

IX.

THE EARTHWORK AT CAMPHILL IN GLASGOW. BY H. FAIRHURST, M.A., PH.D., F.S.A.SCOT., AND J. G. SCOTT, B.A., F.S.A.SCOT.

Camphill forms part of Queen's Park, which lies in the southern residential district of Glasgow, about two miles from the centre of the city (Nat. Grid ref. 26/577622). The hill is an irregular oval about half a mile long, with the steepest end towards W.N.W., and with smooth slopes formed everywhere of boulder clay; it is in fact a large "drumlin" of which many examples are to be seen in Glasgow. The flattish top is at an altitude of just over 200 ft., though it rises little more than 100 ft. above the land immediately around. Much of the summit is at present used for allotments, but in open parkland at the western end there is clearly to be seen an earthwork enclosing an area of nearly three and a half acres. This "camp" measures overall 130 yards from S.E. to N.W. and 109 yards at right angles to this. The site is shown on 6 in. and 25 in. O.S. maps but not on the latest 1 in. sheet. In and around the enclosure there is an open cover of beech and ash trees with large hawthorns, which breaks the view considerably, but even so Camphill is one of the best vantage points in the whole Glasgow area. On a clear day it is possible to see far down the River Clyde past Dumbarton to the Argyll hills, up the valley past the site of Bothwell Castle towards Tinto, and northwards towards the Campsies and Kilpatrick's with the Highlands showing between. This most remarkable outlook may be of significance in understanding the purpose of the earthwork, for the site would form a superb signalling station or beacon.

The "camp" has long been recognised as an ancient fortification; usually it has been attributed to the Romans,¹ but it has also been connected with the Battle of Langside which was fought at the south-eastern foot of the hill in 1568. The first investigations were made many years ago, for on 15 July 1867 the *Glasgow Herald* published a report of an excavation a brief summary of which, largely in the original wording, may be given as follows.

Starting near the centre of the enclosure, a trench was cut into the slope down to the undisturbed subsoil at a depth of four feet. The trench was then pushed forward in a longitudinal direction to a place where the hard bottom seemed to dip away to a depth of eight feet. Here a sort of paved floor was laid bare, twelve feet by six feet, resembling a shallow trough. Over the surface lay a cake of charred oat grain, mixed with fragments of blackened oak. This was thought to be part of an ancient kiln for drying grain.² Many years before, an old millstone was found near the margin of the camp.

¹ O.S.A. (1795), Cathcart Parish.

² For a similar granary see Appendix I.

This report seems inconsequential rather than inaccurate, but it is a great pity that a full statement was not made in one of the antiquarian journals.

The *Herald* report is corroborated by an exhibit in the People's Palace on Glasgow Green, where there is displayed a sample of grain and oak. On the other hand, a diligent search at Camphill has failed to find trace of the trench "near the centre of the enclosure"; a marked transverse depression in the extreme east of the rampart is the only suggestion of large scale excavation we could find. The charred grain has recently been examined by two continental experts who, unfortunately, were under the impression that the "camp" was Roman; they seem not to have known of the old report, but confirmed the statement that the grain was oats.¹

The Site and Appearance of the "Camp."—Somewhat strangely, the "camp" does not encircle the actual summit of the hill, for the earthwork runs over the highest part, and then curves down and around the shoulder on W.N.W. side. This shoulder is notably convex in profile, so that the downward slope does not become marked until beyond the central area of the enclosure (see inset cross-section, fig. 1). Besides giving a windy exposure and a slope away from the sun, this position involves "dead ground" to within a hundred yards of the eastern rampart, as the eastern slope of the hill is hidden beyond the flattish summit. Moreover, being on this convex shoulder, the various parts of the enclosure are not all inter-visible. Possibly a tower existed, but even so full advantage does not seem to have been taken of the site; perhaps the difficulty of drainage on the flatter summit area with its clay subsoil was avoided by this location.

The rampart in its present state is rather badly eroded, and its appearance has been spoiled by the construction of a park road all the way round, just on the outer side; only in one stretch in the S.E. does this broad walk diverge from the earthwork. All signs of an outer ditch have thus been obliterated, and the apparent height of the earthwork has been exaggerated when viewed from outside. Then again, scraps of flower-pot occur so plentifully on top of the scarp that soil must have been heaped there quite recently. Consequently it is difficult to gain an impression of the form of the ancient earthwork (see fig. 2).

