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An Iron Age hillfort and its environs on Castle Hill, Alnham, Northumberland

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SURVEY REPORT

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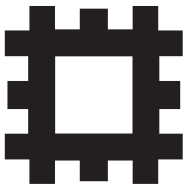

AN IRON AGE HILLFORT AND ITS ENVIRONS ON CASTLE HILL, ALNHAM, NORTHUMBERLAND

Archaeological Investigation Report Series AI/2/2001

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Surveyed May-June 2000
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1. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND TO THE SURVEY

In May and June 2000, English Heritage carried out a field investigation of a prehistoric hillfort and the surrounding landscape at Castle Hill, Alnham. The analytical field survey formed part of the Northumberland National Park Authority's project entitled 'Discovering our hillfort heritage', funded jointly by the European Union through the European Agricultural Guidance and Guarantee Fund, the Heritage Lottery Fund through the Tweed Forum initiative, English Heritage and the Northumberland National Park Authority. Castle Hill lies 1.5km west of the village of Alnham, in the parish of the same name in the district of Alnwick (Figure 1) and lies within the Northumberland National Park. The hillfort which was the focus of the survey is centred on National Grid Reference NT 9800 1094. The analytical field survey was one of a number intended to improve the understanding of Iron Age hillforts and comparable enclosures within the National Park and to inform their conservation and management (Frodsham 2000).

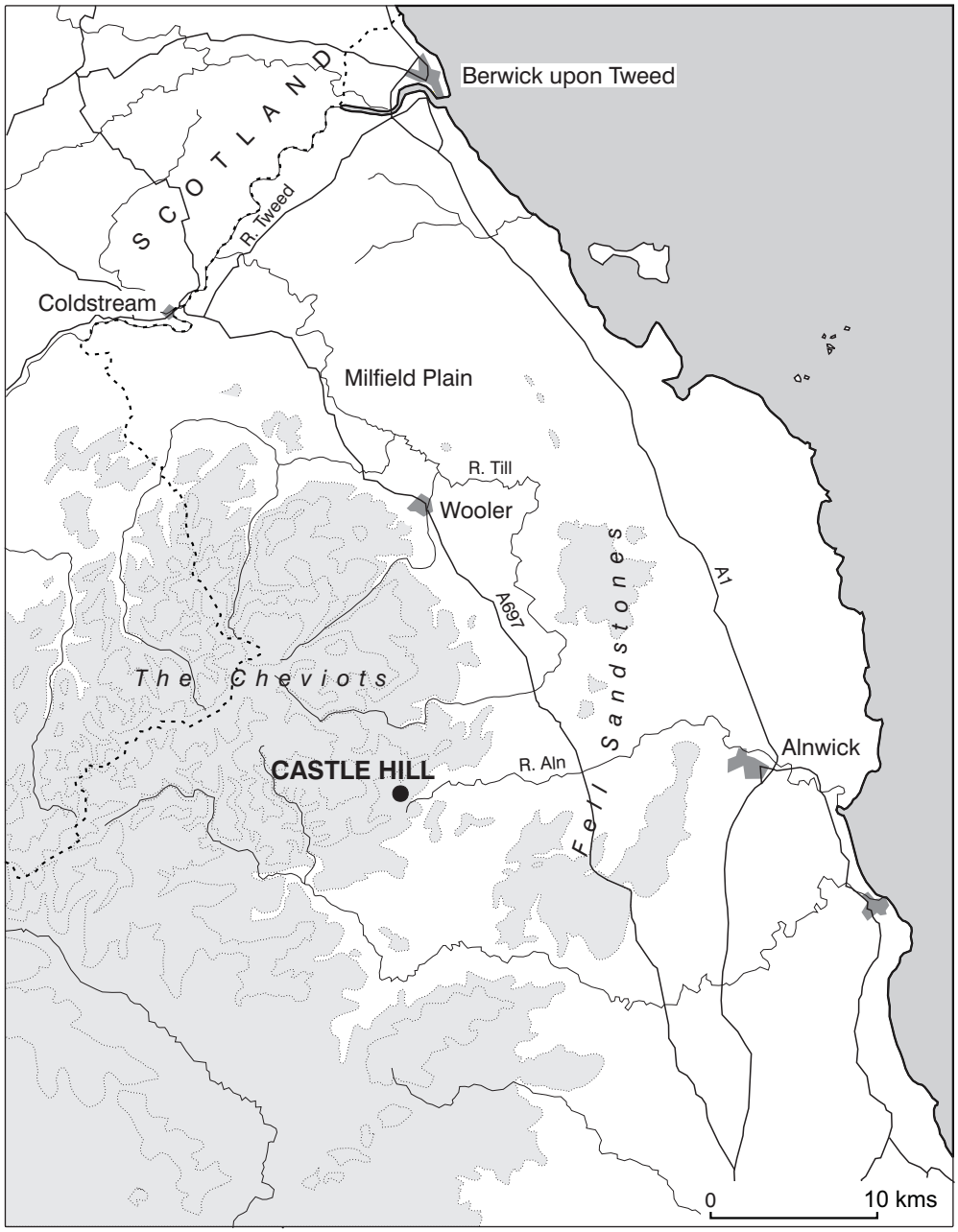


Figure 1. Location map

Castle Hill attains a height of just over 289m above Ordnance Datum (OD) and its summit is completely encircled by the three turf-covered ramparts of the hillfort, which extend over 1.9ha (4.6 acres) and enclose an inner area of 0.4ha (0.98 acres). The fort and its immediate environs were surveyed at 1:1000 scale, whilst the lower slopes of the hill extending up to 250m from the fort were surveyed at the smaller scale of 1:2500. The investigation of all the remains was carried out at Level 3 standard (as defined in RCHME 1999, 3-4) and covered an area of 16.1ha (39.7 acres). The hillfort is protected as a Scheduled Ancient Monument (ND43). It is recorded in the Sites and Monuments Record for Northumberland as Monument 727, and in the National Monuments Record (NMR) as NT 91 SE 9. The NMR numbers and associated identifiers of the other features recorded in the survey area are given in Appendix 1.

The principal monuments in the survey area are the Iron Age hillfort itself, with a sequence of overlying livestock enclosures and circular hut sites of probable Romano-British date, which continue east and north-east outside the hillfort. There is evidence for cultivation on the hillslopes during the prehistoric, Romano-British, medieval and later periods. Several trackways crossing the hilltop were also probably in use during the Romano-British period. On the north-west flank of the hill, pre-hillfort settlement is evidenced by a group of unenclosed huts which might date to the Bronze Age.

2. GEOLOGY, TOPOGRAPHY AND LAND USE

Castle Hill is one of a series of rounded summits at the head of the valley of the River Aln on the eastern fringe of the Cheviot massif. The hill is formed from andesite, a hard volcanic rock that changes from a deep pink colour to pale grey when weathered, and the summit is covered by a relatively thick mantle of soil with colluvium (hillwash) deposits on the lower slopes. The west side of the hill rises steeply by over 50m from the valley of the Spartley Burn but the other slopes are less dramatic (Figures 2 and 3). The east face is formed by a long and even incline from the floor of the Aln valley, whilst the south side falls away quite gently to a lesser summit overlooking a bend in the Spartley Burn. On the north, a steep-sided, yet fairly shallow saddle separates the hill from rising ground beyond, and from this saddle a shallow side valley cuts obliquely up the north face of the hill. The summit of the hill is mostly around 285m above OD rising to a slight rounded peak at 289m where the hillfort is located. From this vantage point the fort commands extensive views in all directions, though the west aspect, across the valley of the Spartley Burn,

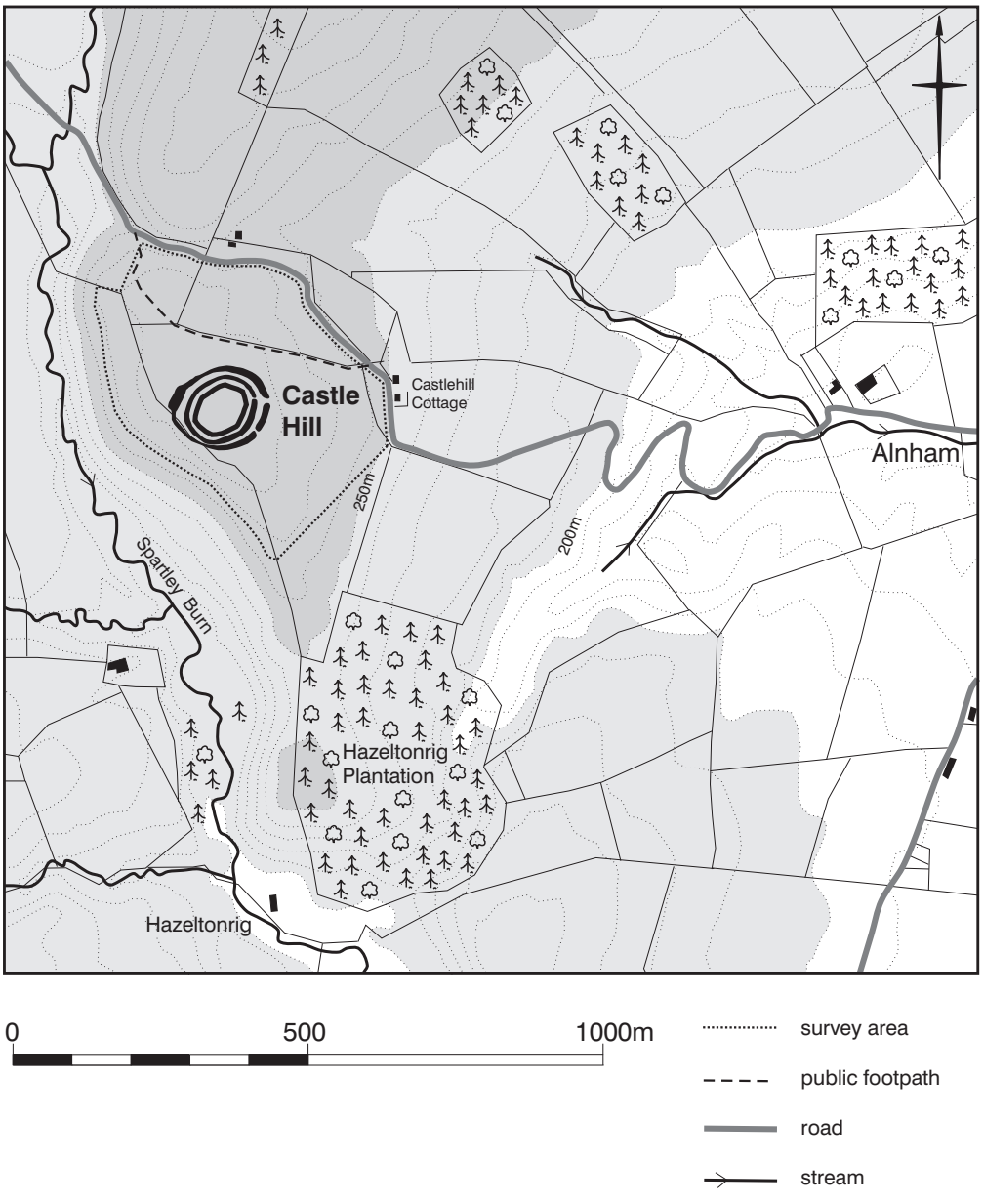


Figure 2. Environs of the site

Figure 3. Aerial photograph of the hillfort taken in May 1997 (© Tim Gates 1997)

is somewhat curtailed by the higher hills of the central Cheviots which also swing round to the north. To the south, the hillfort looks out over a series of lesser summits towards Coquetdale, whilst the most open view is to the east down virtually the entire length of the Aln valley. The nearest modern-day settlement to the hillfort is the village of Alnham which is situated approximately 1km to the east in the bottom of the Aln valley.

The survey area is divided between five fields bounded by drystone walls or post and wire fences and is mostly rough pasture grazed by sheep and cattle. A collapsed stone wall, now marked by a flat-topped bank, indicates a former sub-division of the north-west field. There are two areas of bog in the side valley leading up from the saddle to the north of the hillfort. The only building in the vicinity is Castlehill cottage, on the east of the hill, by the side of a single track road leading from Alnham to the farm at Ewartly Shank, 3kms to the north. The road was constructed in 1959, (Davies pers. comm.): previously the route to Ewartly Shank was a rough track over the north side of the hill, a line now designated as a public footpath.

3. HISTORY OF RESEARCH

The earliest surviving large-scale survey of the earthworks on Castle Hill was undertaken by the Ordnance Survey in 1863 and published at 1:2500 scale (Ordnance Survey 1864). The map shows the three lines of rampart, depicted in somewhat schematic fashion, and the outer ditch on the south-east and north-west sides (Figure 4). An Ordnance Survey trigonometrical station is depicted on the crest of the outer rampart on the south side of the fort and on the west side a field wall is shown crossing over the outer and middle defences. The only archaeological feature shown outside the hillfort is a rectangular embanked enclosure, the most northerly of a series on the east and north-east of the fort. This enclosure has three entrances depicted, two of which accommodate the track forming what was then the route between Alnham and Ewartly Shank, and is crossed by a field wall. The second edition map (published some thirty years later) adds nothing to the depiction of either the hillfort or the enclosure (Ordnance Survey 1897).

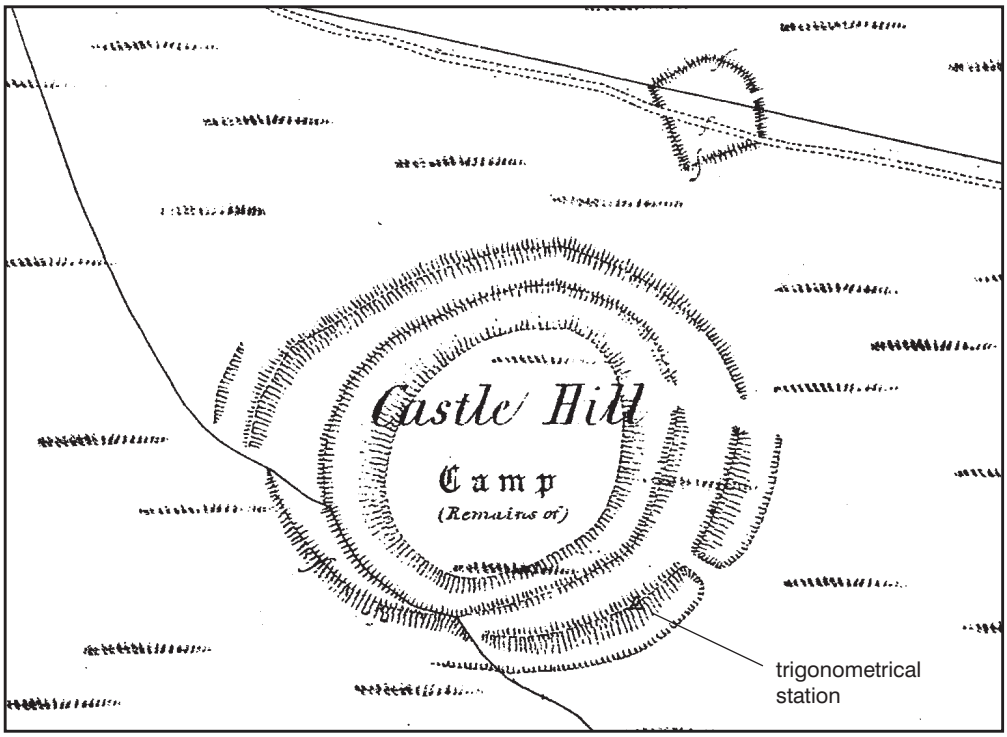


Figure 4. Ordnance Survey 1:2500 scale plan of the hillfort and its environs surveyed in 1863(Reproduced from the 1864 Ordnance Survey map)

A further large scale survey of the hillfort was published with a brief description of the site in a volume of the Northumberland County History (Hope Dodds 1935, 34 and Figure 15). The description states only that the site belongs to a class of hillforts in the county, which are on high ground and are less dependent on natural slopes for protection. The accompanying plan shows more detail than the earlier Ordnance Survey maps (Figure 5). In addition to the ramparts and the outer ditch on the south-east and north-west sides, several minor earthwork features are shown including a discontinuous trench on the inside of the inner defences and a slight bank between the middle and outer defences on the east side of the fort. Three circular features are shown overlying the north-east arc of the inner defences and three rectilinear enclosures are shown immediately beyond the outer ditch on the east side.

The first detailed description of the hillfort was prepared by DA Davies of the Ordnance Survey in May 1957 (NMR No. NT 91 SE 9 – Authority 4). He observed that the ramparts on the north and west sides were mainly the result of cutting back

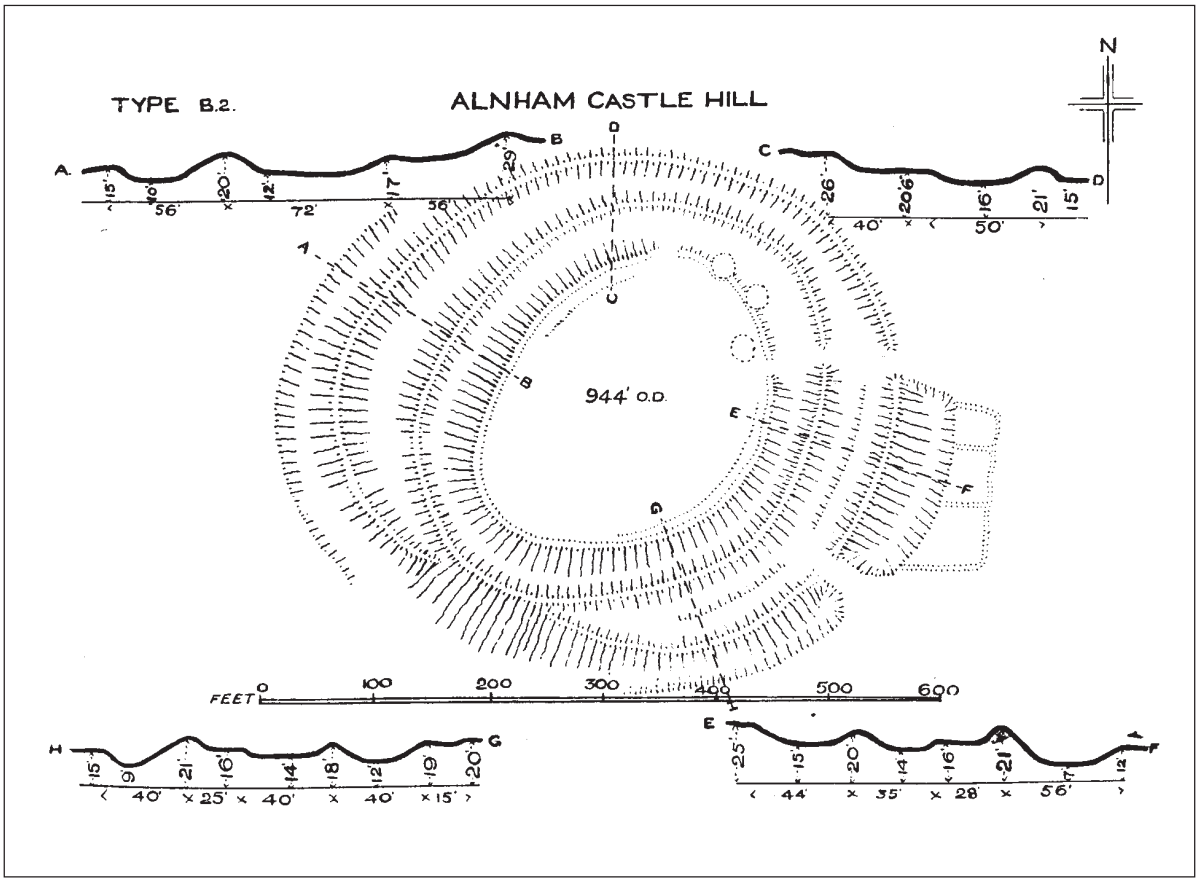


Figure 5. Plan of the hillfort published in 1935 (Hope Dodds 1935, Figure 15)

the natural slopes and that breaks in the outer and middle ramparts on the east side suggested a "somewhat oblique" main entrance. He speculated that the wider gap between the outer and middle ramparts on the north-west side could indicate the possible use of this area as a stock enclosure with access via a break on the west side of the outer bank. Within the fort, he recorded three hut circles, two more possible hut sites and traces of banks creating internal divisions. He did not speculate on the chronological relationship between the hut circles, banks and the hillfort defences but noted that the three rectilinear enclosures beyond the outer ditch were probably later and contemporary with a ploughed-down field bank on their east side.

