

The burnt mound is probably the highest example to be recorded in the Clyde/Tweed hills, and as such shows that such altitudes should be investigated for sites. It probably dates to the Bronze Age, c 3000 – 4500 years ago, the period to which most local burnt mounds have been dated.

Glendorch at Snar Farm, Crawfordjohn.

Ring Enclosure.

The enclosure lies at NS 87254 19253 and is 10m in diameter overall. The bank has no obvious gap and measures 2m wide by 0.3m high.

Bucht complex

The bucht lies at NS 87216 19225 and is near the ring enclosure. It measures 12m wide by 17m long overall, but with an extension bank on the SE side continuing for another 20m. The banks measure up to 3m wide by 0.75m high. The open end faces down hill to the SW. At the upper end there is a partition bank forming a chamber of about 4m by 4m, a gap exists in the cross bank for access to this area. The lower and larger area is also sub divided by a narrow internal bucht that measures 8m long by 1m wide internally. The offshoot bank is designed to facilitate herding sheep into the pens. On the eastern side of the bucht turf stripping for construction is evident.

Boundary bank

Running over the entire ridge from burn to burn is a poorly preserved turf bank. It spreads to 2m wide by 0.3m high. Centred at NS 87273 19211.

Enclosure with lazy beds

This enclosure is given on OS maps at NS 8725 1910. The turf bank enclosure is about 50m square and lies on a step slope. In the lower SE corner there is a patch of lazy beds. A series of small rock quarries lies around the northern corner of the enclosure.

Possible unenclosed platform settlement

At NS 87340 19090 there is a depression that may be a UPS measuring c 14m by 8m. There is no frontal apron but a crescentic back scarp is evident. There is a depth of 0.25m mosses on the fairly level platform.

Natural depression?

At NS 87165 19214 there is a depression that has no back scarp or frontal apron.

Possible cairn?

At NS 87312 19099 there is a possible cairn measuring 6m by 5m by 2m high when measured from the lower side. A few stones protrude through the grass but probing revealed a gravelly texture to the mound which may therefore be natural.

Elvanfoot Farm, Ellershie Hill, Elvanfoot

Unenclosed platform settlement NS 91 NW NS 94562 19090 350m OD

On the south flank of Mid Hill there is a single unenclosed platform settlement. It measures 9m by 5m and has a back scarp but no frontal apron.

Cairn group NS 91 NW centred NS 9465 1915 360m OD
On the south flank of Mid Hill and above a track, there are at least nineteen small grass covered cairns, randomly dispersed over the steep hill face. A few have upright stones projecting from them. These are surface stones and it is known that local shepherds set these stones up for sheep rubbing stones, a phenomenon previously recorded in the area (Ward 1992, 12).

NS 94609 19127	3m by 0.75m	
NS 94612 19149	2m by 0.4m	
NS 94604 19156	2m by 0.3m	} plus two cairns between with standing stones
NS 94566 19166	2m by 0.4m	
NS 94539 19161	3m by 0.5m	
NS 94569 19166	3m by 0.5m	
NS 94518 19181	4m by 0.5m	
NS 94497 19178	5m by 4m by 0.75m	
NS 94459 19160	7m by 2m by 0.3m	
NS 94419 19183	5m by 4m by 0.5m	
NS 94409 19241	5m by 4m by 0.4m	with standing stone
NS 94526 19228	3m by 0.5m	
NS 94501 19217	4m by 0.4m	
NS 94520 19185	5m by 0.6m	
NS 94541 19168	3m by 0.3m	
NS 94693 19126	6m by 3m by 0.75m	lying immediately above this cairn is a broad oval terrace which is probably of natural origin.

Standing stones, (shepherds) NS 91 NE NS 95119 19508 340m OD
On the south east flank of Mid Hill there are two adjacent upright stones; one has a prominent natural cup mark measuring 100mm. The stones are not quite earth fast. (Set up as sheep rubbing stones {local pers comm}).

Burnt mound NS 91 NE NS 9516619459 330m OD
On the south east flank of Mid Hill and at the source of the Ellershie Burn, there is a slightly dome shaped burnt mound. It measures 7m by 5.5m by 1m high. The mound tails into the upper ground and there is a further smaller mound immediately above and that measures 2m by 1m. There is now a hill drain on the west side.

Burnt mound NS 91 NE NS 95235 19387 320m OD
On the south east flank of Mid Hill and on the west bank of the Ellershie Burn, there is a burnt mound deposit lying beneath the eroded bank. The deposit is 4m long by 0.3m deep and probably represents a mound that has been scoured away by the burn, which now flows in a 2m deep and wide gully.

