup> For a general summary see *PSA* (Scot.) vol. LXXXIV (1949-50), pp. 134-5.

There must therefore have been two phases of multiple-rampart building in this area.

The other new information obtained from this survey is that a rock-carving is earlier than a single-walled fort. These carvings are rare in the districts from which the fort-building invaders came, so it seemed probable that they were the work of the earlier inhabitants, but it is satisfactory to have this confirmation.

Although no settlements certainly earlier than the forts are visible on the surface, the great concentration of rock-carvings makes it seem very probable indeed that some exist. Doddington and Horton Moors offer one of the most promising areas in Northumberland for excavations which would be likely to throw light not only on the development of pre-Roman settlement but on the cultural associations of the rock-carvings.