George Jobey included Alnham in his overview of hillforts and settlements in Northumberland (Jobey 1965, 26 and Figure 1). His description of the site is rather concise but he implies that the fort may have originated as a univallate stone enclosure, the line of the enclosure wall picked out by a robber trench around the inside of the inner defences. On the accompanying plan, Jobey shows this trench as a far more continuous feature than was depicted on the 1935 survey noted above (Figure 6). He also states that "existing, though not necessarily primary mutivallate defences, have received an additional rampart and ditch". Presumably this means that he thought the inner and middle ramparts were added to the original stone enclosure and that the outer rampart and ditch were added later. The annotation on the accompanying plan conveys several other of Jobey's ideas about the site. He labels the most southerly of the two possible entrances on the east side of the fort as a later breach, and identifies an area delineated by a bank and containing four semi-circular scoops on the north-east side of the inner hillfort defences as an overlying settlement. Where Hope-Dodds and Davies had recorded three enclosures against the outer ditch

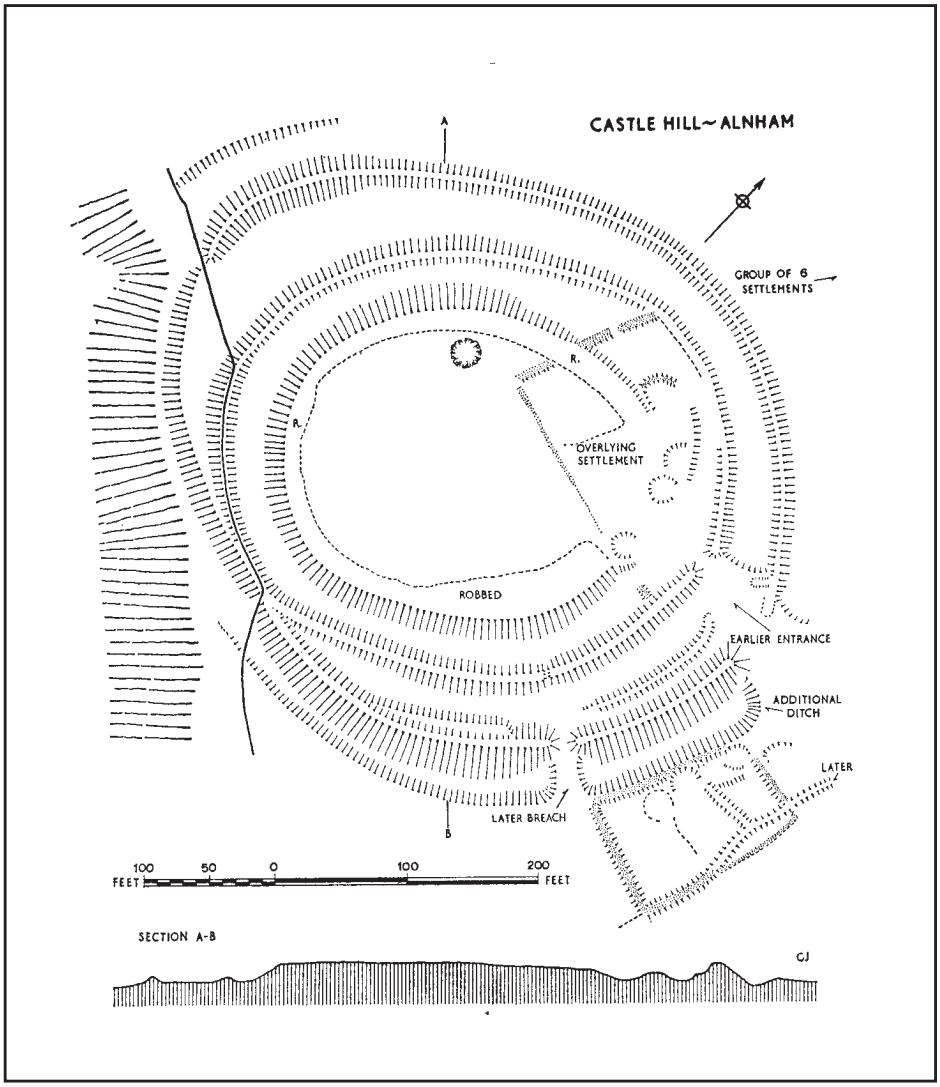


Figure 6. Plan of the hillfort and its environs surveyed by Jobey (Jobey 1965, 24)

on the south-east side of the hillfort, Jobey's plan shows just one large enclosure with a later bank overlying the east side and an offshoot creating an internal division. Jobey identified three semi-circular scoops in the interior of the enclosure and one on the outside.

In a paper published the following year on his excavations at the two Early Iron Age palisaded settlements at High Knowes, 1.5kms to the north, Jobey speculates that the hillfort on Castle Hill may have been developed at the expense of the palisaded sites because it was a better defensive location (Jobey 1966, 21). During the same campaign of excavations, Jobey also excavated one possible Iron Age and three Bronze Age cremations from a cairnfield in the vicinity of the palisaded enclosures. He also noted the existence of two Romano-British settlement sites 1-3kms north of the hillfort.

The question of the phasing of the defences at Alnham has exercised other commentators on the site. In contrast to Jobey, Richard Feachen suggested that the outer rampart and ditch represented the first phase of construction, with the middle and inner defences being secondary (Feachem 1965, 200) but in support of Jobey, Stewart Ainsworth of the Ordnance Survey concluded that the outer rampart on the

south and east side was probably later on account of its sharper profile and more substantial nature (NMR No. NT 91 SE 9 – Authority 7).

In 1989, the site and its environs were surveyed at 1:2500 scale and reported on as part of the South East Cheviots Project, a multi-disciplinary landscape survey undertaken by the Royal Commission on the Historical Monuments of England (RCHME) between 1984 and 1989 (NMR No. NT 91 SE 9 – Authority 8). The plan produced as part of this survey depicts variations in the strength of the defences not clearly shown on earlier surveys, and the accompanying analysis of the earthworks supports the idea that the outer rampart is probably a later addition (Figure 7). However, contrary to Jobey, the two entrances on the east side of the fort were thought likely to be contemporary with it, and it was considered probable that there was an entrance on the west side leading into the wide gap between the outer and middle ramparts, as Davies had previously suggested. Five hut circles were identified in the interior of the hillfort; all except the most southerly equating with the four semi-circular scoops shown on Jobey's earlier plan. The 1989 survey also examined the wider landscape around the monument, providing the first description of many of the earthworks within the area of the present English Heritage survey. However, the rapid nature of the 1989 survey precluded any consideration of the evolution of the landscape around the hillfort based on a synthesis of the earthwork evidence. Finally, the analytical survey carried out by English Heritage in 2000, and the subject of this report, is the most thorough and extensive investigation of the hillfort and its environs to date. The documentary research undertaken as part of the survey was limited to a review of the secondary sources and readily available primary sources, particularly maps, plans and aerial photographs.

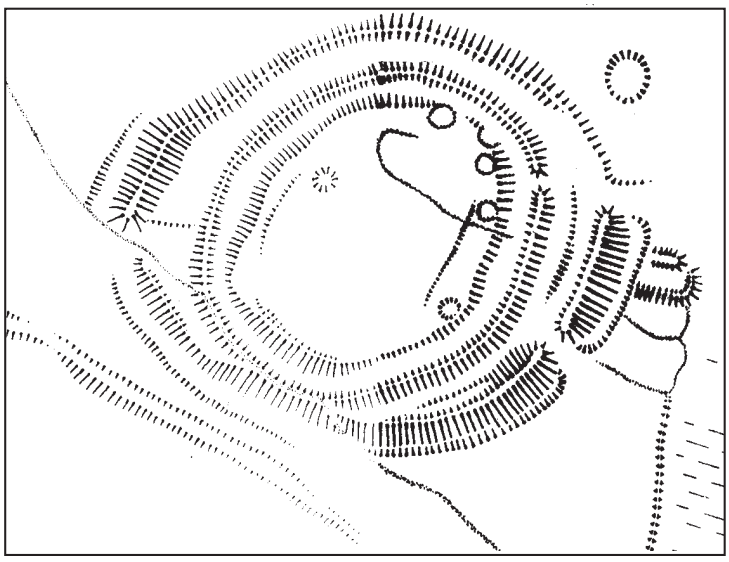


Figure 7. Plan of the hillfort surveyed by the RCHME, South-East Cheviots Project in 1989. (scale 1:2500: compiled from four sheets NT 9710, NT 9810, NT 9711 and NT 9811)

4. DESCRIPTION AND INTERPRETATION OF THE EARTHWORKS

Summary

The earliest archaeological remains identified, and of possible Bronze Age/Early Iron Age date, are a group of three unenclosed huts on the north-west flanks of Castle Hill, some 200m north of the hillfort. The hillfort itself has yet to be dated by excavation, but its morphology and topographic setting places it securely in the middle or late Iron Age. The hillfort is oval in plan with its long axis aligned south-west to north-east (Figure 8). It consists of three broadly concentric, close-set ramparts following the contours of the summit, and a discontinuous outer ditch. The results of the field survey indicate that the site may have begun as a bivallate hillfort consisting of the inner and middle defences. However, the remains of a bank have been tentatively identified within the inner area, raising the possibility that an enclosure existed on the crown of the hill prior to the construction of the hillfort. The outer defence appears to have been added later and to have undergone two phases of construction, culminating in the heightening and re-alignment of parts of the circuit. There is an entrance through all three ramparts on the east, and the outer defence possesses further entrances on the south-east and west, although the latter may not be original.

A series of embanked enclosures overlie the hillfort defences and continue to the north and east of the site, testifying to the intensive use of the area for corralling livestock, probably in the Romano-British period. Several trackways were identified, which were probably the routes used to bring livestock into the enclosure complex, and associated settlement is represented by over thirty circular hut sites. Slight terraces or lynchets on the north-east face of the hill could be evidence for prehistoric or Romano-British cultivation, whilst extensive remains of medieval and later ploughing were noted on the east-facing slope of Castle Hill. A number of small quarries were also identified across the survey area, most of which are likely to be post-medieval in date.

For the purposes of description, the features recorded by the analytical survey are considered thematically in the broad categories of Settlement, Trackways, Agricultural Activity, and Quarries.

4.1 Settlement

4.1.1 Possible Bronze Age/Early Iron Age settlement (Figure 9)

The earliest settlement on Castle Hill appears to be a group of three unenclosed, circular hut sites on the crest of the north-west slopes (Structures 1-3): similar groups of unenclosed hut sites have been dated to the Bronze Age and Early Iron Age in the Cheviots (Burgess 1984, 144). Close by is an area of possible 'cord-rig' cultivation, which will be described more fully later in this report; this is dated elsewhere in the north of England to the Iron Age, with possible origins in the late Bronze Age (Topping 1989). The hut sites are each defined by a curving outer bank, the best preserved being Structure 1 where the bank survives to a height of 0.3m and which has the slight remains of an external ditch no more than 1m wide and 0.1m deep. The bank defines a platform, 4.5m in diameter, which probably marks the site of a circular timber hut. A 1m wide break in the bank suggests the hut had an east-facing

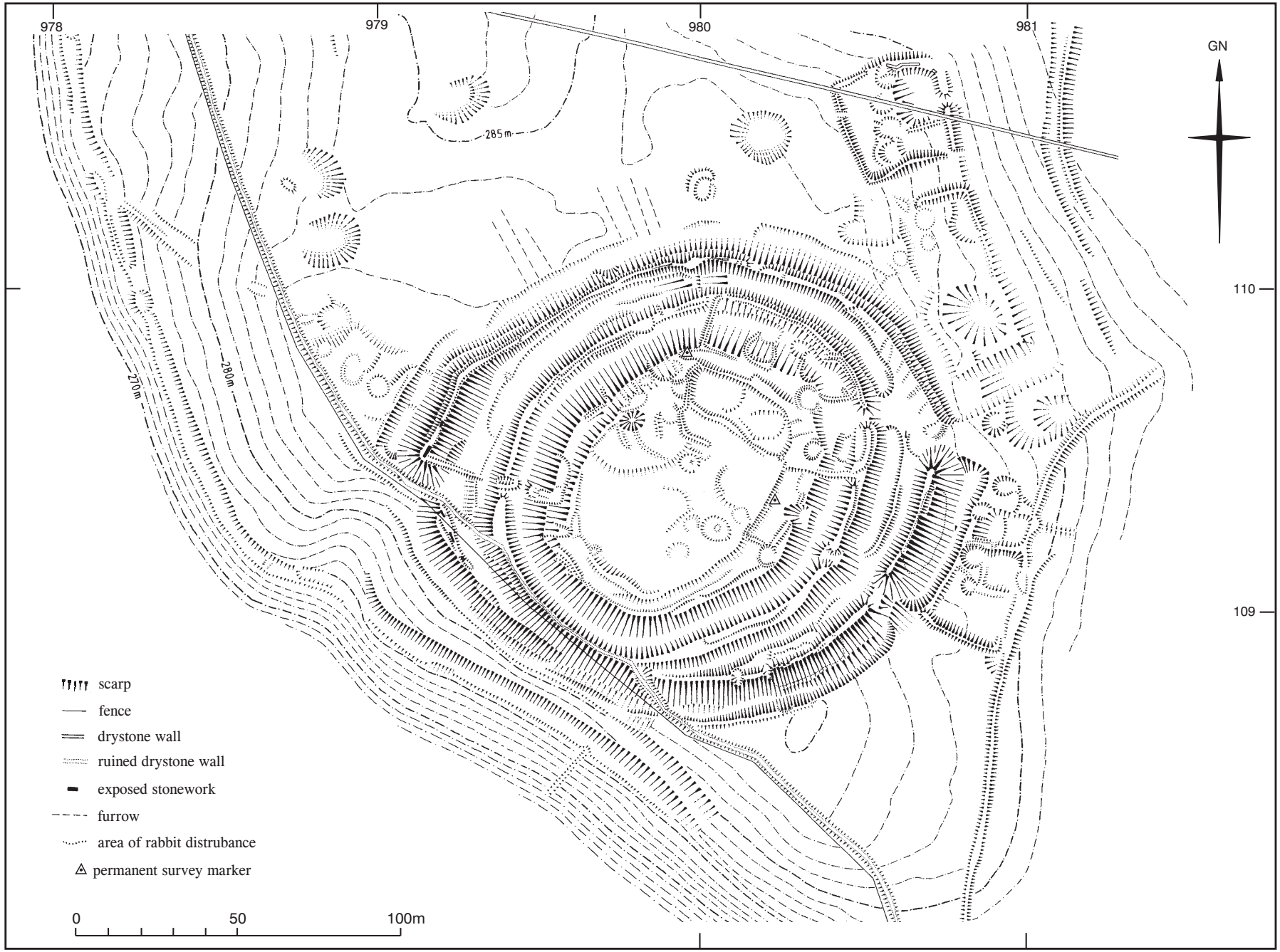
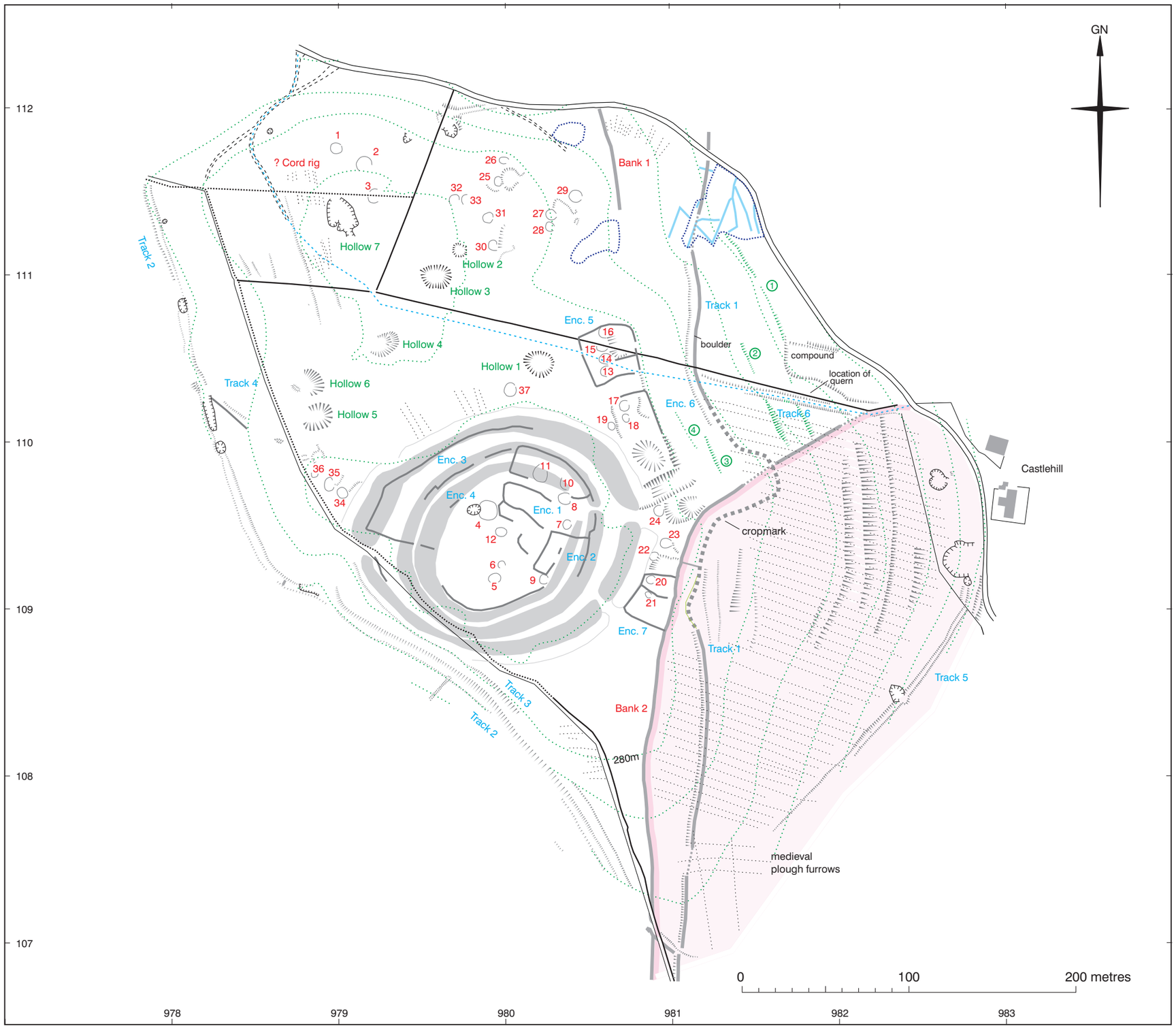


Figure 8. English Heritage plan of the hillfort and its immediate environs (reduced from 1:1000 scale original)



NATURAL FEATURES

- Limit of boggy ground
- Contours at 5m intervals

ARCHAEOLOGICAL FEATURES

- Scarp
- Hillfort rampart
- Hillfort outer ditch
- Hut site
- Narrow bank
- Broad bank
- Prehistoric or Romano-British lynchet
- Plough furrows
- Extent of medieval ploughing from aerial photographs
- Quarry

MODERN FEATURES

- Stone wall
- Collapsed stone wall
- Fence
- Road
- Track
- Public right of way
- Drainage channel
- Building

Figure 9.
The landscape around the hillfort at 1:2500 scale showing features mentioned in the text

entrance. Structure 2, 10m to the east, is defined by the curve of a discontinuous stony bank no more than 0.2m high. There is no clear sign of a levelled platform within the 7m diameter area defined by the bank, although it is likely that it contained a circular timber hut. Immediately to the east, the ground surface dips into an irregularly-shaped hollow up to 0.5m deep. This appears to be a natural feature and should not be confused with the artificial hollows representing livestock pens or yards found adjacent to several of the Romano-British hut sites to be discussed below. Structure 3 is 12m to the south of Structure 2 and is again defined by the curve of a discontinuous stony bank up to 0.2m high, which is divided by the collapsed remains of a post-medieval drystone wall. There is evidence of a slight external ditch up to 1.0m wide and 0.1m deep on the south-west side of the bank. The curvature of the bank indicates it enclosed a platform some 6.5m in diameter which probably would have been occupied by a circular timber hut. Immediately to the east is a further natural hollow up to 1.0m deep.

