
*FIELD SURVEY AND EXPLORATORY EXCAVATION OF CAIRN-LIKE
FEATURES ON THE SOUTH SIDE OF FAWDON HILL, REDESDALE,
NORTHUMBERLAND*

~ INTERIM REPORT FOR REVITALISING REDESDALE ~

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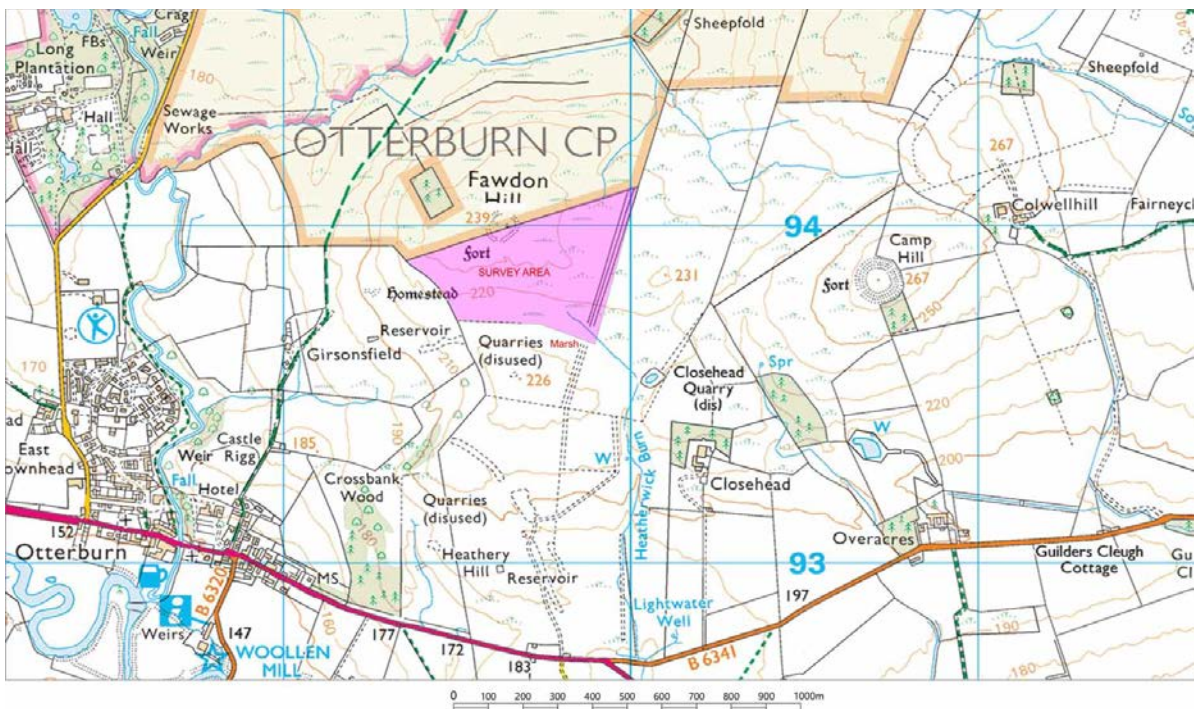
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The fieldwork carried out on Fawdon Hill in September 2019 was supervised on behalf of Revitalising Redesdale Landscape Partnership (RRLP) by Richard Carlton and Marc Johnstone of The Archaeological Practice Ltd., who also produced this report. Jeanette Dagg, Keith Cooper, Bob Jackson and Barbara McCabe assisted in carrying out a preliminary survey of the site in February, 2019, following which Jeanette made initial contact with the landowner, Mr Ryan O'Kane of Close Head Farm. Special thanks are due to him for giving permission for the fieldwork to take place and enthusiastically supporting it with site visits and land-use information. Karen Collins, Revitalising Redesdale Heritage and Engagement Officer, ensured other permissions were in place, co-ordinated volunteers and proof-read the report. A total of 19 RRLP volunteers participated in the fieldwork, sometimes in less than clement conditions, some also providing additional information during the reporting process. Special thanks are due to Barbara McCabe for providing background information about her father, Captain W H Walton, and allowing images of and by him to be used in this report.

1. INTRODUCTION

In 1961 R H Walton included in his analytical account of the Battle of Otterburn – *The Otterburn Story; Address delivered to the Berwickshire Naturalists Club at Berwick, 11th October 1961* (Walton 1962-3) - a note on some possible burials found adjacent to Fawdon Hill, the wider landscape environment of which he had come to believe was that of the battleground of 1388.

On February 13th 2019 a site visit was carried out for *Revitalising Redesdale* by a group comprising the author (RC), Keith Cooper, Jeanette Dagg, Bob Jackson and Captain Walton's daughter, Barbara McCabe, who originally brought her father's work to the author's attention in the Autumn of 2018. A search of the ground south and south-east of Fawdon Hill revealed a number of low mounds of stone and earth, as well as indications of others largely buried below the turf, in the area indicated by Captain Walton on original plans and photographs held in BM's private collection. Up to 10 such mounds, circular or sub-circular in form and measuring up to c 5 m in diameter and up to 0.8 m high, were observed to survive as clearly-defined upstanding features, but the possible position of numerous others were implied by less well-defined, largely buried features, as also suggested by Walton (1961). The features appeared to be constrained entirely to the somewhat rocky sloping field on the south side of the hill-fort, with searches in the wider vicinity, towards a marsh in the north-east and Colwell hill-fort to the east, failing to produce similar features. An additional linear embankment feature was noted towards the eastern range of the mound, however, west of a line of triple-embankments held by Walton to represent defensive structures constructed by the Scottish Army on the day following the battle.