The highest parts of the rampart to-day are the E. and the S.E. sectors, which look across the flattened summit area. Here the height above the interior is from 4 to 6 ft. and there is a drop of 7 or 8 ft. on the outer side; overall, the earthwork is 25–30 ft. across. A gap 22 ft. wide in the S.E. sector obviously formed an entrance, but another hollow in the east rampart can best be explained as an excavation, possibly that of 1867. Passing westwards along the southern side of the camp, the rampart maintains height

¹ Knud Jessen and Hans Helbæk, "Cereals in Great Britain and Ireland in Prehistoric and Early Historic Times," *Det Kongelige Danske Videnskabernes Selskab, Biologiske Skrifter*, Bind III, No. 2, pp. 14, 25, 44; fig. 14 h, i, k.

CAMP HILL, QUEEN'S PARK, GLASGOW

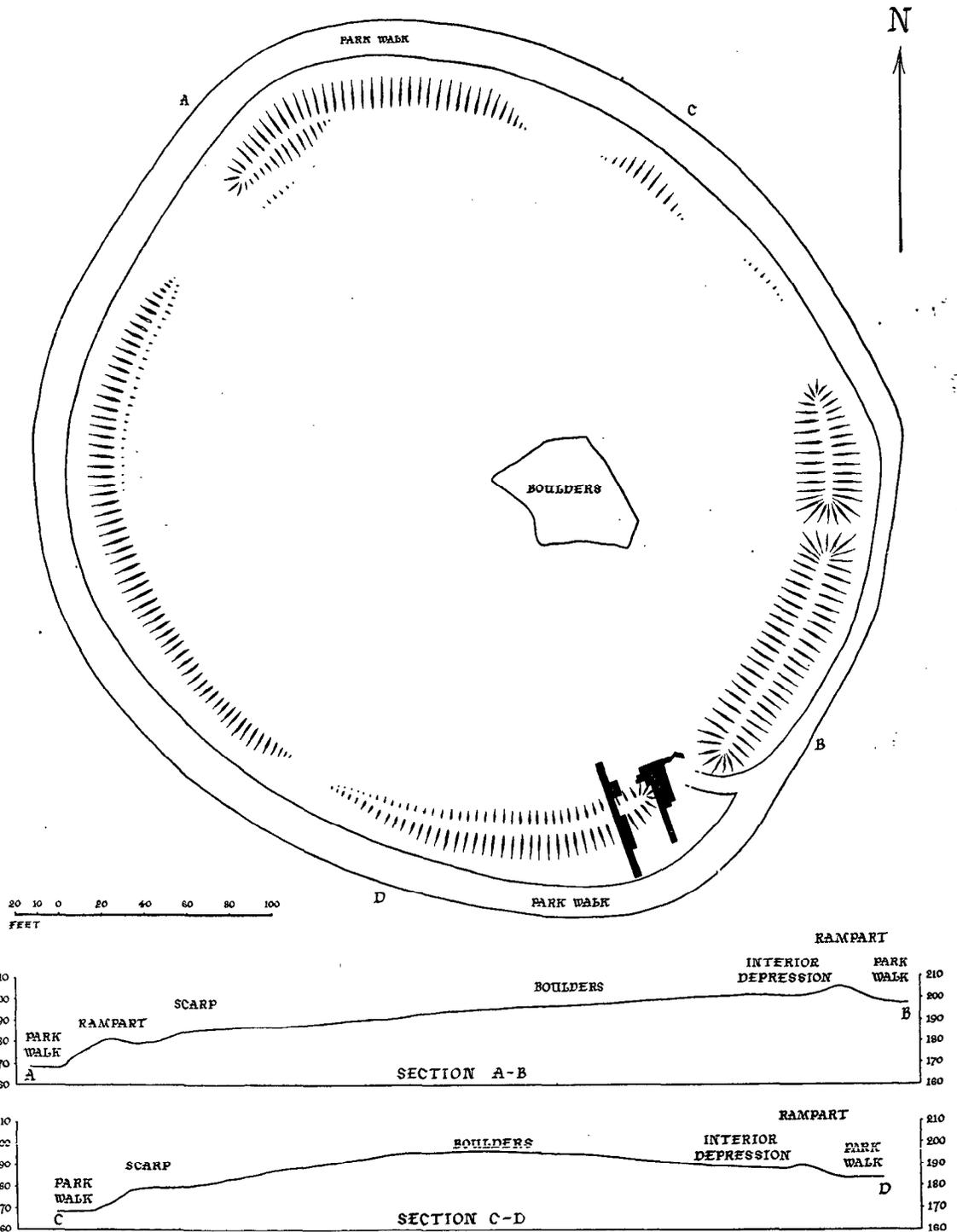
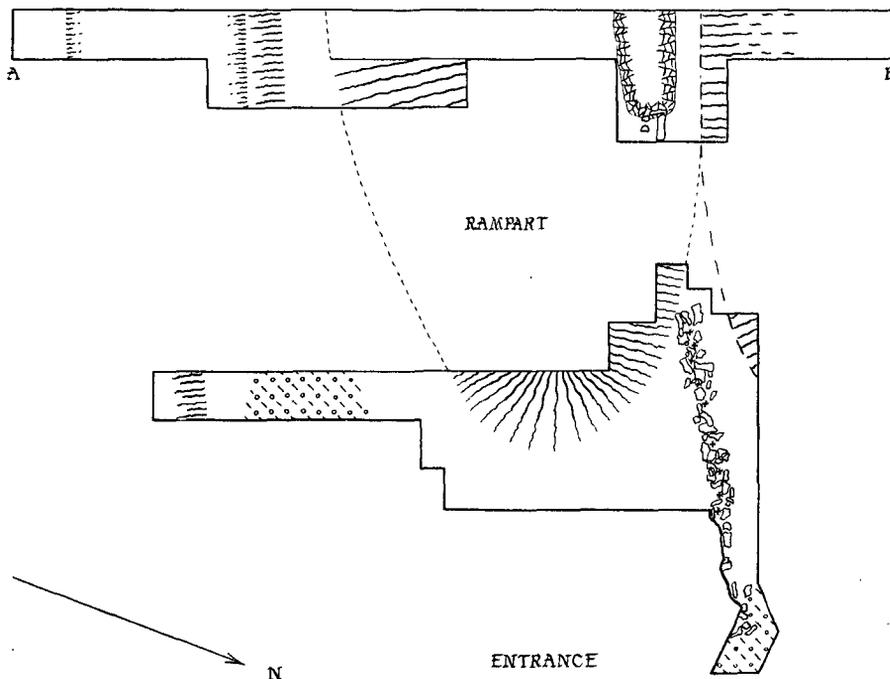
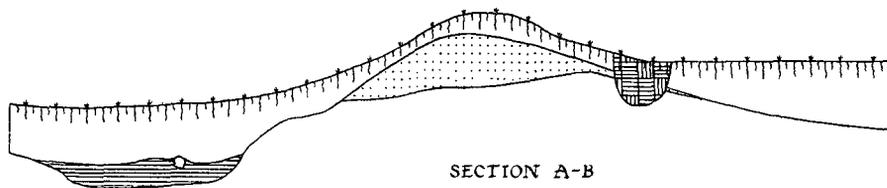