The possibility that this group of structures may pre-date the establishment of enclosed settlement on Castle Hill needs to be treated with caution given that the survey recorded over thirty Romano-British hut sites on Castle Hill, several of which are defined by low banks similar to those defining Structures 1-3. However, the Romano-British hut sites are either situated within embanked enclosures, or where unenclosed, have associated animal yards. In contrast, there is no evidence for similar structures in association with this group, and all three have larger diameters than the unenclosed hut sites to the east. Thus, on morphological grounds, this group is unique on Castle Hill, but in the context of the wider Cheviots they can be compared favourably to other unenclosed hut sites attributed by excavation to the Bronze Age (Gates 1983, 103-105).

4.1.2 Iron Age hillfort (Figures 10-13)

The earthwork evidence suggests that the hillfort has four identifiable phases of development. The first phase appears to be a univallate enclosure, which is subsequently surrounded and replaced by a bivallate enclosure, which is in turn enclosed by a single outer rampart and ditch. This outer rampart itself is then partially re-aligned and heightened.

Phase 1 – univallate enclosure

It was Jobey (1965) who first raised the idea that the hillfort on Castle Hill may have originated as a univallate, stone-walled enclosure, principally based on his identification of a ‘robber trench’. Whilst this English Heritage investigation cannot support the interpretation of a ‘robber trench’, there is evidence, allbeit slight, for an enclosure within the core of the hillfort which may pre-date the construction of the inner rampart of the bivallate phase.

The remains of this inner enclosure are fragmentary, particularly at the east and north, where the circuit has been heavily disturbed by hut sites and compounds associated with the Romano-British re-use of the hillfort (see section 4.1.3 below). At the south and west the enclosure seems to have been formed by a bank, which is visible as a flat-topped rise, 4m wide, 0.3m high and set some 5m inside the crest of the inner rampart. At the south, the rise is cut into by the feature previously interpreted as a ‘robber trench’ (Jobey 1965), although it now seems clear that this ‘trench’ is a narrow quarry ditch for a slight stony bank which surmounts the inner rampart top (see see 4.1.3 below). This slight stony bank is analogous to those

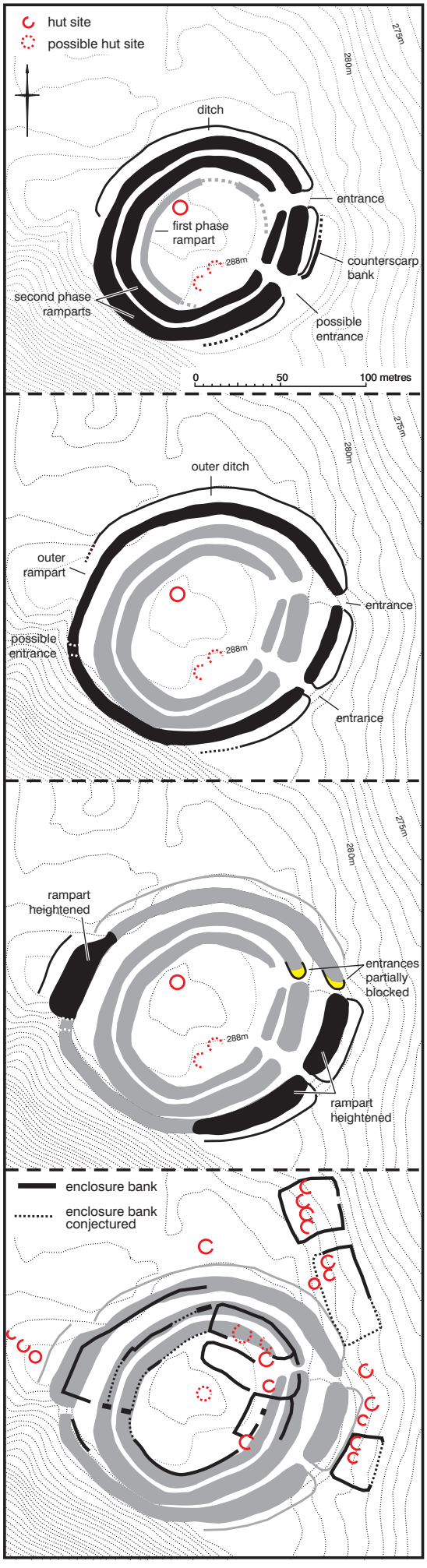


Figure 10. Interpretative plans of the hillfort and its immediate environs

associated with the Romano-British enclosures elsewhere in the hillfort. The flat-topped nature of the underlying rise probably results from a reduction in height resulting from the creation of yards or pens inside the later bank. At the south-eastern end of the underlying rise, its alignment appears to be truncated by the line of the inner rampart, and although the precise earthwork relationship is now lost, this suggests that the inner rampart posts-dates the bank. Thus, the relative stratigraphy here indicates, but cannot be physically demonstrated, that this flattened bank pre-dates the construction of the bivallate hillfort, and clearly pre-dates the Romano-British re-use of the hillfort. At the west, the flat-topped rise is still visible inset from the inner rampart, and at the northern end is clearly truncated by the later Romano-British enclosure complex, further confirming its probable Iron Age origins. At the very north of the circuit, a wider section of bank within this later complex (Enclosure 1) may be a remnant of the earlier line. Around the western circuit, a slight terrace visible on the outer scarp of the inner rampart may indicate that this section of the univallate enclosure was incorporated in the circuit of the bivallate fort in Phase 2, producing the visual effect of a 'third' tier of defence at the west. Due to the fragmentary nature of this putative first enclosure, it is unclear as to where an entrance may have been, or whether the original bank was likely to have been surmounted by a stone wall or timber palisade.

Phase 2 – bivallate hillfort

The second phase consists of an inner rampart, ditch and outer rampart (which subsequently formed the middle rampart of the final hillfort), and an outer ditch. The inner defence consists of a steep, outward-facing slope which levels out at its base onto a terrace separating it from the second rampart: the cutting of this terrace creates the effect of a ditch between the two ramparts. The outer face of the inner rampart and the terrace have been formed by cutting back the natural slope, although the comparatively shallow gradient of the rampart on the north-east side suggests there has been little modification of the hillslope in this sector. The rampart is mostly between 1.5-2.5m high, rising to 3.0m on the west and north-west sides around the highest part of the hilltop, whilst the terrace maintains a consistent width of 5m. There is no clearly defined entrance through the inner rampart but it is most likely to have been at the east apex (inner east entrance – Figure 11), in line with the more obvious entrance through the middle and outer ramparts of the final hillfort (middle east and outer east entrances respectively). At this point there is a slight hollow which might have been eroded by traffic passing through an entrance, although this is not conclusive, and could have equally resulted from the passage of livestock to and from the later Romano-British enclosures and yards in this part of the re-used hillfort.

At the west apex of the inner rampart there is a 5m wide terrace into the slope. This can be traced for 35m around to the north where it is cut by a series of shallow pits and scoops, one of which has exposed a block of andesite some 1.2m in length. The terrace may have been deliberately cut to exaggerate the strength of the hillfort defences when viewed from the north and west, by creating the impression that the inner rampart was in fact two. However, the field evidence suggests that this same effect could also have been created by the incorporation of the Phase 1 enclosure bank into the circuit as was discussed above. In either case, this terrace effect is most likely to be associated with the evolution of the bivallate Iron Age hillfort.

The field evidence suggests that the inner rampart, ditch, outer rampart (the middle rampart of the multivallate fort) and outer ditch were constructed as part of a single concept. The two ramparts are concentric around the summit of the hill, and

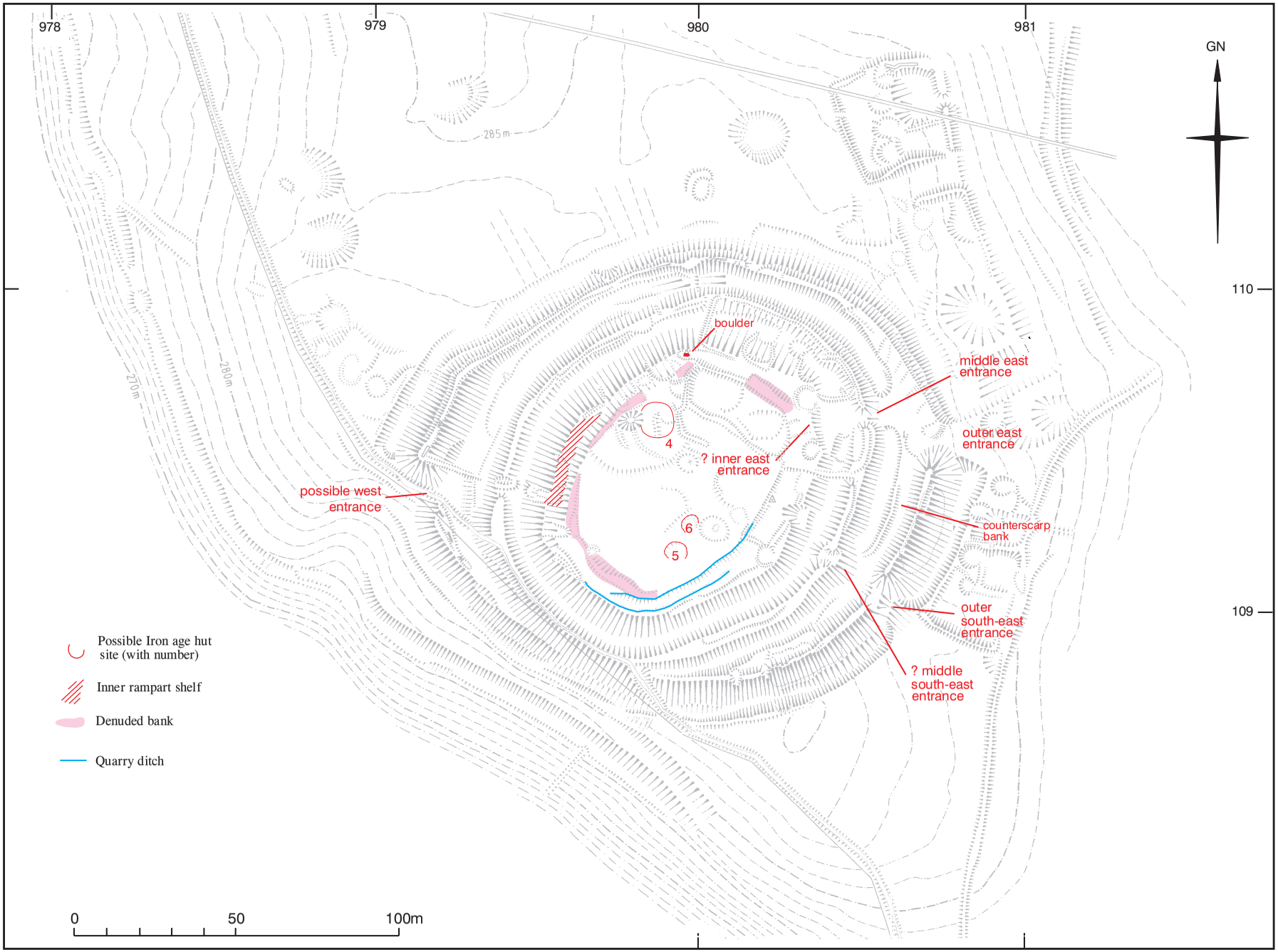


Figure 11. Plan of the hillfort showing possible pre-Roman features

crucially, the inner rampart is set back far enough from the steep west side of the hill to allow the outer rampart to surmount the crest, suggesting the two were constructed at the same time.

In its present form, the outer rampart of the bivallate hillfort is flat-topped, around 1.5-2.0m high and 10m wide at its base. Rabbit scrapes and erosion scars suggest the bank is made up of a dump of earth and small stones although this is not conclusive as nowhere is the core of the rampart exposed. At the west and north, the rampart is overlain by, and incorporated into the network of paddocks and enclosures of the Romano-British complex. The bank has been reduced at several points through erosion but the only gap likely to be an original entrance is on the east (middle east entrance). Here the bank has rounded ends either side of the 2m wide break, suggesting a deliberately created entrance. Although this is the most obvious entrance, clues to chronological changes in the access arrangements are evidenced by the earthworks of the ditch which runs outside this rampart. It is possible that the rampart was strengthened at the time the outer defences were added in Phase 3 since the entrance arrangements appear to have been re-modelled at this time (as will be discussed below).

The outer ditch to the bivallate fort is 5-6m wide and up to 0.4m deep. Although now appearing discontinuous, this results from changes in the entrance arrangements and the addition of the Phase 3 rampart. It begins on the north-west, some 20m from the crest of the slope down to the Spartley Burn. It was probably not taken to the crest of the slope because the ground naturally falls away and therefore digging a ditch was probably considered unnecessary. The ditch is clear around the north side of the hillfort, ending with a rounded terminal at the middle east entrance where it defines one side of a 10m wide causeway. The offset positioning of the present 2m wide entrance through the rampart in relation to the wide causeway is curious. That the northern terminal of the entrance appears to cross and effectively block the wider causeway probably indicates a remodelling of the original entrance into the bivallate fort. A similar remodelling of the outer east entrance through the outer rampart probably during Phase 4 of the hillfort development has been identified in this survey: this in turn appears to have subsequently been heavily disturbed in the Romano-British period (see 4.1.3 below). Thus, the most likely context for this change at the middle east entrance is in the Iron Age when the Phase 3 outer rampart is modified during Phase 4. That the entrance terminals are still well-formed here, and that this narrower entrance acts as a focus to the Romano-British enclosures and settlement within the hillfort strongly indicate that it remained in use during this later period.

On the south side of the middle east entrance causeway, the outside edge of the ditch is given added prominence by the existence of a 0.5m high counterscarp bank for part of its length. The bank was not observed elsewhere but if it did originally continue further, the evidence would have been lost when the outer rampart was constructed on the same alignment in Phase 3. The counterscarp bank fades out to the north following the line of the ditch but on the south it curves inwards before disappearing. The inwards curve of the counterscarp bank is very clear and suggests there was a second entrance into the bivallate fort (middle south-east entrance), directly in line with the outer south-east entrance through the outer rampart (described below). Also, the ditch disappears for 15m suggesting the existence of a causeway comparable with that at the outer east entrance. However, there is no obvious gap through the rampart, apart from a slight lowering at the crest which is too insubstantial to have been an original entrance, and there is no surface indication of a blocked opening. On the

inner rampart slope, almost opposite the lowering of the middle rampart, is a localised hollowing. Although this may be the remnant of an entrance into the inner area, in its present form it is more likely to be associated with passage of animals into the Romano-British enclosures. However, because the ditch terminal is so clear at the north of the causeway, coupled with how this arrangement is mirrored in the entrance causeways and ditch immediately opposite in the outer rampart, it strongly suggests that there may have been a second original entrance into the bivallate fort, which was subsequently remodelled. The most likely context for this change is either during Phase 3 or Phase 4 of the hillfort development (see below). A parallel for this double entrance arrangement through both ramparts into a bivallate hillfort is displayed on Harehope Rings in Peebleshire (RCAHMS 1967, 118-120).

The outer ditch of the bivallate hillfort continues for another 10m beyond the putative middle south-east entrance causeway before it appears to narrow (2m wide compared to 5-6m consistent width elsewhere in its circuit) and is overlain by the base of the outer rampart. It is at this point, where the two ramparts converge, that it can be seen that the outer rampart encroaches onto the line of the ditch. This provides the strongest evidence that the outer rampart is a later addition to the bivallate defences and thus provides a reasonably secure chronology for the development of the hillfort. On the south-west, where the outer rampart of the bivallate fort follows the crest of the slope down to the Spartley Burn, there is a 4m wide terrace, rather than a ditch, at the foot of the rampart. Here, digging a ditch would have been unwarranted given the steepness of the natural gradient but the terrace itself has largely been destroyed by the later cutting back of the slope to create the outer rampart of the Phase 3 hillfort which is further evidence that the outer rampart is a later addition.

Phases 3 and 4 – multivallate hillfort

It has been demonstrated above that the outer rampart and ditch clearly post-date the bivallate hillfort but pre-date the Romano-British re-occupation, thus firmly establishing the site evolved into a multivallate hillfort within the Iron Age period. The substance and height of the outer rampart and the depth of the outer ditch vary quite markedly around the circuit of the hillfort (Figure 12). The west and east sections are massive, and there is strong evidence that these are a later re-modelling (Phase 4) although around the rest of the circuit, the rampart is relatively weak in comparison (Phase 3): at the south, the rampart has taken advantage of the steep natural slope. There are two obvious entrances at the east and a possible one at the west.

