

III.—NOTES ON ADDITIONAL EARLY SETTLEMENTS IN NORTHUMBERLAND

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The following settlements and possible habitation sites have been noted since the summaries of surveys were published in earlier volumes of *Archaeologia Aeliana*. All are visible on the ground and have been surveyed at a scale of 1:200. Plans are given where it appears likely that the sites could be threatened or engulfed by afforestation. One is indebted to those students who may have reported some of these new discoveries in the first instance.

(a) Timber-built, palisaded settlement

Hosedon Linn, Alwinton; NT 918081; fig. 1a, Plate VIII

This settlement is situated at an altitude of *c.* 1000' on a slight platform above and immediately to the west of Clennell Street. The land rises slightly to the west of the site before falling steeply down to Hosedon Linn in the gorge of the Alwinton Burn.

Nine timber-built house sites are visible, the house-walls being marked by "ring-grooves" 0.5 to 0.75 metres wide. It could be that there are more house-sites beneath the turf since to the north of the centre of the site there is a notable gap in what is otherwise a compact distribution. The two larger houses have twin "ring-grooves" (*cf.* e.g. Burnswark and Castle O'er hill-forts, Dumfriesshire or Hayhope Knowe, Roxburghshire) and are *c.* eleven metres in diameter. Some of the smaller house-sites appear to be slightly oval in shape. There are no unequivocal indications of the rebuilding of

