

No. 6 Peter S. Gelling. Close ny chollagh: an Iron Age fort at Scarlett, Isle of Man

## Close ny chollagh: an Iron Age fort at Scarlett, Isle of Man

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WITH A REPORT ON ANIMAL REMAINS

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CLOSE ny chollagh lies on the southern coast of the Isle of Man (fig. 1), about one mile south-west of Castletown, and is one of the group of Manx fortified coastal sites. It is not on a promontory, having land adjacent to it on two of its four sides, but the deep gully to the south combines with an artificial ditch along the rest of the landward side to make it a position of some strength.

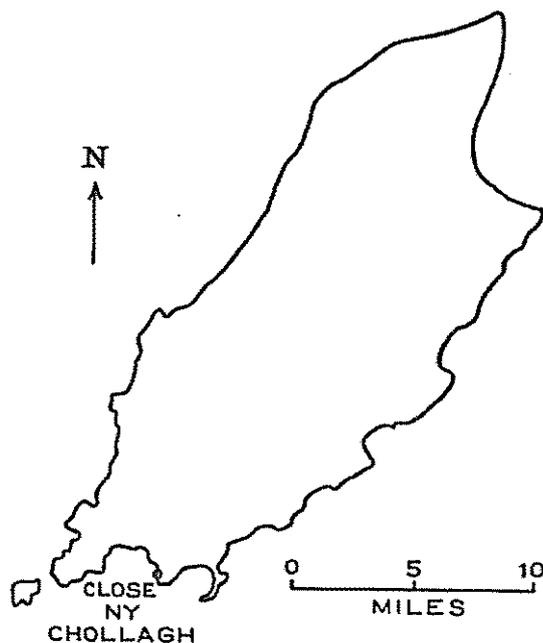


Fig. 1

Outline of the Isle of Man, showing position of Close ny Chollagh

When it was chosen for excavation in 1953 it was thought that the Manx promontory forts belonged to the Viking Age, and Close ny chollagh did indeed have a mediaeval level in which the principal building was a long-house of

Scandinavian type\*. There was also, however, an Iron Age level, separated by a sterile layer from the later one, clearly demonstrating for the first time an Iron Age origin for one of the Manx promontory forts. It is to this Iron Age phase in the history of the fort that the present report is devoted.

The work was carried on in August and early September for four years, 1953-6, making about twenty weeks in all. It was supported throughout by grants from the Trustees of the Manx Museum and from the Isle of Man Natural History and Antiquarian Society, and in the third and fourth years by grants from Birmingham University. It is a pleasure to record our thanks to Mr J. T. Watterson, of Scarlett Farm, for permission not only to excavate but to continue the work much longer than was originally scheduled; and to the late Mr N. Faragher, of Poolvash Farm, who provided storage-space for equipment, and helped in many other ways. Mr J. F. Cowley, the Manx Museum's foreman, and an experienced excavator, assisted with the work throughout. Otherwise the helpers were mainly students from Birmingham, Bristol, Glasgow and London Universities. The plan of Hut 2 is largely the work of Miss D. O'Hanlon. Dr W. Potts, of the Department of Zoology, Birmingham University, has very kindly provided a report on the animal remains.

The fair copies of the plans, and most of the drawings of the finds, are the work of Miss C. Smith, technical assistant in the Department of Ancient History and Archaeology, Birmingham University.

I should like in particular to acknowledge the assistance received throughout the excavation from Mr B. R. Megaw, formerly Director of the Manx Museum, now Director of the School of Scottish Studies.

## THE DEFENCES

(For plan and section, see Pls. xx-xxi; details, Pls. xvii-xix)

The defences consisted of a rampart, which probably encircled the whole site, and a ditch on the landward side only. The ditch began at the south side at the head of a natural gully, and its course is clear until it reaches the modern stone wall on the north side. Thereafter it probably did not curve round with the rampart, but swung a little further north to go round an outcrop of rock. The ground level to the north of the stone wall is modern and artificial, and it is hard to say exactly where the ditch ended.

The dimensions of the ditch were determined at only one point, on the south-east side of the site. Here it was rock-cut and fairly steep-sided for about 6 feet 6 inches, while above the rock the sides sloped rather gently. The bottom was flat and followed the inclined plane of the limestone strata. At the lip it was some 28 feet wide, narrowing to 10 feet at the bottom. Its maximum depth was 9 feet 6 inches. Its filling consisted of a shallow primary silting, above which there was a deep and very stony deposit probably consisting mainly of material fallen from the rampart. Above this, on the outside, a quantity of earth and small stones had silted down from the adjacent field. In the main stony layer there was a number of large shaped blocks of stone, which had presumably been part of the rampart's

\* *Proc. IOM Nat. Hist. and Ant. Soc.*, vol. v, no. v, 1957.

outer face. The relatively small amount of fine silting at the bottom may indicate that the ditch was cleaned out from time to time.

The rampart, at least on the landward side, had two distinct structural periods. In the main section on the south-east side the inner face of the earlier rampart stood almost underneath the highest part of the later one. It was preserved to a height of about 2 feet 3 inches, and consisted of large unshaped stones fitted roughly together. They were quite unlike the neat building characteristic of the later rampart. Associated with this inner face was a core of small rubble; this had presumably been obtained from the ditch and had been piled on a surface from which the turf (if any) had been removed. It is impossible to say how high this rampart may have been. The maximum width allowed by the existing inner lip of the ditch is 10 feet 10 inches, but the ditch may have been widened when the rampart was rebuilt. About one foot inside this original inner face there was a carefully constructed post-hole,  $7\frac{1}{2}$  inches square and 15 inches deep, stone-lined to the bottom. At first sight it resembled the large stone-lined post-holes which were found just inside the rampart at Cronk ny merriu, another Manx promontory fort five miles away to the north-east. These occurred every 10 feet, and appeared to be connected with a raised rampart walk. The present example, however, seems to be too close to the stone face to have served such a purpose, being only one foot away, compared with two to three feet at Cronk ny merriu.

The inner face of the earlier rampart was revealed in a second section on the north-east side. It was again built roughly of unshaped stones, and was running parallel to the inner lip of the ditch, and at the same distance from it as in the other section.

Its date is a matter for conjecture only. The earliest interior buildings, for which an approximate date will be suggested, all seemed to be associated with the rebuilt rampart. The earlier rampart must be considerably older. Not only had its inner face collapsed when the rebuilding took place, reducing it to an eroded stump, but, to judge by the traces of humus in the layer of gritty soil which was thrown over it in the first stage of the rebuilding, turf had begun to form on the collapsed material in the ditch.

On the landward side the later rampart was built over the stump of the earlier one. A new inner face was built well inside the previous one, and no doubt the cleaning out of the ditch provided some of the material for the core. The ditch may have been deepened: the blocks of limestone which were found in its filling and are presumed to have been part of an outer face (now vanished) could well have been quarried from the rock into which the ditch was cut. The ditch which went with the earlier rampart may have been quite shallow, because there was no evidence that quarried limestone was used by the earlier builders, only boulders from the shore. This suggests that the ditch was not cut deep into the rock until the second phase. One or two courses of the new inner face were preserved on the north-east side. It runs fairly straight, instead of following the curve of the ditch, as the earlier one did; the result is that the rampart reaches a maximum width of nearly 30 feet. It may be doubted if it was built very high to this full width, and the possibility suggests itself that the inner face may have been stepped. This idea receives some support from the remaining fragment of inner face, which has

a very level upper surface (except where stones are obviously missing), as if it had never carried any higher courses, but had acted as a lowest step. There were no traces, however, of any other steps higher up the side of the rampart.

