EXCAVATIONS IN THE TWO IRON AGE HILL-FORTS ON CASTLE HILL, CAPEL, NEAR TONBRIDGE, 1965 AND 1969–71

By J. H. Money, M.A., F.S.A.

Introduction

Castle Hill (N.G.R. TQ 608439), in the parish of Capel, lies 2 miles (3·2 km.) south-west of the centre of Tonbridge (Fig. 1).

The O.S. 6-inch map of 1872 gives no indication that the earthworks on Castle Hill had by then been discovered. This map, however, refers to Castle Hill and Castle Hill Woods, which suggests a tradition that the place had once been fortified. On the top of the hill the map shows a cleared area of much the same size as it is today; this clearing was scheduled as grassland in 1849 when the estate was purchased by Somerhill. According to Winbolt the earthworks did not appear on the O.S. 6-inch map until 1912. It is not known whether or not the fortifications survived in the area of grassland in or after 1849, but they had certainly been demolished before Winbolt's excavations of 1929,[1] when the field was arable.

It was no doubt the destruction of the defences in the arable field which misled Winbolt into assuming that there was only one fort, and this is what he showed on his plan, using field boundaries of no great age to link the visible remains of what were two separate fortifications.

Winbolt found a few flint artefacts and some iron slag, which were deposited in the Tonbridge Public Library but have since been lost. In the east entrance (of what is now called Fort I, see Fig. 1) he recognized a roadway paved with ironstone nodules and what he calls 'sandstone slats', and revetting stones along its sides. In other respects his report is of little or no value.

Credit for detecting the existence of two separate earthworks goes to the late Mr. E. Geary, field investigator in the Archæology Division of the Ordnance Survey,[2] who in 1959 recorded (of what is now called Fort II): 'On the south-west of the spur is a kidney-shaped enclosure, with the characteristics of an Iron-Age contour fort, formed by a rampart and outer ditch. The north-east side is under plough but has slight indications of a causewayed entrance'. These details, including the ploughed-out north-east defences, were added to the O.S. maps. Geary also gives a description of the visible remains of Fort I, and

[1] S. E. Winbolt, 'Castle Hill Camp, Tonbridge', *Arch. Cant.*, xli (1929), 193–5.
[2] O.S. Record Card.

comments: 'The true nature of this earthwork is uncertain; it does cut off the promontory but its defensive value is negatived by the weak flanking slopes . . . It may be an unfinished work, possibly a later strengthening of the contour fort.'

In 1964, I was asked by the Inspectorate of Ancient Monuments to keep an eye on construction work preparatory to the erection of the television mast which stands at TQ 607440 just outside the north-west corner of Fort I. The work took place in May and June 1965 (see pp. 64–5 below).

I had already decided to explore selected parts of the earthworks, in the hope of solving some of the outstanding problems; the excavations which took place in 1969, 1970 and 1971 are described below.[3]

Environment, Geology and Date

The two forts (Fig. 1) are situated on a spur of high ground running from north-east to south-west, around 400 ft. above sea level. Although the natural slopes are nowhere very steep, the site commands the surrounding area, and from it the inhabitants would have been able to exercise direct control over the ridge between Tonbridge (TQ 5845) and Pembury (TQ 6240)—a natural north-west to south-east route which the A21 follows today. They would also have been able to exercise indirect control over the crossing of the River Medway at Tonbridge, where the valley is narrowest and which has thus always been a vital point on an important north-south route across the Weald.[4] A track (now partly demolished by clearance work beside the A21) descends from the entrance of Fort I in a northerly direction. Winbolt marks[5] another track (of which traces still survive) running similarly south-east. If ancient, as seems possible, these tracks would have linked the fort with, or may indeed have been, the north-west to south-east ridgeway.

Castle Hill is on an outcrop of Lower Tunbridge Wells Sand. Wherever we dug, the sandstone was encountered a short distance below the land surface. As well as providing a reasonably dry base for the occupiers, the sandstone also facilitated the digging of steep-sided ditches and provided good material for ramparts and revetments.

A number of worked flints and waste material of mainly Mesolithic type came to light during the excavations (see Appendix B): also three late Neolithic sherds (Appendix A). There were no concentrations

[3] Interim reports are in *Arch. Cant.*, lxxxiv (1969), 233–4; lxxxv (1970), 176–7; lxxxvi (1971), 233–4; and lxxxvii (1972), 219.

[4] This route (Cross-in-Hand—Mark Cross—Frant—Tunbridge Wells—Southborough—Tonbridge—Ightham) and its context are described in I. D. Margary, *Roman Ways in the Weald*, 2nd Edition, London, 1949, 258, 259, 264 and 265.

[5] *Op. cit.* in n.1, 194.

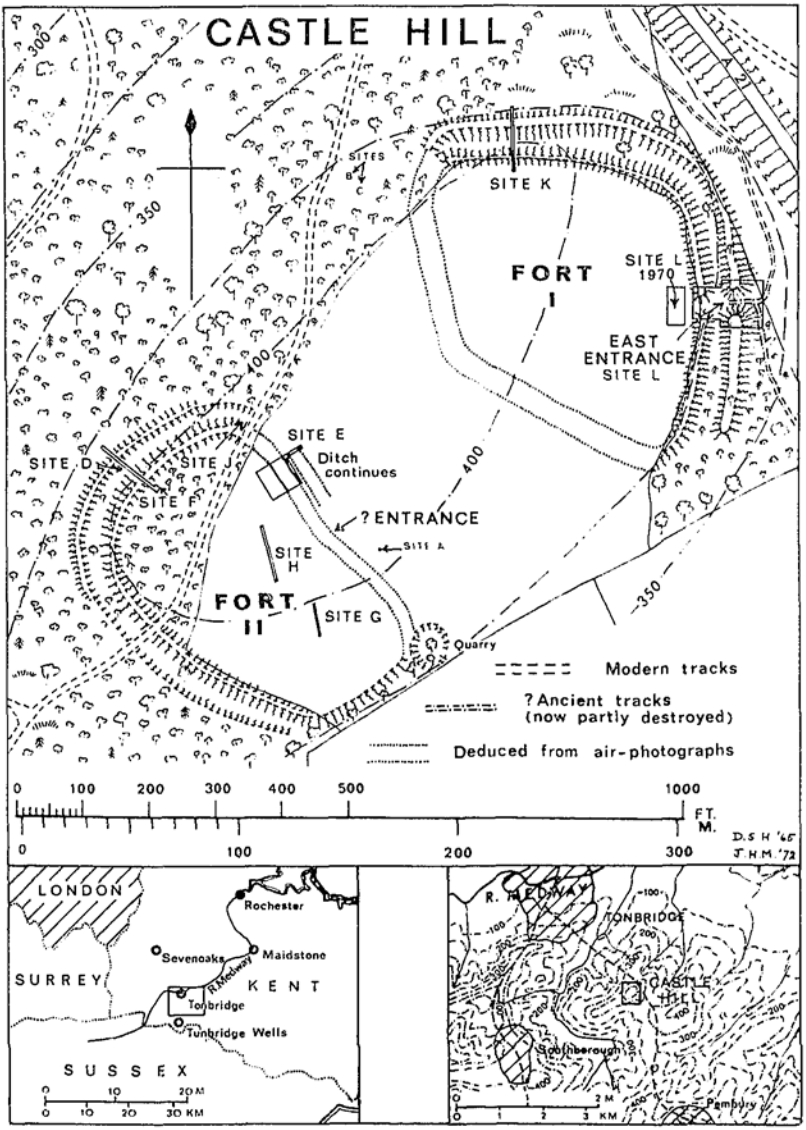


FIG. 1. Maps showing Position of Castle Hill, Kent, south-east of Tonbridge, and Plan of Hill-forts.

Based on the O.S. Maps with the Sanction of the Controller of H.M.S.O. Crown Copyright reserved.

suggesting any settlement on the hill-top, but evidently it was visited in Stone Age times.