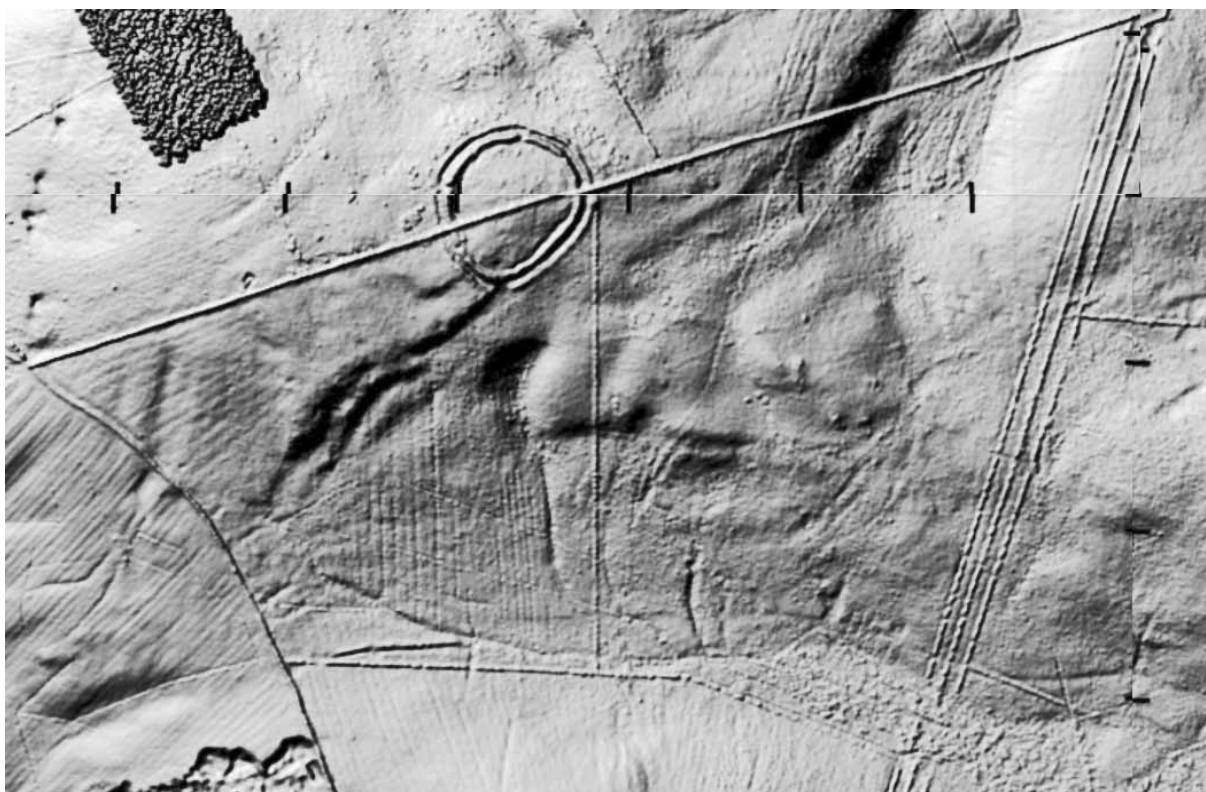


Illus 01: Site Location map.

It was concluded following this visit that there was merit in plotting and examining the mound features in more detail to determine whether they are indeed deliberately constructed, as seems likely and, if so, when and for what purpose. Accordingly, a short period of more intensive and systematic field survey, combined with invasive trial excavation was proposed for Summer, 2019 and funded by *Revitalising Redesdale* in September of that year.

Fieldwork at Fawdon Hill in September 2019 commenced with field survey within a large area enclosed by field walls and fence-lines lying south of Fawdon Hill hill-fort. This is the area suggested by Walton (1962) as the potential site of the Battle of Otterburn based on his reading of the landscape in the context of contemporary accounts, and includes a number of natural and built features central to his thesis, including the southern half of Fawdon Hill hill-fort in the north side of the field, various stony mounds in the north part of the area, a line of three straight, parallel linear banks running along and just within its eastern boundary and an area of marshland in the south and south-east (see *Illus. 01*).

Two of these features, the hill-fort and marsh, potentially relate to features mentioned in Froissart's near-contemporary account of the battle, while the parallel earthworks are speculatively interpreted by Walton as Scottish defences, and the stony mounds as the burial cairns of fallen soldiers. Thus, while the survey aimed to identify the presence of all anomalous, potentially non-natural features within this area, its principal focus was on the potential burial mounds highlighted by Walton.



Illus. 2: Location map (above) and LIDAR Survey of the fieldwork area on the south side of Fawdon Hill.

2. FIELD SURVEY

In order to carry out the field survey the field was divided into 100 metre wide transects, marked at both ends with banded ranging poles. The survey participants were invited to line up at even spacing along the western 100 m section of the northern field boundary, then to walk slowly down the field until reaching the southern boundary. Any features identified during this first transect were marked with numbered canes. The second transect was then walked, followed by a third, again from north to south, and further transects until the entire field was covered. A small team then returned to the sites marked by canes to verify and briefly describe them, before the sites were surveyed electronically in order to map their distribution on an Ordnance Survey base-map. A number of problems were experienced during this exercise, notably in terms of visibility of features, since the early Autumnal grassland remained relatively high and dense, thereby obscuring some of the features seen in an earlier field visit over the previous Winter. However, the close-spacing of fieldwalkers made it likely that few features of note were missed, although a further episode of

survey proposed for Winter 2020 will pick up any features missed in 2019. Not included in the survey were linear banks or ditches of modern origin or shallow rig and furrow which exist in the west part of the site.