The builders of the long-house dug deep into the rampart and destroyed its inner face along the whole south side, but on the seaward side considerable portions of it were well preserved. Here there was no ditch material to fill the core of the wall, so fairly large rubble from the shore was used instead. Very little remained of the outer face, but what there was suggested that the thickness of the rampart had been about 10 feet 6 inches where it overlooks the gully on the south side, and between 8 feet and 9 feet 6 inches along the west side. The position of the footing stones of the outer face was dictated to some extent by the configuration of the rock.

The best preserved stretch was between the north-west corner and the point where it breaks off near Hut 3. Up to ten courses were preserved, showing masonry of excellent quality. The highest point was at the north-west corner, where the inner face stood 5 feet 10 inches high. It has a marked batter today, but this may well be due to subsidence following the erosion of the rampart's outer face.

The builders of the earlier rampart seem to have intended to create a semi-circular defensive line; the later builders, on the other hand, seem to have aimed at an enclosure with nearly straight sides and carefully rounded corners. These differing tendencies may be noted, while admitting that both sets of builders were largely circumscribed by the nature of the site.

Granted that the later builders fortified the site with some care, it is natural to expect a well-constructed entrance. Nothing of the kind was discovered. Supposing that there was one, its position can only be indicated by a process of elimination. The only possible position appears to be on the north side, where the rampart is missing altogether. The inner face ends abruptly, from being six courses high, on the north side of Hut 3, and by Hut 1 the other end breaks off just as suddenly. Between the ends, apart from some scraps of relatively modern building, there is only a very crude structure, extending halfway across the gap from the west side, consisting mainly of reused rampart stones thrown together in the roughest possible manner. It is of uncertain date, but might plausibly be connected with the mediaeval occupation. The entrance may have been somewhere in this gap. If the landward rampart continued on a wider arc until it overlapped the seaward end, there could have been an entrance facing out to sea.

## THE HUTS

Most of the south-east side of the area enclosed by the rampart was taken up by the mediaeval long-house, inside which almost every trace of earlier occupation had been obliterated, but in the remaining area there were four huts in various states of preservation.

*Hut 1.* Hut 1 (fig. 2; pl. xv) was the slightest in construction. Its outline was marked by a slot in the ground some 5 inches deep and 9-12 inches in width, in which footing-stones had been set on edge. It probably held the foot of a light wall

of wattle and daub; fragments of burnt daub were found in the slot at one point. The slot and footing-stones could only be followed for about two-thirds of a circle; if they continued further they may have been obliterated during the building of Hut 3. Slight as this building was, its use cannot have been entirely transient, because on the east-south-east side there were signs that it had been repaired. For about 5 feet the slot had no stones in it, and had evidently been replaced by a row of footing-stones, without a slot, which curved out beyond the original line of the wall. Then for about 5 feet neither original slot nor repair could be convincingly traced, but a further 8 feet were well preserved on the south side of the house, ending with a post-hole 6 inches in diameter and 5 inches deep.

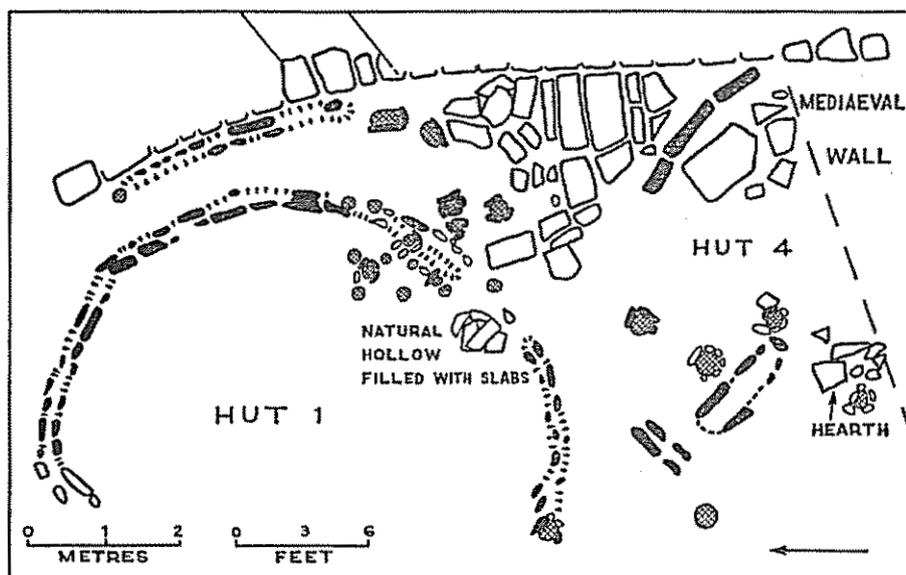


Fig. 2

Close ny Chollagh, Isle of Man: plan of huts 1 and 4

Very little could be learned about the internal features of this hut. It is on the higher part of the site, and the occupation deposit—if there ever was one—had been lost through erosion or disturbance. Near the repaired portion of the wall an oval depression in the ground some 8 inches deep had been levelled off by filling it with thin slabs of limestone. It contained no occupation material, and was presumably levelled off when the hut was built.

The circular shape of the hut was by no means regular, but its maximum diameter would be about 21 feet. On the north-east side it stood only 2 feet 8 inches from the foot of the rampart, and at this point there were traces of an earlier similar structure which had been built right against the rampart. They took the form of a slot, with footing-stones set on edge in it, which followed the line of the rampart for 10 feet. It was hard to say whether any other features could be associated with this slot. Close to its south end there were two elongated post-holes: the one nearer

the rampart was 16 by 8 inches, and 5 inches deep; the second, on a slightly different alignment, was the same length and depth, but only 6 inches wide, and had one packing-stone. It is possible that these continue the line of the earlier slot, but if they do, they represent a change in the manner of building. It may be pointed out here that the flimsy footing-stones which remain in this slot could hardly have survived the construction of the inner face of the rampart, if they had been there first, and that the rebuilt rampart is therefore probably older.