Fig. 1.

CAMP HILL, QUEEN'S PARK, GLASGOW



-  TOPSOIL
-  MODERN COW BURIAL
-  CLAY RAMPART
-  FINE GREY SILT
-  POST HOLE
-  GRAVEL SURFACE

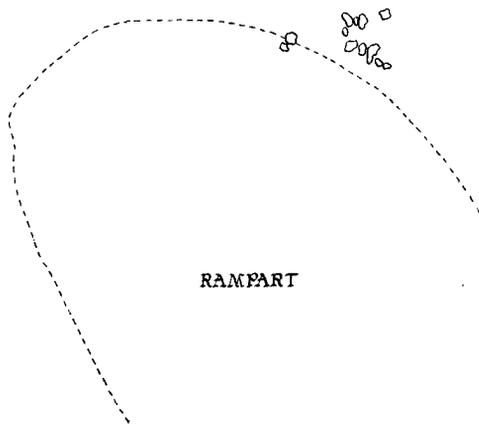
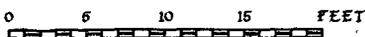


Fig. 2.

as seen from the outside, but the inner slope fades away, especially on the far side of another gap 25 ft. wide in the middle of the southern sector (Pl. XIV, 2). This second gap is suggestive of another entrance, although only fifty yards from the first. In the S.W., the rampart continues in the form of a scarp rather than of a mound, for the ground drops away sharply from the interior of the "camp" down to the park walk some eight feet below. The defence work is now running well down the shoulder of the hill. On the W. side there is a gap 45 ft. wide which is difficult to explain; someone suggested that here a water tank once existed to supply Camphill House just below, but we could not verify this. In the N.W. corner the rampart is at first well preserved, and rises some 10 ft. above the park walk outside and about 4 ft. above ground-level inside. Thereafter, along the whole northern sector the earthwork is never more than an ill-marked scarp and in places it disappears altogether; the contrast with the southern side is as obvious as it is puzzling. Scarcely any sign of a defence is visible in the N.E. corner, and then, with a sudden change, the high eastern rampart commences as the circuit of the "camp" is completed.