Radiocarbon dates were obtained from charcoals collected from the top of the old land surface under the outer rampart of Fort I and the inner rampart of Fort II. The charcoal was presumably derived either from the burning of wood cut to make way for the rampart, or from a camp-fire. In either case the charcoal must be closely related to the building of the two forts; that from Fort I has a date of 2265±50 years B.P. (c. 315 B.C.): that from Fort II, 2178±61 B.P. (c. 228 B.C.). If the two forts were contemporary, the median date would be about 270 B.C. If one followed the other, the dates suggest that Fort I was the earlier. The latter proposition is to some extent supported by the presence of tumbled revetting stones and burnt timbers in the ditch silt beside the entrance of Fort I (see pp. 70–2 below). Whether this destruction was deliberate or accidental, it can reasonably be argued that the local inhabitants, when faced with the need to construct another fort, abandoned the old site, chose the only remaining position suitable for defence and built new but weaker fortifications enclosing a slightly smaller area.

No sign of any water supply was found. The ditches would have collected a fair amount of water in wet weather; otherwise, it would have been necessary to obtain water from the surrounding valleys.

To judge from the charcoals collected during the excavations, the tree cover in the fourth and third centuries B.C. included oak, yew, beech, birch, lime, ash, field maple, hazel and hawthorn. The light loamy soil which carried this cover would also have been suitable for agriculture.

Detail of Work

Site A (Fig. 1)

In May 1965, the South-Eastern Electricity Board excavated holes for pylons and stays to carry an electricity line from the main grid south of Castle Hill to the new television pylon and to some cottages at TQ 605443 belonging to the Somerhill estate. Nothing of archæological interest was found in any of them except in one excavation in the field just outside the ploughed down north-east bank of Fort II, where at a depth of 30 in. (0·76 m.) there was a layer of mottled soil, 3 in. (0·076 m.) thick, containing small pieces of stone and ironstone and one sherd of Iron Age pottery.

Site B (Fig. 1)

Four holes, 7 ft. (2·13 m.) square and between 10 ft. (3·04 m.) and 12 ft. (3·66 m.) deep, were dug into the bedrock in order to accommo-

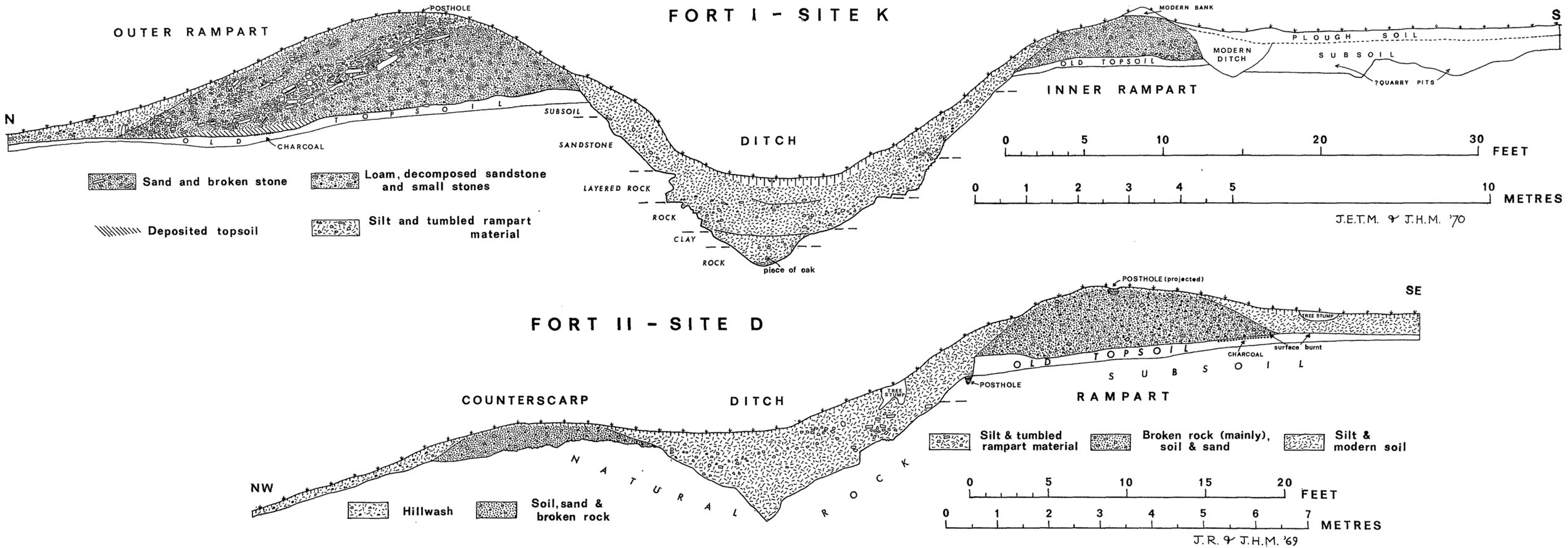


FIG. 2. Sections through the Defences of Fort I (Site K) and Fort II (Site D).

(face p. 64

date the 'feet' of the television pylon. Almost all the topsoil had already been removed in preliminary clearance of the woodland. The holes themselves yielded nothing of archæological interest. In particular there were no signs of ditches, and it subsequently became clear that the television pylon and its attendant buildings were completely outside the confines of Fort I.

Site C (Fig. 1)

A shallow trench was dug to carry the electric cable from the extension of the grid to the television pylon. A 100 ft. (30·48 m.) length of this trench immediately south of the pylon was examined; nothing of archæological interest was found.

Fort I

Fort I, which enclosed 2·9 acres (1·2 hectares), stands on the brow of the spur. Its northern and eastern defences (two ramparts and a ditch), which closely follow the contours, are intact; there is an entrance centrally placed on the east side. South of the entrance the earthwork has been badly mutilated by forestry, and its original form is difficult to determine. The O.S. map includes some features which look modern and are omitted in Fig. 1, which shows only what is certainly or probably ancient. At the north-west corner of the fort the earthworks have been demolished and the ditch filled in. Probing showed that the ramparts continued for about 80 ft. (24·4 m.) along the edge of the wood, then turned south-south-east and later south-east across the neck of the spur (where they have been demolished but are visible on air photographs), before joining the surviving defences about 200 ft. (61 m.) south of the entrance.

Site K (Fig. 2 and Plate I) (1970)

A section 6 ft. (1·82 m.) wide and 93 ft. (28·34 m.) long was dug through the northern defences, which consisted of two ramparts separated by a ditch. The ditch and outer rampart are illustrated in Plate I.

What was left of the inner rampart, which consisted of a mixture of clay, small stones and decomposed sandstone, was 12 ft. (3·65 m.) wide and had a maximum height of 33 in. (0·84 m.). Originally it was 15 ft. (4·57 m.) or perhaps 18 ft. (5·48 m.) wide, its tail having been destroyed by a modern ditch, some of the spoil of which was thrown on top of the rampart. Much of the original material had silted or tumbled forward into the ditch and with it all traces of any revetment or palisade there may have been (apart from the butt-end of one possible palisade post-hole on the crest). The old topsoil, on which was

scattered charcoal of hazel, field maple, beech, yew and (mostly) oak twigs, was light brown and loamy and varied in depth from 4 in. (0·10 m.) to 8 in. (0·20 m.); below it was a subsoil of grey and yellow sandy loam and below that the sandstone. Shallow depressions in the natural behind the rampart indicated that material had been quarried there.

Between the inner and outer ramparts was a steep-sided V-shaped ditch, 27 ft. (8·23 m.) wide and 12 ft. (3·65 m.) deep, cut from the natural, which varied from (at the bottom) two layers of hard rock separated by a layer of clay, to layered rock and (at the top) sandstone, subsoil and the old topsoil (Fig. 2).

In the centre of the ditch the silt was 5 ft. 6 in. (1·67 m.) deep. A piece of unburnt oak, which may have been part of the timbering of one of the ramparts, was found still intact 6 in. (0·15 m.) from the bottom of the ditch. 2 ft. (0·61 m.) from the bottom was a distinct band of humus, stretching across the ditch, which indicates a pause in the process of silting, and there was another but smaller band of humus 2 ft. (0·61 m.) higher up.

The ditch silt was a mixture of sandy and loamy material. There was a fair number of small stones, which appear to have been just part of the general rampart material. Fig. 2 is a fair representation of the ditch as a whole. The absence of larger blocks seems to rule out the possibility of a stone revetment on this part of the inner rampart. If there were a timber revetment, which seems to be demanded by the steepness of the ditch side (cf. Fort II, pp. 00–0 below), there was no trace of it. On the other hand, clear evidence of a stone and timber revetment on the inner rampart was found beside the entrance (see pp. 70–2 below).