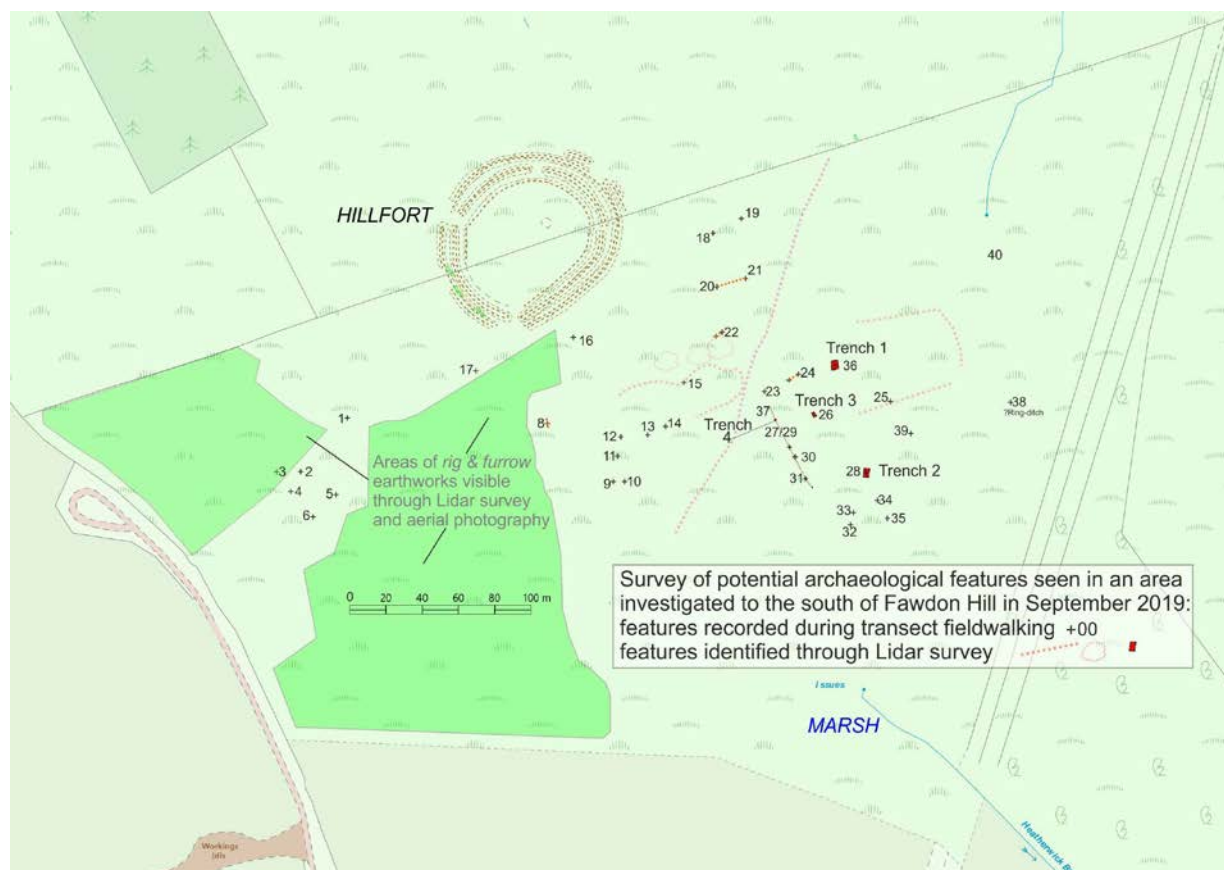
The fieldwalking exercise as described accounted for a total of about 40 individual features, including three short linear banks, a single possible ring-ditch and numerous stony mounds ranging in shape from oblong to sub-circular and between 2-3 metres and 8 metres in maximum diameter. These features were principally recorded in the north and central parts of the site and were virtually absent from the lower, southern parts, as suggested by the results of the earlier reconnaissance survey in February 2018. Two distinct clusters were apparent, one in the west and one in the east, with the latter accounting for around half of all features and most of the more prominent stone mounds.

Fawdon Hill Landscape Survey: List of Features recorded during fieldwalking.