No signs of foundations were detected in the enclosure formed by the earthwork, either on the ground or on an air photograph. In the centre of the "camp," however, some three dozen very large smoothly-rounded boulders form an irregular group over a space about 60 ft. wide. The biggest is 5 ft. across, one has a deep water-worn groove, and several have been drilled and blasted apart. They form no pattern, and none seems at all deeply bedded in the ground. No mention is made of these stones in the *Old Stat. Acct.* or in the *Glasgow Herald* report of 1867. The readiest explanation is that they have been collected together in some landscape gardening craze of last century.

The Excavations of 1951.—Investigations at Camphill were suggested by Dr S. M. K. Henderson, Director of Museums in Glasgow, who invited the writer to co-operate with the Curator of Archæology, Mr J. G. Scott, in excavating the site. The City Corporation gave permission, and for the first time in Scotland a civic authority sponsored an excavation. Mr Garside, the Parks Director, did his best to further the project and made available the services of two excellent workmen, Mr Hunter and Mr Richmond. The area chosen for excavation was fenced off, and it is a pleasure to report that there was no sign of outside interference during the whole period of the work. In all, the four of us spent four weeks on the site during July, and a few days again in September 1951; rather showery weather somewhat delayed operations. This report records the joint work of Mr Scott and myself for this period.

The area of the S.E. entrance was the obvious choice for first investigations, as the encircling park walk here diverged sufficiently from the earthwork to allow room for the excavation of an outside ditch. This site,

however, was overshadowed by tall trees whose massive roots had to be avoided in spacing the trenches, and at times the development of the investigation was retarded; moreover, photography was unusually difficult. Starting on the inside of the enclosure well clear of both the rampart and the entrance passage, a trench 3-6 ft. wide was cut for a distance of 50 ft. across the earthwork to the edge of the park walk outside. An extension was made along the inner edge of the rampart, and then a second trench parallel to the first ran from the entrance back to the park walk. Subsequently, the excavations reached the rampart on the far side of the entrance (figs. 1 and 2).

The western trench (see Pottery Finds, A) was cut through the rampart down to undisturbed clay. The top seventeen inches or so of the earthwork consisted of dark friable loam in which broken plant-pot occurred frequently; this soil was obviously a recent addition. The true rampart below proved to be a mound of compact clay with many small stones and even little boulders in it. This was the local boulder clay of the drumlin, and it varied in colour from yellow to a reddish brown verging on purple. It was evident from the changes in colour that the rampart had been built in irregular layers up to about a foot in thickness. At its maximum, the ancient part of the earthwork rose 4 ft. above the undisturbed clay, and its overall width was about 18 ft. No indication of a revetment was found either inside or out. The disproportion between the great breadth and small height suggests very marked erosion, and this assumption is borne out by the fact that a considerable depth of soil had accumulated on either side as downwash.

From the foot of the rampart on the inside, the surface of the undisturbed clay was found to dip away against the natural slope of the drumlin, so that a wide artificial depression must have existed parallel to the earthwork. In our trench we found that this interior depression was filled with a friable brown loam to a depth of as much as four feet. The excavation could not be extended more than about half-way across, but superficial traces of a similar hollow were noticed along the inner foot of both the E. and S.E. sectors of the rampart, and the full width can confidently be estimated at about 30 ft. (Pl. XIV, 2). The slopes were gentle and there was no sign of waterlogging at the bottom. We concluded that this interior depression was not defensive in character, and had resulted simply from the removal of clay to build the rampart. It may well be that the excavators in 1867 found their "kiln" and charred grain in a similar depression elsewhere in the "camp."

An account of operations in this area must include mention of a collection of cow-bones buried at the inner foot of the rampart just where the trench cut through. Above the bones, but separately interred, were the fragments of a brown teapot. Excavation was very tedious and nothing is to be gained

by a detailed description, but all the evidence goes to show that the burial was a late intrusion.