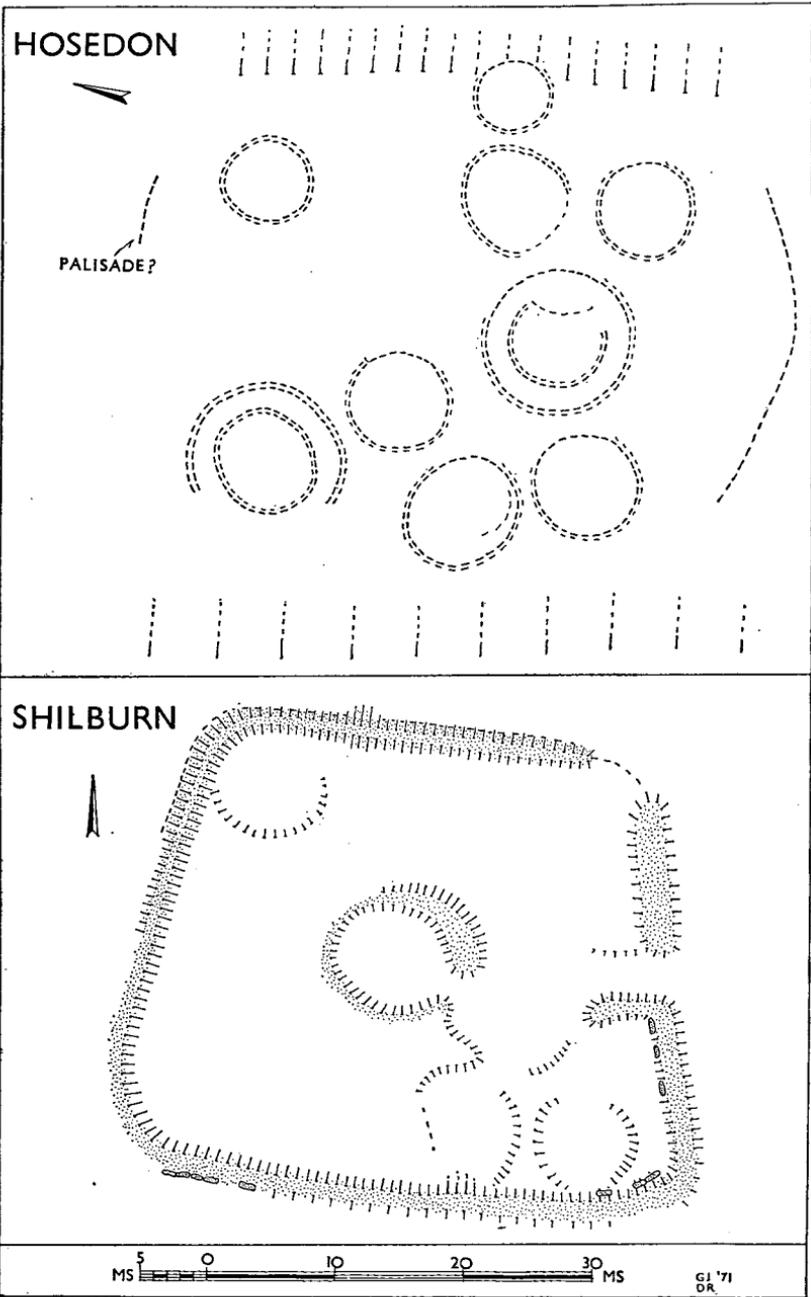


FIG. 1a & b



Ring-groove house, Hosedon Linn, Alwinton.

houses but faint traces of short arcs in two instances may point to such a possibility. At first sight it may appear that the settlement is unenclosed. However, slight traces of a groove can be detected in the "bent" grass on two sides of the site and may mark the former course of a perimeter palisade, though its full extent is uncertain.

On the evidence of radio-carbon dates from other similar sites in the northern area a general context in the sixth or seventh century B.C. is possible for these remains. That this settlement never achieved more substantial defences of the order of, for example, the nearby hill-forts already recorded on Camp Knowe, Clennell, or Castle Hill, Alwinton (*Arch. Ael.*,⁴ XLIII (1965), nos. 75 and 87), could be because of the comparatively inferior natural defensive qualities of the site. In this respect the situation is reminiscent of the High Knowes palisaded settlements relative to Alnham Castle hill-fort, 7 kilometres to the north-east (*Arch. Ael.*,⁴ XLIV (1966)). The settlement was first noted by Mr. G. Waters.

(b) Enclosed stone-built settlements

- (1) *Uplaw North and South, Alwinton*; c. NT 919081; fig. 2.

Not far distant from the above site, on the east side of Clennell Street, are two enclosed settlements which have already been recorded but for which, as indeed for the majority of sites, no plans could then be published because of cost (*Arch. Ael.*,⁴ XLII (1964), nos. 77 and 78). As the sites do not appear on any O.S. maps, the opportunity is now taken to present the larger of the two sites, since it is also one of the largest extant settlements of this order in the county. Both settlements have had timber or stone-built houses fronting on to excavated courtyards (e.g. *Peebleshire Inventory*, type E) and could fall into a context approaching or within the Roman period. Neither site is particularly well preserved but at least sixteen house-sites