The insubstantial section of rampart around the north, between the massive rampart at the west and the outer east entrance, is the original outer defence (Phase 3); this section is a maximum of 10m wide and has an outer face up to 2.4m high. It is unambiguously overlain by the higher and more massive section at the west (Phase 4 – see below). The height of the original outer rampart mainly results from cutting back the natural slope, although there are the remains of a bank up to 0.9m high on the crest which appears to be of simple dump construction. In places there are traces of stone foundations on the crest of the bank, but these mark the remains of later, Romano-British, stock enclosures. The bank virtually disappears some 50m north of the outer east entrance, its line cut by a combination of later pitting and hollow ways. The destruction of the bank here and the context for the hollow ways is provided by the proximity of the Romano-British settlements immediately to the east and the intensive re-use of the hillfort interior for the corralling of livestock in this period (see 4.1.3 below).

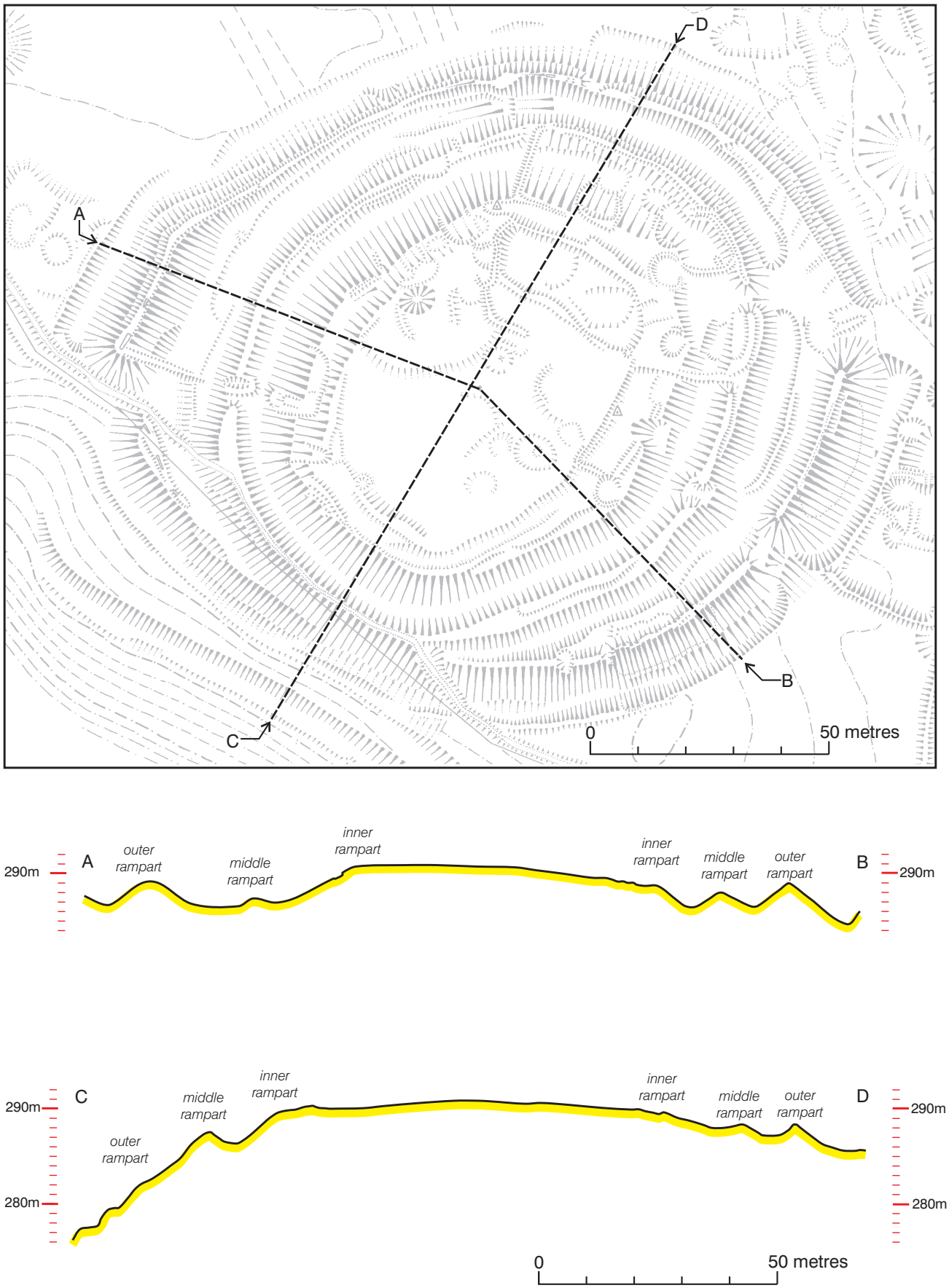


Figure 12. Profiles across the hillfort defences

Outside the rampart, the indistinct remains of an outer ditch, 5m wide and 0.2m deep are visible. At the north-west, it is clear that the line of the outer ditch is crossed by the heightened section of the outer rampart. This massive section of rampart on the north side of the drystone wall is built on level ground and consists of a raised bank up to 3.3m high and 10m wide overlooking a 5m wide outer ditch. The ditch is up to 1.8m deep and is partially formed from the head of a natural gully which cuts the crest of the slope above the Spartley Burn. This stretch of rampart is comparable in height and bulk to the prominent outer bank on the opposite side of the hillfort, and judging from erosion scars, it appears to be a similar stone and earth dump. The massive section of bank comprises two uncharacteristically straight sections which meet at an angle of 45 degrees, with the northern section gradually reducing in height as it meets the more insubstantial outer rampart. At the point of junction it is clear that this higher section is built over and out from the line of the Phase 3 rampart, on an alignment slightly to the north-west of the original outer perimeter. This observation is reinforced by the fact that the ditch fronting this massive section of bank is offset from the line of the original outer ditch to the east and by the fact that the two ditches do not clearly link up. Thus, it is later in date than the Phase 3 outer rampart and ditch, but as this section of rampart is also overlain by and thus pre-dates the Romano-British enclosure complex, it can be attributed to the final phase of hillfort construction (Phase 4). It is possible that the line of the original Phase 3 outer rampart continued around the west closely following the curve of the Phase 2 outer ditch (which is still visible along this section), but is now incorporated in the inner face of the Phase 4 rampart, which is noticeably very wide (17m) at this point and which suggestively, lines-up with the Phase 3 outer rampart beyond the putative west entrance (see below p.21).

The outer east entrance is marked by a funnel-like causeway, which narrows from 15m at the outside to 7m close to the rampart, though a 0.2m high curving bank within this gap appears to be the remains of the robbed section of the northern bank terminal, and indicates that the entrance was narrowed to a width of only 2m. This echoes the arrangements at the entrance through the middle rampart immediately to the west (described above p.16), suggesting that both entrances were re-modelled at the same time. The inner edge of the outer ditch turns sharply to the east, away from the hillfort, and continues for a distance of 35m defining the north side of what might have been a continuation of the entrance causeway. This linear-like northern edge to the causeway seems to emulate the orientation of the Romano-British enclosed settlements immediately to the north and may imply an association and continuity of use of the earlier entrance. The entrance is an integral part of the Phase 3 defences with the partial blocking of the gap clearly occurring later. As both the rampart on the north side of the entrance and the bank responsible for the later narrowing were largely destroyed in the Romano British period as was described above, this strongly suggests the partial blocking of the entrance probably took place in Phase 4 at the same time as the outer rampart was heightened.

The insubstantial rampart and ditch defining the north side of the entrance is in marked contrast to the much-more imposing rampart and ditch on the south side. At the south, both the rampart and ditch have rounded terminals and from the east entrance around to the south apex of the hillfort, the rampart is up to 4.0m high on the outside and 2.6m on the inside and around 15m wide. It is separated from the outer ditch of the bivallate hillfort by a 2-3m wide berm. The difference in height between the outer and inner faces indicates that it gains some advantage from a gentle underlying slope, but the bulk of the rampart nevertheless must consist of a massive raised bank. There is no evidence of any stone facing or structure to the bank, even

where rabbit burrows penetrate into the sides, suggesting that it is probably constructed from a simple dump of earth and stone (Figure 13). However, this is not certain as the core of the rampart was not exposed. The outer ditch is an imposing, steep-sided feature up to 5.0m wide and 1.5m deep with slight traces of a counterscarp bank and is in marked contrast to the much shallower ditches elsewhere around the Phase 3 outer rampart, and those of the preceding bivallate hillfort. Immediately to the north of the outer south-east entrance, a Romano-British settlement is situated on the outer edge of the ditch (Enclosure 7). The west side of the enclosure clearly respects the ditch and may re-use and redefine a section of the counterscarp bank. This is a firm indication that the ditch and consequently the enhanced section of the outer rampart pre-dates the Romano-British period, placing it securely it to the fourth and final phase of the hillfort defences.

Figure 13. View looking north of the outer defences on the south-east of the hillfort

There is a second entrance on the south-east side of the outer rampart (outer south-east entrance), 50m to the south of the one discussed above. Here again, the rounded ends of the ditch define a 7m wide causeway which leads up to a 4m wide gap through the outer rampart, the sides of which have been rounded off to create the entrance. Jobey considered this was a later breach (implying that the ditch had been filled in at this point) but there is no evidence of any subsidence in the causeway to indicate the existence of a filled-in ditch. Rather it looks to be solid, undisturbed ground. This suggests that the causeway, and therefore the outer south-east entrance, are both elements of Phase 3 and Phase 4 developments.

From the outer south-east entrance around to the south apex of the hillfort, the inner slope of the rampart shows clear evidence of having been reworked. A shelf, 25m long, has been cut into the rampart about half way up the inner slope. Some of the excavated material has been pushed downslope to help create the 5m width of the

shelf whilst the rest has been piled along the top of the rampart raising the crest 1.4m above the level of the shelf. Here large stone blocks give the impression of a rudimentary wall along the crest. The sharpness of both the cut for the shelf and the profile of the raised crest make it unlikely this reworking is of any great antiquity and it could be medieval or post-medieval in date though its purpose remains obscure. One possible explanation is that the shelf was created by digging to extract stone from the core of the rampart, but this does not explain the existence of a rudimentary stone wall along the crest. Alternatively, the existence of a shelf behind a raised wall on a strong rampart such as this has all the appearances of a wall-walk or firestep and may have been an attempt to strengthen this particular stretch of the hillfort defences, with the rudimentary wall providing some additional cover. This is unlikely to be part of the original Iron Age defences, although its date is uncertain (see Section 5: Discussion).

Beyond the south apex of the hillfort, the outer defences decline in strength as they approach the precipitous slope above the Spartley Burn. The ditch and bank fade towards the top of this slope, although the outside face of the rampart continues to be a prominent feature. Traces of a counterscarp bank outside the ditch are evident along this section. The outer rampart compensates for the decline in the height of the bank by cutting into the steepening natural gradient of the hillside, eventually combining with the base of the middle rampart on the west side of the hillfort to form one continuous rampart 5.5m high. The point where the two ramparts merge is somewhat obscured by the line of a ruined drystone wall which has cut into the ramparts at their junction. A 3m wide terrace immediately below this section of the defences may have been created in the Iron Age as an external defence, perhaps fronted by a timber palisade, although, as will be discussed later in the report, in its final form the terrace is part of a trackway approaching the hillfort from the south.

Some 40m after the merger of the two ramparts, the outer rampart re-emerges as an outward-facing slope up to 4.0m high, cut into the hillside, and surmounted by a slight bank no more than 0.5m high with the remnants of a terrace separating it from the middle rampart. This section of the outer rampart looks out over a natural gully cutting into the crest of the main slope above the Spartley Burn. Visible on the crown of the bank is a discontinuous rubble bank. This is similar in its size and construction to other slight traces of bank elsewhere on top of the outer and middle ramparts and which are part of the Romano-British enclosure complex overlying the hillfort (see 4.1.3 below) and a comparable date is probable. The outer rampart turns along the top of the gully, disappearing where the ruined stone field wall crosses but emerges again, slightly offset from its line, on the opposite side of the field wall: here, an entrance-like gap separates it from the massive bank which forms part of the Phase 4 defences noted above. The existence of this gap and the dramatic change in the character of the rampart either side of it could indicate this was an original entrance as previous fieldworkers have suggested (NMR No. NT 91 SE 9 - Authorities 4 and 8). However, the evidence is not conclusive and it is equally likely to be a breach created in the Romano-British period as will be discussed later (see 4.1.3 below).

The outer rampart added in Phase 3 is contiguous with the outer ditch of the bivallate hillfort on the north and probably on the west side as was described above but on the east the two alignments diverge slightly. The resulting berm was probably too small to be used for the corralling of stock and its presence is more likely to be connected with new entrance arrangements in Phase 3 which are also evident in the apparent blocking of the southern of the two entrances through the bivallate defences. The intention in blocking the southern entrance might have been to utilise the berm as a

passage linking the outer south-east entrance to the inner and middle-east entrances. This would have strengthened the defence of the inner area by only leaving one entrance and could have occurred in either Phase 3 or Phase 4. A hillfort with three ramparts at Northshield Rings in Peebleshire (RCAHMS 1967, 136-7), demonstrates a broadly similar development to Castle Hill. Here, the addition of a second rampart creates a space within which the ditch and counterscarp bank of the first phase are retained, and there appears to be a perpetuation of the earlier entrance channels in a similar way to that proposed by this survey for Castle Hill. At Northshield Rings, the north-east entrance is arranged to create a funnel effect, the widest gap being on the outside rampart: this same arrangement is evident at the outer east and middle east entrances at Castle Hill.

At the west of the hillfort, the re-alignment of the massive outer bank has been demonstrated to belong to Phase 4, and this too increased the space between it and the middle rampart. No similar argument regarding changes in entrances can be applied here and given the amount of work involved, the re-building is most unlikely to have been connected with creating an area behind the outer rampart for penning livestock. The most likely explanation is that the bank was re-aligned to incorporate the natural gully into the outer defences. Thus, in Phase 4 the layout of the outer defences exhibits an overriding concern with strengthening, (or at least appearing to strengthen), the security of the hillfort.

Hillfort interior

The majority of features recorded within the hillfort post-date the abandonment of the defences and form a cohesive group of hut sites and enclosures of the Romano-British period. However, there are three features which are not obviously associated with the later enclosures and which therefore might date from the Iron Age. The first (Structure 4) is not visible as an earthwork but emerged as a parchmark on a sequence of aerial photographs of the north side of the hillfort interior (Gates 1989). It is around 10m in diameter and could well be the outline of a large circular timber hut. Its possible Iron Age date is suggested by the fact that it is overlain by a short stretch of bank which is interpreted as part of the complex of Romano-British enclosures. Structures 5 and 6 are represented by two adjacent curving scarps, respectively 5m and 3.5m in diameter, cut no more than 0.2m into a gentle south-facing slope which define shallow circular platforms. These features are not obviously connected with the main complex of Romano-British structures and enclosures, which are over 40m to the north and which are defined by more substantial earthworks. It is therefore possible, but by no means certain, that Structures 5 and 6 are Iron Age hut platforms.

4.1.3 The hillfort in the Romano-British period (Figure 14)

A series of discontinuous, low banks define four recognisable enclosures which overlie, and unambiguously post-date, the north half of the hillfort (Enclosures 1-4). Further isolated stretches of bank suggest there were originally several more enclosures. The banks were presumably surmounted by fences or hedges and are most likely the perimeters of livestock pens. Collectively, these enclosures occupy more than half the hillfort area, and point to a carefully organised complex for stock corralling and management. It is also possible that the more level areas inside the enclosures could have been cultivated although no evidence of this was observed.

Figure 14. Plan of the hillfort showing Romano-British features

Enclosure 1 is the only one of the four with definite evidence of occupation. It contains the sites of two probable huts and two possible circular huts or pens (Structures 7, 8, 10 and 11). The two probable hut sites (Structures 7 and 8) are defined by scooped platforms and external banks whilst the two other structures (Structures 10 and 11), also defined by curving banks, may be possible hut sites although it is equally possible that they may be later animal pens. Another probable circular hut site (Structure 9) is represented by a circular scoop immediately outside the south side of Enclosure 2, and a circular depression towards the centre of the hillfort may be a further possible hut site situated among a series of fragmentary enclosure banks not obviously part of the main complex of animal pens (Structure 12).

The enclosures and hut sites are evidence that the fort was re-used after the abandonment of the defences, and they are most likely to date to the Romano-British period, as Jobey first suggested. There are many examples in the Cheviots of Romano-British settlements of this general type consisting of circular huts situated within or in close proximity to small embanked enclosures. A particularly close parallel has recently been recorded at the hillfort on West Hill near Kirknewton, in the north Cheviots. Here, the interior of an abandoned hillfort was re-settled in the Romano-British period and divided into enclosures, partially re-using the defences (Oswald *et al* 2000). In contrast, at Castle Hill, there are relatively few hut sites sites in comparison to the size and complexity of the arrangement of enclosures overlying the hillfort and yet there is a higher concentration of settlement outside the defences to the east, where there is a line of embanked enclosures associated with the sites of further circular huts (described below). The overall settlement pattern suggests that the interior of the former hillfort served a different function to that at West Hill (this is discussed below).

The heart of the enclosure complex inside the hillfort is a roughly 'D'-shaped compound on the north east of the hillfort, which encompasses sections of the middle and inner ramparts and extends into the hillfort interior (Enclosure 1). The enclosure measures up to 60m east-west and 30m north-south and the sides of the enclosure are defined by stony banks, no more than 0.3m high, which are clearest where they traverse the level interior of the hillfort or ascend the sides of the ramparts. However, on the north side, where the perimeter follows the crest of the middle rampart, the enclosure bank is only visible as a slight steepening at the top of the rampart. At the east, the enclosure re-uses, (and possibly partially re-defines) the original hillfort entrance through the middle rampart. That this entrance has experienced heavy use is indicated by the series of scars, which have the appearance of short hollow ways cutting through the reduced crest of the outer rampart, and which are aligned on the gap. Although the scarring could have occurred during recent times and be associated with the later ploughing (see below section 4.3.3) it is equally possible that they result from the passage of livestock to and from the settlements and fields to the east in the Romano-British period.

There is a second possible entrance into Enclosure 1 in the middle of the west side; this is represented by a 2m wide break with in-turned banks. This entrance straddles and re-uses the terrace below the crest of the hillfort inner rampart which suggests this was used as a routeway, continuing into the interior of the enclosure up to Structures 7 and 8. A third possible entrance at the south-east corner of the enclosure is represented by a 5m wide gap, but the break is more likely to be the result of later erosion. The banks on the south-west and south sides of the enclosure, and on the south side of the terrace, follow the edge of an oval-shaped hollow. This feature

probably results from a combination of animals trampling the surface and the cleaning out of animal dung, and suggests the prolonged use of the south-west quarter of the enclosure for penning livestock.