We continued the trench, 3 ft. wide, outside the rampart for a distance of 20 ft. to the edge of the surrounding park walk. At the foot of the earthwork there was a berm one foot wide, and then we found a ditch filled to a depth of 5 ft. with the same friable loam as in the interior depression. The inner side was a steep slope of clay, while the ditch itself was flat bottomed over a distance of 10 ft., and then came a marked step upwards to a less steeply sloping outer side (see section, fig. 2, and Pl. XV). The outer lip was obliterated by the park roadway, but the full width of the ditch was probably about 25 ft. The inner flat-bottomed part was filled to a depth of 18 in. with a fine grey silt, mottled with iron stains which indicate waterlogging. Embedded in the silt were large angular stones which may at some early stage have toppled in from the rampart, but more probably were placed there as an obstacle to cavalry. In wet weather the ditch flooded in the inner flat-bottomed section; this may explain why clay to build the rampart was taken from the interior depression instead of coming entirely from the bottom of the ditch. It is to be remembered that the rampart runs obliquely down the shoulder of the hill so that a continuous ditch of constant depth would drain naturally; the stagnant ground water indicates an obstruction, possibly a causeway opposite the next gap in the rampart to the west.

A dozen potsherds were found on the undisturbed clay on the very bottom of the ditch and also distributed amongst the silt (see the section below, "The Pottery Finds").

We next extended our excavations to the entrance passage and thence by a long trench (Pottery Finds, B) outwards to the park roadway; massive tree roots and the ballast of a park pathway restricted our freedom of action. On the western side of the entrance passage the clay rampart came to a neatly rounded end, with no sign of elaboration or of a revetment. Across the entrance, 22 ft. away, the E. sector of the rampart commenced in the same way, but on a different alignment. The surface of the original entrance passage could be recognised only in places, and seemed to consist merely of trampled clay and patches of gravel. The ditch was further out than we had expected and was separated from the rampart by a gently sloping berm 17 ft. wide. In the middle of this berm the trench exposed a stretch of trampled clay and gravel. Although it may seem a curiously involved approach, we are inclined to believe that the ancient roadway curved out of the entrance along the berm and probably crossed the moat by a causeway between our two trenches. The lip of the ditch we found opposite the entrance would thus be the end of the moat, which may be presumed to lie in front of the E. sector of the rampart. In this small section of the ditch another seven potsherds were found, and a fragment of a bottle of blue glass came from the inner slope of the rampart just at the W. side of the entrance passage.

On the inner side of the entrance, commencing just where the rampart coming from the west began to narrow to its rounded end, a setting of stones was found in the clay subsoil, running across the entrance passage in a slight curve for a distance of 20 ft. (Pl. XIV, 1). The stones were nearly all less than a foot across and they formed an irregular strip about 18 in. wide. They also seemed to be arranged in groups as though around the posts of a fence or stockade, but nowhere did we in fact find traces of any but the shallowest of post-holes and in only one was there clear evidence of carbon. Mr Scott, who excavated these foundations, is convinced that the groups shown on the plan were the sockets for posts which were as much as 6 in. thick. A subsidiary excavation was made on the opposite side of the entrance passage and the same formation was found, but it extended only for a distance of 3 ft.; presumably a gate spanned the gap 8 ft. 6 in. wide between the two ends of the stonework, although no strong gate-post was indicated.

General Comments.—Excavations confined to the S.E. entrance area must leave much in doubt about the site as a whole. On the scale of our operations, however, we think that little more could be achieved by selective methods. The present periphery of the camp has been so much affected by the construction of the park roadway that there is little incentive to try further cross-sections of the earthwork. Nor was much guidance to be obtained from the appearance of the turf inside the enclosure as to where further excavation would have been useful. One trial cut near the centre revealed undisturbed clay just beneath the turf, and over many parts of the north and north-west, erosion and wear by trampling have been so great that a continuous grass cover is not maintained and the boulder clay appears at the surface. Other entrance passages may have existed, but to check all the possibilities would be a long task. In view of these difficulties we do not contemplate prolonging the investigations. Several further comments may, however, be made from our observations.

Earlier in the report the discontinuous nature of the earthwork on the N. side of the "camp" was emphasised, and also the fact that along much of the S. and W. sectors there was a scarp to be seen rather than a mound. This may be due to erosion and recent interference, but close observation has suggested another explanation. Everywhere round the periphery there is a distinct fall in ground-level from the interior of the "camp" to the foot of the rampart outside. This break of slope is best interpreted as being due to a former ditch. In other words, the outer ditch is apparently the constant and primary feature, while the rampart may have varied in size and may even have been discontinuous. Facing the flat ground on the summit of the drumlin a high rampart would be necessary, but on steeply falling ground the ditch alone may have sufficed—especially if there were a stockade in accordance with mediæval practice generally, though we found no trace of this except across the inner side of the entrance.