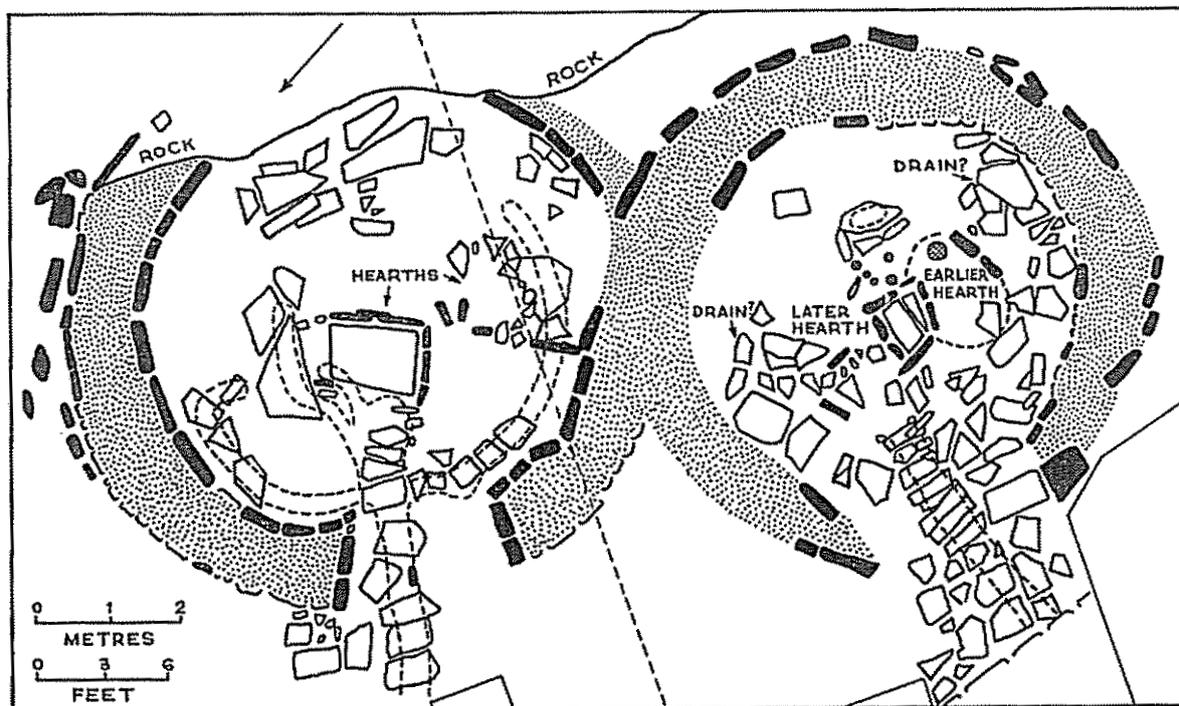


Fig. 3

Close ny Chollagh, Isle of Man: plan of huts 2 (*right*) and 3 (*left*)

*Hut 2.* Hut 2 (fig. 3; pl. xvi, upper; pl. xvii) was the most southerly of the Iron Age buildings. About a quarter of its wall was preserved to an average height of 2 feet 9 inches, and the line of about half of it, in all, could be established with certainty. The internal diameter from the south side of the doorway was 17 feet 9 inches.

The inner face of the wall varied in construction. Beginning from the south side of the doorway there were some rather small slabs set on edge, above which nothing survived. Then, 7 feet from the doorway, there was a large slab set on edge, followed by a second slab 12 feet further on. The space between these slabs was entirely filled with dry walling, the courses of which were not all horizontal, but tended to slope downwards from the second slab to the first. After the second slab the condition of the inner face deteriorated. Two further slabs presumably

mark its continuation; as they stand on nearly a foot of rubble they may represent a rebuilding rather than the original form.

The outer face of this semicircle of wall consisted mainly of upright slabs. Along the east side they were large and continuous, and when discovered they were lying almost flat. The core of the wall on this side must have been of some perishable material, such as turf, whose erosion caused the slabs to fall inwards; elsewhere the core was of rubble.

The stretch of wall adjoining Hut 3, which would have been of the utmost importance for determining the chronological relation of the two huts, was unfortunately very ruinous. A residue of rubble remained to give a rough indication of its course, but the only facing-stones which could be identified with certainty were two of the outer face on the north side of the doorway. Inside these there was the broken stump of an upright slab; this has been marked on the plan as if it were part of the inner face. If it was, it means that the wall became much thinner towards the doorway—a tendency which perhaps may also be noticed on the opposite side of the doorway.

The rubble which remained was indistinguishable from that which made up the similarly ruined wall of Hut 3. It looked very much as if the huts had been successive, the material of one wall being reused in the other. But this rubble occurred not only where the wall of Hut 2 was presumed to have been; it also spread some way across the floor of the hut. Some of it could have fallen there after the building was abandoned, but as some of it was sealed under the paving, it appears to follow that the collapse of the wall of Hut 3 had begun before the construction of Hut 2, whose builders did not bother to remove all the fallen rubble, but laid their paving over part of it. The eventual destruction of this wall, after it had been remodelled as part of Hut 2, was presumably due to the mediaeval builders.

Near the centre of the hut there was a four-sided hearth, whose greatest internal measurement was 2 feet 8 inches. On three sides it was demarcated by thin upright slabs of limestone, standing about 8 inches high, while on the fourth side there were two smooth shore-stones. It was filled to the tops of the stones with grey ash, amid which there were innumerable small flat pieces of limestone, lying at every level, and never forming a continuous layer. The only true paving was at the lowest level, where two slabs had been laid so as to cover very accurately the space within the kerb.

This hearth partly overlay an earlier one which had been a little nearer the south side of the hut. Only two stones of its kerb survived, but it could be traced as an ash-filled depression 3-4 inches deep. Within it on its east side there was a post-hole 13 inches deep and 9½ inches in diameter. There was no trace of hearth material in its filling. There appeared to be no post-hole of similar size associated with the later hearth, but there were three small ones just outside it on the north-east side. The largest of them was 4 inches deep and 4 inches in diameter, the other two were only 3 inches in depth and diameter. They may have held supports of some kind which were used with the hearth. Just beyond them, 3 feet from the later hearth, there was an oval depression in the floor, 20 inches by 10 inches, and reaching a maximum depth in the centre of 7 inches. It was carefully covered by a

slab, but it was unlined, and its filling consisted only of gritty soil from the floor. On the north side of the later hearth there were two stones set on edge and standing at right-angles to each other. They looked very much like kerbstones of a hearth, but there was no hearth material associated with them. Near them was the mouth of a drain which ran straight out of the hut through the centre of the doorway. It was the best constructed drain of all those found on the site, in that it had a continuous line of stones set on edge along each side, on which the covering slabs rested. The floor of the drain was the solid rock, and its channel was 15 inches wide and about 6 inches deep. A rounded shore pebble lay at each side of its mouth; they seemed to serve no practical purpose, and may have been ornamental. Both the distribution of the paving and (at certain points) the texture of the filling underneath it made it fairly certain that there had been side drains as in Hut 3, but their course could not be determined with sufficient certainty to be plotted on the plan.

Outside this hut, on the south side, there was a covered drain, which began against the outcrop of rock and ran towards the south-west corner of the fort. Its channel, which was covered with substantial paving stones, was about 10 inches wide and 6 inches deep. Before the end of the Iron Age occupation it was buried 2 feet deep in occupation material.

*Hut 3.* Hut 3 (fig. 3; pl. xvi, lower; pl. xix) was in a relatively good state of preservation, except for a short stretch of wall on the side adjoining Hut 2. From the right-hand side of the doorway to the opposite wall the internal measurement was 19 feet, and the maximum measurement at right-angles to this was about 21 feet. The thickness of the wall was more uniform than in Hut 2, averaging about 3 feet 8 inches.

On the south face of the doorway there remained two slabs set on edge. From here the inner face of the wall began with three slabs which had been forced a little out of line by the weight of the core, and were tilted towards the centre of the hut. The next two appeared to be in their original positions. Then there was a small gap in which lay one end of a long slab placed at right-angles to the wall; it was 2 feet 7 inches long, and apparently had formed a sort of partition about one foot high. The next slab along the wall was set on rubble, at an appreciably higher level than the preceding ones; it was probably placed in its present position by the builders of Hut 2, as an outer facing stone for their wall. There followed a gap of just under 5 feet before three more slabs continued the line to the outcrop of rock. For the next 12 feet the face of the rock provided the wall of the hut to an average height of 2 feet; it had been trimmed to approximate to the required curve. Above the outcrop what remained of the wall consisted of large slabs laid horizontally. The northern wall, from the outcrop to the doorway, had an inner face of fairly uniform construction, consisting of large upright slabs surmounted by dry walling. Only at one point, close to the doorway, did the dry walling come down to floor level. Here the wall still stood 4 feet high. Nearer the centre of the north wall the vertical height was only 3 feet 8 inches, but a number of courses of dry walling (of much lighter stones than the lower courses) had slumped onto the top of the wall. In their original position they must have brought the inner face to a height of at least 4 feet 6 inches.