The cairns, platforms and burnt mounds are part of a large suite of Bronze Age sites previously recorded in the immediate area (RCAHMS 1978, CFA 1990, Ward 1992). This survey completes the set of features to allow a better understanding of the possible relationships between the sites.

Glendowran Farm, Glendowran Hill, Crawfordjohn.

Burnt mounds (2 of) NS 82 SE NS 88385 20327 380m OD

On the northern flank of Glendowran Hill and on a spring course, which feeds the Holmhead Burn, there are two burnt mounds. The larger dome shaped mound measures 6m in diameter by 1.4m high. It has a shallow cover of clayey soil and the spring course is washing over the mound that is covered in short grass.

These burnt mounds are some of the highest recorded in the area of Clyde/Tweed.

About 20m down slope, the other mound is 3m in diameter by 0.3m high.

Lying further down slope, and on the same spring course are several other obvious mounds, which when tested were shown to be natural gravel deposits. Various other mounds were tested in the nearby Holmhead Burn and these all proved to be natural.

Standing stone (sheep rubber) NS 82 SE NS 88340 2032 380m OD

On the northern flank of Glendowran Hill some 50m west of the burnt mounds given above; there is a prominent standing stone. The boulder is nearly earth fast and was set up as a sheep rubbing stone (local shepherd, pers comm).

Mine workings and spoil heaps NS 82 SE NS 88269 20530 360m OD

On the northern flank of Glendowran Hill and on the lower west flank of White Hill there is evidence of mining trials. The position is given on older OS maps. The main feature is an 8m-diameter pit with upcast all around and mineralised stony spoil, lying as two vegetation free areas. Lying in these two patches of ground are pieces of lead glassy slag within some pieces galena is visible, indicating that lead was found and some at least was smelted on the site.

Nearby at NS 88204 20548 is a prominent crescent shaped mound that measures 7m long by 3m by 1m high. This appears exactly like a classic burnt mound deposit, but consists of grey clayey gravel; it is evidently another spoil heap and trial pit for the mine. Another similar mound and pit lies immediately above here.

Also, lying along the course of Holmhead Burn to the east of the main workings, are various spoil heaps and a possible adit on the east side of the burn. OTHER INFO ----

Drilled stone NS 82 SE NS 87604 20560 320m OD

On the north west flank of Glendowran Hill and about 50m up from Glendowran Burn there is a greywacke boulder with a drilled hole. The flat boulder has probably been an unused stone for a metal fence stanchion post. The hole is triangular in shape and is 130mm deep with straight sides.

Possible cairn NS 81 NE NS 88370 19866 395m OD

On the west flank of Glendowran Hill and lying below a track, there is a possible cairn that measures 4m by 2m by 0.5m high. Grass covered stones.

Stell, quarries NS 81 NE NS 88373 19933 400m OD

On the west flank of Glendowran Hill and lying above a track, there is a ring of stones forming an enclosure c 8m in diameter. This is an old ruinous dry stone wall. Nearby are a series of small rock quarries with spoil heaps.

Townhead Farm, Dolphinton

Cairn NT 09182 43795 330m OD

On the northern flank of Broomylaw and lying at the edge of a natural terrace on the break of slope down to the NW, there is a cairn which measures 6m in diameter by 0.5m high. It has a flattened top and is covered in heather which was strimmed down in 2009.

Ring enclosure NT 09315 43785 350m OD

On the northern flank of Broomylaw and lying at the southern edge of a natural terrace which measures c 50m N/S and 35m E/W and on the break of slope down to the NW, there is a well preserved ring enclosure. The ring measures 8m in overall diameter with a flat topped bank measuring 2m wide by 0.3m high. There is no apparent gap in the circuit of the bank which could not be tested at the time of survey for content as it was frozen solid; however, probing failed to find any stone in the interior. The ring lies in an area covered with heather but which has been strimmed down in 2009.

Tinto Hill

Sheep bucht & enclosure NS 96264 35529 350m OD

On the NE flank of Tinto Hill and lying on the east side of Kirk Burn near the point where an unnamed tributary joins it are a sheep bucht and a small enclosure. The bucht measures 10m by 3m internally and is composed of a stony bank up to 2m wide by 1m high, it is open at the northern end. The enclosure is c 30m to the north and measures 8m by 9m and is composed of a low stony bank 1.5m wide by 0.2m high. Both these features are typical of upland sheep management enclosures dating to the 17th / 18th centuries.