There are four circular structures within the enclosure but only two (Structures 7 and 8) are likely to be hut sites. They are situated immediately to the east of the hollow on the crest of the inner rampart, indicating a distinct division within the enclosure between the occupation area and the main animal pen, as is commonly the case in Romano-British settlements of this type. Structure 7 is a 5m wide circular scoop up to 0.4m deep with two banks up to 0.4m high flanking the sides of an east-facing entrance. Structure 8 is 15m to the north and is the best preserved of the hut sites inside the hillfort. It is a circular platform defined by a curving stony bank up to 0.4m high and 6m in diameter with a distinct break in the bank on the east. A curving bank runs between this gap and the north side of the enclosure.

Two other circular structures within this enclosure are more questionable as hut sites, chiefly because they are situated on the outer slope of the inner rampart and show no evidence of platforming; this would not have made for particularly convenient accommodation. The east one of the pair (Structure 10) consists of a semi-circular scoop some 6.0m in diameter with a stony bank up to 0.4m high on the upslope side. The ground within the scoop falls by over a metre. Structure 11 is 10m to the west and straddles the outer face of the rampart, amounting to a fall of around 0.4m across the 7m wide interior. The feature is sub-circular in shape and defined by a stony, flat-topped bank up to 0.4m high with a gap on the downslope side. Here a shallow scoop, which looks like an erosion scar, cuts slightly into the interior of the feature. It is possible these two circular structures are the remains of small animal pens rather than huts and they could well be much later in date than the enclosure within which they are situated.

Enclosure 2 is roughly square-shaped and measures 25m across. It is situated immediately to the south-east of the 'D'-shaped enclosure (with which it shares a common boundary) and encloses sections of the middle and inner ramparts. It is clearly defined by flat-topped stony banks no more than 0.3m high; that on the east side runs along the crest of the middle rampart and that on the west along the inside edge of the earlier quarry ditch discussed above. This bank turns to form the south-west side of the enclosure, but there is no bank on the south-east side. This may be because all surface traces have been destroyed or because it was an entrance into the enclosure. A slight break in the crest of the middle rampart at the south-east corner may indicate another point of access, especially since it is in line with the south-east entrance in the outer rampart. The interior is subdivided by a slight bank running along the crest of the inner rampart which may have been to separate stock off within the enclosure. The east compartment thus created has a level floor with no trace of the quarry ditch continuing across it, suggesting the ground in this part of the enclosure has been levelled. A large scar some 0.4m deep, cuts through the internal bank and penetrates the rampart below; although superficially appearing like an entrance, it is probably an area of later disturbance or quarrying. There is no evidence of occupation within Enclosure 2, although the most southerly of the hut sites (Structure 9) cuts into the outside of the perimeter bank on the south-west side, indicating it post-dates the enclosure. The site of the hut is defined by a circular scoop 5.0m in diameter and up to 0.3m deep with a slight bank up to 0.2m high on the south side. The scoop is open to the east, suggesting the hut faced towards the south-east entrance into the hillfort.

Some 30m west of Enclosure 2 is a further possible Romano-British hut site represented by a circular depression around 4m in diameter and 0.2m deep with slight break in the edge of the depression on the east, suggesting the site was occupied by a hut with an east-facing entrance (Structure 12). However, there is a slight mound at the centre of the depression up to 0.2m high and 1.5m across suggesting the depression might be nothing more than a series of scoops to create the mound. In this same area are isolated stretches of bank of similar width and height to those forming the main series of enclosures. They may be the remnants of further small enclosures in the level interior of the hillfort which have either suffered partial destruction or were mostly defined by fences or hedges which have left no visible remains.

The north half of the earlier hillfort defences appear to have been divided into two large enclosures following the curve of the ramparts (Enclosures 3 and 4). Enclosure 3 overlies the outer and middle ramparts and shares a common boundary with Enclosure 4 which encompasses the middle and inner ramparts and has far less of its perimeter surviving compared to Enclosure 3. The long north side, and short west side of Enclosure 3 is defined by a continuous stony bank up to 0.3m high which follows the crest of the outer rampart up to the west end of the hillfort and then turns and descends the inner face of the rampart. The stretch of bank along the outer rampart begins at the north apex of the hillfort opposite the west side of Enclosure 1, indicating Enclosure 3 was at least 110m long. The bank defining the shorter, west side of the enclosure runs for a distance of 20m down the inner face of the outer rampart as far as the foot of the middle rampart where it ends at a possible entrance represented by a 5m wide gap. The bank on the other side of the entrance is on the crest of the middle rampart and here there is a slight ditch on the north side of the bank where material was presumably dug for its construction. The bank then continues on the same alignment to form one end of Enclosure 4 (described below). The east side of Enclosure 3 is represented by two separate stretches of stony bank on the crest of the middle rampart. They indicate that the east side ran up to the west side of Enclosure 1 whilst a distinct 'dog-leg' in the longer of the two sections of bank suggests a sub-division which is no longer visible, such as a fence line or hedge.

Enclosure 4, measuring 70m long by up to 20m wide, straddles the middle and inner ramparts. Its perimeter is not well defined on the ground but it is reasonable to assume that it shared common boundaries with Enclosure 1 to the east and Enclosure 3 to the north. Its south side is well-defined and is created by a continuation of the bank defining the south end of Enclosure 3. The bank defining the south side of the enclosure is pierced by a 2m wide gap at the foot of the inner rampart; the rounded ends of the bank suggest this a genuine entrance. Beyond the entrance, the bank ascends the inner rampart and ends at the outer edge of the terrace below the crest. This may be the corner, as a solitary stretch of enclosure bank to the north, surviving on the outer edge of the terrace, indicates that it probably ran along this edge. A possible scar curving around the outside of this same corner, and a break in the crest of the middle rampart, both define a well-used route on the outside of Enclosures 3 and 4 which turned along the shelf up to the west entrance in Enclosure 1.

The observation that Enclosures 1, 3 and 4 were all entered from the west highlights the possibility of an entrance on this side of the hillfort. This focuses attention on the break in the outer rampart at the west apex of the fort, which was discounted above (p.21) as an original Iron Age entrance. However, the gap may well have been created in the Romano-British period to assist in bringing livestock into the hillfort from the west. The three short sections of stony bank on top of the outer rampart on the south side of the gap were mentioned above (p.21) as probably being

Romano-British. Although there is no trace of an enclosure here, it is possible the bank was sited to restrict and control the movement of livestock immediately inside the suggested west entrance.

The enclosure complex appears to have extended no further south than a line between the south-east and west entrances into the hillfort. The fact that the sides of Enclosures 2, 3 and 4 all respect this line presupposes a strong element of planning in their layout and perhaps the existence of a physical boundary across the interior of the hillfort, such as a fence, which has left no surface remains. This line is extended further east by the south side of Enclosure 7 on the outside of the hillfort, possibly indicating that this could have acted as a barrier, ensuring animals approaching from the south were diverted through the outer south-east entrance. This raises the question of what happened to the south of this putative boundary. There is no evidence of occupation in this area apart from one hut site (Structure 6) which was described earlier in the report and is thought likely to be Iron Age.

Possibly the south part of the hillfort was one large enclosure, and there are the remains of a slight stony bank along the southern crest of the inner rampart. This feature is similar to the banks defining Enclosures 1-4 and implies the existence of one or more animal pens on the south side of the suggested transverse division of the hillfort interior. However the south boundary of Enclosure 2, which respects this dividing line, clearly overlies and therefore post-dates the quarry ditch for the bank on the southern crest of the inner rampart. This relationship suggests that the division of the hillfort and the enclosures to its north came after the possible livestock pen indicated by the bank on the southern crest of the inner rampart. Although the details are obscure, the field remains clearly suggest that the use of the interior of the hillfort changed and evolved during the Romano-British period.

4.1.4 The hillfort after the Romano-British period (Figure 15)

There is no evidence that the site was occupied after the abandonment of the enclosures and as a result the earthworks have only suffered minor modification and disturbance. The most visible change to the hillfort defences is on the south of the fort where a platform has been cut into the inner face of the outer rampart, as was described earlier in the report. On the west side of the hillfort, the middle and outer ramparts are overlain by a collapsed drystone wall which is depicted on the earliest Ordnance Survey map of the site (Ordnance Survey 1864) when it was presumably still functioning as a boundary. The date of the wall is unknown, but there is no evidence that it dates back into the medieval period since at this time a bank further to the east appears to have been the main land boundary (see below section 4.3.2). Some of the stone in the wall may have come from the hillfort ramparts and the overlying Romano-British enclosure banks although there is no evidence of extensive or systematic robbing on the site. More likely is that the majority of the stone for this, and other field walls on Castle Hill, was supplied by the various quarries and pits recorded in the area. The north apex of the middle rampart is pitted with several hollows and scoops which might also be localised quarrying of surface stone for building field walls and therefore relatively recent in date. One of the hollows contains a large andesite boulder some 1.2m in length but it is impossible to say if this rock is in-situ. No evidence was found for the Ordnance Survey trigonometrical station shown on the first and second edition Ordnance Survey maps on the crest of the outer rampart on the south-west side of the hillfort (Ordnance Survey 1864 and 1897).

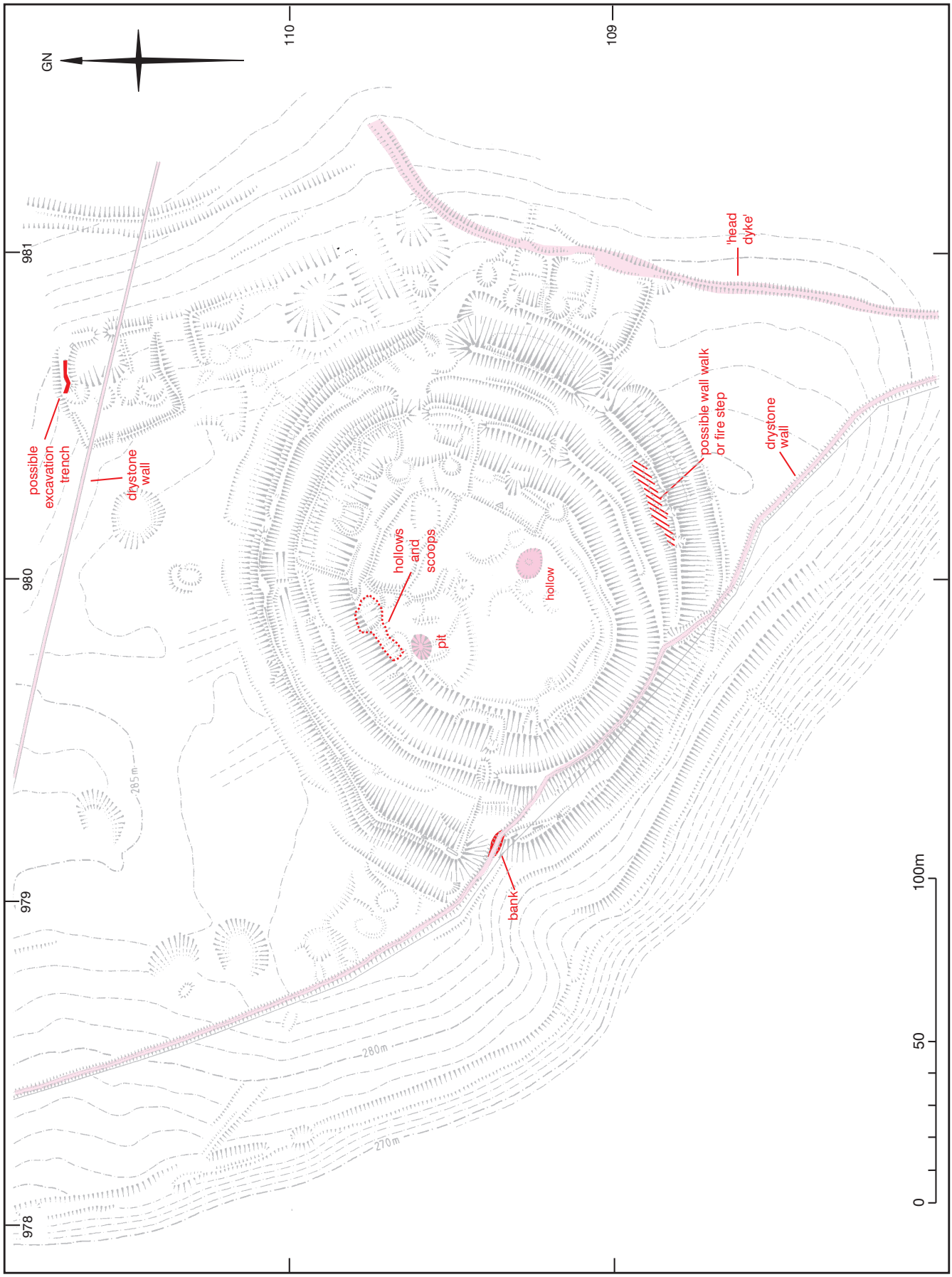


Figure 15. Plan of the hillfort showing post-Roman features

In the interior of the hillfort, the main area of disturbance is a steep-sided oval pit some 1.5m deep, located on the north-west side. There are several short stretches of bank on the north and east sides of the pit which may be upcast. Its purpose is unknown, although it has been suggested as a pond (NMR No. NT 91 SE 9 – Authority 8). However, its depth and steep sides would seem to argue against its use by livestock and there is no sign of any wearing around its perimeter caused by the trampling of animals. Alternatively, it may be a quarry pit, but again this seems unlikely as there is no obvious reason why anyone should have gone to the considerable effort to extract stone from this depth. There is no firm evidence to establish the date of the feature, though judging by the sharpness of its profile it is unlikely to be of any great antiquity. One clue may be that it does not appear on any of the published plans of the site until that published by Jobey in 1965 and presumably surveyed not long beforehand. It is possible therefore, that the pit dates to the thirty year period between this plan and the previous survey published by Hope Dodds (1935). However, this is not conclusive as the surveyor of Hope Dodd's plan and the Ordnance Survey may have thought the feature too minor to depict. On the south side of the interior is a circular hollow up to 0.2m deep and 8m in diameter with a 0.3m high mound at its centre, which is around 1.5m in diameter. This does not appear to be a hut platform and its purpose and date remain obscure.

4.1.5 Romano-British settlement outside the hillfort (Figures 9 and 14).

Beginning on the east side of the hillfort and extending for a distance of 200m to the north, is a line of three rectilinear enclosures (Enclosures 5-7) containing the remains of eight probable circular huts (Structures 13-18; 20-21). There are a further four probable hut sites which fall outside the enclosures but are part of this settlement (Structures 19; 22-24). The enclosures are defined by low, stony banks and were probably surmounted by fences or hedges. The absence of any evidence of external ditches suggests the perimeter banks were not primarily for defence. The hut sites are defined by shallow, scooped platforms and the majority overlook scooped-out hollows representing the sites of courtyards and probable animal pens.

The similarity between these settlement remains and the series of Romano-British enclosures and hut sites overlying the hillfort is striking although there is nowhere near the equivalent level of evidence that the enclosures outside the hillfort post-date the abandonment of the fort defences. The west side of Enclosure 7, and probably also the south-west side of Enclosure 6, both run along the edge of the fort's outer ditch. As has been noted above, the west side of Enclosure 7 appears to re-use the counterscarp bank of the hillfort ditch, and the layout of the enclosure clearly respects the ditch. This suggests that this enclosure post-dates the hillfort, and by analogy, so should Enclosure 6. Also, as the hillfort contains the same arrangement of hut platforms and a scooped-out hollow as is found in the enclosures outside, this strongly suggests that the two areas of activity are likely to be broadly of the same period, although some chronology might be inferred (see Section 5: Discussion). The overall form of these enclosed settlements is comparable to many other sites recorded in the Cheviots and the Scottish borders (Jobey 1964; RCAHMS 1967), and which are generally assigned to the Romano-British period.

The northernmost of the enclosures outside the hillfort is the best preserved (Enclosure 5), despite the fact that it is bisected by a drystone wall and therefore falls within two adjacent fields. It measures 30m square and is defined by a stony bank which is mostly around 0.4m high but rises to 0.8m high around the north-east corner. The bank is broken by three gaps. Those at the south-east corner and on the

west side are breaches created by the track to Ewartly Shank which is shown on the Ordnance Survey County Series maps (Ordnance Survey 1864 and 1897) and is now a public footpath, whilst the third gap in the middle of the east side could well be an original entrance. Here the ends of the bank curve round either side of a 3m wide gap suggesting a deliberately formed break rather than a later breach. The interior of the enclosure preserves the remains of four circular scooped platforms (Structures 13-16). Arranged in pairs, they display no evidence of stone walling and therefore it is assumed that they represent the sites of circular timber huts. Of the south pair of hut platforms, one is 5m in diameter and has a curving stony bank up to 0.4m high defining its west half (Structure 13) whilst the adjacent platform (Structure 14) is also 5m in diameter and is defined by a curving scarp up to 0.6m high deep on its west side, though this has been partially cut away by the track up the hillside. The north pair of structures are less well preserved. One of the structures (Structure 15) is bisected by the drystone wall and consists of a circular platform around 5m in diameter defined by a 0.6m deep curving scarp on its west and south sides. The other hut platform of this pair (Structure 16) is 7m in diameter and cuts into the inside edge of the enclosure bank on its north side whilst on the west and south it is defined by a curving scarp some 0.7m deep. A shallow, but crisply cut, square-sided trench cuts into the side of this hut and continues down the line of the enclosure bank. It may well be the remains of a partially-backfilled antiquarian excavation. On their east sides, Structures 15 and 16 overlook a sunken yard up to 0.7m deep, defined by the sides of the enclosure on the north and east and by an internal bank 0.3m high on the south. There is a less distinct hollow adjacent to the south pair of huts, presumably another yard, and is chiefly defined by a 0.4m high drop on the east side of Structure 13.

Enclosure 6 is separated from Enclosure 5 by a 10m wide gap, and is defined by a bank only on the north and north-east sides. The south-east and south sides are represented by an outward facing scarp up to 0.3m in height. The south-east scarp could well be a lynchet created by ploughing up to the perimeter of the enclosure and the scarp on the south side is probably primarily a natural slope. There are no traces of a bank on the top of either of these two slopes, nor on the west side of the enclosure: this is probably due to later overploughing which is visible as parallel furrows on several aerial photographs (Gates 1997). The south-west side of Enclosure 6 probably ran along the outside edge of the multivallate hillfort outer ditch, and on the north-west its line could be indicated by an 0.2m deep cut facing into the enclosure. The enclosure thus defined measures 55m x 25m, which is around twice the length of the other enclosures outside the hillfort.

Two circular hut platforms were recorded inside Enclosure 6 towards its north end (Structures 17 and 18) and a third (Structure 19) is situated immediately outside. Structure 17 is a 5m diameter platform, defined by an inward facing scarp up to 0.2m high on all but the east side, whilst Structure 18 consists of a 3m diameter platform again defined by a 0.2m high inward facing scarp on all but the east side. Structure 19 is represented by a shallow, but continuous circular depression no more than 0.2m deep and 5m in diameter. To the east of these two hut platforms is a lower terrace which extends between the north and east sides of the enclosure and is around 0.3m deep. It probably represents the site of a yard within the enclosure, possibly associated with the two huts. A much larger hollow up to 1.3m deep occupies most of the south half of the enclosure, but perhaps due to later overploughing there is no evidence of any associated hut platforms.