Very little remained of the outer face of the wall on the south side of the hut, though a little dry walling survived in the first 8 feet from the doorway. What was left of the core on this side consisted of rubble mixed with clean brown soil. Where the walls of the two huts diverge again near the outcrop the last three slabs of the inner face were backed only by clean soil. On the north side the outer face consisted mainly of dry walling, but in places the lower courses were replaced by small upright slabs. As on the inner face, the upper courses tended to have slumped onto the wall; this suggests that the core, at least at this height, was made up of turf, which in time was eroded. A number of heavy stones had been placed around the foot of the wall on the outside. Their purpose is obscure, but they could have served for securing the ends of thatch ropes. They were only found along a limited part of the wall of this one hut. Immediately outside the doorway, on the north side, there were the remains of a solid, roughly square, foundation, which looked as if it could have supported one side of a projecting stone porch. No corresponding traces were found on the other side of the doorway, however, and there appeared to be no such structure associated with Hut 2.

In the part of the hut furthest from the door the builders could have used the exposed surface of the rock as their floor, but as it was rather uneven they chose to level it with clean soil and cover it with paving. For the rest, where there were neither hearth nor drains, they left the natural gritty soil unpaved.

The principal hearth was not quite in the centre, being placed a little towards the doorway. On the south-east and south-west sides it was demarcated by flat stones set on edge, those on the south-east side being rather slight, but made fast by being set in clay. On the north-east side it was bounded by the large slab which covered a drain, while on the north-west side only one kerbstone survived. At first the fire had been set on the rather uneven natural surface, but soon nearly the whole hearth had been covered by a large slab. A small part on the north-east side remained uncovered by it, but, to judge by the surviving deposit of ash, the fire did not normally extend this far. The ash was never more than 3 inches deep, and much shallower than the deposit on the second hearth, which stood near the south-west side of the hut. Here there was a pile of ash 14 inches deep, overflowing and partly obscuring the rough kerb. That this hearth was at least slightly later than the original layout of the floor was suggested by the fact that its kerbstones partly overlay a covering slab of the south drain. Only two stones of the kerb (at the corner nearest the other hearth) were set on edge, the others being piled roughly together to demarcate a triangular area. Between the two hearths there was a single stone set on edge.

The most interesting feature of this hut was the drainage system. The main drain, consisting of a channel 15 inches wide and about 7 inches deep, and covered with heavy slabs, ran out through the doorway. This was fed by a number of channels. One curved two-thirds of the way round the south-west side of the house, and another curved about half-way round the north-west side, beginning close to the large slab at the north end of the hearth. These drains were on an average 10 inches wide and 6 inches deep. The third arm began with the drain which ran down the north side of the hearth to join a smaller channel which began within the hearth; from there a broader drain led down to the point where the

three arms met. The paving which covered the drains inside the house was of a much lighter kind than that which covered the main drain in the doorway.

*Hut 4.* Hut 4 (fig. 2) was on the higher landward side of the site, and had been largely obliterated by the builders of the long-house. Of its wall only three large slabs remained; they were set on edge in a curving line close to where the wall of the long-house rode over the inner face of the rampart. Close to them, on the inner side of the curve, was some paving, on which lay a quantity of carbonized wood. This was probably not a hearth, as the paving-stones showed no sign of having been exposed to heat. Since the paving came right up to the upright slabs, these should represent the inner facing of the wall. But the paving comes just as close to them on the outside, and it must be admitted that if these slabs are indeed part of the wall of the hut, the method of construction is obscure. The paving on the outside could theoretically have been laid after Hut 4 went out of use, and its wall had been partly destroyed, but, as will be explained later, there are grounds for believing that this was the latest of the Iron Age dwellings to be occupied.

A hearth which presumably belonged to it was found close to the wall of the long-house, just over 13 feet from the rampart. It consisted of a group of stones laid side by side and presenting an even upper surface, much reddened by heat, without any trace of a surrounding kerb. Immediately to the west of it was a post-hole. To the north of it was a slab-lined depression in the ground 30 inches long and 6-7 inches deep, with a thin slab covering part of it. From its position it could have been a drain, but it seemed to have no outlet, and the covering slab was so thin that it seemed better to explain it as a handy lid for a storage hollow of the kind found in Hut 2. The filling consisted of clean gritty soil, quite unlike the more silty filling of a drain. To the east and north-east of this there were three post-holes, all of practically the same dimensions:  $8\frac{1}{2}$  inches in diameter and 5 inches deep. They may not have belonged to this hut at all. The four small stones set on edge, which were found close to the end of the stone-lined depression, also very possibly belong to some other structure. They resembled the footing of Hut 1, but there was no trace of a slot between them.

#### FINDS\*

##### BRONZE.

1. La Tène III brooch of 'Colchester' type. cf. Hawkes and Hull, *Camulodunum*, pp. 308-9. Found practically on the top of the midden material overlying Hut 3. (fig. 4, no. 1).

##### IRON.

2. Penannular brooch. Unstratified. (fig. 4, no. 2).

##### GLASS.

3. Fragment of armlet. Blue, with diffuse streaks of lighter colour, probably indicating admixture of ice-green glass. From midden material overlying Hut 3. (fig. 4, no. 3).
4. Dumb-bell, unpierced, of dark blue glass with clearly defined white streaks. From midden material overlying Hut 3. (fig. 4, no. 5).
5. Dumb-bell, unpierced, of plain greenish glass. From occupation layer between Huts 1 and 3. (fig. 4, no. 6).
6. Cylindrical bead. Blue, with light greenish streaks. (fig. 4, no. 4). From midden material overlying Hut 3.

\* I wish to thank Professor C. F. C. Hawkes and Mr R. B. K. Stevenson for their help in dealing with the small finds.