In the layered rock half-way up the sides of the ditch there were traces of what appeared to be artificial cutting or boring—possibly part of the process of splitting off pieces of rock during the original excavation of the ditch, at the same time making use of existing natural weaknesses. On the south side of the ditch this took the form of two almost vertical cuts (and the beginning of a third) and a roughly rectangular hole dug into a step of rock.[6] On the north side there were two cuts (Plate I) of which the larger had pieces of stone resting in it.

The outer rampart was 30 ft. (9·14 m.) wide and had survived to a maximum height of 6 ft. (1·82 m.). On the crest a palisade post-hole was found in the section; slightly further forward there were three depressions in the top of the rampart material, varying between 4 in.

[6] A similar feature was observed at High Rocks, Site F. See J. H. Money, 'Excavations in the Iron Age Hill-Fort at High Rocks, near Tunbridge Wells, 1957–1961', *Sx. Arch. Coll.*, cvi (1968), 163.

(0·10 m.) and 6 in. (0·15 m.) deep, which may have been the butt-ends of other palisade posts. Fig. 2 illustrates the order in which the rampart material dug from the ditch was dumped—first topsoil deposited near the front, then a mixture of subsoil and broken sandstone, next a tip of slabs and small blocks from the layered rock layer and finally a mixture of sand and broken stone. The small band of natural clay from near the bottom of the ditch was not represented in the rampart (presumably because it would have been dumped on top of the rampart and would, therefore, have been the first to weather away).

A considerable amount of small charcoal (oak twigs and a little hazel) was found scattered over the old land surface under the rampart. The absence of any hearths suggests that this charcoal was not the product of a camp fire but rather the result of burning unwanted wood and undergrowth cut in order to make way for the rampart. A sample of this charcoal has a radiocarbon date of *c.* 315 B.C. (see p. 64 above).

The trench was extended 22 ft. (6·70 m.) into the area behind the inner rampart in the hope of finding occupation material, but nothing was found except a few pieces of charcoal, burnt sandstone and the quarry pits already mentioned.

Dr. M. S. Tite took samples from the old topsoil buried under the outer rampart, from the rampart itself and from three points in the ditch silt, for magnetic measurements in the laboratory. He concluded from these tests that 'only extremely limited occupation for a short period occurred on this site'—a conclusion which is fully supported by the dearth of archæological material.[7]

East Entrance (Site L)

Figs. 3, 4 and 5; Plates II and III

Having been used until recently as a way of approach to the fields on Castle Hill, the area of the entrance had been left comparatively open and had not suffered the serious disturbance which forestry has caused to the earthworks immediately south of it. Nevertheless a considerable number of trees and tree-stumps had to be removed before digging could begin.

Fig. 3 shows the shape of the entrance before it was dug. There was a narrow gap through the inner rampart, a causeway across the ditch and a wider gap through the outer rampart. There were extensions to both ends of the outer rampart, that on the north side being in the form of a platform on which traces of a palisade were found. Details of the excavated features are shown in Fig. 4.

[7] For further details, see M. S. Tite and C. E. Mullins, 'Enhancement of the Magnetic Susceptibility of Soils on Archæological Sites', *Archæometry*, xiii (1971), 209–19.

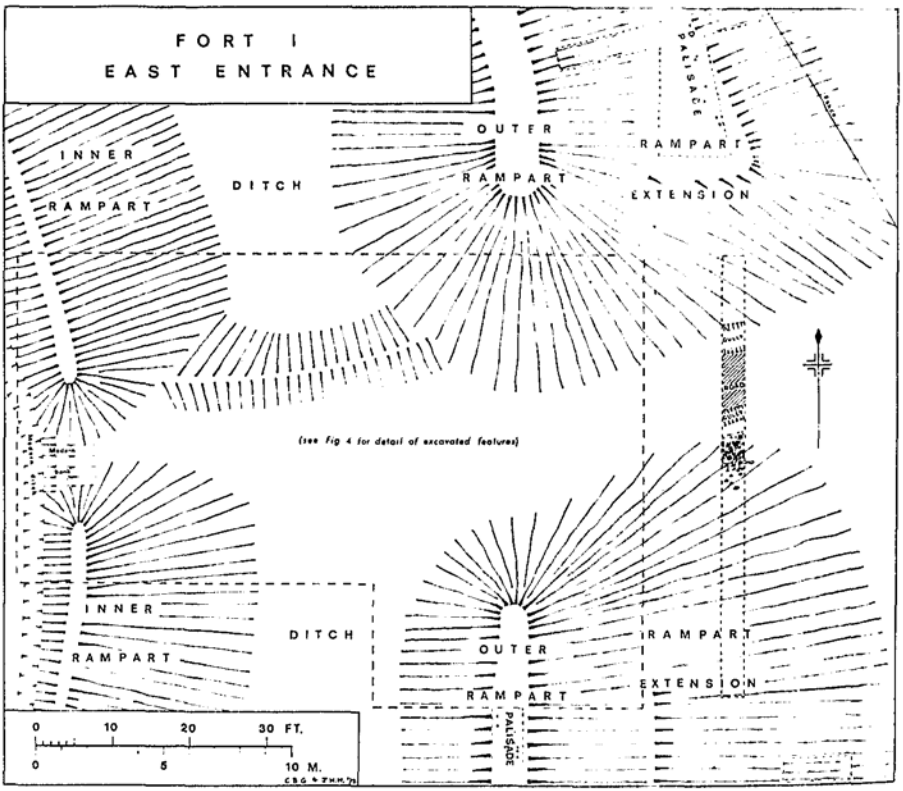


FIG. 3. Plan of East Entrance (Site L) of Fort I before Excavation.

In 1970 an area 26 ft. (7·92 m.)×52 ft. (15·85 m.) within the fort immediately inside the inner entrance (Fig. 1, Site L, 1970) was excavated. The results were very disappointing. No pottery or other occupation material came to light. In the exceptionally dry weather the natural surface was too hard and dusty to reveal any post-holes there may have been. The only artificial feature which came to light was a shallow trench, partly filled in with earth and stones, running east-west and roughly in the same alignment as the gully on the south side of the roadway (Fig. 4). Whether the trench in the field was one of Winbolt's or belongs to the later phase of the hill-fort (see p. 72 below) is uncertain.

The holes of two gate-posts were found, 10 ft. (3·05 m.) apart, on either side of the inner entrance (Plate II). Both the posts had been sunk 18 in. (0·45 m.) below the level of the old land surface in pits which had then been filled with a packing of earth and broken stone to