- 1 - Turf-covered earthen mound.** Dimensions: L 3.0 m x W 1.0 m x H 0.2 m. A few stones were noted in the earthwork.
- 2 - Turf-covered stony mound.** Dimensions: L 1.5 m x W 1.0 m, x H 0.2 m.
- 3 - Turf-covered earthen mound.** Dimensions: L 3.0 m x W 1.0 m x H 0.2 m. A few stones were noted in the earthwork.
- 4 - Stony mound.** Dimensions: L 2.5 m x W 1.5 m x H 0.2 m. Partially turfed over.
- 5 - Turf-covered stony mound.** Dimensions: L 3.0 m x W 1.0 m x H 0.2 m.
- 6 - Turf-covered earthen mound.** Dimensions: L 2.0 m x W 1.0 m x H 0.2 m.
- 7 - not listed**
- 8 - slight raised earthwork**
- 9 - Large single stone.** Dimensions: H 0.5 m. No associated mound.
- 10 - Small mound.** Dimensions: L 2.0 m x W 1.0 m x H 0.2 m. With scattered stones.
- 11 - Turf-covered mound.** Dimensions: L 3.0 m x W 2.0 m x H 0.3 m.
- 12 - Turf-covered mound.** Dimensions: L 3.0 m x W 2.0 m x H 0.2 m. Some scattered stone.
- 13 - Turf-covered mound.** Dimensions: L 3.0 m x W 2.0 m x H 0.3 m. Large stones visible.
- 14 - Turf-covered mound.** Dimensions: L 3.0 m x W 2.0 m x H 0.2 m. Some stone visible.
- 15 - Small turf mound.** Dimensions: L 2.0 m x W 1.0 m x H 0.2 m. Stones apparent below.
- 16 - Turf-covered earthen mound.** Dimensions: L 2.0 m x W 2.0 m x H 0.2 m. No stones visible.
- 17 - Large boulder.** L 1.5 m x W 1.0 m x H 0.4 m.
- 18 - Turf-covered mound.** Dimensions: L 3.0 m x W 2.0 m x H 0.4 m. Some stone visible.
- 19 - Turf-covered mound.** Dimensions: L 3.0 m x W 2.0 m x H 0.3 m. Some stone visible.
- 20 - Turf-covered mound.** Dimensions: L 3.0 m x W 3.0 m x H 0.3 m. Some stone visible.
- 21 - Turf-covered mound.** Dimensions: L 4.0 m x W 2.0 m x H 0.4 m. Some large stones.
- 22 - Linear run of stones.** Dimensions: L 4.0 m x W 1.0 m x H 0.3 m. Large stones.
- 23 - Turf-covered mound.** Dimensions: L 3.0 m x W 2.0 m x H 0.2 m. Little stone visible.
- 24 - Arc of turf-covered stone.** Dimensions: L 4.0 m x W 1.5 m x H 0.2 m. No stones visible.
- 25 - Small turf mound.** Dimensions: L 1.5 m x W 1.0 m x H 0.2 m. Few stones visible.
- 26 - Small turf mound.** Dimensions: L 3.0 m x W 3.0 m x H 0.3 m. Few stones visible. Investigated by means of trial excavation and found to comprise outcropping bedrock.
- 27 – Linear terrace or embankment around base of hill –** explored by means of a small test-pit.
- 28 - Mound of moss-covered stones;** investigated by means of trial trench.
- 29 – Arc of large boulders = 31, 37.** Dimensions: L 2.0 m x W 1.0 m x H 0.4 m. Boulders forming an arc around a knoll. Investigated by means of test-pit.
- 30 - Stony hollow.** Dimensions: L 3.0m x W 3.0m. Covered with vegetation.
- 31 - Large boulder; one of several around a knoll.** Dimensions: L 1.5 m x W 1.0 m x H 0.5 m.
- 32 - Scattered stones.** *Doubtful significance.*
- 33 - Turf mound.** Dimensions: L 2.0 m x W 2.0 m x H 0.3 m. Stones below.
- 34 - Turf mound.** Dimensions: L 3.0 m x W 2.0 m x H 0.3 m. Stones below.

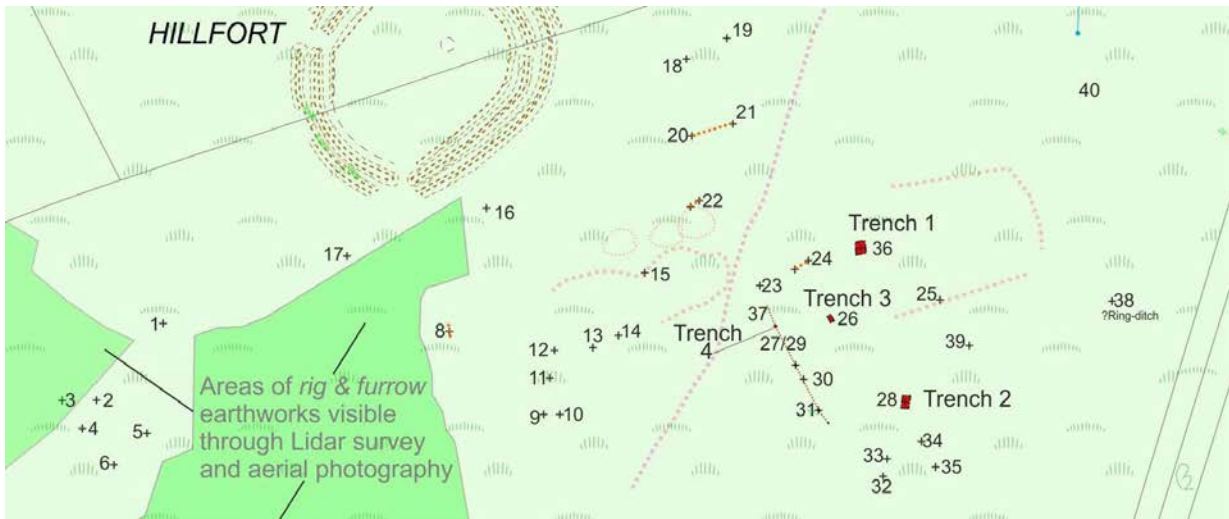
- 35 - Small turf mound.** Dimensions: L 2.0 m x W 2.0 m x H 0.3 m. Stones below.
- 36 – Large mound or cairn of moss-covered rocks.**
- 37 - Large boulder; one of several around a knoll.** Dimensions: L 0.7 m x W 0.5 m x H 0.5 m. Investigated by means of test-pit
- 38 - Circular gully or ‘ring-ditch’.** Dimensions: c. 8 m diameter x D 0.5 m.
- 39 - Small stone mound.** Dimensions: L 1.5 m x W 1.5 m.
- 40 - Stone mound.** Dimensions: L 4.0 m x W 4.0 m.

Illus. 03:



Observation of aerial photographic and Lidar survey images broadly supports the pattern produced by field observation, but adds some additional detail, notably the presence of later medieval &/or post-medieval rig & furrow cultivation features in the west part of the site and possible linear earthworks in the east, particularly around the hill upon which the majority of suggested earthworks sit, including those investigated by Trenches 1-3. Hints in the same area of possible prehistoric ‘cord rig’ are not substantiated by visible remains on the ground and isolated sections of earthwork embankment do not amount to a recognisable field system.