Enclosure 7 is adjacent to the outer south-east entrance into the hillfort, some 50m to the south of Enclosure 6. Its sides are defined by stony banks; that forming the north

side is around 0.4m high but appears more prominent than this because of hollows on either side. On the west, the perimeter of the enclosure is up to 0.2m high and runs along the outer edge of the hillfort ditch as far as the outer south-east entrance into the hillfort where it turns at right angles, rising to a maximum height of 0.6m on the south side of the enclosure (its relationship to the hillfort ditch has been described above p.29). As Enclosure 7 does not intrude upon the ground in front of the south-east entrance into the hillfort it is likely that the entrance continued in use during this period. A later, medieval field boundary is aligned on the east side of the enclosure and it is this 0.3m high spread bank which now appears to create the edge on this side. However, the true south-east corner of the enclosure is preserved slightly to the west of this later field boundary, indicating that the original east side was further to the west, and is now not visible. At the north-east corner there is no clearly defined junction between the north side of the enclosure and the medieval field boundary. It is probable that the medieval boundary was taken to the existing corner, but that this stratigraphy is not now detectable as a surface relationship.

Two hut sites were recorded inside the enclosure. The largest (Structure 20) is situated at the north-west corner of the enclosure and is defined by a circular scoop some 5m in diameter and up to 0.4m deep, which cuts into the perimeter bank. On the east it overlooks slightly lower ground defined by inward facing scarps up to 0.3m high on the west and south and by the sides of the enclosure on the north and east. This hollow probably marks the site of a yard within the enclosure. The second hut site (Structure 21) is situated just to the south of Structure 20 and is defined by a shallow circular scoop up to 0.3m deep defining a platform around 3m in diameter. A shallow linear depression approaches the east side of the platform where it turns sharply to the north to head towards Structure 20. It is possible this is the remnant of a path within the enclosure. The south half of Enclosure 7 is devoid of any features, suggesting it may have been a compound for livestock or that it was under cultivation.

No significant stretches of bank were noted between Enclosures 6 and 7, indicating that the three hut sites recorded in this area were probably unenclosed. Structure 22 is situated on the edge of the hillfort's outer ditch about half way between Enclosure 7 and the outer east entrance, whilst the other two hut sites (Structures 23 and 24) flank the line of approach. Structure 22 consists of a circular platform around 3.0m in diameter and up to 0.3m deep situated on the edge of the hillfort's outer ditch. It is open to the east where it faces out onto a roughly square-shaped hollow, the north side of which is defined by a 1.0m deep scarp whilst the south side follows the outside edge of Enclosure 7. The hollow probably represents a yard and its east side is presumably underneath the medieval field boundary. However, a slight bank was noted east of this boundary which, significantly, is on the same alignment as the north side of the hollow. This bank could therefore be evidence that the yard extended further in this direction. Structure 23 is situated 5m to the north of Structure 22 and is level with the south side of the outer east entrance into the hillfort. It is defined by a circular scoop around 4m in diameter and up to 0.4m deep, and which is open to the east where it faces out onto a lower terrace 0.3m deep. The scoop probably indicates the site of a hut and the terrace marks one side of an associated yard.

Structure 24 is a circular scoop some 4m in diameter and up to 0.7m deep which is open to the north-east where it faces out over a hollow. The platform within the scoop probably marks the site of a hut with the hollow representing the remains of an associated yard. The west side of the hollow is 0.5m deep increasing to 1.5m on the south where it follows a natural rise, whilst on the north it does not extend beyond the edge of the causeway created by the eastwards turn of the hillfort ditch. The

relationship is not entirely clear and it is not certain if the causeway cuts the west side of the hollow or *vice-versa*. A circular scoop around 0.3m deep and 10m across, starts at the south side of the hollow and extends into the interior of the suggested yard. Although there is no firm evidence that it is contemporary with the hollow, it is best interpreted as a subdivision of this yard.

The open spaces between Enclosures 6 and 7, between Enclosure 6 and Structure 24 and between Structures 24 and 23 were probably deliberately left to facilitate the movement of livestock across the settlement and the re-used hillfort interior. Although Structure 24 is situated on the main approach to the hillfort's outer east entrance it is noticeable that sufficient space was left between Structures 23 and 24 to keep the approach to the east entrance open, pointing to the fact that this entrance was still in use in the Romano-British period.

North of the hillfort, the remains of thirteen probable unenclosed hut sites were identified, some with associated yards (Figure 9). They are defined either by circular platforms scooped into the natural slope or by circular banks where the terrain is more level. Twelve of the hut sites fall into one of four distinct groups, three of which are arranged along the south-facing slope of the side valley on the north of Castle Hill (Structures 25-33), whilst the fourth group (Structures 34-36) is on a slight ridge immediately outside the north-west side of the hillfort. None of the groups show any sign of having been enclosed by banks although three of the groups are each associated with a shallow-sided hollow. As has already been discussed, these probably mark the sites of yards, presumably formed by a combination of animal trampling and the digging out of manure. Three comparable hollows were noted on the north side of the hillfort, which, although not obviously associated with any hut sites, may mark the sites of further yards (Hollows 1-3). The thirteenth hut-site (Structure 37) is solitary, and close to the north side of the hillfort; it is not associated with any identifiable yard. These thirteen hut sites share common characteristics with those overlying the hillfort, and those within the enclosures to the east. It is therefore not unreasonable to suggest they are also Romano-British in date.

The most northerly of the four clusters of hut sites stretching along the side valley on the north of the hillfort consists of two circular scooped platforms (Structures 25 and 26) around an 11m long hollow, presumably a yard. Structure 25 is some 4m in diameter and defined by a 0.2m deep scoop with slight traces of a stony bank around the perimeter. The possible entrance into the hut is indicated by a gap in the bank on the east side and this faces out onto the west end of the hollow. Structure 26 is situated 3m to the north of the hollow and is a 4m diameter circular platform defined by a 0.2m high scoop. The hollow is around 0.4m deep and has a 3m wide break at the east end which may be an entrance.

Broadly, the same layout occurs within the east and south groups overlooking the side valley.The east group comprises three circular hut sites (Structures 27-29). Structures 27 and 28 overlook a triangular-shaped terrace, whilst Structure 26 is 3m from the north edge of the terrace. Structure 27 is defined by a circular 0.3m high flat-topped bank and has an internal diameter of 3.5m, and though disturbed by rabbits, appears to have had an entrance facing east towards the terrace. Structure 28 is immediately adjacent and is represented by a circular scooped platform some 0.2m deep and around 3m in diameter and again is open to the east suggesting the hut faced towards the terrace. Structure 29 is defined by a slight curving bank no more than 0.2m high and again has an opening suggesting the hut had an east-facing entrance. The terrace itself is created by a sinuous scarp no more than 0.2m high which

probably represents wear around the perimeter of an animal pen. On the east, the terrace curves back on itself to create a rounded end which looks like one side of a possible entrance. The opposite side is defined by a short stretch of bank 0.2m high.

The south group of hut sites is composed of Structures 30 and 31. Structure 30 is on the west edge of a hollow and is defined by a flat-topped bank 0.3m high and 4m across, with a gap on the east looking over the west side of a hollow, presumably a yard. Structure 31 is 5m to the west of the hollow and is defined by a scooped platform 5m in diameter and up to 0.3m deep with a slight bank on its south side, the gap between the scoop and the bank suggesting the hut had an east-facing entrance. The hollow is defined by a steep scarp up to 0.6m high and to the south, by a much shallower curving scarp 0.3m high. The gap between the two may have been a ramp down into the hollow immediately in front of Structure 30.

Structures 32 and 33 form the most westerly of the four groups of unenclosed huts stretching along the side valley and they are not as closely associated with a hollow as the other three groups already described. The more prominent of the two hut sites (Structure 32) is defined by a semi-circle of bank 0.2m high with an internal diameter of 5m, whilst to the east a much shorter stretch of curving bank of the same height and diameter defines the site of a second hut (Structure 33). Insufficient survives of either site to indicate the direction the respective huts might have faced although with a surviving bank curving around its north and west sides, Structure 32 must have faced either south or east.

Three more hut sites (Structures 34-36), immediately to the west of the hillfort are situated on a slight natural ridge just outside the hillfort ditch. Of the two hut sites on the crest of the ridge, the southern one (Structure 34) takes the form of a circular platform, 5.0m in diameter, with a 0.2m high back scarp and an outward-facing scarp of a similar height defining the front of the platform. There is no trace of an entrance, but a slight terrace 0.3m deep running north-east from the hut site may be the remains of an adjacent yard. Immediately to the north, a further hut site (Structure 35) is defined by a circular bank 0.2m high and 5m in diameter. An opening in the bank to the east suggests the hut faced onto an adjacent 0.3m deep hollow, again presumably a yard. Some 5m to the north, Structure 36 is on the crest of the ridge and is defined by a scooped platform 0.2m deep with a diameter of 4m. It is open to the north suggesting the hut occupying the platform overlooked the slightly lower ground in this direction.

In contrast to the groups of hut sites so far discussed, Structure 37 on the north side of the hillfort is in isolation, some 6m from the outer edge of the hillfort ditch. It is defined by a circular flat-topped bank around 0.3m high with a slightly scooped interior and an internal diameter of up to 6.0m. It probably represents the site of a hut and as there is an obvious break in the bank on the east, it suggests the hut had an east-facing entrance. Although the hut site stands apart from all the other settlement remains so far discussed, its size and form is similar to other Romano-British hut sites inside the hillfort (Structures 7 and 8) and is probably of around the same date.

Some 10m to the east of Structure 37 is a hollow up to 0.5m deep which may indicate the position of a yard (Hollow 1). However, other than the fact that Structure 37 is open towards the hollow, there is no evidence that these two were associated. At the head of the side valley are two hollows which, although also not closely associated with any of the circular hut sites, may part of the Romano-British settlement. One of the two hollows (Hollow 2) is situated 11m to the west of Structure 30 and at around

7m across and 0.5m deep is of a similar size and depth to the hollows already described and could therefore be a yard. The second hollow is some 15m further to the south-west and is up to 1.0m deep (Hollow 3). There is no indication of any entry into what is quite a deep feature and so its interpretation as a yard is less certain. Other possibilities are that it may be the eroded remains of a surface quarry, or a natural feature. There are three further hollows on the north side of the hillfort but these are too deep to be yards and are more likely to be old quarries (these are described in more detail below in section 4.4).

4.2 Tracks (Figure 9)

Summary

Several tracks of potentially prehistoric or Romano-British date were identified in the survey area. Two traverse Castle Hill from south to north, passing either side of the hillfort. Track 1, on the east side of the fort, takes the form of a slight hollow way with a bank on the downhill side. Medieval ridge and furrow cultivation overrides most of the southern half of the track indicating it must be earlier than this in date. Track 2 is on the west side of the hillfort, below the crest of the steep slope overlooking the Spartley Burn. It is terraced into the slope and runs below the hillfort defences. There is no firm evidence as to its antiquity but the two lesser tracks which branch from it towards the hillfort were probably in use in the Romano-British period (Tracks 3 and 4) and it is probably the same date or earlier. Track 3 is higher up the slope than Track 2 and runs south along the contour from the putative west entrance of the re-used hillfort. As the west entrance is potentially not created until the Romano-British period, it suggests this is likely to be the date of Track 3. Track 4 is on the north-west side of the hillfort and climbs obliquely up the slope from Track 2. It heads towards the group of unenclosed Romano-British huts on the outside of the outer rampart (Structures 34-36) with which it might be contemporary. The likelihood is that these four tracks were used as droveways in the Romano-British period to move livestock from the outlying areas to the complex of enclosures within and around the hillfort. Other trackways within the survey area are more recent in date (Tracks 5 and 6) and are discussed separately.

Track 1

Track 1 is first visible as a slight hollow way with a bank on its east side some 220m south of the hillfort, on the east side of the drystone wall which follows the crest of the slope above the Spartley Burn. It is not visible on the opposite side of the wall, but the alignment of the track suggests it may have continued southwards obliquely down the slope to the Spartley Burn. From this point, the hollow way and bank run up the gentle south face of the hill reaching a point 50m to the east of the hillfort where both disappear as earthworks. This first stretch of the track is overlain by medieval ploughing visible as ridges and furrows on aerial photographs (Gates 1997) and by more recent improvement ploughing seen on the ground as a series of straight furrows. As a result, the track is not a particularly prominent feature and is mainly picked out by the bank which survives as a low spread mound no more than 0.3m high, with a terrace into the slope uphill from it. A part of the track has been obliterated by a ditch cutting across it at right angles about 20m north of where it is first visible, and some 45m further north, an 18m stretch has been destroyed, presumably by the ploughing referred to above.

Aerial photographs taken in particularly dry conditions (Gates 1989) show the line of the track continuing northwards as a cropmark beyond the point where it disappears as an earthwork. Presumably it has been levelled by the combination of medieval and later ploughing. The cropmark bank turns sharply to the east around the most southerly of the enclosures outside the hillfort and then turns to the north, following the crest of a slight knoll on this side of the hill. After this pronounced 'dog-leg' the track emerges again as an earthwork as it starts to descend the north side of Castle Hill and so enters an area with no evidence of medieval or later ploughing. The apparent absence of ploughing means the stretch down the north face of the hill is much more pronounced than the section on the south face. The track takes the form of a 2m wide terrace on the uphill side of the bank which is about 0.4m high, whilst the downhill side of the bank rises to a height of 1.2m, becoming more of a lynchet than a bank. At the north of the survey area, several drainage ditches cut through the bank and reveal it has a stony core, and at one point, a single large boulder is evident in the make-up of the bank. The track disappears beyond the drainage ditches and there is no firm evidence that it carried on outside the survey area although two possible hollow ways are visible crossing the slope on the opposite side of the saddle on aerial photographs (Gates 1997) and these might be its continuation.

The 'dog-leg' in the track may be explained by the way this section aligns with the outer east entrance to the hillfort, suggesting a deliberate intention to direct livestock around the knoll and into the interior. Given the strong evidence for extensive stock management within the hillfort in the Romano-British period, and the way the track appears to respect the layout of the enclosures outside hillfort, a similar date for the track can be proposed, although in part at least, earlier Iron Age origins can not be discounted (see Section 5: Discussion).

Track 2

Track 2 starts as a terrace on the crest of the slope overlooking the Spartley Burn, about 130m south of the hillfort. There is no sign of the track any further south although the ditch which cuts across Track 1 is on roughly the same alignment and could therefore be the continuation of Track 2. The fact that it cuts across an adjacent, probably medieval field boundary but is overlain by a drystone field wall suggests that it remained in use after the medieval period, but ceased to be used after the field was enclosed.

Track 2 maintains a fairly level course northwards following the 275m contour around the west side of Castle Hill. The terrace is around 3m wide and the uphill side is defined by a prominent scarp, mostly between 1.0 and 1.5m high, though for the last 120m on the north of the survey area it fades in prominence to below 1m in height. The track continues northwards outside the survey area, and though less clear as a terrace, presumably heads down the north-west flank of the hill to the edge of the saddle. Towards the south end of the track, the terrace is much degraded by slumping from higher up the slope over a distance of 60m and the terrace fades out altogether where it meets the gully below the north-west side of the hillfort. There are several slight hollows and pits along the line of the track suggesting that relatively recent digging for stone has occurred.

Track 3

Track 3 is defined by a terrace up to 3m wide with an uphill scarp that attains a maximum height of 0.7m but is mostly around 0.3-0.4m high. It starts at the south, close to where the terrace defining Track 2 begins and it is possible that the two routes merged south of this point. Northwards, Track 3 gradually diverges from Track 2 as it ascends the hillside towards the west side of the fort. It is obliterated by the same hill slump which partially obscures Track 2, after which it continues close to the foot of the fort's outer rampart before curving into, and fading out in the gully on its north-west side, just below the putative entrance on this side of the hillfort. The possibility has already been mentioned that the section of terrace below the fort's outer rampart could have originated as part of the Iron Age defences.

Track 4

Track 4 is a slight hollow way which heads obliquely up the slope from the track starting at a point 110m north-west of the hillfort. It is about 0.2m deep and 2m across with a slight bank 0.2m high on the south side. It fades out after 30m but a slight hollow on the crest of the hill probably marks its continuation. At this point, the track is only 25m from the group of hut sites on the north-west side of the hillfort (Structures 34-36)

Track 5

On the east face of the hill, a terraced track leads from the bend in the modern road just to the south of Castlehill cottage south-west up the slope, fading out at a point 190m from the road. The track heads towards the point where the ditch continuing the line of Track 2 cuts the crest of the slope above the Spartley Burn. It is no more than 2m across and is defined by a prominent scarp on the uphill side which reaches a maximum height of 1m. There is a quarry scoop midway along the track on its uphill side which suggests the track was in use in relatively recent times. The quarry does not look to be of any great antiquity and is probably broadly contemporary with those closer to the cottage which appear on the first edition Ordnance Survey map surveyed in 1863. Aerial photographic evidence (Gates 1997) shows the track overrides traces of medieval ridge and furrow cultivation and on the ground, the furrows of later improvement ploughing were seen to cross over the track. These two observations indicate that the track dates after the cultivation of the hillside in the medieval period but was in existence when the last visible ploughing took place and is therefore firmly established as post-medieval.

Track 6

The field gate on the north of Castlehill cottage is the start of Track 6 which, as has previously been mentioned, was the main route north to Ewartly Shank before the construction of the present road in 1959. The track is defined by several slight erosion scars running directly up the side of the hill immediately to the south of the drystone wall; these scarps also cut into the bank defining the edge of Track 1 and Enclosure 5, as has previously been described. On the summit of the hill there is little trace of the track continuing, although on the 1863 Ordnance Survey map it appears to have passed through the gate in the stone wall and descended the north-west flank of the hill. Here it is picked up again by the line of the existing farm track. The route is now used as a public footpath.

4.3 Agricultural activity (Figure 9)

Summary

There seems to be good evidence for agricultural activity in the Romano-British period, although much less for the Bronze Age and Iron Age periods. A small area of possible prehistoric ridged cultivation known as ‘cord rig’ was found on the north-west of the hilltop, and cultivation terraces or lynchets on the north-east side of the hill created by ploughing along the contours of the slope probably date to the prehistoric or Romano-British periods. Later in time, broad ridges and furrows typical of medieval ploughing cover the south-east side of the hill, but this is not as clear on the ground as it is on the aerial photography. This medieval cultivation stops at a boundary bank, or head dyke, which crosses over the south-east face of the hill and which seemingly starts close to the castle site in Alnham village and ends on the opposite side of the hill near the Spartley Burn. Improvement ploughing of the 19th or 20th centuries has left an extensive area of straight, parallel furrows on the south-east side of the hill and lesser traces elsewhere on the hilltop.