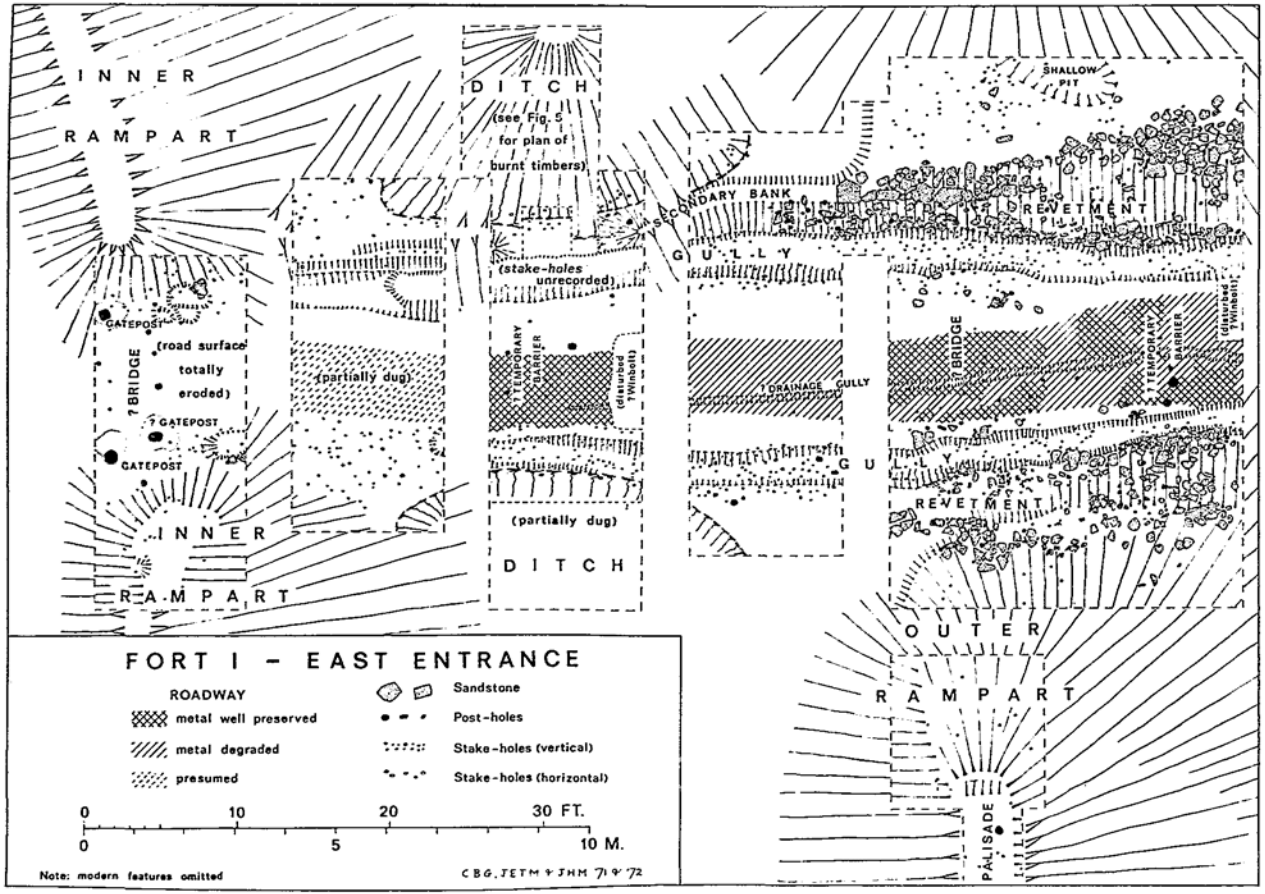


FIG. 4. Detailed Plan of excavated Area of east Entrance of Fort I.

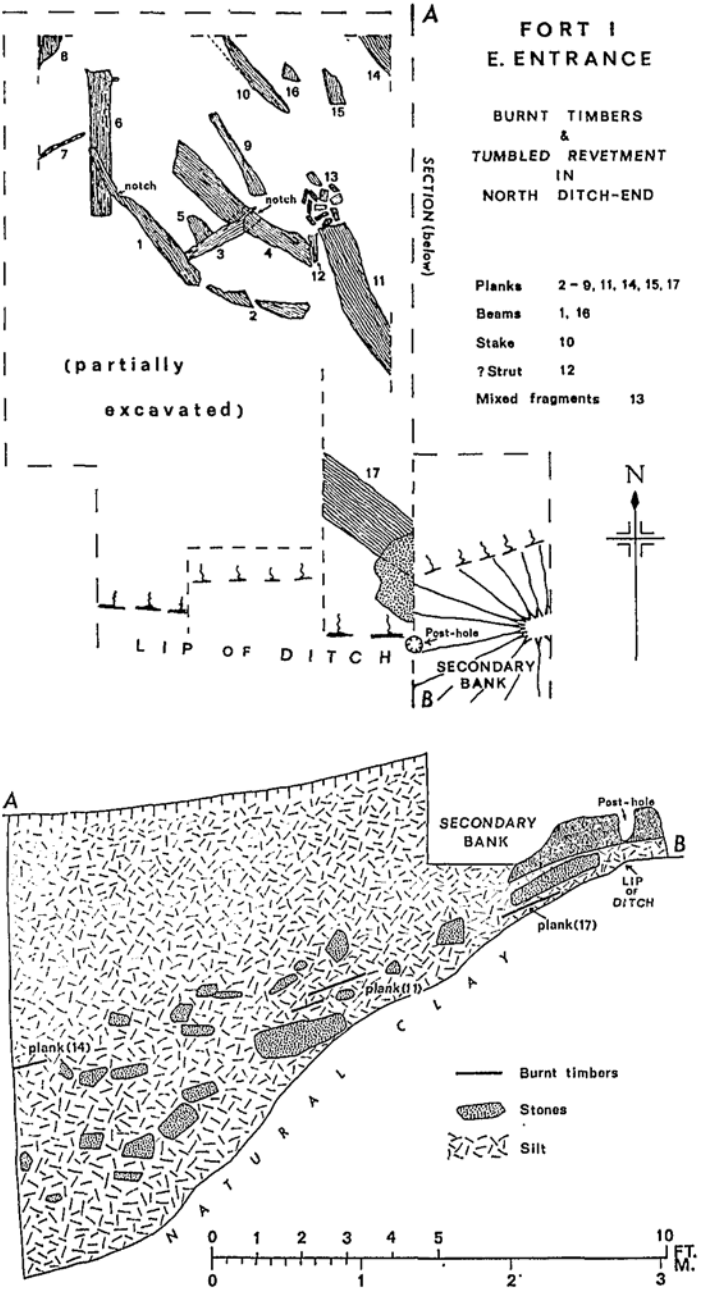


FIG. 5.

Above: Plan of burnt Timbers and tumbled Revetment in north Ditch-end of east Entrance of Fort I and secondary Bank. (The partially excavated area was not dug deep enough to reach timbers and stones.)

Below: Section A-B through Ditch Silt, Timbers, Stones, and secondary Bank.

hold the posts in position. The post-hole on the north side was about 8 in. (0·20 m.) in diameter and flat at its base; that on the south side was 10 in. (0·25 m.) in diameter and ended in a blunted point. On the south side of the entrance, 3 ft. (0·91 m.) to the east of the latter, was a third major post-hole but there was no corresponding hole on the north side; this may also have been a gate-post (perhaps a later addition). These three major post-holes, together with the lesser holes set roughly in two lines across the road-way, possibly held the uprights of a bridge over the entrance.

A few roughly shaped stones (five on the north and two on the south) appeared to be *in situ* and may represent the remains of a revetment. In the ends of both ramparts there was a number of stake-holes. The timbers they once held were probably designed to consolidate the rampart material and check erosion. On the forward slope of the rampart on both sides of the entrance were many more similar stake-holes.

The ditch was about 24 ft. (7·31 m.) wide. On the south side it was excavated only to the extent of determining the rim of the ditch-end. On the north the greater part of the ditch-end was excavated, with remarkable results. The silt contained considerable numbers of revetting stones and burnt timbers (planks, beams, stakes and a strut) which had tumbled from the inner rampart. Whether the destruction was deliberate or accidental is not known, but it must have been a deciding factor in causing the abandonment of the defences of Fort I and its eventual replacement by Fort II on another part of the hill.

Mr. Christopher Giles excavated this part meticulously and made a careful study of the timbers, which are planned as a whole (regardless of their level in the silt) in Fig. 5; here there is also a section up the ditch-end which shows the actual position of four of the planks (11, 14 17 and one unnumbered) lying amongst the silt and tumbled revetting stones. There can be no doubt that the planks, which varied in thickness from 2 in. (0·05 m.) to only ½ in. (0·013 m.) had been sawn. In detail the timbers (Fig. 5) were as follows:

1. Beam (oak) *c.* 5 in. (0·13 m.) in diameter, with a notch which possibly joined it to another timber.
2. Plank *c.* 1½ in. (0·04 m.) thick; only one surface was charred; traces of unburnt wood on the other side still survived.
3. Plank *c.* 7 in. (0·18 m.) wide, twisted about its longitudinal axis.
4. Plank (oak) with notch (cf. 1).
5. Plank *c.* 8 in. (0·20 m.) wide.
6. Plank *c.* 6 in. (0·15 m.) wide.
7. Plank *c.* 6 in. (0·15 m.) wide and 1½ in. (0·038 m.)—2 in. (0·05 m.) thick, lying on edge.
8. Plank, of which only part projected into the trench.