The possibility of the ditch being the primary feature was suggested by a visit to a site one and a half miles to the west of Camphill, in the North Wood of Pollok House (Nat. Grid ref. 26/557627). This is again located on a drumlin, and on the 6-in. O.S. map is called a "fort." Surrounding a roughly circular area about 100 ft. across, there is a deep ditch about 30 ft. wide interrupted on the E. side by a causeway, again 30 ft. wide, giving access to the central area; but for a modern drainage cut this moat would fill with water. There is no doubt that the moat is the primary feature; the earth which had been taken out was obviously heaped in mounds, but they are often low and occur both on the inner and outer sides. A mediæval date is almost certainly indicated for this "fort" at Pollok.

This may seem to labour a minor point, but if the ditch were the dominant characteristic, there might be a criterion for distinguishing structures of a similar type from the forts of the Iron Age.

Of the approximate age of the Camphill earthwork there can be no doubt. The late mediæval pottery was found on the very bottom of the ditch. Bearing in mind that an Iron Age fort might have been reconditioned, we made a very close search for signs of earlier work, but nothing whatsoever was found to suggest an older occupation. One must be emphatic, because neither of us at the outset of operations saw anything to differentiate the site definitely from many an Iron Age fort. From a general point of view, the significance of the Camphill excavations is twofold: a site of this type has been recognised for the first time, and also the "prehistoric forts" of Scotland have been shown to date to a far lengthier period than many have suspected.

It has not been altogether easy to fit this site at Camphill into the generally accepted classification of mediæval fortifications in Scotland. There is no sign of a mote hill, the enclosure seems rather large for a bailey, and we have no proof of the existence of the characteristic stockade of a peel. Mackay Mackenzie has, however, discussed the importance of clay construction in mediæval building,¹ and has also suggested that there is a late application of the word "peel" to a type of enclosure with mound and ditch alone.² Perhaps we are not too deeply committed if, instead of using the word peel in this extended sense, we describe the Camphill earthwork simply as a "clay castle."

THE POTTERY FINDS, by Mr SCOTT.

The pottery sherds recovered were submitted to Mr S. H. Cruden, Inspector of Ancient Monuments for Scotland, who kindly gave his opinion as follows: "From the nature of the clay and the glaze, the pottery generally, I should say, is not later than the fourteenth century." From the two

¹ W. Mackay Mackenzie, "Clay Castle-Building in Scotland," *P.S.A.S.*, LXVIII, 117-27.

² *The Mediæval Castle in Scotland*, p. 20.

trenches 19 pieces were recovered in all, 12 from Trench A and 7 from Trench B.

Trench A, in Ditch Silting.—Ten pieces, all possibly from the same vessel—a wheel-made handled jug or flagon with spouted lip, bulbous body and flat base, and with a light green glaze sparingly used.

1. Rim section with portion of spout; of gritty fabric, cream on the outside and cream to light grey within; green glaze visible on body below rim. Diameter perhaps four inches (fig. 3, 1).

2. Portion of same rim, with shoulder beginning to expand below neck (fig. 3, 2).

3. Upper part of handle and portion of body, of same fabric. Pronounced thumb-print inside body (fig. 3, 3).

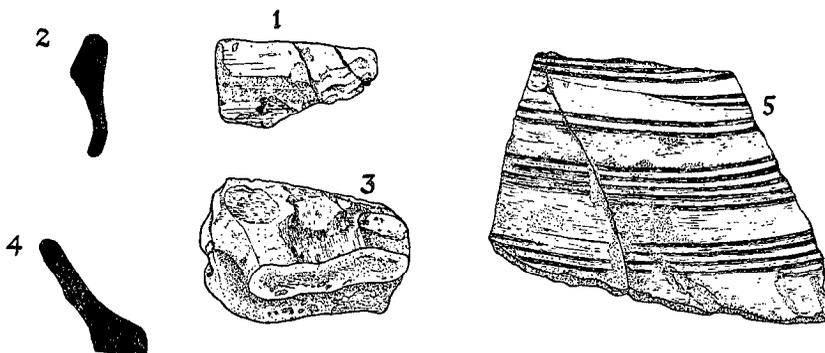


Fig. 3. Pottery from ditch silting.