Having recorded the distribution of visible, upstanding anomalous features within the site a choice was made of features to be sample-excavated over the remaining, brief period of fieldwork. In considering this, it was thought desirable to investigate a range of features, including larger, sub-circular stone mounds and smaller ones of sub-rectangular form of the sort pictured in Walton’s investigation in the early 1960s. In practice, however, time constraints allowed the partial investigation of only four features over a period of little more than 2 days, three of them larger stony mounds and the fourth being a possible linear stony bank around a prominent natural hill.



Illus. 04: Survey of Potential Archaeological Features on the south side of Fawdon Hill (see general plan, above)

3. TRENCH DESCRIPTIONS

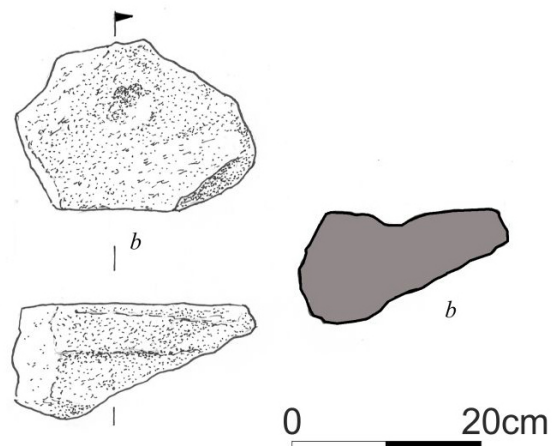
Trench 1 - (NGR: NY 89800 93924)

This trench was positioned on fairly level ground over feature [36], the northernmost mound within a cluster of possible Cairns surmounting a natural knoll located approximately 130 metres SE of Fawdon Hill, and possibly enclosed as a Bronze Age Cemetery.

After stripping off the turf and topsoil by hand, it was possible to determine the extent of the Cairn and define aspects of its character (*see Illus. 07 and Photos 10-16*). The overall dimensions of the cairn prior to removal of the stones forming its mound were 2.85 m (maximum width E-W) x 3.25 m (maximum length N-S) x 0.27 m (maximum depth excavated of upper stone layer).

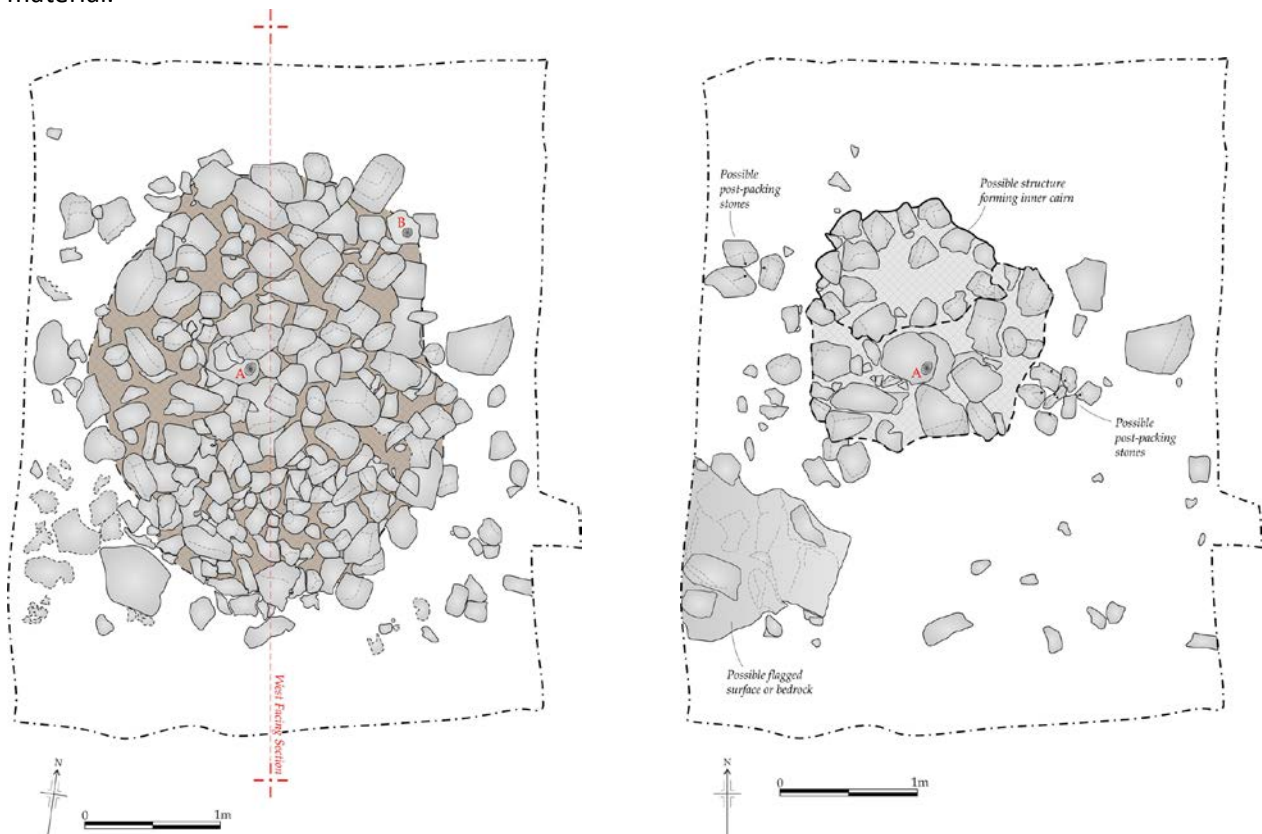
The upper cairn material comprised a layer of medium-small sub-rounded and subangular sandstones without bond but deliberately mounded up, perhaps two or three courses deep, with reddish-brown silty soil mixed in, forming a roughly oval shaped low mound, orientated approximately north-south.