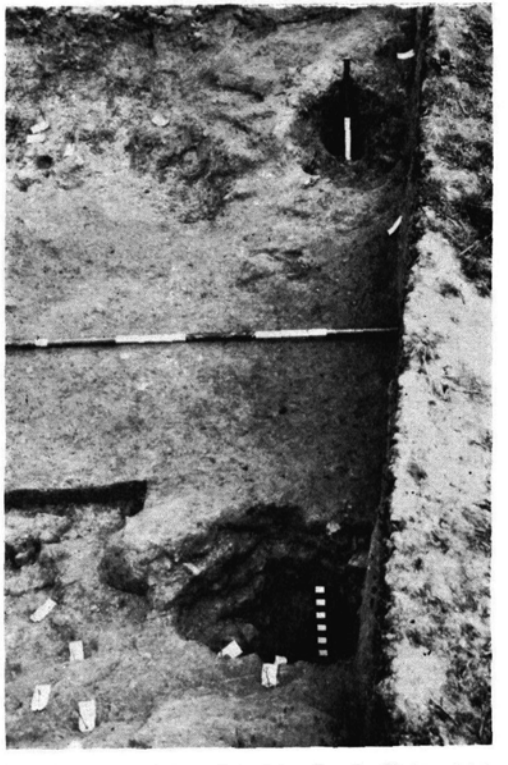
9. Plank *c.* 5 in. (0·13 m.) wide.
10. Plank (birch) *c.* 5 in. (0·13 m.) in diameter, with a sharpened point.
11. Plank (oak) *c.* 11 in. (0·28 m.) wide and ½ in. (0·013 m.) thick.
12. Strut (ash) *c.* 2 in. (0·05 m.) wide and 1 in. (0·025 m.) thick.
13. Area of mixed fragments.
14. Plank (oak) at least 6 in. (0·15 m.) wide, of which only part projected into trench.
15. Plank (oak) *c.* 5 in. (0·13 m.) wide and possibly 2 in. (0·05 m.) thick.
16. Part of a beam (oak) standing nearly on end amongst revetting stones.
17. Plank *c.* 12 in. (0·30 m.) wide and ½ in. (0·013 m.) thick, lying almost on the natural and immediately under a stone slab.

It will be observed that no. 17 and the slab overlying it are covered by a low bank, which must, therefore, be later than the collapse of the stone and timber revetment. It is likely that the material of this secondary bank was dug from the gully, which runs almost the whole length of the entrance on the north side and is matched by a similar gully on the south side. The date and purpose of these gullies are unknown. A possible explanation is that they belong to a peaceful phase after the collapse of the defences, when the top of the hill was given over to farming which required drainage. The gullies were peppered with small stake-holes which may represent fencing, designed to prevent livestock from straying into the ditches on either side of the causeway, or to control erosion, or both.

The roadway, the surface of which had been worn away completely in the inner entrance, was well preserved between the ditch-ends; it was made of iron-stone nodules rammed into the old land surface. In and beside it was a group of medium and small post-holes which may have held the uprights of a removable or temporary timber barrier across this part of the entrance. Here, below the level of the road and cut into the old land surface, was the beginning of a small cutting, about 3 in. (0·076 m.) deep and between 4 in. (0·10 m.) and 8 in. (0·20 m.) wide, which ran westward along the line of the road; if not a drainage gully, it may have been a 'marking-out' trench to guide the course of the entrance.

A good part of the outer entrance had survived. It had stone revetments on either side (Plate III) and numerous post-holes and stake-holes which held timbers for supporting the revetment, checking erosion and, where there were a number of medium-sized holes in the roadway, possibly carrying a bridge between the rampart-ends. A group of large and medium post-holes 14 ft. (4·26 m.) to the west of

Site K (Fort I). Section through rock-cut Ditch and outer Rampart, looking North. (The arrow points at artificial cuts in the rock; see p. 65.)



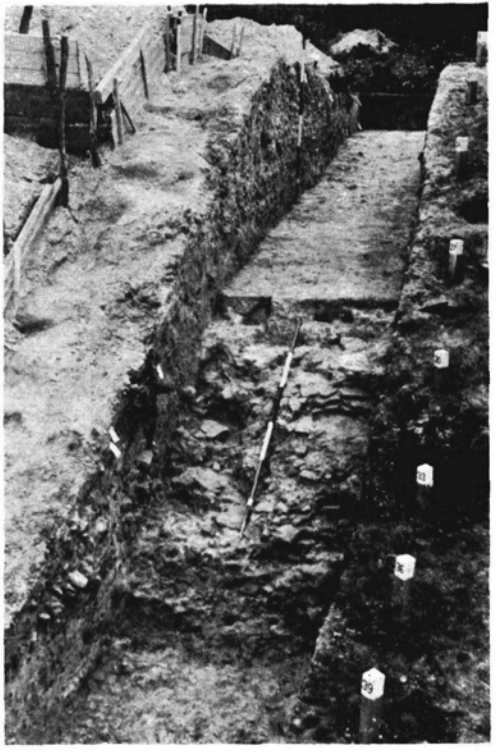
East Entrance of Fort I, looking South. Holes which held Gate-posts of Entrance.

[face p. 72

PLATE II

East Entrance of Fort I, looking South. General View of outer Entrance, showing revetted Rampart-ends, Gullies and Roadway. The vertical ranging rod stands in the southern gully; the horizontal rod, along the middle of the roadway.

Site D (Fort II), looking North-west. Section through Defences, showing main Rampart and counterscarp Bank.



Site D (Fort II). Side of rock-cut Ditch and main Rampart, looking South-east. The arrow points at the revetment stake-holes, some of which are visible (see pp. 73–4).

PLATE IV

Site E (Fort II), looking North-east. Section through rock-cut Ditch in ploughed Field. The light-coloured filling at the top is demolished rampart material.

the supposed bridge may be the remains of another removable or temporary barrier.

On the crest of the outer rampart were post-holes, which in part probably represented a palisade (see also Fig. 3) and in part stakes to check erosion.

Outside the rampart proper, but linked to it, were outer works flanking the roadway. The northern extension was in the form of a platform, on which palisade post-holes were found over a length of 15 ft. (4·57 m.) where the top of the earthwork was examined.

The cobbling of the roadway was patchy in the outer entrance and became generally more degraded between the rampart extensions. Once outside the earthworks the roadway meets the ridgeway which passes below the defences (see p. 62 above).

The site yielded eight pieces of pottery, including one rim-sherd (see Appendix A).

Fort II

Fort II, which enclosed about 2·5 acres (1·01 hectares), lies on the south-west part of the spur. Two-thirds of the earthworks still survive in the woodland; they consist basically of a single bank and ditch, except on the north-west side where the slope of the hill-side is reasonably steep and there is a low outer or counter-scarp bank. On the north-east side the rampart has been demolished but is still visible on the ground as a slight swelling running across the field. There is no trace of an entrance through any part of the surviving defences, and nothing convincing in the ploughed area shows up on any of the air photographs I have seen. On the analogy of Fort I, a likely place of the entrance is in the middle of the north-east defences (see Fig. 1).

Sites D and F (Fig. 2; Plates IV and V) (1969)

A trench 5 ft. (1·52 m.) wide and 74 ft. (22·55 m.) long (Site D) was dug through the defences on the north-west side (see Plate IV), and behind it an area 10 ft. (3·04 m.) by 8 ft. (2·44 m.) (Site F) (Fig. 2).

The inner rampart, which was composed of soil, broken rock and sand, all dug from the ditch (there was no trace of quarrying behind the rampart), was 19 ft. (5·79 m.) wide at its base and had survived to a maximum height of 4 ft. (1·22 m.). The butt-end of a palisade post-hole 9 in. (0·23 m.) across was found on the crest of the rampart.

The forward face of the rampart was held up by a timber revetment, six post-holes of which were found, four at regular intervals of about 18 in. (0·45 m.) and two smaller holes close together besides one of the four. Some of the holes are visible in Plate V; one is shown in the section (Fig. 2). Their dimensions and characteristics are as follows:

Post-hole	*Depth*	*Width*
α	4 in. (0·10 m.)	2 in. (0·05 m.)
β	16 in. (0·40 m.)	4 in. (0·10 m.)
γ	21 in. (0·53 m.)	2 in. (0·05 m.)
δ	7 in. (0·17 m.)	4 in. (0·10 m.)
ϵ	11 in. (0·28 m.)	1 in. (0·025 m.)
ζ	15 in. (0·38 m.)	1 in. (0·025 m.)

