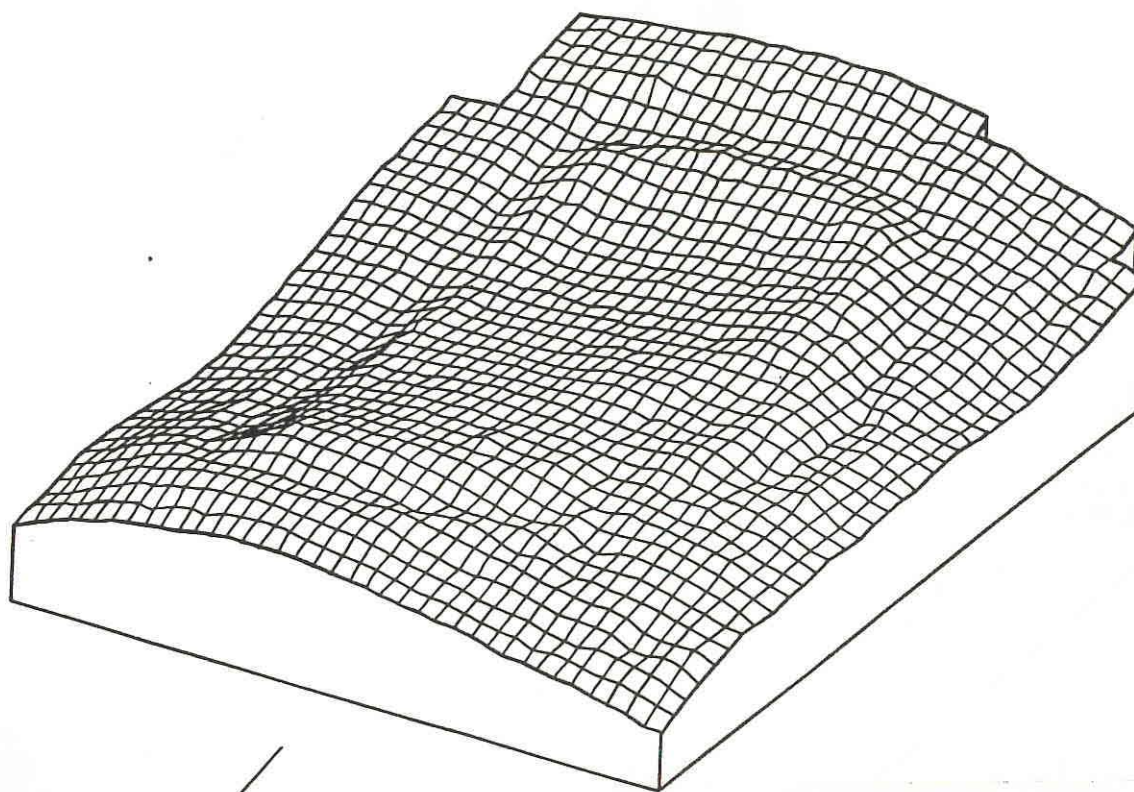


CLWT CAMP SIBWLL WOOD KERRY · POWYS



isometric plot of
Clwt Camp, Kerry, Powys
from the Trust's original survey
by Paddy Moindrot, Antur Tanat Cain

C L W T C A M P, K E R R Y, P O W Y S

By N. W. Jones and W. G. Owen¹

Introduction

Clwt Camp lies at a height of 245 m. above Ordnance Datum, on a slight spur on the north-facing slope of the Miwl valley, about 3.5 km east of Kerry (SO 18018952).² The site is completely overlooked by higher ground to the south and south-east, but the local topography is steepest to the north and north-east, immediately below the camp (fig. 1). The general siting is similar to the univallate enclosure at Drefor, 1 km to the east.

Until recently, the camp lay within and was obscured by mature timber forming part of the western end of Sibwll Wood (also known as Trefeen Wood).³ During the course of clearfelling carried out in the winter of 1986-87, a new trackway was cut across the site by machine, inadvertently damaging the enclosure entrance and parts of the enclosure banks at the north-west entrance, and also infilling part of the ditch on the south-east. Fortunately, the interior of the camp has sustained little damage.

As a consequence, the Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust was commissioned in late February and early March 1987 to make a record of the oblique section which had been cut through the enclosure banks just to the north of the entrance. The opportunity was also taken to make a complete survey of the site, now unobscured by trees, to which the recorded section could be related.⁴ The bank ends were subsequently consolidated with turf to prevent further erosion. The area around the camp had been replanted with larch transplants just before the survey was made.