4. Portion of handle, with strong central groove on outside.

5. Base of handle, broken off at point of junction with body.

6. Small portion of flat base, and part of wall, of same fabric (fig. 3, 4).

7-10. Portion of base and three indeterminate fragments, all possibly from same vessel.

11. Portion of the wall of a large wheel-made vessel, presumably a flagon, of light grey fabric with occasional large grits; the exterior decorated with bands of scored lines and covered with a good light olive-green glaze (fig. 3, 5). Similar scored decoration occurs on two jugs found in London and dated to the fourteenth century; cf. Bernard Rackham, *Mediæval English Pottery*, pls. 28 and 29.

12. Sherd of dark grey fabric, with faint horizontal markings on the exterior, which is covered with a good dark green glaze. This is presumably not from the same vessel as 11, the more cucumber shade of green in its glaze indicating a higher admixture of copper.

Trench B, in Ditch Silting.—Seven sherds of indeterminate character were recovered, all bearing traces of green glaze on the exterior.

THE LANDS OF CATHCART.

We are greatly indebted to Mr C. T. McInnes, Curator of Historical Records, who reports that a search for indications that the earthworks at Camphill were the predecessor of Cathcart Castle was unproductive. The

lands were granted by King David I to Walter, the Steward of Scotland, and a Reginald de Ketkert is witness to several charters before the end of the twelfth century. Thereafter there are references to the family of Cathcart and the lands thereof during the following centuries, but there is no mention of a fortified place until a royal charter was granted on 9 August 1507 to Alan Cathcart, containing the phrase "cum turre et manerio"; and in another of 23 December 1543 there is reference to "castrum et fortalitium de Cathcart et castellandis earundem." These sixteenth-century references give no indication of site, but probably refer to the present Cathcart Castle, which Maegibbon and Ross considered to be of fifteenth-century style.

At the suggestion of Mr McInnes application was made to the present Earl of Cathcart, who kindly examined his papers and writes: "I have so far found nothing about Camphill, although I have found some very interesting plans of Cathcart Castle as originally planned and laid out."

APPENDIX I.

Remains of grain from a very similar granary to that described in the *Glasgow Herald* of 1867 were found under the Roughdyke Road, New Monkland, and were exhibited at the Scottish Exhibition of National History, Art and Industry in Glasgow in 1911; cf. *Palace of History* (Catalogue of Exhibits), II, 824, No. 9:

"Mediæval Corn, fragments of green-glazed-handled mediæval pottery, and charred wood, found by the lender in a clay-floored concealed granary, cut out of the solid rock, and measuring 12 ft. × 8 ft., and 4½ ft. deep, under the Roughdyke Road, New Monkland."

It may be of interest to note in addition that the same lender exhibited "miscellaneous Antiquities, including small Jar, found with coins of Edward II, Mediæval Pottery Fragments, Bronze Axe, and a small Pottery Cup, from New Monkland" (*op. cit.*, II, 865, No. 7).

APPENDIX II.

A search was made for local parallels to the Camphill site, and as so little has been written about the forts in general of this neighbourhood, a short report has been included. Only ten sites occur in the lowland basin within ten or twelve miles of Glasgow.

1. Pollok (Nat. Grid ref. 26/557627). This has already been described and may well be mediæval.
2. Byres Hill near Paisley (Nat. Grid ref. 26/501648).
3. Dykebar Hill near Paisley (Nat. Grid ref. 26/498623).
4. Near Wallace's Seat, N.E. of Kilbarchan (Nat. Grid ref. 26/424642).
5. Knockmaden Hill, 2 miles N. of Lochwinnoch (Nat. Grid ref. 26/352618).

These four, all in Renfrewshire, have a low hilltop situation as at Camphill, but the remains are so fragmentary that little further can be said.

6. Wall's Hill (Nat. Grid ref. 26/411588), 4 miles E. of Lochwinnoch.¹ Childe describes this as an Iron Age hilltop town.

¹ This is wrongly plotted on Christison's map in *Early Fortification in Scotland*, and also on Childe's map in *The Prehistory of Scotland*.