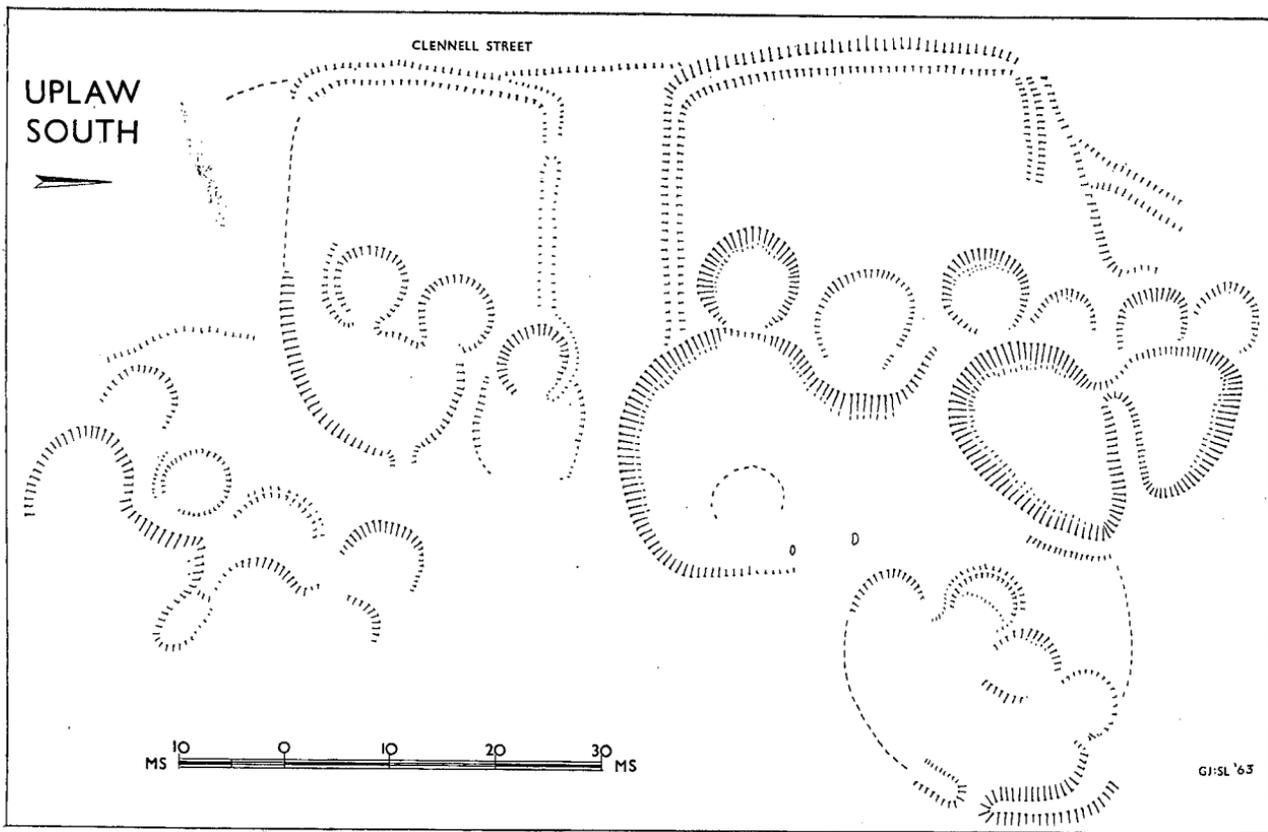


FIG. 2

are visible at Uplaw South. It comprises a number of smaller units in close juxtaposition to one another, as is not unusual, although in this instance it is difficult to point to an original nucleus from which there could have been expansion. Afforestation could spread rapidly into this area.

(2) *Heddon Hill, Ilderton*; NU 006204.

During the course of other investigations, two poorly preserved enclosures were noted at an altitude of between 700' and 800' on the east facing slopes of Heddon Hill, close to the track which ascends the slope from Ildertonmoor Farm. Again they would appear to have been curvilinear enclosed settlements similar to Uplaw South, with timber or stone-built houses fronting on to a scooped forecourt (*Arch. Ael.*,⁴ XLII, (1964)). As such they would help to fill a void, unexplainable on topographical grounds, which exists on the present distribution map between the Lilburn Burn and the Breamish Valley.

(3) *Shilburnhaugh, Wellhaugh*; NY 700872; fig. 1b.

This stone-built settlement, rectilinear in form, is presumably Romano-British in general context by analogy with other excavated sites in the area (*Arch. Ael.*,⁴ XXXVIII (1960)). It is situated on Yarrow Moor above the North Tyne at an altitude of c. 600' and c. three hundred metres to the south-east of Shilburnhaugh Farm.