β entered the ground obliquely so that the post emerging from it would have pointed forward down the hill at an angle of about 50° from the horizontal; it also pointed obliquely across the trench, i.e. almost due west. γ also bent forward at an angle of about 50°, but did not lean laterally, ϵ and ζ both tilted forward—ϵ only forward like γ, ζ both forward and westward like β. α and δ tilted slightly backwards. It is difficult to explain how the revetting posts were arranged without examining them over a greater width of rampart, but one possibility is that the post-holes into which the main uprights supporting the front of the bank were driven have disappeared entirely owing to erosion, and what is left is the remains of a rear line of posts (which would not originally have been visible) driven in at various angles in order to strengthen the rampart structure.

The front of the rampart appears to have been supported also by some form of dry-stone walling (the layered rock which occurs in places in the sandstone would have been suitable for this). Several flat stones, of which the largest was 8 in. (0·20 m.) by 6 in. (0·15 m.), were found resting on the side of the ditch just below its lip. A considerably larger group of stones, including some 12 in. (0·30 m.) across, also occurred in the silt, about half-way down the ditch.

The old topsoil which had survived below and behind the rampart was a brown silt and rather loamy. Immediately behind where the topsoil is cut into the ditch, there was a slight hump, which may be turf deposited either as a 'marking-out' bank or as a footing for the rampart; no distinction, however, between deposited and undisturbed topsoil was noticed.

There was a considerable amount of charcoal (oak, hawthorn, and lime) resting on and in the old land surface under and behind the back of the rampart. In one area, the surface was also reddened by burning, and there was a number of small burnt stones. It is possible that these were the remains of a hearth used by the builders, but equally they could have resulted from the burning of unwanted wood and undergrowth cut during clearing operations.

The ditch, which was V-shaped and 20 ft. (6·09 m.) wide, was cut out of the natural rock. Having been broken up, the excavated material was dumped on either side to form the main rampart and the counter-

scarp bank. Apart from the group of largish stones which had probably once formed part of the revetment, the silt and tumbled stone in the ditch contained nothing noteworthy; no occupation material except charcoal was found in the ditch.

The counterscarp bank, which was 14 ft. (4·26 m.) wide, was made of soil, sand and a small amount of broken rock. It rested directly on the natural rock, with no topsoil intervening. It may be that the topsoil had been removed for rampart material before the counterscarp bank was built or had washed down the hill. A third possible explanation is that proposed by Dr. I. W. Cornwall at High Rocks, Site J, namely, 'that the buried soil was insinuated throughout the material of the counterscarp by worms operating under its shallow cover'.[8]

Beyond the counterscarp was a thin yellow clayey layer of hill-wash stretching away down the side of the hill.

An area 10 ft. (3·04 m.) by 8 ft. (2·43 m.) was excavated inside the fort behind the rampart section, in the hope of finding occupation material. Apart from a few flint flakes, charcoal and pieces of burnt sandstone, no human remains were found.

Site E (Fig. 6; Plate VI) (1969)

This site was chosen because the O.S. 1/2500 map, following the late Mr. Geary's survey, marks an entrance here (cf. p. 61 above), but our work proved conclusively that none existed (cf. also pp. 78 below). There is no break in the rampart in Site E, and test holes at frequent intervals along 100 ft. (30·48 m.) of the ditch in Site E and south-east of it showed that there was no causeway and, therefore, no entrance in this sector.

Dr. Anthony Harding made a skilful examination of the rampart and the area immediately behind it; the details are shown in Fig. 6.

The plough soil, which covered the site, was 9 in. (0·23 m.) deep. Immediately below this, in the middle of the site, the base of the rampart was encountered. The rampart material consisted predominantly of orange loam with an admixture of yellow and light grey clay and small chips of sandstone. The fact that this tiny vestige of the rampart was undisturbed makes it clear that there had been no deep-ploughing of the field. In B4 a small pile of stones was found—possibly a 'marking-out' cairn, but more probably just part of the rampart material.

The back of the rampart was delimited with some certainty, and in it was a number of small post-holes, some approximately in a line, which may represent a fence that originally held up the material. Some traces occupation behind the rampart were noted. In C6 was a number of

[8] *Op. cit.* in n. 6, 168.

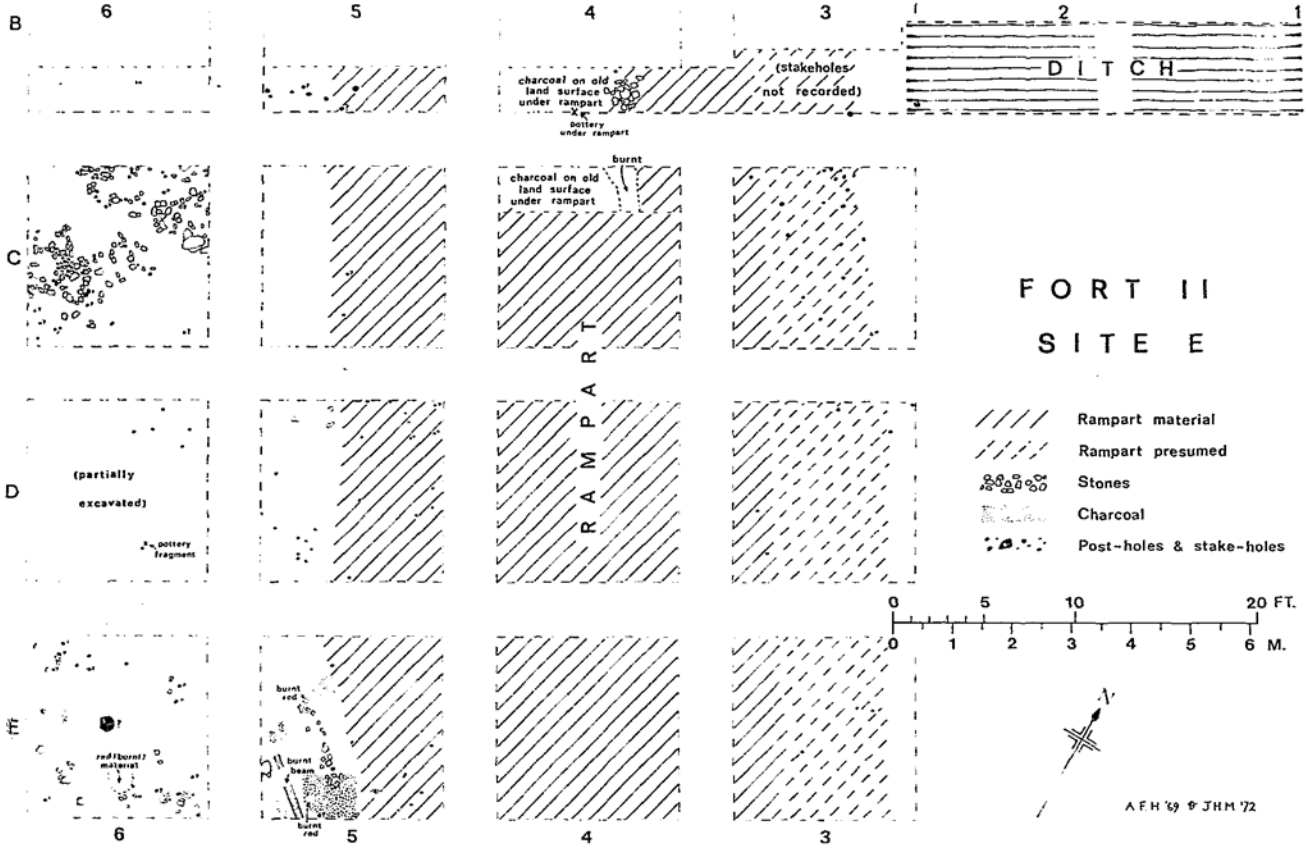


FIG. 6. Plan of Site E of Fort II, which proved that there was no 'entrance' (as marked on O.S. map) in this sector. The plan shows the ditch (cf. Plate VII), remains of ploughed-down rampart, post-holes, stake-holes and traces of occupation behind the rampart—the only evidence of occupation in either fort.

stake-holes, and many small stones resting on the old land surface, which, although no pattern was detected, may have been a working-floor or the base of a hut. Behind the rampart in E5 there was much burnt material, including two beams which appeared as black outlines in the lighter soil. The reddened clay and sandstone and patches of charcoal here and in part of E6 suggest the presence of a hearth.