Lazy beds NS 96386 35895 c400m OD

On the NE flank of Totherin Hill (Part of Tinto Hill) there is a patch of undeveloped lazy beds about 1m in width and only just visible within the heather in which they now lie, the beds run up a steep slope for about 100m long and form an 's' profile at their upper ends.

Backstane Hill – Pillmore Hill

Cairn NS 90780 27480 290m OD

On the southern flank of Backstane Hill there is a prominent cairn which measures c11m in diameter and is 2m high on the lower west side, it tails into the hill on its upper side. The cairn is covered in mature heather.

Cairn NS 90827 27491 290m OD

Nearby to the cairn (above) there is another cairn which measures c4m in diameter by 0.75m high. The cairn is grass covered with boulder showing.

Bomb crater group centred NS 90792 27591 310m OD

On the southern flank of Backstane Hill there is a group on bomb craters with at least twenty smaller examples of about 4m diameter and c1m deep. Two larger craters in the centre of the group are over ten metres across and around three metres deep. The smaller features are probably the result of mortar bombs falling while the larger

craters clearly show that the trajectory of the missiles was from the east towards the west as the upcast from the impacts are on the west sides.

A similar group can be found c50m upslope and to the east and where two short drystone walls have been built to form a double shooting butt.

Somewhat confusingly there is a single quarry within the upper group and this has a typical exit leading to a spoil heap in front of the quarry. It may have been that the quarry was the target area and it is known that the Robertson area nearby was used for army manoeuvres (Ward, 1992. Site No 27).

Ring enclosure NS 90570 27603 300m OD

On the SW flank of Backstane Hill and lying on a slight natural terrace there is a ring enclosure. The ring, which measures 9m internally, is seen as a low, grass covered stony bank about 0.9m wide, and no more than 0.3m high, in one place it can be seen that small flat pieces of local sandstone have been used to construct internal walling. No entrance is visible and the area within is featureless apart from an apparent cairn of the small sandstone slabs in the SE quadrant, however, on closer examination this is shown to be a double sided shooting butt built of the local stones and which has now collapsed into a cairn like pile, two short walls of 0.5m thick and set 0.9m apart formed the structure, the butt stones were probably gathered in the nearby bomb craters (above).

Ring enclosures are found in a variety of sizes and forms of construction and they remain problematic in terms of date and function. Some are described as old sheep stells but a pre historic purpose of enclosed cremation cemeteries may be applicable to some (Ward, 1992 *ibid*, 35 – 37).

Natural feature NS 90301 27610 290m OD

On the NW flank of a knoll which lies beside and overlooks the east side of the Mill Burn there is a natural platform which measures 15m by 8m. Unlike unenclosed platform settlements which it could be confused for, it has no frontal apron and the back scarp or break of slope is rather straight and not curved as would be found in an house stance. The interior is boggy.

Natural features circa 90146 27751 280m OD

On the east side of the Mill Burn there is a prominent dome shaped mound which measures 6m by 3m and is 2m high on the side which drops down to the burn, it is heather covered. When tested it was shown to consist of natural soil and stone. Further prominent mounds upstream were also tested and shown to be natural in origin. Such features can easily be confused as burnt mounds.

Cairn NS 90263 28012 320m OD

On the west flank of Backstane Hill there is a dome shaped cairn which measures c7m in diameter by 1m high. It is heather covered with some stones showing.

Bomb craters NS 90419 27930 320m OD

On the west flank of Backstane Hill there are at least four bomb craters which measure c4m wide by 0.7m deep and which were probably created by mortar shells.

Cairn and pit NS 9103 2756 300m OD

On the southern flank of Backstane Hill and on the northern side of a sheep stell there is a cairn which measures 6m in diameter by 1m on the lower side, the upper side tails into the hill but there is a 1m diameter dome shape on top. Immediately above it is a kidney shaped excavation which is 4m long by 1m wide and 0.3m deep and with the upcast on the lower side. The pit may be a very old feature judging by its appearance.

Cairn NS 91135 27552 300m OD

On the southern flank of Backstane Hill and on the eastern side of a sheep stell there is a dome shaped cairn which measures 7m by 4m by 0.75m high, it is heather covered and with stones showing.

Cairn NS 91232 27574 300m OD

On the southern flank of Backstane Hill and to the east of a sheep stell there is a shaped cairn which measures 4m in diameter by 0.5m high, it is covered in heather and has some stone showing, and it lies in a hollow area of ground.

Bomb craters centred NS 91286 27558 300m OD

On the south eastern flank of Backstane Hill there are at least eight mortar bomb craters forming a close grouping. They measure up to 2m wide.