The site is overrun by heather, particularly on the east side, which makes the area of the entrance somewhat difficult to interpret. There are stone foundations of one round house in the centre of the interior and a possible platform for another house in the north-west corner. Normally on such sites the area to the north and south of the east facing entrance is occupied by two yards, sometimes hollowed. In

this instance, the north side appears to be free from buildings but it is possible that a third hut position exists in that area generally reserved for the south yard. As such this hut may represent later expansion which only very occasionally occurs on these particular sites (*cf.* Quarry House, No. 74 *op. cit.*); but excavation would be required to confirm the suggestion. The perimeter wall of the settlement, which is up to 2 ms wide, contains some fairly large facing stones and, as might be anticipated in this situation, no ditch is present. The site is well drained and rock is not far beneath the surface, so that a possible correlation already noted on these sites between the presence of a ditch and a sub-soil requiring drainage is maintained.

The site was first noted by Mr. Charles Marshall and makes a useful addition to a small gap in the general distribution of this type of settlement in North Tynedale, where there appeared to be no good topographical reasons for their absence. There are remains of a number of stone enclosure walls further to the north-east but these would appear to be associated with the ruins of a more recent steading. The site lies beyond the limit of present afforestation but falls on the margin of the flood level of the proposed Otterstones reservoir, and could be in jeopardy if this scheme matures.

(4) *Edge House, Hexhamshire Low Quarter*;
NY 891598.

A similar rectilinear stone-built enclosure, lying within a single ditch and containing the foundations of three round houses, was discovered recently by officers of the Ordnance Survey (Archaeology Division) during map revision of this area. The site is farther removed from a main river system than most others of this nature in the county and falls in an area where little is known to have survived in the way of early settlement sites.

(5) *Manor House, Ulgham; NZ 234923.*

A rectangular enclosure, measuring some seventy by forty metres and bounded by a broad ditch, is visible amongst the ridge and furrow in the south-west corner of Camp or Front field on the east side of the village of Ulgham and to the south of Manor House. It was first brought to my notice by Mr. R. Bailey as a feature on an air-photograph. The interior is somewhat disturbed. On the east the site is bounded by an old hollow road running north and south across the field, and presumably coming from the area of the present crossing of the River Lyne. The enclosure is only doubtfully of any antiquity but is recorded here because of possible land development in the vicinity of the village.

(c) Unenclosed sites

The confusion which may arise between the remains of isolated huts, robbed out cairns and enclosed cremation sites, or more recent stack-bases, sow-kilns, animal pens and bughts, is ever present. The present rarity of unenclosed huts as extant features in the Border area not only serves to increase wariness in identification but also the need to record possible contenders. The following are noted with such reservations in mind.

(1) *Tathey Crags, Selby's Forest; NT 964212; fig. 3.*

An interesting collection of embanked circles, some containing stone others less certainly so, is situated on and around a rock outcrop at an altitude of 1250'. The situation is unusual, at least for early settlement sites of a permanent nature, but the circles do appear to have entrances mainly

in an arc east to south. Although there are faint traces of what may be a ruined wall on one side this does not seem to be part of an enclosure wall. The site overlooks the Three-stone Burn stone circle, just over 1 km to the south and is