7. Kilmacolm (Nat. Grid ref. 26/369689), on the golfcourse. A small circular fort which is probably an Iron Age type.

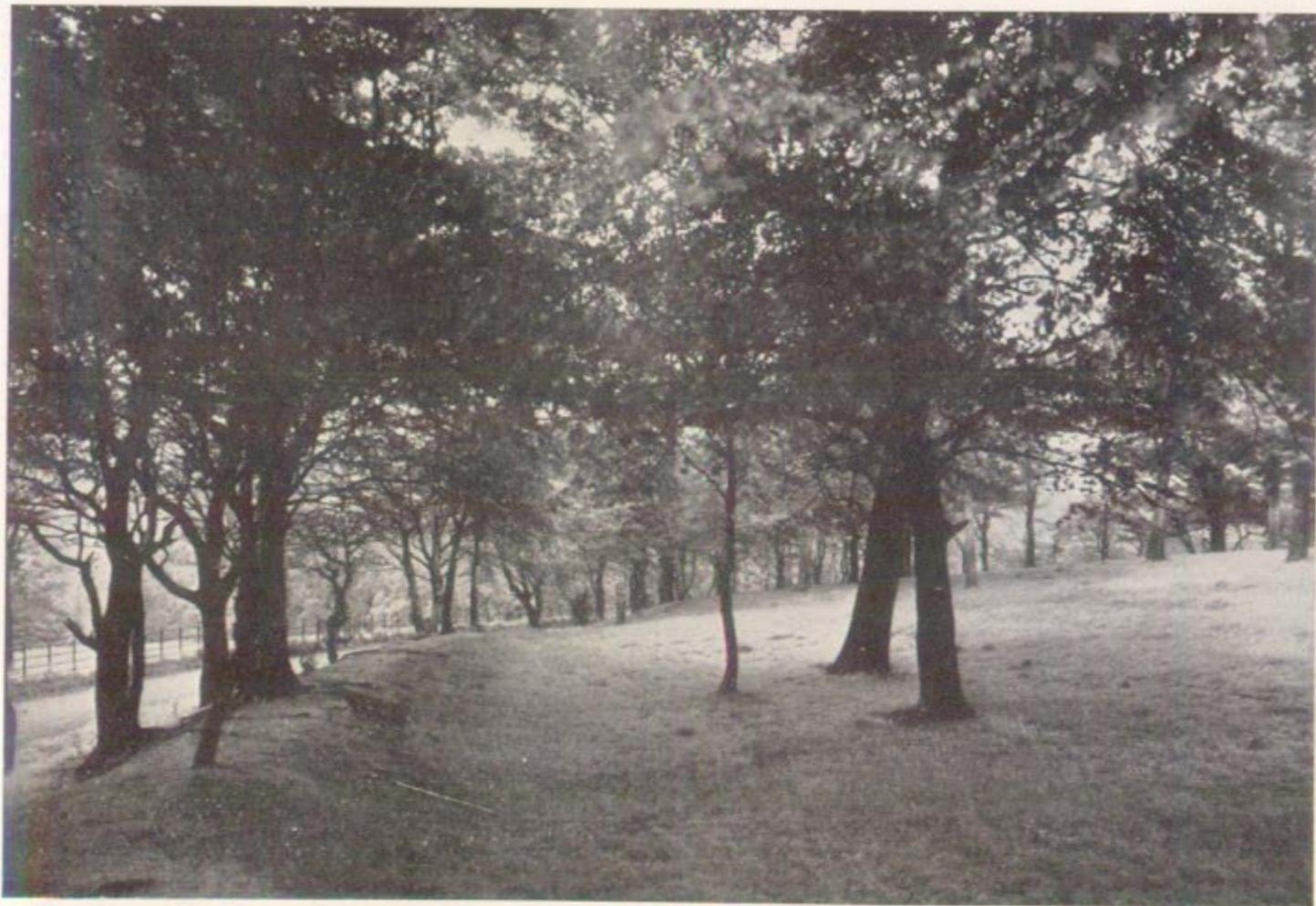
8. "Meikle Reive" (Nat. Grid ref. 26/638789), on the S. face of the Campsies above Lennoxton. A medium-sized circular fort with a stone rampart and probably of Iron Age date.

9. "Maiden Castle" (Nat. Grid ref. 26/643786), quarter of a mile below the "Meikle Reive," consists of a knoll on the edge of a deep glen, isolated by a deep wide ditch. This resembles a mote hill and may well be mediaeval.

10. Arnbrae, 1 mile W. of Kilsyth (Nat. Grid ref. 26/701782), is a large mote hill.



1. Camphill, Queen's Park, Glasgow: Western side of entrance passage, showing end of rampart and line of post-holes on inner side.



2. Camphill, Queen's Park, Glasgow: Inner side of southern sector of rampart, showing interior depression, with possible entrance in middle distance.



Camphill, Queen's Park, Glasgow: Section across ditch and rampart from outside, near western side of entrance passage.