Bomb craters centred NS 91354 27558 300m OD

On the south eastern flank of Backstane Hill there are numerous bomb craters of varying sizes and shapes, they cluster around the west and south side of a prominent knoll.

Discussion

The cairns found on Backstane hill could fall into two possible categories of function but probably belong to the Bronze Age in time; field clearance may be the reason for these cairns but because of their apparent isolation from each other it is also possible that they formed a funerary role when constructed.

The ring enclosure is equally problematic as to age and function and this has been discussed above.

The area may be an extension to the previously recorded pre historic monuments to the east on Little Law (Ward, 1992, *ibid*) and the prominent cairn (RCAHMS, *ibid*, No 117) on Wildshaw Hill to the NW all of which may well be part of a broad funerary complex dating to the Bronze Age.

The bomb craters were almost certainly created by army manoeuvres during or after WWII (local pers comm) and not due to hostile actions such as dumping bomb loads, since there are a variety of crater sizes involved.

Natural features were recorded to avoid any future confusion between them and burnt mounds and unenclosed platform settlements, which can appear to be very similar.

References

- Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland, 1978. *Lanarkshire Prehistoric and Roman Monuments*, No 246, fig 68.
- Centre for Field Archaeology, University of Edinburgh, 1990, Scottish Power plc, Parcel No 221 Ref No 4, *Hurl Burn Swyre small cairns*.
- Ward T 1992 *Upper Clydesdale Through The Ages*, Biggar Museum Trust.
- Ward T 2004 *Burnt Mound and Lead Smelting Project*, Interim Report, Biggar Museum Trust

Wandel Farm

Earthwork/natural feature? NS 95234 28687 240m OD

To the west of and overlooking the Bower of Wandel, a 15th century ruinous tower built on a prominent outcrop of rock which projects from the east bank of the River Clyde, there is a possible siege work. One of a series of glacial gravel knolls now lying between the railway and the River Clyde and which has a clear view down towards the tower, appears to have been modified either by cutting into the existing knoll or perhaps more likely by throwing up a bank along the edge which drops very steeply down to the river terrace.

The bank which can be seen in exposures to consist of gravel with cobble size stones measures 16m in length and up to 4m wide and up to 2m high. A further stretch of similar bank extends down the ridge to the north. Although this feature may be entirely of natural origin it is possible that it has been created as a siege work for attacking the tower.

The remains of the tower have deteriorated significantly with considerable erosion of the lime mortared walls and facing stones, this may be caused by cattle rubbing against the walls.

Nether Abington Farm

Lying on an area bounded on the south side by the M74, the east side by the A73 and on the north and west sides by the Duneaton Water and being the lower northern flank of Craighead Hill, there are a group of small cairns, they lie between the 250 - 260m OD contours:

- NS 92682 25781 4m diameter by 0.5m high, flat top seen as mossy grass surrounded by coarse grass and on a slight slope
- NS 92636 25764 5m by 3m by 0.5m high
- NS 92605 25791 6m by 4m by 0.5m high and centre robbed
- NS 93580 25792 3m diameter by 0m high, robbed out
- NS 92587 25748 3m diameter by 0.3m high.
- NS 92816 25585 3m diameter by 0.3m high.

Natural mound NS 92881 25474

A prominent mound measuring 8m in diameter by 0.5m high is a patch of raised bog

NS 93111 25424 Enclosures, sheep stell

A ruinous stell lies with a group of enclosure banks lying on the summit of a broad knoll in semi improved ground. These are part of sheep management enclosures.

Recently made mound NS 95297 18048

On the north west flank of Craighead Hill and lying about 100m above the unclassified road to Crawfordjohn there is a prominent earth mound of recent origin. It has been created by machine moving of soil from above, the reason for this is unknown however, it will eventually take on the appearance of an archaeological feature, hence the reason for this record. It measure c6m by 1.5m high and is dome shaped.

Elvan Water

Building NS 93635 17339

On the lower north flank of Lousie Wood Law and in an area known as Toddle Moss, on the south side of Elvan water and the B7040 road to Leadhills, there are the prominent remains of a small building, built of lime mortared stone. It measures 8m by 6m and forms a single chamber with an entrance on the south long wall, appended onto the east side is another tiny chamber, possibly a pig sty. Judging by a piece of window glass on a molehill the building dates to the late 18th early 19th century. A patch of six lazy beds drop down from the disused rail track on the north side.

Crawford

Find spot Chert steep sided scraper NS 95214 20501

A chert scraper was picked up from a molehill. (Retained at Biggar Museum).