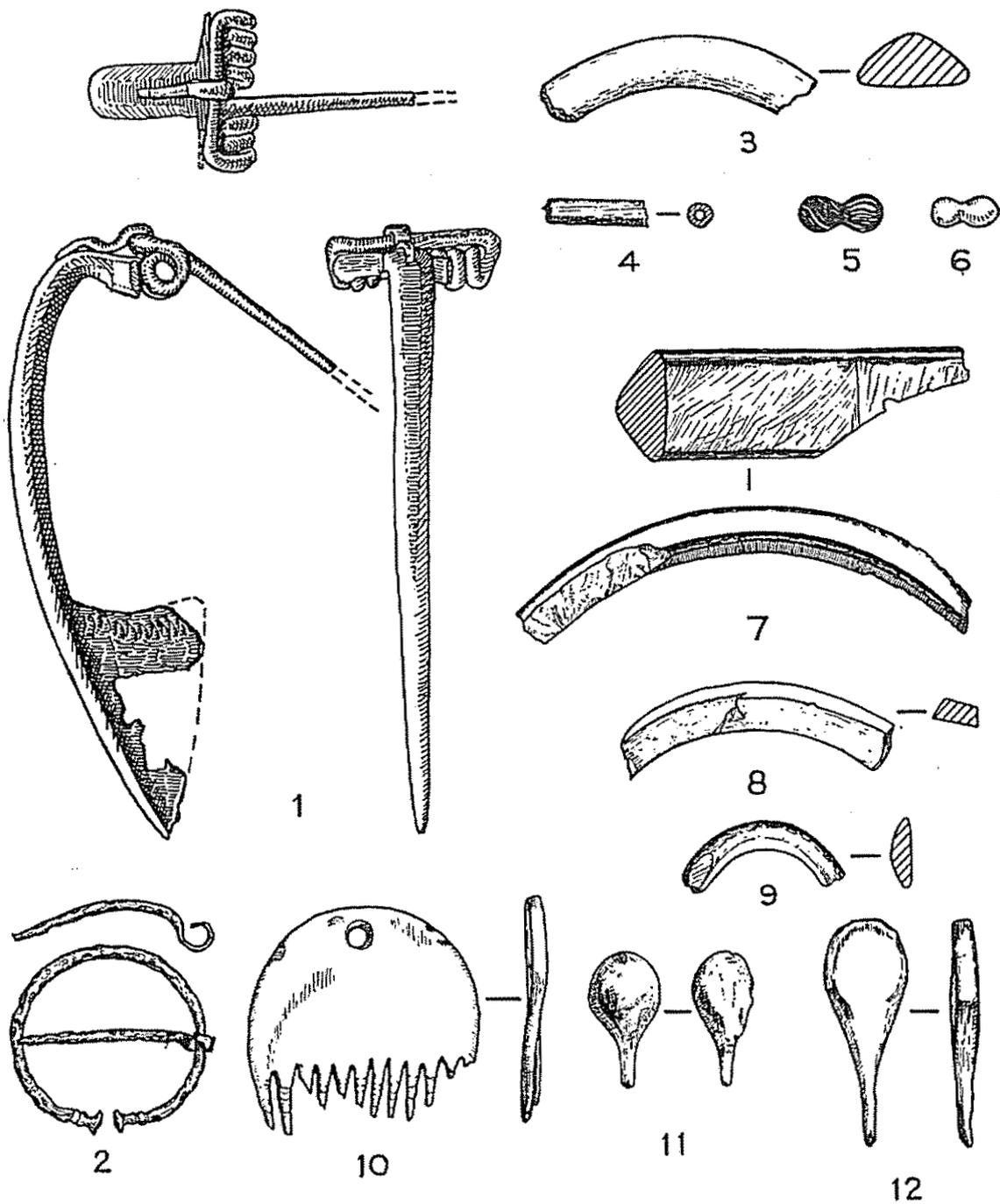


Fig. 4

Close ny Chollagh, Isle of Man: objects of bronze (no. 1), iron (no. 2), glass (nos. 3-6), jet (nos. 7-9) and bone (nos. 10-12). (†)

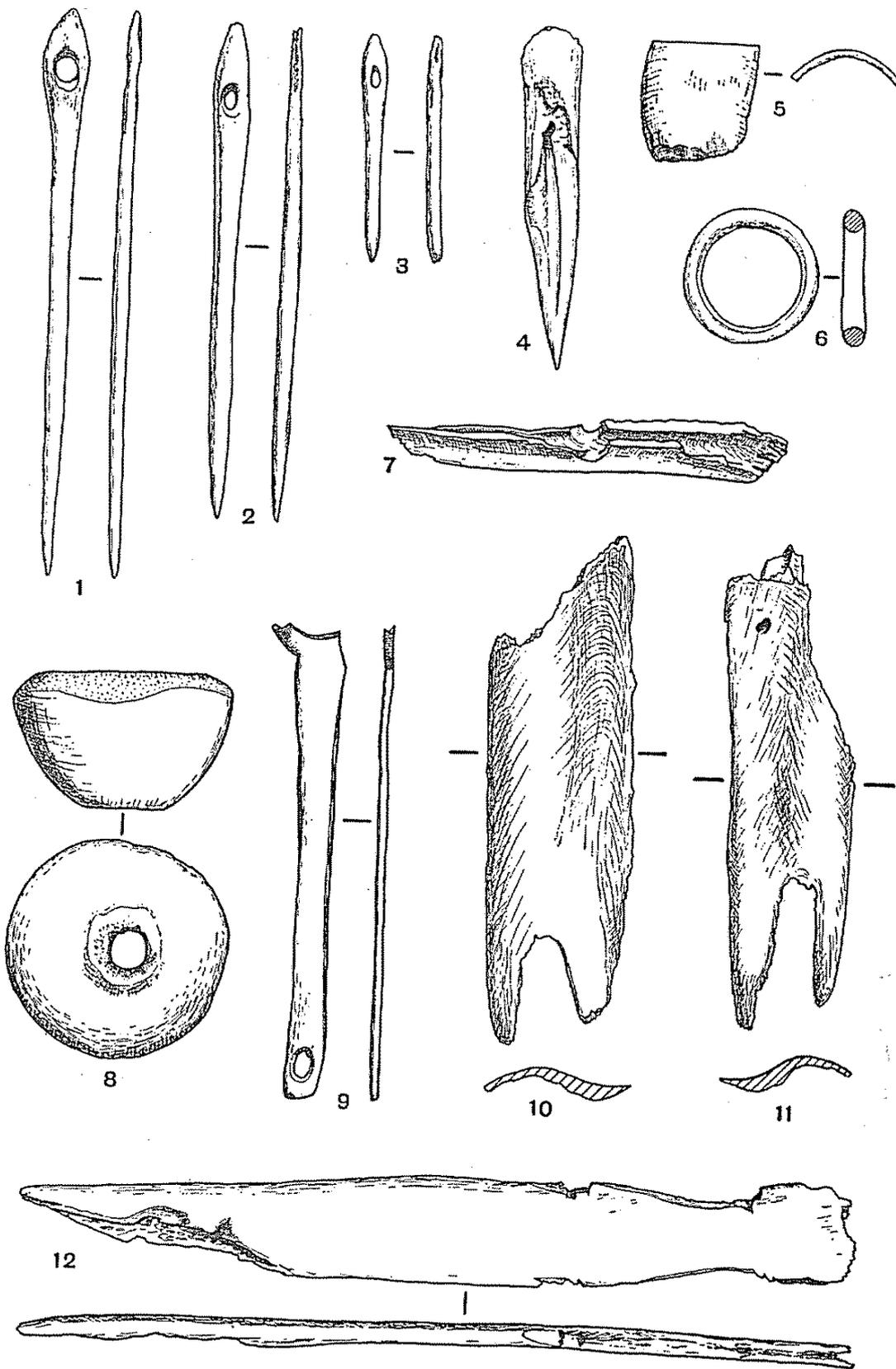


Fig. 5. Close ny Chollagh, Isle of Man: objects of bone (nos. 1-5, 7-12) and stone (no. 6). (†)

PLATE XV



The footing-stones on the north and north-east sides of Hut 1



Hut 2 seen from the north. The mouth of the drain is hidden under the paving on the right of the hearth



Hut 3, seen from the South. The inner face of the rampart can be seen in the background