In the trench through B3, B4 and B5 all the rampart material, the underlying topsoil and a few inches of subsoil were excavated. In B4, B5 and C4 considerable quantities of charcoal, mostly of oak but including beech, were found on the old land surface under the rampart. Like charcoal in similar situations elsewhere (cf. pp. 67 and 74 above), this probably represents the burning of unwanted wood and undergrowth before the building of the rampart. A sample of this charcoal gave a radiocarbon date of *c.* 228 B.C. (see p. 64 above). In B4 were a few pieces (but the largest single collection!) of rough hand-made pottery, which Professor Cunliffe assigns to the beginning of the pre-Roman Iron Age (Appendix A).

The front edge of the rampart (B3, C3, D3 and E3) had been removed by erosion or ploughing or both. Numerous stake-holes (some of which must have formed part of a revetment structure), however, made it possible to judge with reasonable accuracy where the edge of the rampart had once been.

The main feature of Site E was the ditch, which was 8 ft. (2·43 m.) deep and about 20 ft. (6·09 m.) wide (Plate VI). Below the plough-soil was a thick layer of rampart material (up to 24 in. (0·61 m.) deep in places), which must have been shovelled into the top of the ditch when the rampart was demolished. This material was very clearly separated from the underlying layer of dark brown silt (up to 3 ft. (0·91 m.) thick), the top of which would have been the surface until the modern arable phase began; over a short length the humus top of this layer was clearly visible. Immediately below the dark brown silt, on the inner (south-west) side of the ditch, was a quantity of fallen rampart material, which represented an earlier stage in the rampart's decay. Under the dark brown silt, in the ditch as a whole, was a layer of heavily panned silt, buff in colour and with dark irony patches; in it were a squatter's hearth and some unburnt wood which Dr. M. Y. Stant (see p. 79) found 'too fragmentary and decomposed and mineralized for identification'. Next there was a layer of smooth orange and grey silt; and, finally, the primary silt, smooth grey with horizontal streaks, each of which represented a wash of silt into the ditch at the start of its life. Miss M. Collins (see p. 79) found a low pH figure in the primary silt and concluded that liming, which was clearly evident from her tests on the modern soil, had not been carried out in ancient times. Another heap of collapsed rampart material lay to the south-west of and near

the bottom of the ditch, and in another part of the excavated trench a small amount of rampart material lay at the very bottom of the ditch *under* the primary silt. These two deposits represent the earliest decay of the rampart, that below the primary silt possibly having fallen while the construction of the rampart was actually in progress.

Sites G and H (Fig. 1) (1969)

Two trenches were cut at random inside the fort in the hope of locating occupational material. In Site G the natural rock was encountered everywhere immediately under the plough-soil. In some places the natural rock was undisturbed and took the form of layered slabs divided by narrow fissures. In other parts the top of the rock had been weathered and was no more than sand and small fragments disturbed from their original bed. There was no trace of occupation of any sort.

Site H, which was in a shallow depression, yielded a few pieces of charcoal and burnt sandstone, but was otherwise barren. In the southern part of the site the natural rock also lay immediately under the plough; elsewhere, it sloped downwards and was overlaid by grey and orange loam, above which was a mottled grey and brown soil with small irony nodules.

Site J (Fig. 1) (1970)

Sub-site a

The work on Site E (see p. 75 above) having shown that the O.S. had wrongly marked the entrance there, it was decided to test the possibility of there being a causeway under the modern track where it enters the north corner of the fort. A trench 8 ft. (2·43 m.) by 14 ft. (4·26 m.) was dug across the ditch silt and up to the side of the track. Wet weather prevented the trench from being completely excavated, but enough digging was done to locate the sloping side of the ditch, which ran straight towards the track and showed no signs of curving round to form a ditch-end, which would have occurred if there had been a causeway and entrance at this point.

Sub-sites b and e

Two trenches (sub-sites b and e) were cut behind the tail of the rampart, in the hope of finding occupation material, but with negative results.

Sub-sites c, d and g

The top of the rampart was exposed at various points in the hope of establishing a system of palisade posts. Although a number of the

soft dark fillings found in the rampart material were convincing enough as post-holes, the examination was interrupted everywhere by chestnut stumps, under which it was not possible to dig and which prevented the examination of anything but isolated areas. No record was made of what was found, because, with so much interruption by the chestnut, any plan would have been positively misleading.

Sub-sites f and h

Two adjacent trenches were dug against the nose of the rampart and down to the natural in front of it, in the hope of finding more revetting posts like those in Site D (see pp. 73–4 above). None was detected.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First, I must thank the owner of Castle Hill, Sir Henry d'Avigdor-Goldsmid, Bt., M.P., his tenant, Mr. James Hill, who gave us permission to excavate, and Sir Henry's agent, Mr. D. J. Adamson, who helped us in many ways.

Special thanks are due to the Kent Archæological Society, who contributed one-third of the total cost (£505); and to the Tonbridge Urban District Council, the Tonbridge Rural District Council, the Tonbridge Historical Society, Iris Lady Wedgwood and Mr. I. D. Margary, M.A., F.S.A., all of whom were particularly generous.

The work was carried out by volunteers. I am grateful to the supervisors, Messrs. Michael Bridge, Christopher Giles, Frank Johns, James Monnington and John Rogerson, and Dr. Anthony Harding, for their skill and advice; Mrs. Gabrielle Bond, Miss Jessica Davies, Mrs. Douglas Giles, Miss Kathleen Leigh, and Messrs. John Southam, Anthony Streeten, Alan Stronghill and Andrew Webster deserve special mention.

Thanks are due to the British Museum Research Laboratory for undertaking two radiocarbon determinations on charcoals from the forts; Miss Margaret Collins, for soil analyses; Dr. M. Y. Stant, for identifying the charcoals; Dr. M. S. Tite, for undertaking magnetic measurements on some of the soils; Professor Barry Cunliffe, M.A., Ph.D., F.S.A., for reporting on the pottery (Appendix A); and Mr. John Wymer, M.A., F.S.A., the flints (Appendix B).

The finds, site books, plans and section drawings are deposited in the Tunbridge Wells Museum.

CONCLUSIONS

The following conclusions can be drawn:

(i) Castle Hill was visited in Mesolithic and Neolithic times;

(ii) about 315 B.C. a bivallate fortification (Fort I), enclosing 2·9 acres (1·2 hectares), was built on the brow of the spur which dominates the north-west to south-east ridgeway and exercises indirect control over the important river-crossing at Tonbridge;
(iii) after a brief occupation, the revetment of the inner rampart (beside the east entrance at least) was burnt and collapsed into the ditch;
(iv) this destruction may have been followed by a peaceful phase, during which farming took place on the hill-top;
(v) about 228 B.C. a basically univallate fortification (Fort II), enclosing 2·5 acres (1·01 hectares), was built to the south-west of Fort I in the only remaining position suitable for defence;
(vi) after brief occupation Fort II fell into disuse.

APPENDIX A

POTTERY

By B. W. CUNLIFFE, M.A., Ph.D., F.S.A.

The fragments of pottery recovered from Castle Hill so far lack well defined characteristics. The collection from Fort I, however, includes part of a vessel assignable to the second millenium B.C. as well as a sherd of the late pre-Roman Iron Age. The sherds from the old land surface below Fort II give the impression of belonging to the beginning of the pre-Roman Iron Age and might tentatively be dated to the sixth or fifth centuries B.C.

Fort I—East Entrance (Site L)

1. Three body sherds in a very coarse grey brown fabric fired to red on the outer surface. The ware is tempered with large flint grits. The surface appears to have been rusticated with a coarse toothed comb in a style of decoration not unlike that current in the late Neolithic period.
2. Body sherd in hard grey sandy ware, from the shoulder of a bowl with an out-turned rim. Possibly wheel turned. This should be placed late in the pre-Roman Iron Age.
3. Three small body sherds from different vessels, but all in brown sandy wares with flint grits.
4. A small fragment from the upstanding rim of a vessel, possibly like a saucepan pot. Crumbly grey ware.

Fort II—Site E, Rampart Material

Fragments of soft buff coloured daub tempered with chopped chaff.