4.3.1 Prehistoric and Romano-British cultivation

A series of furrows spaced at 2m intervals are visible as either stripes of richer vegetation or slight grooves 0.05m deep, on the north-west side of the hilltop in an area of close-cropped grass. They cover an area measuring approximately 25m by 25m, (though bisected by the remains of a collapsed stone wall), and are within 15m of a group of unenclosed hut sites. These hut sites (Structures 1-3) are thought to be prehistoric in date (see 4.1.1 above). The narrow spacing of the furrows bears some comparison with prehistoric ridged cultivation called 'cord rig' (Topping 1989) but this interpretation needs to be applied with caution as there is evidence that much more recent ploughing on the same alignment has occurred in this area. This recent improvement ploughing is also evidenced by several prominent straight ridges and furrows of similar spacing. Therefore, on the surface evidence alone, the interpretation of this small area as ’cord rig’ should remain tentative.

There are a number of slight terraces or lynchets on the north-east side of the hill which indicate that ploughing has taken place along the natural contours of the slope. The longest, and best preserved lynchet (Lynchet 1) is towards the bottom of the slope where the ground levels off onto the saddle. It is around 0.3m high and on the north has been destroyed by modern drainage channels, whilst a further section has been destroyed by the cutting of a rectangular compound by the side of the road to Ewartly Shank. Some 25m further west up the slope are slight traces of a second lynchet (Lynchet 2), whilst two further slight terraces are evident between Track 1 and the east side of Enclosures 5 and 6 (Lynchets 3 and 4). As all these lynchets are outside the known area of medieval cultivation defined by the head-dyke crossing over the south-east face of the hill, they are likely to be prehistoric or Romano-British in date though it is impossible to be more precise about their period of origin. It has already been mentioned that the east side of Enclosures 5 and 6, and the downhill side of the bank forming the east side of Track 1 on north-east side of the hill, which are all Romano-British, appear to be partly formed by lynchets but their chronological relationship is not clear. They clearly co-existed when ploughing, and thus presumably cultivation, was taking place on these slopes, and are likely to be broadly contemporary in date. However, there is also the possibility that the lynchets are earlier and were formed as a result of ploughing up to a possible Iron Age land boundary represented by Bank 1 to be discussed below.

During the course of the survey a possible Iron Age or Romano-British quern stone was identified in tumble from the drystone wall immediately to the north of Track 6 (Figure 16). The quern, which would have been used for the hand-milling of cereal crops, has a 0.1m deep hollow some 0.2m in diameter carved into the surface of a small block of andesite. The quern was presumably gathered from close by during the course of building the wall and it is evidence that cereal crops were being cultivated in the Castle Hill area during the Iron Age or Romano-British period.

Figure 16. The quern discovered in a field boundary wall.

There is no topographic reason why the lynchets on the north-east side of Castle Hill should not have extended further south. However, all that is visible today are the more prominent contour terraces left by medieval ploughing, but it is more than likely that these may result from the re-working of earlier lynchets. The early cultivation does not appear to have extended across the entire hill since there are no signs of any comparable lynchets on the west side of Castle Hill. On the north side of the hill there is a slight bank no more than 0.2m high which might represent a physical boundary marking the western limit of cultivation (Bank 1). The bank ascends the north face of Castle Hill but disappears after 60m. However, it is noticeable that on the summit of the hill, the line of this bank is continued by the east side of Enclosures 5 and 6, and on the south side of the hill by the south section of Track 1. Whilst acknowledging that the common alignment of these three features may be fortuitous, it might equally demonstrate the existence of a significant land boundary crossing the hilltop, marking the western limit of cultivation and influencing the alignment of two of the Romano-British enclosures and part of a contemporary track. If this interpretation is correct then the suggested boundary could well be earlier than the Romano-British period, perhaps even contemporary with the Iron Age hillfort.

4.3.2 Medieval ridge and furrow

Medieval ridge and furrow cultivation extends over the east and south-east slopes of the hill, though on the ground it is not as clearly defined as on aerial photographs (Gates 1997). These photographs show a northern set of ridges following the contours, and a southern set at right angles running directly up the slope. This latter set of ridges has the 'reverse-S' pattern characteristic of medieval ploughing (Figure 3).

Only about half the north set of ridges visible on the aerial photographs can be seen on the ground, where they stand out as a series of terraces up to 0.5m high. Later improvement ploughing, to be discussed below, has rounded the profile of these terraces and degraded the rest of the pattern to the extent that they are unrecognisable as earthworks. However, the medieval cultivation remains lowest down the slope have escaped overploughing and survive as four short terraces with sharply defined edges up to 1.0m high, overlooking a curve in the road past Castlehill cottage. The bend itself appears to over-ride one of the terraces. The south set of ridges is in the same direction as the improvement ploughing but for the most part it is only the more sharply defined and closely spaced furrows of the improvement ploughing that can be seen on the ground. However, three broadly-spaced, curving furrows towards the south edge of the survey area are probably medieval and have survived on the ground because they are outside the limits of the improvement ploughing.

The aerial photographs clearly show the medieval ridge and furrow bounded on the north and west by a bank which can be identified on the ground as an earthwork, which enters the survey area on the south after rising directly up the steep slope from the Spartley Burn (Bank 2). At the crest of the slope it is a prominent bank up to 0.6m high and is cut by the ditch marking the continuation of Track 2. Some 20m north of this point the bank fades to 0.2m in height and becomes much more spread. Here, slight ridges are visible west of the bank on the crest of the slope overlooking the Spartley Burn, suggesting that for a time at least, medieval ploughing crossed over one section of the established boundary. The bank continues up the hillside to the south-east corner of Enclosure 7, overrides the east side of the enclosure and then drops down the north-east face of the hill where it has been partially destroyed by improvement ploughing. It fades out some 15m short of the drystone wall on this side of the hill. However, it can be argued that the stretch of wall nearest to the road perpetuates the alignment of the bank, which is then picked out by the line of a second drystone wall on the opposite side of the road and continues outside the survey area to the village of Alnham (Figure 17). At the end of the stone wall the boundary emerges once again as a bank and leads up to the earthworks of the medieval castle.

4.3.3 Recent Cultivation

As described above, 19th or 20th century improvement ploughing characterised by straight furrows some 3-4m apart is extensive over the east side of the hill. Aerial photographs (Gates 1997) show the furrows extend further than is visible on the ground as they cross, and hence degrade, the middle of the chain of Romano-British enclosures east of the hillfort. Another pattern of straight furrows on the north side of the hillfort again can be seen on the 1997 aerial photograph extending over a wider area than can be seen on the ground.

Some 75m north-west of Castlehill cottage, a sub-rectangular compound, defined by a shallow, inward facing scarp, is evident next to the road. The scarp on the west side cuts into the lowest of the prehistoric/Romano-British lynchets before curving around

Figure 17. The suggested course of the medieval field boundary

to form the south side, whilst on the north, the inward-facing scarp is surmounted by a slight bank no more than 0.2m high. The compound is open to the east, facing onto the road. It may be the remains of a livestock pen, an area that was cultivated for a short period of time, or simply a quarry for road building material; it has the appearance of being quite recent. It does not obviously continue on the opposite side of the road (implying the two may be associated), although the road itself has a distinct curve at this point, suggesting that this was the eastern boundary of this area when the road was constructed in 1959, and therefore in existence at this date.

4.4 Quarries (Figure 9)

There are no natural exposures of rock evident in the survey area suggesting quarrying would have been necessary to obtain stone for both the hillfort and later field walls and tracks etc. The survey identified a variety of recent quarry hollows and scoops for the probable extraction of stone, but none that can be attributed to the Iron Age or Romano-British periods. There are the grassed-over scars of four small disused quarries on the north and east slopes of the hill. A fifth quarry scar, adjacent to Track 4, has been mentioned previously, as have a number of small quarry pits and

hollows in the base of Track 2 on the west side of the hill. Although one of the quarries on the east slope is labelled as an old quarry on the 1863 Ordnance Survey map, all the quarry scars appear too crisply defined to be much earlier than 19th century in date. To the north of the hillfort are three distinct hollows, all open to the east. Two (Hollows 4 and 5) are around 1.0m deep, but the third is much deeper at over 2.0m and has a slight mound facing it (Hollow 6). It is difficult to see how natural weathering could have produced distinct hollows such as these in the underlying hard volcanic rock. They might simply be the eroded remains of quarries much older in date than those noted above or perhaps they began as natural features which have been accentuated by quarrying. The mound facing towards one of the hollows could therefore be the remains of quarry spoil. There is no evidence to date these features. On the north side of the hill, a large hollow up to 1.0m deep and measuring 16m by 25m, appears to be the remains of surface quarrying, perhaps to get the smaller, gravel-like pieces of naturally weathered rock below the subsoil (Hollow 7). A ramp on the south leads down into the hollow and faces onto the line of the public footpath marking the route of the earlier track over the hilltop.

5. DISCUSSION (Figure 18)

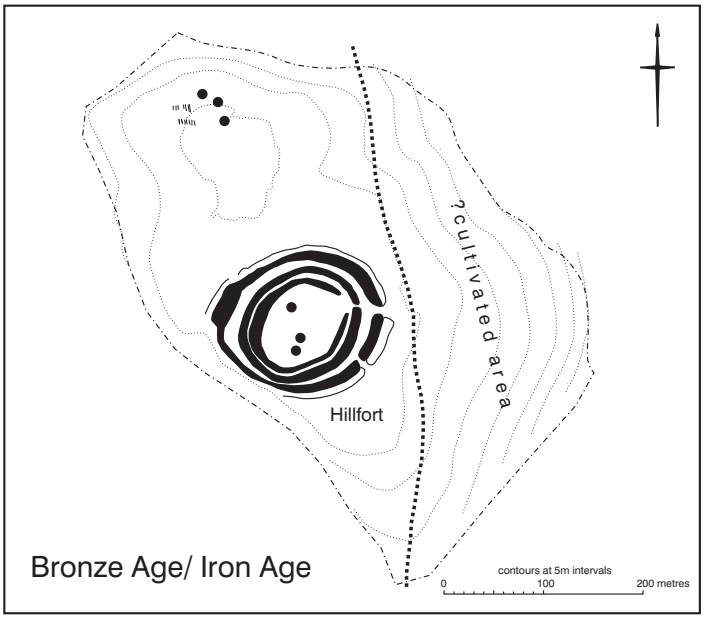
5.1 Bronze Age/Early Iron Age periods 2000-400 BC

There is a possibility that the group of three huts (Structures 1-3) on the north-west flank of the hill may be prehistoric, perhaps even Bronze Age in date, and therefore the earliest remains recorded by the field investigation. Excavated groups of unenclosed round huts between the River Tees and the River Forth have been found to range in date from *c* 1750 BC to *c* 450 BC, spanning both the Bronze Age and Early Iron Age (Gates 1983, 117). Those on Castle Hill are morphologically distinct from the Romano-British period hut sites close by, and are not obviously associated with remains of animal pens or stock yards which characterise settlement of that period. It is also possible that they may be associated with an area of possible prehistoric 'cord-rig', although the identification of this type of cultivation here is very tentative. Unenclosed settlements and palisaded sites appear to have co-existed in the region in the Late Bronze Age and Early Iron Age, and it may be relevant to the date of this group of huts that they are sited with clear views north towards the two Early Iron Age palisaded sites at High Knowes, and the adjacent Bronze Age cairnfield (Jobey 1966, 20).

5.2 The Iron Age hillfort and its landscape, 400 BC – AD 50

The survey identified four possible phases in the development of the earthwork defences of the hillfort in the Iron Age, followed by the re-use of several stretches of rampart to make livestock enclosures in the Romano-British period when the site was re-occupied. The weight of evidence suggests the sequence began with a possible univallate enclosure, followed by an expansion into a bivallate hillfort comprising the present inner and middle ramparts, with a ditch on the exterior. As a bivallate hillfort, the west side of the hillfort dominated, but did not descend, the steep slope above the Spartley Burn, and on the other sides the ramparts followed the natural contours of the summit creating both a visually and physically impressive defence. The hillfort faced east towards the Aln valley, presumably because this was the main route of approach and perhaps because the cultivated land was on the east-facing slope of the hill. It should also be borne in mind that east-facing entrances may have had symbolic meaning as this orientation is found in a range of Iron Age structures and enclosures (Oswald 1997) and might therefore have influenced the direction of the hillfort entrances at Castle Hill. This bivallate hillfort was subsequently surrounded by the outer rampart and ditch, and finally, sections of the outer rampart were re-aligned and heightened, further emphasising its topographic dominance. It appears that although there were two identifiable entrances at the east in both the bivallate and multivallate phases, changes did take place in the access arrangements, probably during the transition between the two phases. There is little evidence that the break at the west was a third entrance as has been suggested; this was most probably created during the Romano-British period.

The dating of the hillfort to the Iron Age (*c* 750 BC to AD 50) is virtually secure given the form and location of the monument, but in the absence of excavated evidence the dates of construction of the various phases remain obscure. It is widely accepted that stone-built hillforts in the Cheviots were generally constructed from the 6th century BC onwards, in many cases replacing earlier enclosures bounded by timber palisades, and coinciding with the intensification of arable agriculture (Burgess 1984, 159-64). Radio carbon determinations from the excavated ramparts at Wether Hill



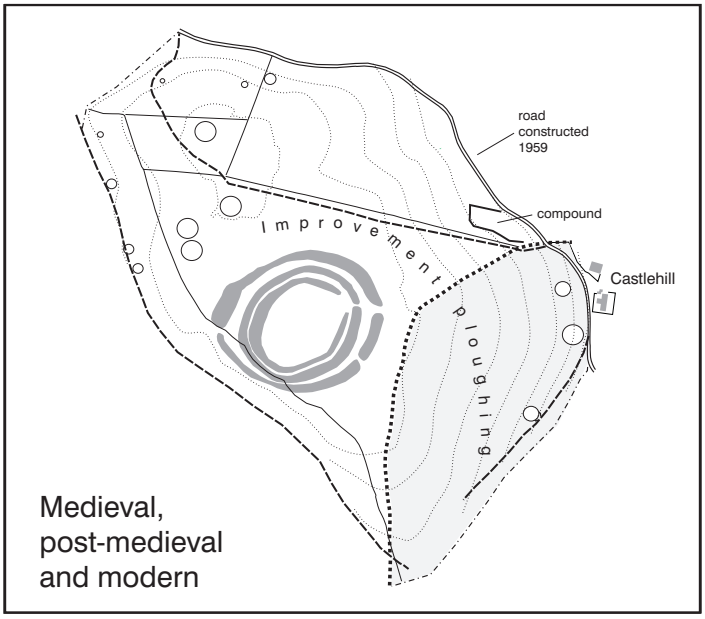


Figure 18. Interpretative plans showing the development of the landscape of the survey area

overlooking the Ingram Valley broadly support this theory (Topping and McOmish 2000). The thick soil mantle at Castle Hill appears to have facilitated construction of the ramparts largely in earth, which makes this hillfort somewhat unusual compared to most others in the andesite hilltop areas. No real evidence was found to suggest the collapse of massive stone walls. Although the presence of nearby stone walls would provide a context for robbing, there is not the usual tell-tale residual scatters of stone and evidence of extensive pitting which accompanies this process. Even the banks which define the Romano-British enclosures within the hillfort appear to be minimal, suggesting that they were surmounted by timber fences or hedges, and that there was no ready-made source of stone. At West Hill, where a similar re-use occurs, it is clear that the walls are constructed from the collapse of the hillfort walls (Oswald *et al* 2000). There is no suggestion of this at Castle Hill. On the balance of the surface evidence, it is probable that the largely earthen ramparts of the bivallate and multivallate hillforts were surmounted by timber palisades, or stone walls which were not as massive as on many other hillforts in the Cheviots.

The existence and form of a univallate enclosure is somewhat uncertain, but although the remains are slight, the field evidence strongly suggests that one existed here prior to the establishment of the bivallate hillfort. Due to the subsequent development of the site it cannot now be established from the surface evidence alone whether originally this was a stone-walled or timber palisaded enclosure. The survival of what may have been a substantial bank may suggest a feature such as a collapsed wall, rather than a timber palisaded structure set into the land surface. A further complicating factor, is that it appears that this enclosure may have been incorporated into the defences of the more substantial bivallate hillfort, rendering interpretation of its original form almost impossible. However, there is no indication it was ever ditched. Its likely size, general form, and topographic location compare favourably with the simple univallate hillfort recently investigated at Fawcett Shank in the North Cheviots (Oswald 2000).

The inner defence of the bivallate hillfort consisted of a strong, outward-facing slope which gave the impression of a substantial rampart from the outside, surmounted by a broad bank set back from the crest (possibly the first enclosure). A terrace-like ditch and counterscarp bank completed the defences. It is likely that there was one, if not two entrances at the east. Again, there is no indication if the inner enclosure consisted of a stone wall or palisade. There is no trace of a robbed-out, stone-walled enclosure within the inner rampart as suggested by Jobey and which he concluded might pre-date the hillfort (Jobey 1965, 24-6). Despite the clarity with which he depicts the 'robber trench' on his published plan, the feature is not evident on the ground. Also, as has already been discussed, there is no indication that quantities of robbed stone were re-used elsewhere on the site, either in the Iron Age ramparts or in the banks of the Romano-British enclosures. The field investigation concluded that Jobey's 'robber trench' was an amalgam of features of different dates and function. Beginning on the south-east side of the hillfort and continuing around to the west apex, Jobey interpreted the flat-bottomed quarry ditch as part of the 'robber trench'. The field evidence indicates the ditch was excavated to get stone to build an adjacent bank along the crest of the inner rampart and which is likely to be Romano-British in date. From the west apex of the hillfort around to the east entrance, the shelf cut below the crest of the inner rampart is the only feature Jobey could have interpreted as the continuation of the 'robber trench' but this is more likely part of the Iron Age defences. It is also possible that Jobey included the shallow pits and scoops across the line of the shelf at the north apex of the hillfort as part of the 'robber trench'. The field survey concluded these may be connected with quarrying surface stone perhaps

for building neighbouring drystone field walls and are therefore likely to be relatively recent in date.

The third phase of the site's development saw the addition of an outer rampart which, as initially constructed, might have been a relatively low feature (as is still the case in the present survival from the north-west side of the hillfort around to the outer east entrance), and a probable change in the entrance arrangements. This was followed by the re-alignment and heightening of the outer rampart on the north-west side of the fort in Phase 4. It is probable that the outer rampart on the south-east side was raised in height at the same time, but apart from its similarity to the heightened section on the north-west, this cannot be proved from the field evidence. The raised sections of this outer bank overshadow the middle, and to a lesser extent the inner ramparts, compromising their effectiveness as a defence by obscuring their views of the exterior. If they are both contemporary, then they could point to a change in strategic thinking from defence in depth in phases two and three, to reliance principally on the outer rampart for protection in phase four, in which case the new strategy was evidently never fully implemented around the entire outer circuit. On the other hand, the sections of rampart could have been raised in height to strengthen the perimeter where it was most vulnerable to attack. Within 100m of the heightened ramparts, the ground outside the hillfort falls away, thereby shielding a potential attacker from view. Similarly, the north-west section may have been realigned to utilise the natural gully on this side of the fort as a ready-made ditch.