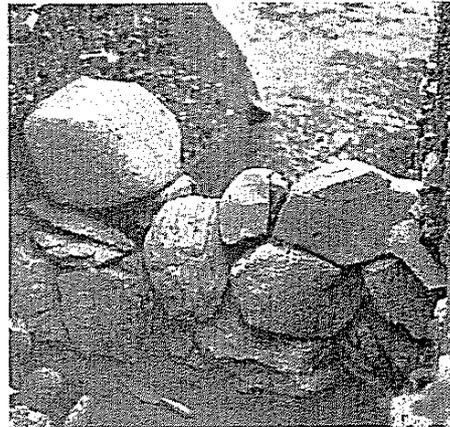
PLATE XVII



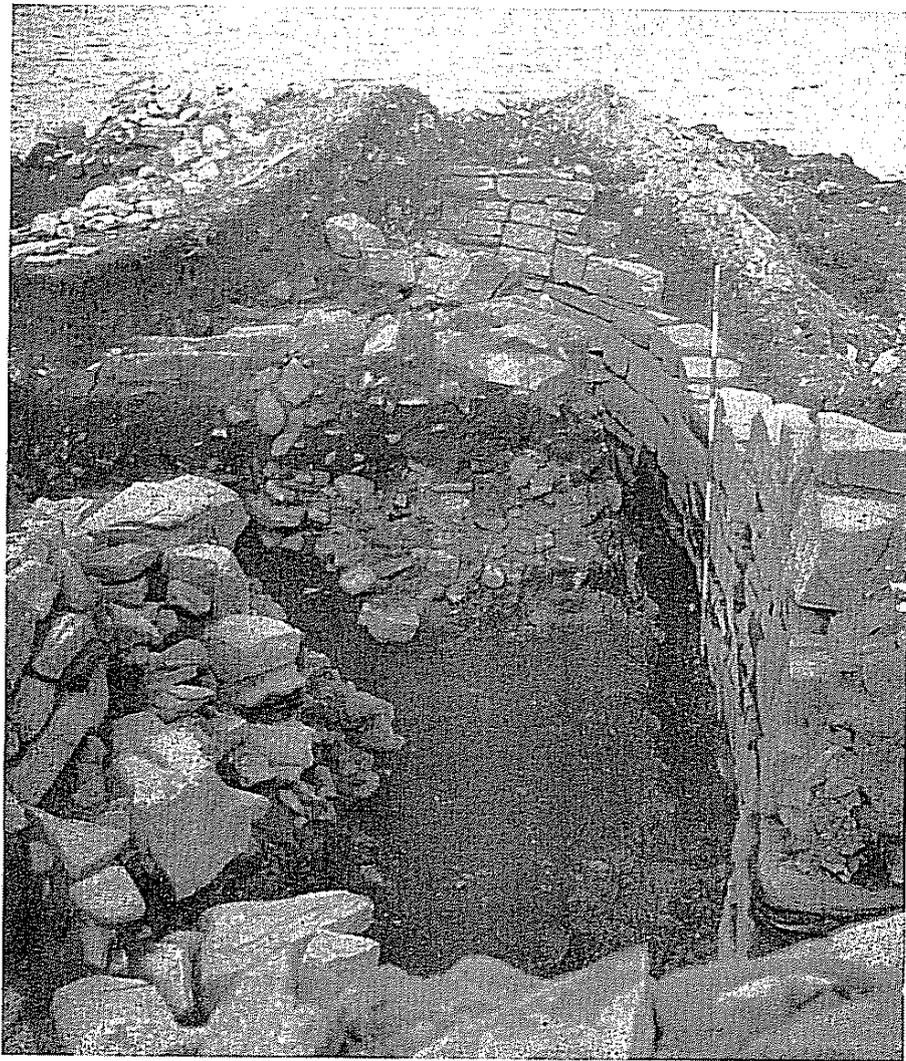
The central (later) hearth in Hut 2



The drain to the South  
of Hut 2



The inner face of the earlier rampart,  
revealed in the main section

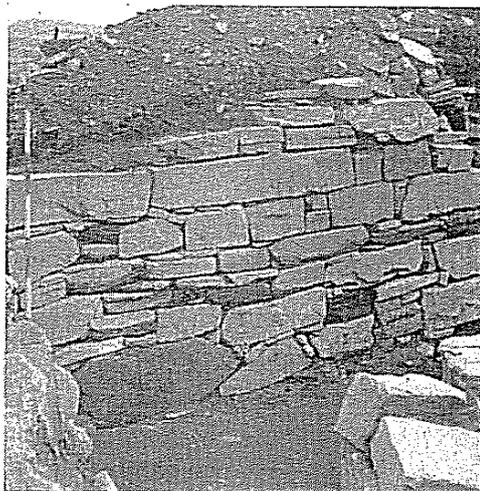


The rampart on the north side of the site, looking towards the north-west corner. The section to the left of the ranging-pole shows Iron Age occupation material underlying a sterile layer which in turn underlies a mediaeval foundation

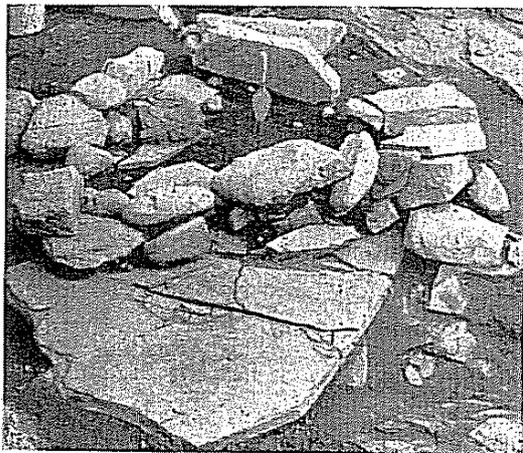
PLATE XIX



The north wall of Hut 3, showing  
the large stones at its foot



Part of the inner face of the rampart  
on the north side of the site



The secondary hearth in Hut 3



The main hearth in Hut 3

JET.

7. Fragment of armlet, inner surface not fully polished. Vertical perforation 2mm. in diameter. From midden material overlying Hut 3. (fig. 4, no. 7).
8. Fragment of armlet, split horizontally on both sides. Both surfaces polished. From midden material overlying Hut 3. (fig. 4, no. 8).
9. Fragment of finger-ring. Both surfaces polished. From occupation layer on the floor of Hut 2. (fig. 4, no. 9).