Two cup-marked stones were identified from the upper cairn material, both containing single cup-marks on flat surfaces (*see Illus. 06 (below) and 05 (right), stones labelled 'A' and 'B'*) with their cup-marks facing skywards. Stone 'A' was located almost perfectly at the centre of the cairn; it comprised a sub-angular sandstone rock measuring 0.41 m x 0.29 m and with the cup-mark measuring approximately 0.10 m x 0.07 m. Stone 'B' was located at the NNE edge of the cairn at a distance of 1.43 m NE from Stone 'A'; it comprised a sub-angular sandstone rock measuring 0.26 m x 0.23 m and with the cup-mark measuring approximately 0.07 m in diameter. Cup-marked rocks commonly occur in Bronze Age



cairns and cist burials in Northumberland, sometimes in the form of reused Neolithic panels, but more commonly as individual cup-marked stones in individual burials, as at Fowberry and Weetwood Moor (Beckinsall 1983, 119-22 & 131-33).

After recording the upper layer in plan and profile (*see Illus. 07, below*), the stones were removed to reveal any underlying structures or features. Three areas of interest were identified; firstly, beneath the upper stones towards the north-western end of the Cairn, a possible structure forming the perimeter of an inner cairn was observed comprising of flatter rocks relatively level to one another, arranged in a subcircular outline and measuring approximately 1.32 m (E-W) x 0.90 m (N-S). Although this feature was left unexcavated, its location and character most likely indicate the position of an undisturbed grave of likely Bronze Age origin. Further stonework extended for an additional 0.90 m to the south of the feature but was impossible to interpret and may just be tumble either associated with the inner cairn or the upper cairn material.



Illus. 06a & b: Plans of Trench 1, showing the stone mound immediately below the turn (above left) and following removal of loose stone (above right).

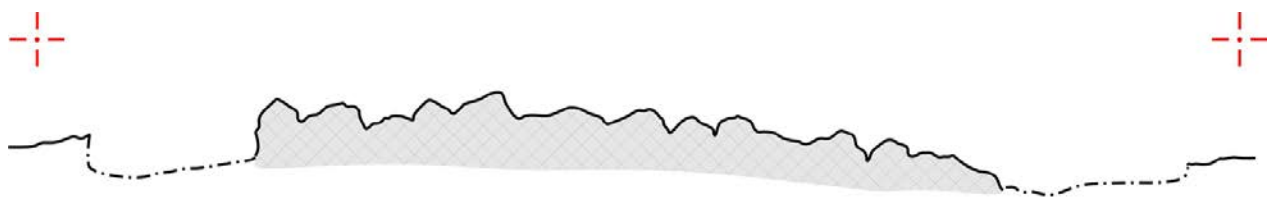
Secondly, positioned either side of the possible inner cairn, approximately on an E-W axis, two possible post-settings were observed, constructed using packing-stones and positioned carefully around central post-holes. Again, these features were left unexcavated. It is however, not unfeasible to assume that they may have supported a superstructure/canopy of some sort associated with the cairn.

Thirdly, at the southern edge of the upper stone layer and extending beyond the western limit of excavation, an area of possible flagged surface was observed to measure approximately 1.20 m x 1.20 m. Without associated finds, dating evidence or paleoenvironmental material, the surface is difficult to interpret; nonetheless it is most likely an extra-mural feature associated with the cairn or the post-settings either side of it. Perhaps it was simply a paved area for mourning relatives to use during funeral rites or later votive ceremonies.

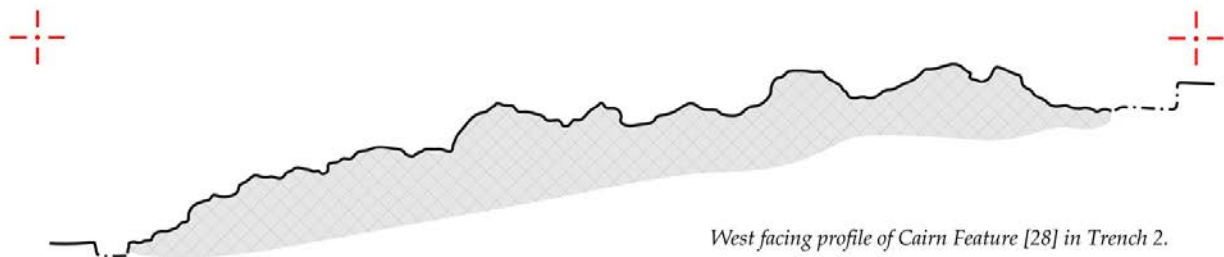
Natural boulder-clay, firm and orange-brown in colour, was encountered throughout the trench beyond the extent of the aforementioned features.

After recording these lower features in plan and covering them with a breathable textile membrane, the upper cairn material was carefully reinstated and the trench backfilled accordingly.

Finds: In addition to the two cup-marked stones, one of which was removed from the site, two flint chippings/wasters were recovered from amongst the upper cairn material. A small amount of charcoal found within the lower cairn material was sampled for possible Radiocarbon dating analysis.