A recent study of Iron Age hillforts in the Cheviots has demonstrated the part displays of wealth and status played in the construction and siting of defences (McOmish 1999). At Alnham, the intention behind raising sections of the outer rampart may have been less to do with security than with presenting an imposing façade to anyone approaching the hillfort from the north-west and south-east. In the same vein, the existence of a second entrance on the south-east side of the hillfort less than 50m from the outer east entrance may have had more to do with display than defence. The outer south-east entrance is the more imposing of the two because it is flanked by the heightened section of rampart, but it is unlikely to have functioned as the main way into the hillfort given the obvious gap through all ramparts at the east entrance. Although there is no clear evidence for an entrance through the middle and inner ramparts opposite the outer south-east entrance, blocking and re-modelling at a time when the outer ramparts were heightened cannot be dismissed. Consequently, the outer south-east entrance may have been constructed more for the impression it gave of strength rather than for any real gain in security. The importance of display might also explain why the outer rampart was constructed around the west side of the hillfort below the crest of the steep slope overlooking the Spartley Burn. This was hardly necessary for defence given the steepness of the natural gradient and its construction may have served to emphasise territorial rights over the valley below.

Evidence for Iron Age occupation of the interior of the hillfort is restricted to several shallow hut platforms and a circular parchmark feature. There are probably other hut sites in the interior which have left no surface traces and therefore await discovery. Castle Hill is not unusual among Cheviot hillforts in that the area available for settlement within the defences is small compared to the area covered by the ramparts. This has been put forward as evidence that some hillforts were only occupied by a social elite who indulged in a conspicuous display of resources through, amongst other things, the provision of multivallate defences (McOmish 1999).

The hillfort is without any clear evidence of a contemporary landscape. No settlement or agricultural remains which are unambiguously associated with the hillfort were found, although the lynchets discovered on the north-east side of the hill could be evidence Iron Age cultivation or land demarcation. Terraces such as these are primarily believed to form by ploughing along the contours, and in the Cheviots could range anywhere in time from the Neolithic right through to the medieval period (Topping 1989, 173). At Castle Hill, there is evidence that in the Romano-British period, lynchets were formed by ploughing along the east side of Enclosures 5 and 6 and on the downhill side of Track 1. Nevertheless, this does not rule out the possibility that cultivation of the slope began in the Iron Age during the period of the hillfort, or perhaps even before its construction.

The only other feature which might be contemporary with the hillfort is the low bank which rises part way up the north face of the hill (Bank 1). It can be argued that this might be the remains of a prehistoric land boundary. As the east sides of Enclosures 5 and 6 both follow the projected line of the bank (as does the south part of Track 1 on the south side of the hill), it suggests the bank might represent a boundary pre-dating the Romano-British period. It may have been associated with the hillfort, perhaps marking the limit of cultivation on the east facing slope of the hill.

5.3 Romano-British period

The term Romano-British has been used throughout this report, but for most of this period, the area north of Hadrian's Wall was outside the area of Roman rule and the native population of the Cheviots therefore probably had little direct contact with Roman culture. Nevertheless, Roman influence would still have been felt throughout the region through trade whilst it has been suggested that the Romans took more direct action in the region in the third century by enforcing a policy of deliberate depopulation (Burgess 1984, 172).

The Romano-British settlement on Castle Hill is characterised by a clustering of enclosed and unenclosed settlements, along with extensive evidence for re-use of the hillfort for stock management. There is no direct evidence of relative chronology between the enclosed and unenclosed settlement although a similar situation may exist here to that recently recorded by a survey at West Hill, Kirknewton (Oswald *et al* 2000) where it is suggested that the enclosed Romano-British settlement post-dates the reoccupation of the hillfort interior. At Castle Hill it is possible to point to evidence of relative chronology within the complex of Romano-British hut sites and enclosures occupying the hillfort, perhaps indicating expansion and changing use of the interior during this period. As the final use of the hillfort appears to be heavily biased to stock management, this may indicate that the community supporting this activity expanded and subsisted over a long period of time in the settlements identified outside the ramparts, but that the physical evidence for this chronology is not visible on the surface. There could have been continuity between this community and the occupants of the hillfort, but the field evidence indicates that the Iron Age hillfort defences are likely to have been abandoned and defunct by the time the enclosures and paddocks of the Romano-British period were built (as appears to be the case at West Hill). The fact that the largest, and therefore presumably the most prestigious, Iron Age fortification in the area was used for corralling livestock may also indicate a major cultural or social change of perception regarding this previously imposing hillfort. In the Romano-British period, the hillfort's abandoned defences appear to have been viewed as nothing more than a ready-made stock enclosure, which in turn suggests there was no continuity between the fort's Iron Age and

Romano-British occupants. The existence of hut sites within the re-used hillfort should not be assumed to imply meaningful settlement. Rather, the small number of hut sites compared to the size and complexity of the enclosure complex, may indicate that they are simply stockman's shelters, or occupation sites functionally related to overseeing and managing this enclosure complex. There is no indication of the type of livestock kept on Castle Hill in the Romano-British period although from evidence elsewhere in the borders, cattle is the most likely with sheep and horses other possibilities (Higham 1986, 202).

Outside the hillfort, the hollow yard areas associated with the groups of unenclosed huts, and which also occur within the embanked enclosures, suggest the presence of small numbers of animals kept for domestic purposes. In marked contrast, the extensive pens within the hillfort point to the corralling of large numbers of livestock, far in excess of the domestic needs of the small associated settlement of four probable huts (Structures 7-9 and 12). That large numbers of animals were managed within the hillfort is also implied by the existence of several entrances into some of the enclosures, presumably there to assist in dividing up the herds, and by the observation that trackways, which probably functioned as droveways, are aligned on the east entrance into the hillfort (Track 1) and on the breach on the west side (Track 3). The picture which emerges is that outside the hillfort animals were kept for domestic purposes and may have belonged to individual family units, whilst the hillfort itself functioned as the centre of what might be termed a *ranch*, its ramparts employed as ready-made animal pens. What is not clear, is if this difference is due to controlled social and agricultural practice within a single clustered settlement around the hillfort, or if it indicates pragmatic change through time on an *ad hoc* basis. For example, it is conceivable that initially animals were only kept for domestic purposes as evidenced by the enclosures and yards outside the hillfort, but that gradually the numbers of livestock increased to the point where the hillfort was brought in to use as a corral. Alternatively, it is possible that the topographic location, ease of access and the size and nature of the abandoned hillfort itself, made this a convenient focus for extensive stock trading and management within a wider hinterland of settlements, trackways and fields. Recent surveys of a Romano-British landscape at High Park in Lancashire have identified purpose-built enclosure complexes, previously thought to have been settlements, carefully positioned at focal points amongst wider landscapes of fields, trackways and settlements, and which are likely to be communal stock gathering areas (RCHME 1998). It may be that a similar concept is being applied here at Castle Hill, except that a convenient, ready-made hillfort is used.

The field remains indicate an economy heavily reliant upon the raising of livestock but this is probably misleading. There is some evidence that the east slope of the hill continued to be cultivated, since lynchets appear to have formed on the east side of Enclosures 5 and 6 and on the downhill side of Track 1 where it traverses the north-east of Castle Hill. In support of this idea, the bank identified on the downhill side of Track 1 may have been maintained as a barrier, perhaps with a fence or hedge on top, to prevent animals from wandering onto cultivated lands lower down the slope. There is also the evidence of the quern, which points to the processing of cereal crops in the vicinity.

5.4 Medieval period AD 410-1540

There is no firm evidence of when the settlements and enclosures were abandoned and it is possible they continued into the post-Roman or 'dark-age' period. As has been recently pointed out, the tradition of circular timber buildings could have continued as late as the 7th century in Northumbria (Cramp 1995, 28) and therefore there is at least the possibility that some of the hut sites and enclosures on Castle Hill could be post-Roman.

There is no certain evidence of any further activity on Castle Hill until the ridge and furrow ploughing occurred on the south-east slope. The form is typical of the medieval period and presumably relates to the expansion of arable cultivation in the 13th or 14th centuries, following the growth of Alnham as the local centre of population. The local importance of arable cultivation is documented by the fact that Alnham possessed a mill at this time (Hope Dodds 1935, 574-5).

The medieval ridge and furrow falls within a clearly defined boundary bank which probably stretched down the east side of the hill to Alnham and marked the division between arable land to the east and south and open moor and pasture to the north and west. For part of its length this boundary was aligned along the east side of the most southerly of the Romano-British enclosures and as a result these earthworks, along with the hillfort, were not touched by the ploughing. The hillfort was probably too much of an obstacle to be worth taking into cultivation but this does not explain why the much lesser enclosures outside were not included in the ploughed area. There may have been some superstition attached to this whole complex of ancient earthworks which deterred cultivation or, more practically, the fort and enclosures might still have been used for rounding up stock. However, there is no field evidence which supports the possibility of re-use.

There is some evidence of a cursory attempt to re-fortify the hillfort, with the creation of an apparent wall walk or firing step on the inner face of the outer rampart on the south of the hillfort. This appears too recent to be connected with the Romano-British enclosures and may have been an abortive attempt to construct a castle on the site during the Norman advance north of the Tyne after 1095 (Lomas 1996, 15), perhaps indicating the derivation of the name 'Castle Hill'. Alternatively, the hillfort could have been occupied in the 16th century when it is recorded that Alnham was troubled by border raids and that troops were garrisoned in the area (Hope-Dodds 1935, 574). However, the extent and nature of this possible re-fortification is so minimal, that any re-use of the rampart in this period was either abortive or very short-lived.

5.5 Post-medieval and modern period

There is little evidence that arable cultivation continued in the survey area after the medieval period. More likely is that the land reverted to pasture, hence preserving the traces of the medieval plough ridges and associated boundary bank. The straight furrows recorded in several places over the hill may be evidence of a short-lived effort to bring the area back into cultivation or may simply be ploughing to improve the quality of the pasture. The track on the west side of the hill (Track 2) appears to have continued use in this period, as a ditch was dug through the medieval 'head dyke' apparently to assist the passage of traffic over the crest of the hill.

Marginal amounts of surface quarrying also occurred during this period, most notably on the east side of the hill and the line of Track 2, probably to get material to

build the drystone walls which sub-divide the hilltop. The survey found evidence of a possible archaeological excavation in the straight-sided, and sharply defined trench on the north side of Enclosure 7, although there is no published record of any excavation having taken place. The trench cuts into the enclosure bank and adjacent circular hut platform, suggesting the trench was positioned to examine the relationship between these two features.

6. METHODOLOGY

The field investigation was carried out by Trevor Pearson and Amy Lax with assistance from Marcus Jecock and Bernard Thomason whilst Stewart Ainsworth and Peter Topping provided valuable comment in the field.

The measured survey of the hillfort and its immediate surroundings was based upon a network of temporary points established using a Trimble 4800 dual frequency Global Positioning Satellite (GPS) system related to a permanently marked base station on site. The base station had previously been established using the GPS equipment and related to the National Grid (OSGB36) through a transformation programme which calculated its position relative to three Ordnance survey trigonometrical pillars. These were located on the summit of Gains Law, 17kms to the north at NGR NT 95588 28164, the summit of Ridlees Cairn 15kms to the south-west at NGR NT 84049 04262 and the summit of Blackchesters Hill, 2.5kms to the south-east at NGR NU 00379 10250.

The hillfort and surrounding earthworks were plotted from the network of temporary points at 1:1000 scale employing conventional graphical techniques using hand tapes. Earthworks in the wider landscape were surveyed using Trimble 4800 and 4700 GPS systems and plotted at 1:2500 scale using Key Terra-Firma, AutoCad and Corel Draw software. Sufficient GPS points were surveyed to generate contours on the survey plot at 1m intervals.

The report was written and illustrated by Trevor Pearson using Corel Draw and Corel Ventura software and edited by Stewart Ainsworth. The site archive has been deposited in English Heritage's National Monuments Record, Great Western Village, Kemble Drive, Swindon SN2 2GZ to where applications for copyright should be made (reference number NT 91 SE 9).

7. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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APPENDIX 1: Table of NMR numbers linked to the survey

Hillfort	NT 9800 1094	NT 91 SE 9
Romano-British enclosed settlement	NT 9808 1089-9807 1107	NT 91 SE 17
Romano-British unenclosed settlement	NT 9796 1117-9805 1113	NT 91 SE 167
Field bank	NT 9782 1115-9794 1114	NT 91 SE 169
Boundary bank	NT 9790 1050-9808 1070-9811 1095-9821 1101	NT 91 SE 190
Terraced trackway	NT 9809-1071-9780 1120	NT 91 SE 191
Improvement ploughing	NT 982 109	NT 91 SE 204
Collapsed drystone wall	NT 9803 1085-9782 1115-9813 1052	NT 91 SE 206
Trackway with bank	NT 9809 1067-9813 1094-9816 1096-9810 1103-9812 1118	NT 91 SE 211
Lynchets	NT 981 110	NT 91 SE 212
Romano-British enclosures overlying hillfort	NT 9800 1094	NT 91 SE 344
Romano-British unenclosed settlement	NT 9790 1098	NT 91 SE 345
Romano-British hut site	NT 9800 1103	NT 91 SE 346
Medieval ridge and furrow ploughing	NT 982 110	NT 91 SE 348
Possible ‘cord rig’	NT 9787 1115	NT 91 SE 349
Boundary bank	NT 9806 1113-9805 1119	NT 91 SE 350
Trackway	NT 9815 1076-9827 1090	NT 91 SE 351
Trackway	NT 9824 1101-9792 1109-9783 1117-9788 1123	NT 91 SE 352
Possible quarry hollows	NT 9790 1104	NT 91 SE 353
Hollow	NT 9802 1105	NT 91 SE 354
Quarry	NT 9823 1084	NT 91 SE 355
Quarry	NT 9826 1093	NT 91 SE 356
Quarry	NT 9825 1097	NT 91 SE 357
Quarry	NT 9796 1119	NT 91 SE 358
Quarry	NT 9790 1113	NT 91 SE 359
Quarry	NT 9780 1108	NT 91 SE 360

Quarry	NT 9781 1101	NT 91 SE 361
Quarry	NT 9787 1091	NT 91 SE 362
Modern pit	NT 9798 1096	NT 91 SE 363
Possible Late Bronze Age/Early Iron Age unenclosed settlement	NT 9791 1116	NT 91 SE 364

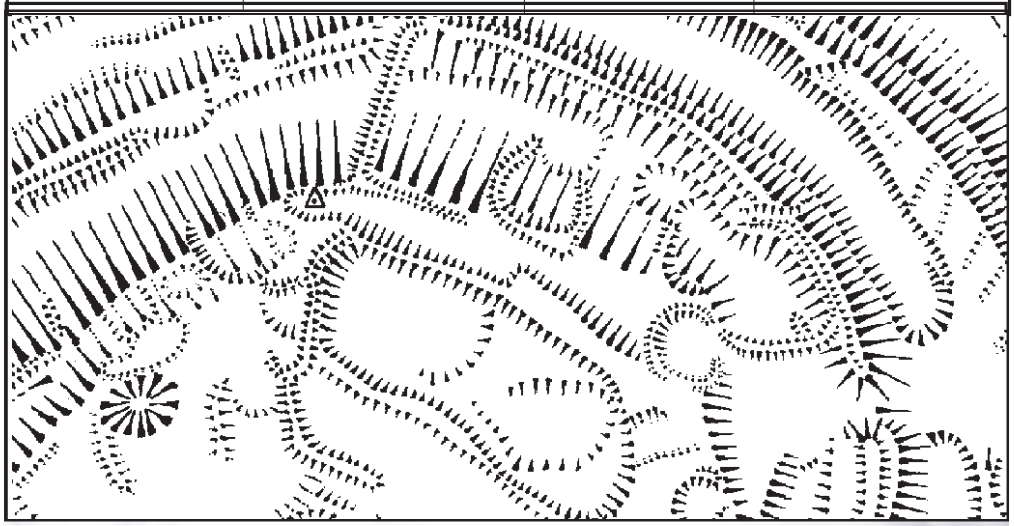
APPENDIX 2: Locations of permanent survey stations

SURVEY STATION INFORMATION

ENGLISH HERITAGE

SITE NAME	Castle Hill, Alnham		
Station number	STN 1	**Status**	Permanent
Type of Mark	Brass rivet	**NMR number**	NT 91 SE 17
Date of Survey	May 2000	**Sam number**	Northumberland 43
Office of origin	York	**RSM number**	———
Surveyor(s)	AL, TP, BT, MJ	**Neg number**	———

Co-ordinate Scheme	**Eastings**	**Northings**	**Height**
OS National Grid	397995.777	610980.516	288.481

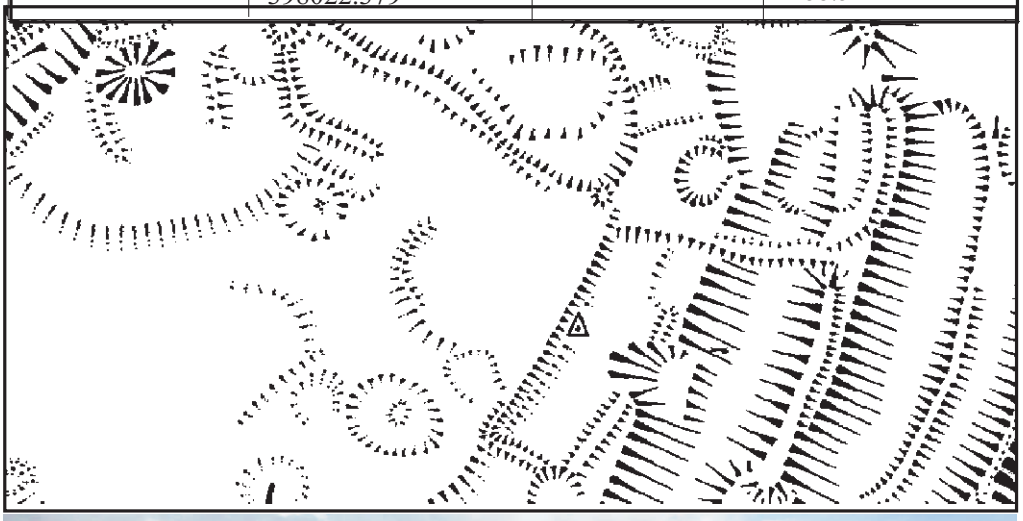


SURVEY STATION INFORMATION

ENGLISH HERITAGE

SITE NAME	Castle Hill, Alnham		
Station number	STN 2	**Status**	Permanent
Type of Mark	Brass rivet	**NMR number**	NT 91 SE 17
Date of Survey	May 2000	**Sam number**	Northumberland 43
Office of origin	York	**RSM number**	————
Surveyor(s)	AL, TP, BT, MJ	**Neg number**	————

Co-ordinate Scheme	Eastings	Northings	Height
OS National Grid	398022.379	610935.518	288.544



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