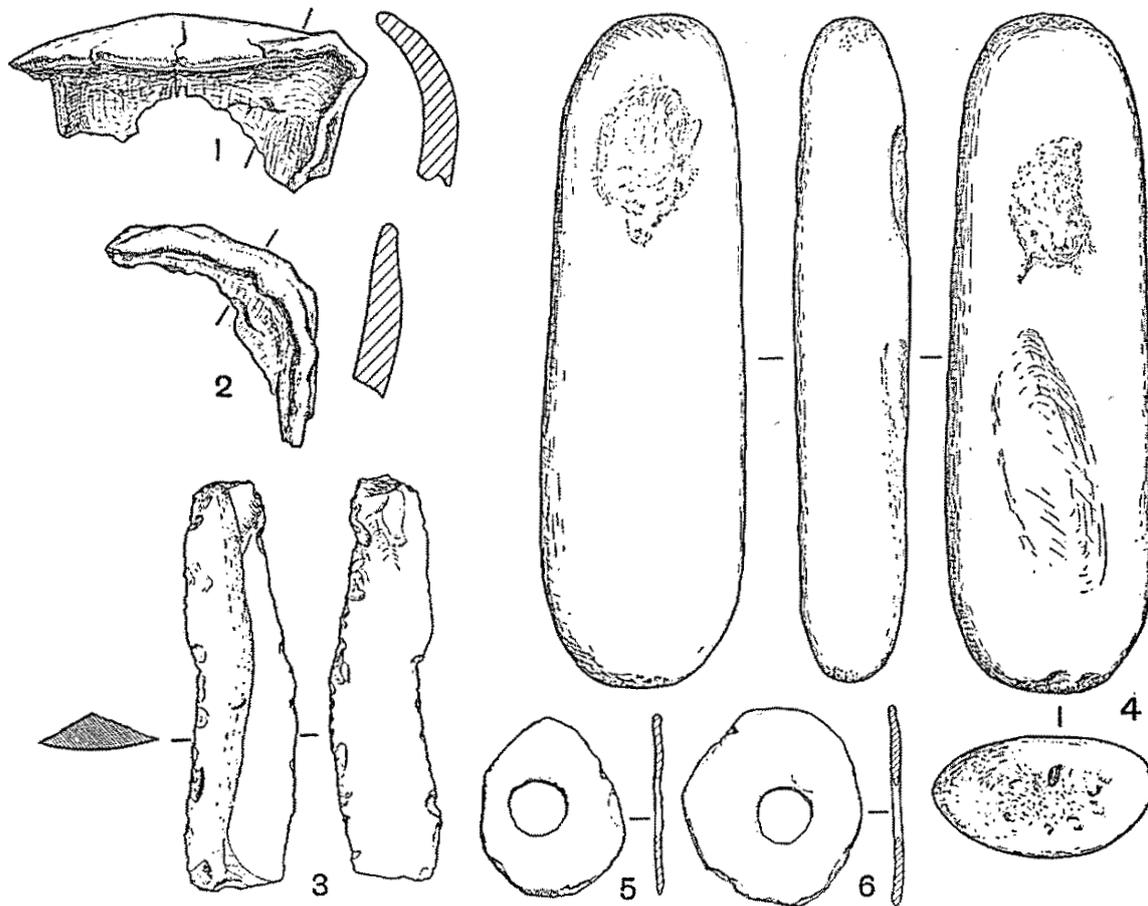


Fig. 6

Close ny Chollagh, Isle of Man: stone whetstone? (no. 4), perforated stone discs (nos. 5, 6), clay crucibles (nos. 1, 2) and flint strike-a-light (no. 3). (3)

BONE.

10. Comb. From occupation material between Huts 1 and 3 (fig. 4, no. 10).

11-15. Pins.

11. From occupation material on the floor of Hut 3. (fig. 5, no. 1).

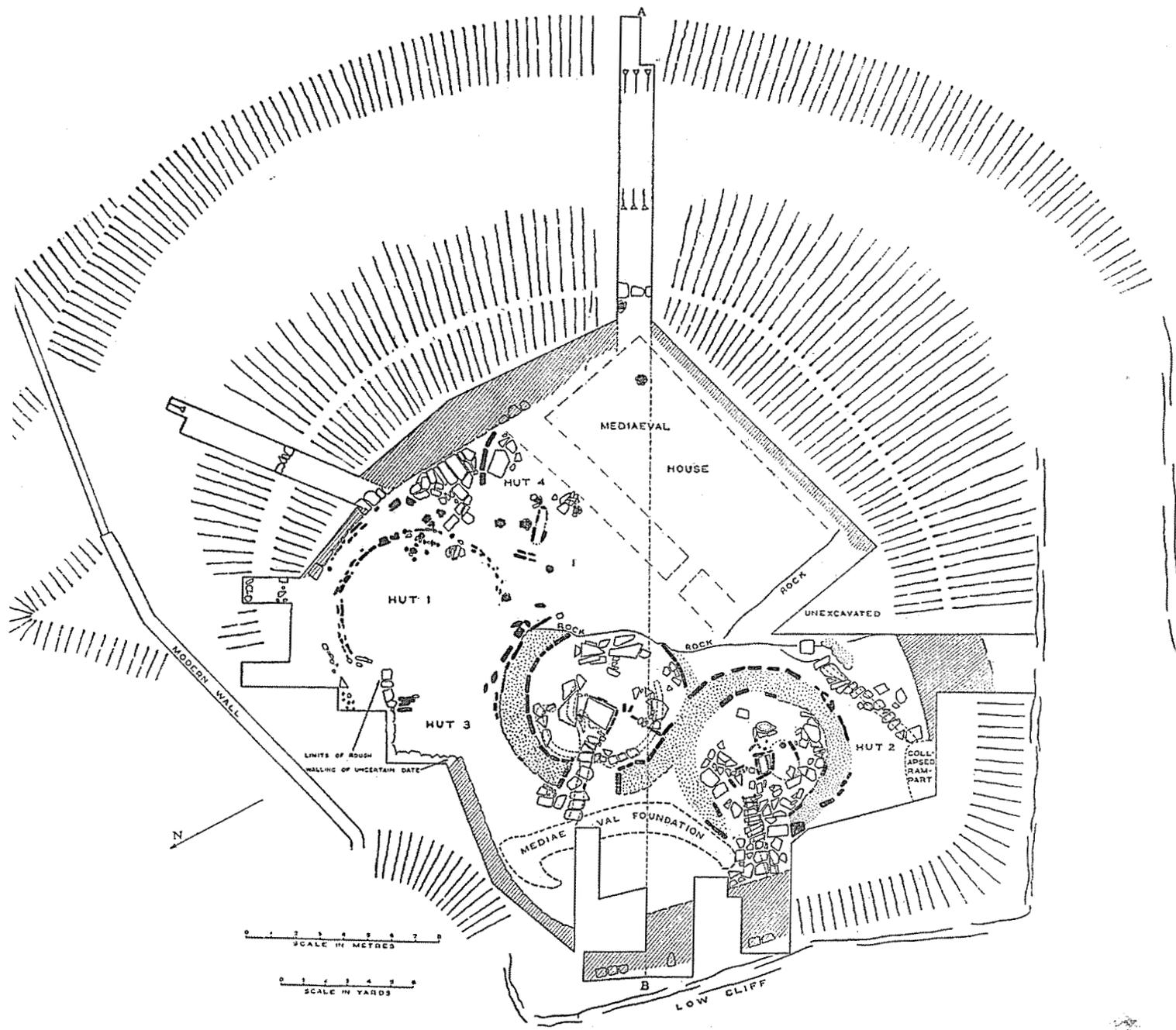
12. From midden material immediately outside Hut 2, on the south-west side. (fig. 5, no. 2).

13. From midden material overlying Hut 3. (fig. 5, no. 3).

14. From occupation layer between Huts 1 and 3 (fig. 4, no. 11).

15. As 14 (fig. 4, no. 12).

PLATE XX



16. Obliquely truncated and pointed bone. From occupation layer on the floor of Hut 2. (fig. 5, no. 4). Similar objects were found in the Bac Mhic Connain wheel house, N. Uist. cf. *PSAS*, LXVI, p. 54, fig. 8.
17. Femur whorl, from occupation layer on the floor of Hut 3. (fig. 5, no. 8). Eight were found altogether.
- 18, 19. Two-pronged objects, probably, though not certainly, artefacts. From midden material at the foot of the rampart on the seaward side. (fig. 5, nos. 10, 11).
20. Bobbin? From midden material overlying Hut 3. (fig. 5, no. 7).
21. Handle with remains of ?disc head with circular perforation. Unstratified. (fig. 5, no. 9). Possibly similar to the 'spoonlike object of bone' in Curle, *A Roman frontier post and its people*, pl. xcii, no. 21, and p. 338.
22. Fragment of bone finger-ring. From midden material overlying Hut 3. (fig. 5, no. 5).
23. Pointed piece of rib with symmetrical cuts on the edges. Surface at the point worn very smooth. From midden material overlying Hut 3. (fig. 5, no. 12).