General description of the camp

The camp essentially forms a D-shaped univallate enclosure about 65 m. across, with a usable internal area of about 1 ha. (2.14 acres), with an outer, counterscarp bank on the northern side.⁵ There is a fall of about 15 m. from the northern to the southern side of the camp, and the profile from north to south gives the impression that the internal area has been slightly terraced into the hillside, the resulting spoil presumably being used to enhance a slight natural spur on which it is sited (fig. 1, C-D).

Both banks are fairly low and sometimes indistinct, especially on the eastern side. A hollow about 2.5 m. across on the crest of the bank at the north-east corner (omitted from the accompanying plan), may have resulted from a tree being uprooted some time in the past. The ditch presently varies in width from 3 to 4 m., and in depth from 0.5 to 1.6 m. It is both widest and deepest on the south-east side, facing the rising ground, an observation also made at Drefor (Spurgeon 1972, 330). On this side, such is the rise in the ground that the outer edge of the ditch is about 1 m. higher than the inner edge. On the western side there is a discontinuity in the line of the ditch where it crosses a slight saddle. While it is possible that this is due to later disturbance, it may be that the ditch was incompletely dug, suggesting that the ditch was primarily a quarry for bank material, rather than being essentially defensive in its own right.

According to Spurgeon (1972, 332), the only entrance was a simple gap on the north-west; this is consistent with earlier sketch plans of the site (Morris 1889, Hughes 1922), but this had unfortunately been damaged before the new survey was made. The Royal Commission (RCAM 1919, no. 284) locates the entrance on the eastern side, but there appears to be little evidence for this.

Just inside the enclosure entrance is a slight terrace defined by a scarp about 0.5 m. high, which appears to represent a house platform about 14 m. across. There are no other clear indications of buildings within the enclosure.

The bank sections

The section which resulted from the machine cut, extended for a distance of 13.4 m. to the north-east of the entrance (fig. 1, A-B). The recently constructed trackway had been cut down into the natural, light olive coloured clay and angular shale beneath the inner bank, and to about the base of the counterscarp bank. Part of the section was obscured by a tree stump and tree roots, which had clearly caused some disturbance to the stratification.

The banks proved to be very slight, and advantage had clearly been taken of the natural siting during their construction to minimise the effort involved. The inner bank consisted of a layer of fairly firm yellowish brown sandy loam up to 0.4 m. thick. The counterscarp bank was of similar material, but only about 0.2 m. thick, and contained a greater quantity of angular shale fragments towards its base. There was no suggestion of a buried ground surface below either bank. The trackway had just clipped the upper filling of the ditch below the topsoil just to the north of the entrance, revealing about 0.1 m. of yellowish brown sandy silt. No datable material was recovered when the sections were cleaned and recorded.

Bibliography

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RCAM 1911. Montgomeryshire Inventory, Royal Commission of Ancient Monuments in Wales and Monmouthshire.

Spurgeon, C. J., 1972. 'Enclosures of Iron Age Type in the Upper Severn Basin', in F. Lynch and C. Burgess (eds) Prehistoric Man in Wales and the West.

Footnote references

1. The Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust, 7a Church Street, Welshpool, Powys.
2. Powys Archaeological Record No. PAR 1898. Scheduled Ancient Monument No. Mg 136.
3. Owned by County Land Agent and Valuer's Department, Powys County Council.
4. We are grateful to Mr J. G. Markwick for granting permission to carry out the work, and to Mrs Higgs of Upper Trefeen Farm for granting access. The cost of recording the damaged bank section have been provided by Powys County Council Estates Department. The cost of the site survey was borne by Cadw/ Welsh Historic Monuments. Survey work was carried out with the assistance of Peter Downey and Hugh Ward. The publication drawing is by Bill Britnell.
5. The site is classified as bivallate in Spurgeon 1972, 330.

Damaged bank ends and partially infilled ditch terminal and recently constructed trackway on the northern side of the entrance, viewed from the south-west.

Recently constructed trackway and partially infilled enclosure ditch on the eastern side of the camp, viewed from the south.

Section through the inner bank, viewed from the south-west (scale 2 metres).

Section through the outer bank viewed from the south-west (scale 2 metres).

CLWT CAMP KERRY