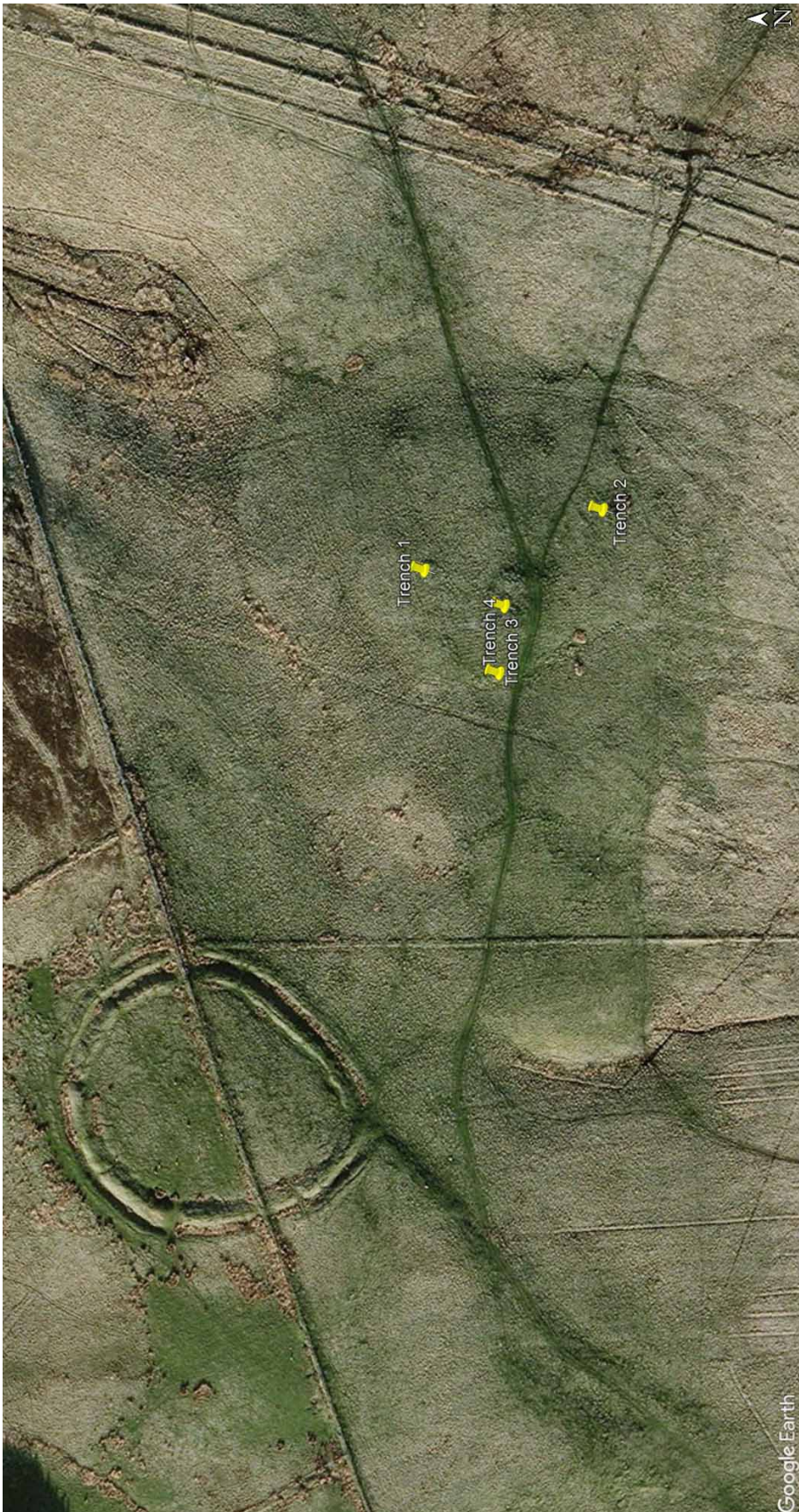


West facing section of Cairn Feature [36] in Trench 1.



West facing profile of Cairn Feature [28] in Trench 2.

Illus. 07 a & b: West-facing profiles of Cairn features [36], above and [28], below.



Illus. 08: Google Earth aerial view with trench locations transposed (north to left of view).

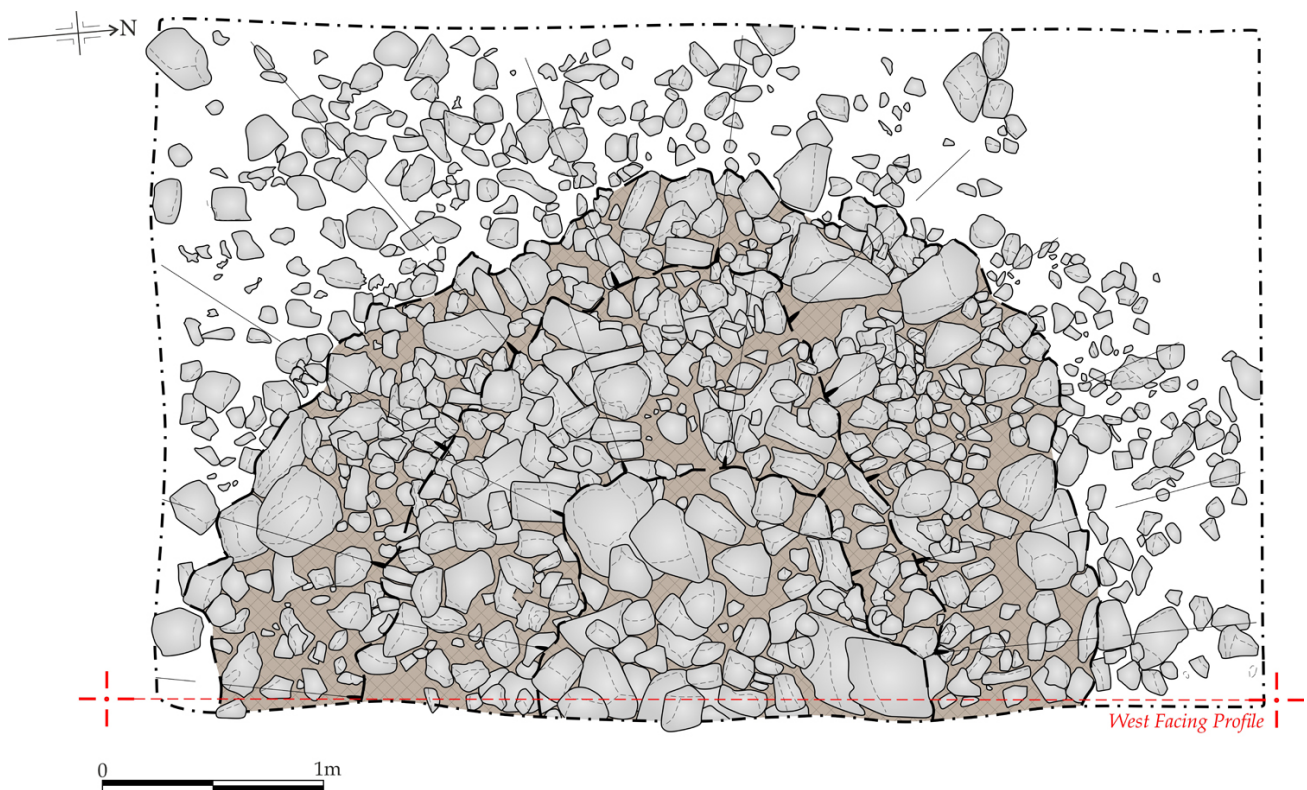
Trench 2 - (NGR: NY 89820 93865)