Fort II—Site E, old Land Surface under Rampart

1. Body sherds in soft dark grey sandy fabric tempered with fine inclusions. The form of the vessel is uncertain, but it is presumably large, since the sherds are ⅜ in. (1·0 cm.) thick.
2. Body sherd probably from the shoulder angle of a large jar. Grey sandy fabric with flint grit inclusions re-fired to a light red colour on the surface after breakage.
3. Three small body sherds probably from a bowl or small jar in a grey brown sandy fabric with small grit inclusions. The surfaces have been burnished.

Fort II—Site E, Occupation Level

Body sherds in grey ware tempered with coarse flint grit. Too small to be distinctive.

APPENDIX B

Flints

By J. J. Wymer, M.A., F.S.A.

The flint artefacts found during the course of the excavations were in no great numbers or concentrations, or at any particular archæological levels. They vary in condition, from fresh to slightly worn and patinated, the majority having their edges a little dulled, probably by attrition in the soil. The flint used is mainly grey with paler cherty inclusions, but darker and lighter flint occurs including a pale ochreous variety. The typology of those with secondary working suggests that they represent several different periods, and their sparseness and varying conditions support a conclusion that they are casual losses spread over a long period of time, from the Mesolithic period to historical times.

Flakes without secondary working

Of 27 examples examined, only one is patinated a pale blue-white. Another is white and fire-crackled. There is nothing diagnostic but they are probably the waste chippings of Mesolithic or Neolithic industries.

Flakes with secondary working of unspecialized type, or with heavy use

Eight examples. Two are lightly patinated, one being a small core-rejuvenating flake, and both of these have a small amount of blunting along their edges suggestive of Mesolithic work. Two others are broken pieces about ¾ in. (2 cm.) long with small notches of less than ⅜ in. (1 cm.) diameter. A thicker, larger flake has steep trimming on three sides.

Flakes of Mesolithic type

Nine examples. There are three blades struck from prismatic cores and two are figured (Fig. 7, 1–2). Five segmented blades can be divided into:

Bulbous segments	..	3 (Fig. 7, 4)
Middle segment	..	1 (Fig. 7, 3)
Non-bulbous segment	..	1

One of the bulbous segments is lightly patinated, but the break is a fresh one. One other small flake appears to be punch-struck and may qualify for this category. The longest blade (Fig. 7, 2) is in two pieces and the break is an ancient one, having the same slight lustre as the rest of the flint.

Miscellaneous worked flakes

A rectangular, side-struck flake of dark grey-black flint has its straight end delicately trimmed. A flake of pale, ochreous flint has a neat notch with a diameter of about ⅜ in. (1 cm.) on one edge. Both pieces may be Mesolithic, as is certainly a micro-blade (Fig. 7, 5) blunted to a point from both sides. Although resembling a microlith and probably fulfilling the same functions, it is not technically a microlith as the blunting is on the non-bulbous end, the bulb remaining intact. It is unpatinated, of light grey flint and in fresh condition.

? Graver spall

A small (1¾ in.; 4·4 cm.) plunging flake of black flint patinated deep white may be a spall from graver production and thus probably Mesolithic. Unfortunately, the striking platform is missing, as the bulb is broken off by a more recent fracture. This flake appears to have been struck off the edge of a thick flake rather than the side of a core.

Scrapers

Five examples. These can be divided into:

Rounded scrapers	..	4 (Fig. 7, 11)
End scraper on blade	..	1 (Fig. 7, 6)
Small, thick, denticulated	..	1

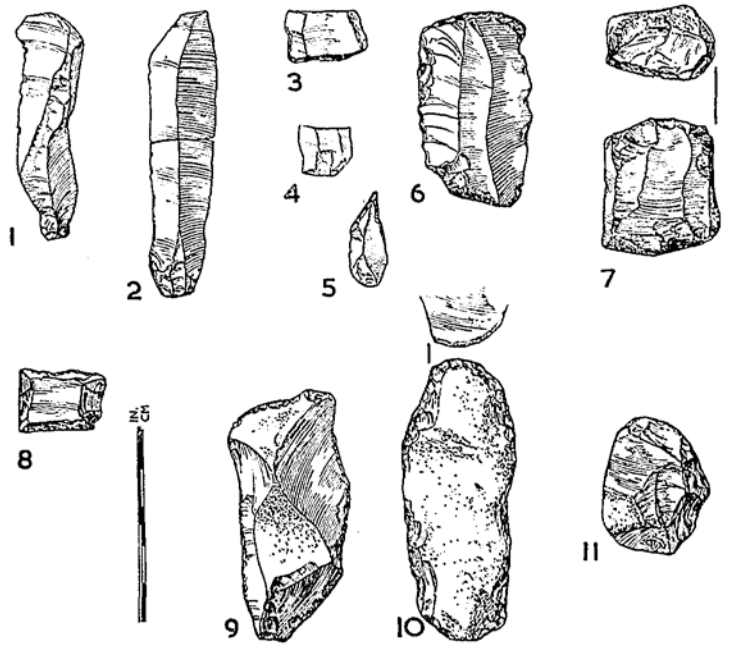


FIG. 7. Mesolithic and Neolithic Flints (see Appendix B). (Scale: $\frac{1}{2}$)

Only the latter is patinated. The end scraper is probably Mesolithic, as also may be the other rounded scrapers.

Cores

Six examples. These can be divided into:

Cores with a single platform	3
Cores with two platforms of prismatic type	1 (Fig. 7, 7)
Burnt micro-core	1
Stumpy, irregular core	1

The largest core is only $1\frac{3}{4}$ in. (4·5 cm.) long, so they may be all Mesolithic. The two-platformed core is a typical Mesolithic type. This one is patinated, as is one of the single platform cores, which also has some later unpatinated flaking and numerous incipient cones on the platform caused by unsuccessful strikings.

Hammerstones

There are no actual hammerstones, but one flake has been struck off a core bearing localized patches of battering typical of such tools.

'Strike-a-lights' and possibly allied pieces

Fig. 7, 10, illustrates an outer flake chipped irregularly around all its edges. The flake itself is patinated but the secondary chipping is not and is thus more recent. The non-bulbous end is worn smooth. Fig. 7, 9, is a flake with similar smoothing of its end and part of its edges.

Such pieces may have been used to produce fire, in conjunction with suitable lumps of iron pyrites. This is a subject which requires study, and microscopic investigation of flints suspected of being 'strike-a-lights' could well resolve doubts. The matter is discussed by Evans (1897)[9] and he quotes several instances of lumps of pyrites, sometimes grooved, with prehistoric associations. One of the most convincing examples is the flint and half nodule of iron pyrites found by Canon Greenwell in a barrow at Rudstone, near Bridlington, Yorkshire. The Rudstone flint resembles a small punch, unifacially worked and, although a little thicker, is similar in size and proportion to the one illustrated in Fig. 7, 10. It is similarly smoothed at the end and was apparently scraped across the nodule of iron pyrites as the latter is grooved.

Small, punch-like implements, unifacially or bifacially worked, usually between 2 and 4 in. (5 and 10 cm.) long, are common in Neolithic assemblages. They are generally referred to as 'fabricators', the inverted commas emphasizing that this is a term of convenience rather than function. Some are smoothed at the ends, and these, at least, could be regarded as strike-a-lights.

There is one small piece from Castle Hill which resembles a 'fabricator' but it is not smoothed at the end. Some chipping on the edge of a natural flake may be from use as a strike-a-light with steel. Three stumpy 'scrapers' may have been intended for similar purposes.

Gun-flint

Fig. 7, 8, illustrate a gun-flint of dark grey-black flint, seventeenth to twentieth century. The Brandon flint-knappers made similar flints until recently, and this example is in their size category for a pocket pistol.

Pebbles

Eighteen flint pebbles, some or all of which may have been sling-stones belonging to the period of the hill-forts, were found at scattered points.

[9] J. Evans, *The Ancient Stone Implements, Weapons and Ornaments of Great Britain*, 2nd Edition, London, 1897, 16–17, 312–19.

Conclusion

The only flint artefacts found at Castle Hill which are diagnostic of any particular prehistoric period are considered to be Mesolithic. Most of the other flintwork probably dates to the same period. This is not surprising, as Tonbridge is in the heart of the Wealden area which is rich in evidence of Mesolithic activity. In Tunbridge Wells Museum there is a core, four blades of flakes, a scraper and a worked piece from Castle Hill, all probably Mesolithic.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

This paper is published with the aid of a grant from the Council for British Archeaology.