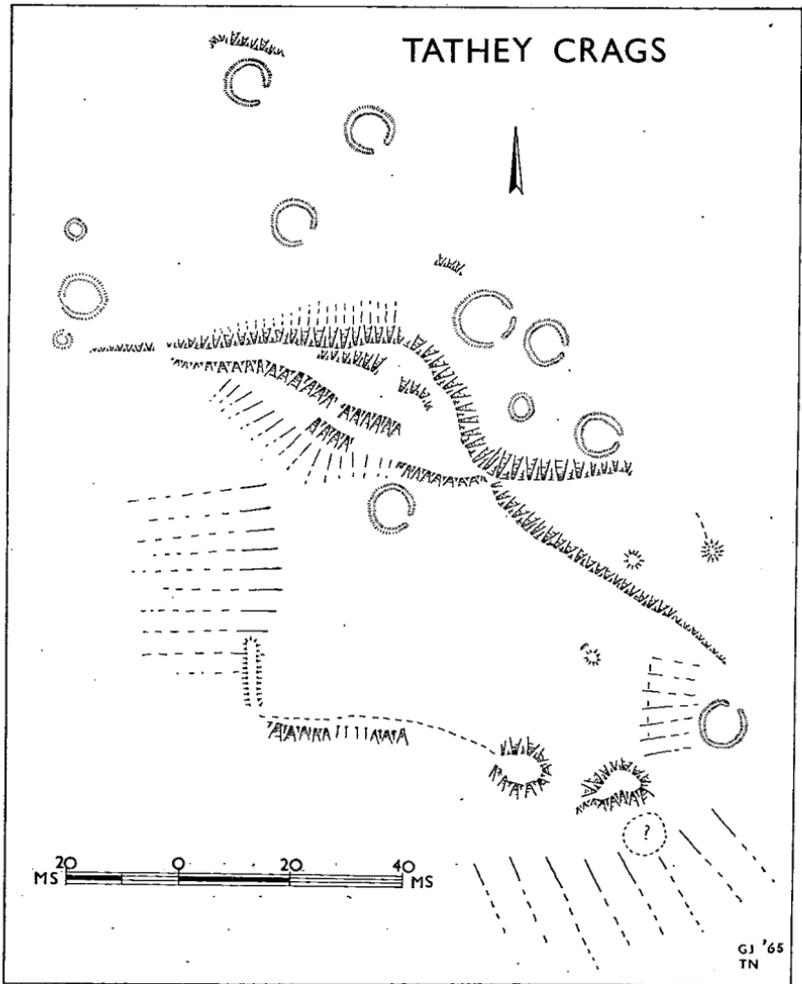


FIG. 3

well removed from a watercourse of any substance. The area is again one which may be subject to afforestation in the near future.

(2) *Monday Cleugh, Akeld; NT 953285.*

About three hundred metres west of the hillfort at Monday Cleugh (*Arch. Ael.*,⁴ XLIII (1963), no. 27), on a slight shelf at an altitude of c. 800', are three stone founded circles 6 to 7 metres in internal diameter. All appear to have entrances in the arc east to south. A few metres to the south there is also a small stone founded rectangular enclosure, not a settlement.

(3) *Earlehillhead, Earle; NT 972262.*

Four small circular enclosures are situated on a slight shelf on the slopes of Hart Heugh. Stones appear in the well spread footings and three have east facing entrances. The overall diameters are small at c. 5 metres. There are other large rectilinear enclosures in the area, some with ruins of rectangular buildings, and it is just possible that the circular features may be associated with these and of no great antiquity.

(4) *Rackside North, South Middleton; NT 983227.*

Two embanked circles of stone, some 8 metres in diameter and both with possible entrances in the east, lie some eighty metres apart on small natural shelves on the hillside. Again there are the ruins of a small steading or shieling some thirty metres further to the south with which the circles could have some associated function, though they do not appear to be the remains of drying kilns.

(5) *Clennell Street, Alwinton*; NT 918078.

Some two hundred metres south-east of the palisaded settlement at Hosedon and immediately on the east side of Clennell Street is a single ring-ditch of slight proportions. It is some 8 metres in diameter and though it could be a house-site it is more likely to be of a sepulchral nature.

(6) *Ward Law, Kidland*; NT 864131.

A number of unenclosed small embanked circles are reported by Mr. R. Cowper at an altitude of 1200' on the slopes of Ward Law.

Whatever may be the nature and context of such isolated sites of which there are a growing number, sometimes situated at altitudes and in areas where afforestation spreads rapidly, it is evident that some investigation is necessary. Some similar examples, noted in the past, such as those near Stannersburn and Milkhope, have already disappeared beneath planting before enquiries could be made. In recent years the same fate has befallen not only more noticeable features such as cross-dykes but also, less understandably, some scheduled early settlement sites. One can only suppose that the channels of communication are still far too tenuous in a situation where workers and observers in the field are few.