Golf course features NS 95403 20977

Three prominent mounds lying just above the fence line at the A702 road through Crawford give the appearance of burnt mounds, however these are features connected with the old Crawford golf course and this is confirmed by the presence of a green and former tees and bunkers seen just 100m to the north.

Natural mounds NS 95272 20678

Lying just to the south side of the A74 and above Crawford village there is a prominent double mound which has the appearance of a burnt mound. The mounds were tested and shown to consist of broken angular rock in a dark soil matrix, but there is no charcoal and the stone is weathered brown rather than discoloured by heating. It is difficult to explain the nature of these mounds as such natural mounds in the district are easily demonstrated to be the result of glacial deposition being gravel in a matrix of the same light brown soil as surrounds them. The mounds measure 16m in total length each being c6m and 9m in diameter and up to 1m high, they lie in a dry gully. They are covered in the same grass as the field within which they lie.

Elvanfoot

Recumbent stone NS 95297 18048

Lying equidistant between the A702 road and the River Clyde and adjacent to and on the north side of the supposed Roman Road (RCAHMS, 1978) there is a massive greywacke stone which measures 2.4m long by 1.1m broad and at least 0.4m thick as it lies on the ground. The stone has a pointed end which aligns with the road in the direction of Crawford; the other end is a broad flat 'base'? This stone is extremely unusual although such singular large stones are occasionally seen on the Upper Clyde landscape. It may just be an isolated erratic however it lies almost within site of the standing stone at Crookedstane Farm to the south east (RCAHMS, 1978, *ibid*). It is

possible this stone has some archaeological significance either with Romans or the Bronze Age – or both.

Red Moss, Crawfordjohn

Natural cup marked stone NS 86237 25106 290m OD

On the lower east flank of Braid Knowe (hill) and north of the Braidknowe Burn there is a large greywacke erratic boulder apparently lying flat on the ground. It measures about 4m long by 1.5m broad and of an unknown width, it has a pointed end but what is so unusual is the fact that the upper surface is almost covered in natural cup marks. Some cups are perfectly round and bowl shaped and up to about 35mm in diameter while most are oval shaped up to 50mm long and vary in depth to about 30mm deep. A smaller stone of about 1m in size lies around 10m to the north; it is the only other visible stone in the area of tussock grass. The two stones make an alignment of 133⁰ to the cross over between the two hills; Mill Scar and Drake Law to the south east, a fact which may have no archaeological significance. Only part of the stone is currently visible the rest being covered in turf.

Discussion

Greywacke stones such as this are often found with various shapes and sizes of natural cup marks in the Tweed Hills to the east, but they are much rarer in the Upper Clyde valley. This example is exceptional for the area. It may have some archaeological significance (although natural) since it ought to have been highly visible during the Late Neolithic/Early Bronze Age period and when the nearby Wildshaw Burn Stone Circle (Ward 1992 & 2012) was being built. The alignment with the smaller stone to the horizon feature is intriguing but of course may be coincidental nevertheless the site is worthy of further investigation.

Refs:

Ward T 1992, Upper Clydesdale Through The Ages, the M74 Project, Biggar Museum Trust 1992.

Ward T 2012, A re evaluation of the Wildshaw Burn Stone Circle site at Crawfordjohn, www.bbiggararchaeology.org.uk

Quarry, spoil heaps and sheep stells NS 86596 25310 280m OD

On the lower east flank of Braid Knowe (hill) and north of the Braidknowe Burn there is an elevated area of drier ground lying in the Middle Muir (bog). Cut into the western side, there is a quarry from which sandstone has been extracted to build two sheep stells nearby (both now ruinous). However adjacent to the quarry there has been another less obvious trial for rock which has resulted in a prominent dome shaped crescentic spoil heap being created. It measures 14m long by 8m wide and 2m high and has the appearance of a burnt mound.

Ring enclosure (possible) NS 96936 25904

Lying on an elevated area of Middle Muir there is a possible ring enclosure, perhaps the scant remains of a small sheep steel. It measures c10m in diameter with a stone free bank of up to 2m wide and 0.3m high. The perimeter is infested with rush growth. The interior is featureless.

Standing stone NS 8586 2617 290m OD

On an unnamed summit on Middle Muir and south of Black Burn there is an isolated boulder lying at the corner of a drystone dyke. The stone measures about 1m long and by up to 0.6m high above the turf; it is rather rounded in shape.

Such isolated stones in an otherwise stone free landscape as this is should be treated as having possible archaeological significance.

Ring enclosure NS 8670 2615 290m OD

On an unnamed summit on Middle Muir and south of Black Burn there is ring enclosure measuring c10m in diameter and the bank 0.3m high.