#### STONE.

24. Ring. Under paving in Hut 2. (fig. 5, no. 6).
25. Whetstone? Unstratified. (fig. 6, no. 4).
- 26, 27. Thin pieces of slate with circular perforation.
  26. From occupation layer on the floor of Hut 4, under mediaeval wall. (fig. 6, no. 5).
  27. Under paving in Hut 2. (fig. 6, no. 6).
28. Flint strike-a-light. From occupation layer on the floor of Hut 2. (fig. 6, no. 3).

#### CRUCIBLES

29. Fragment of crucible with triangular mouth. Hard grey ware. Traces of bronze adhering to inner surface. From occupation layer on the floor of Hut 2. (fig. 6, no. 1).
30. Fragment of crucible with more circular mouth than 29. Hard grey ware, with outer surface slightly vitrified. Traces of bronze adhering to inner surface. From occupation layer on the floor of Hut 2. (fig. 6, no. 2).
31. Fragment of the base of a crucible of uncertain shape. Same ware as 29 and 30, but slightly thicker. Traces of bronze adhering to inner surface. From midden material at the foot of the rampart on the seaward side. Not illustrated.

### CONCLUSIONS

The earliest period of occupation is represented only by the remains of the earlier rampart, which was ruinous when the main Iron Age occupation began.

In the second period the rampart was rebuilt on a much finer scale, and the fort had a static population which dwelt in circular huts. Huts 2-4 were probably occupied successively. It has already been suggested that Hut 2 was later than Hut 3 (p. 91), and this is borne out by the fact that the paving which runs out through the doorway of Hut 2 overlies occupation material as it approaches the rampart. The occupiers of Hut 2 may have been partly responsible for the thick deposit of midden material which overlay Hut 3, but the site of Hut 2, in turn, was covered by a deposit of bones, shells and other rubbish, presumably thrown down by the occupiers of Hut 4. Whether Hut 4 was built after Hut 2 went out of use, or merely continued to be occupied for longer, cannot be said. It is even theoretically possible that there was a fifth hut to be taken into account, the remains of which were obliterated by the builders of the long-house.

It is not possible to fit Hut 1 into a chronological sequence except on the risky assumption that the missing part of its circumference was destroyed when

Hut 3 was built. That would make it the earliest of the four, though perhaps preceded, on much the same site, by a flimsy structure similar to itself. Both could be regarded as temporary shelters erected at the beginning of the second period, while the reconstruction of the defences was in progress.

The people who lived in the huts must have been primarily, if not exclusively, pastoralists, as there was nothing which pointed to their raising crops of any kind. Their diet (see Appendix) consisted mainly of beef, but to supplement the flesh of their domestic animals they caught crabs and gathered huge quantities of limpets from the shore. Although no dog bones were found, they certainly had domestic dogs, since numerous pieces of canine coprolite were found both in the midden material and on the floors of the huts.

Since so large a part of the site was excavated, it is safe to affirm that, apart from the crucibles, they had no pottery. No weapons were found, but a clutch of a dozen round pebbles, discovered at the foot of the rampart on the north side of Hut 1, looked like sling-stones.

The date of the occupation can best be estimated from the La Tène III brooch, of 'Colchester' type, which was found practically on the top of the midden material overlying Hut 3. Its date of deposition will correspond roughly with the end of the occupation of the site. Such a brooch is unlikely to have been made after *c.* A.D. 50, and can hardly have been deposited later than *c.* A.D. 75; while both making and deposition could have been up to forty years earlier. Perhaps the occupation is likeliest to have come to an end in the third quarter of the first century A.D. If we may envisage the occupants being ejected (or carried off as slaves?) by a patrolling Roman fleet, it would be natural to put the event a little later, *c.* A.D. 80, in the governorship of Agricola. When this occupation began is largely a matter for conjecture, but it was almost certainly in the previous century, to judge by the quantity of occupation debris. And the earliest phase must have been considerably before that.

The distribution of the 'Colchester brooch' is mainly in the Belgic areas of Lowland England. The Llyn Cerrig finds have shown how objects from Lowland England could reach the Irish Sea area, and the brooch may be simply an import. It may, however, have been brought by a Belgic refugee from the Roman invasion, or conceivably have been made in the Isle of Man by a refugee Belgic craftsman. The crucibles show that some kind of bronze-working was done on the site.

It would be premature to attempt to relate this site to the general picture of the Early Iron Age in the Isle of Man. Its occupation appears to have been at least in part contemporary with that of the undefended Celtic round houses on Ballanorris and Ballakeigan, barely a mile away. It is natural to wonder what was the relationship between these two very different sites, but a full examination of this problem must await the publication of Dr Bersu's excavations. Two Manx promontory forts, Cronk ny merriu\* and Cass ny hawin, which have produced remains of the Viking period, might now be guessed to have been constructed originally in the Iron Age; but the defences of both were markedly different from each other and from Close ny chollagh. Meanwhile a small inland promontory

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fort, whose excavation is still in its early stages, but which is apparently contemporary with Clove ny chollagh, seems to be different from all three. Fortunately the Isle of Man is very rich in both coastal and inland sites which appear to belong to the Iron Age, and there are plenty of opportunities for further research to throw light on this obscure period in the island's history.

#### APPENDIX: Report on Animal Remains

The total collection contained 953 identifiable specimens: 513 cattle, 318 sheep, 48 pig, 10 horse, 1 hedgehog, 54 edible crab (*Cancer pagurus*) and 9 chicken.

When allowance is made for the relative size of the animals it is clear that beef must have contributed about nine tenths of the meat, with mutton forming most of the remainder. Occasional pork, crab, chicken and perhaps even hedgehog would diversify the diet.

The cattle were relatively small; the longest anterior and posterior cannon bones are 18.0 and 19 cm. long respectively. The only intact skull roof is of the narrow *Bos longifrons* type, the small 'Celtic ox'.

Forty-five cattle jaws, 59 sheep jaws and 18 pig jaws are sufficiently intact to enable an estimate to be made of the age of animal at death. Further, but less detailed evidence of the age at death can be obtained from the cannon bones.

The details of the estimated age at slaughter are summarized in the following tables:

		Cattle						
Age in months:	<6	6	9	12	15	18	21	>21
No. of jaws:	3	10	0	4	1	1	1	25
		Sheep						
Age in months:	<6	6	9	12	15	18	21	>21
No. of jaws:	1	3	7	0	2	4	1	41
		Pig						
Age in months:	<8	8	12	13	>15			
No. of jaws:	0	1	0	3	14			

There is evidence of considerable slaughter of animals aged six to nine months, presumably the autumn slaughter of animals in their first year. In the case of the sheep there is slight evidence of slaughter at about 18 months, but if the cattle survived their first year they appear to have been allowed to reach maturity. The proportion of mature animals is surprisingly high, but the sample is so small that this may not be significant. The cannon bones of the sheep and cattle give a rather different picture. The distal ends of 19 cattle cannon bones survive. In 11 cases the epiphyses are unfused, suggesting an age of less than 18 months. The sample is very small, but suggests a much higher proportion of immature beasts. Of 24 sheep cannon bones, only 7 have fused epiphyses, suggesting again that the proportion of young animals slaughtered was higher than is indicated by the jaws alone.

W. POTTS.