This trench targeted feature [28], revealing the western half of its upper layer exclusively. The feature is the southernmost mound within a cluster of possible Cairns surmounting a natural knoll located approximately 130 metres SE of Fawdon Hill, and possibly enclosed as a Bronze Age Cemetery. The NW corner of the trench was located 56.73 m SSE of Trench 1 SE corner.

After stripping off the turf and topsoil by hand, it was possible to determine the approximate extent of the Cairn and define aspects of its character (see *Illus. 10* and *Photos 17-20*). The overall dimensions of the western half of the Cairn revealed were as follows:

4.10 m (maximum width N-S) x 2.50 m (approx. half of its length E-W). Depth undetermined.
The overall length of the Cairn is estimated to be 6 m in total.

The upper Cairn material comprised a compacted layer of medium and small sub-rounded and subangular sandstones without bond but deliberately mounded up, perhaps two or three courses deep, with reddish-brown silty soil mixed in, forming a roughly oval shaped low mound, orientated approximately east-west and inclining to the south (a difference of 0.75 m in ground level between the north and south edges of the trench). In form and character, the feature has been interpreted as a potentially undisturbed and intact Cairn monument of probable Bronze Age origin.



Illus. 09: Plan of Feature no. [28] exposed in Trench 2.

After revealing the upper cairn stones and recording the feature in plan and profile (see *Illus. 00-00*), it was observed that voids were apparent near the centre of its summit. Time and resources did not permit an exploration of these voids and it was decided impracticable to continue with invasive excavation. The cairn was subsequently covered with a *terram* textile membrane and the trench carefully backfilled. The large size of this apparent cairn and its excellent state of preservation within a complex of several other potential cairns, warrants broader research and its full excavation at a later date.

Trench 3 - (NGR: NY 89789 93898)

This trench was positioned over feature [26], a more centrally located mound within a cluster of possible cairns surmounting a natural knoll located approximately 130 metres SE of Fawdon Hill, and possibly enclosed as a Bronze Age Cemetery. The trench was aligned NW-SE with dimensions 3 m (length) x 1.50 m (width) x 0.17 m (max depth).

After stripping off the turf and topsoil by hand, it was determined that the mound comprised an entirely natural feature of bedrock (see *Photos. 21-23*). No cairn material or archaeological features of any sort were observed within the trench.

Trench 4 - (NGR: NY 89767 93900)

This test-pit targeted a large protruding boulder; one of several glacial erratics forming a linear bank [27] enclosing or demarcating the perimeter of a natural knoll now interpreted as a possible Bronze Age Cemetery, located approximately 130 metres SE of Fawdon Hill. The dimensions of the test-pit were as follows: 1 m (length) x 1 m (width) x 0.14 m (maximum depth excavated).

After stripping off the turf and topsoil by hand, the trench was excavated down to a firm upper layer of smaller stones and earth that the boulder was set into – possibly forming a linear bank (see *Photos. 24 & 25*). The boulder was subsequently measured, recorded by survey and photography and tentatively interpreted as a marker in a possible Bronze Age cemetery enclosure. The dimensions of the boulder were: 0.70 m (length) x 0.50 m (width) x 0.50 m (height).

Time and resources did not permit further exploration of this linear bank, which would certainly warrant future invasive excavation to determine its configuration and extent.

4. DISCUSSION

Survey and excavation on Fawdon Hill in September 2019 revealed evidence for a likely bronze age ‘ritual’ landscape, represented by probable burial cairns, identified as such by their form and presence within one of at least two cup-marked stones, lying just over the 200 m contour level.

While the nature and distribution of bronze age settlement (c 1900-700 BC) remains poorly understood in the Northumbrian uplands, as more widely in north-east England and the Borders, burial and related ritual monuments of the early and middle bronze age, such as standing stones and stone circles, are better-represented in the archaeological record than for any other period prior to the later middle ages, although the later Bronze Age and Iron Age are notable for their lack of burial remains and related monumental religious sites (Petts and Gerrard 2006, 39).

Burial monuments are varied in nature, reflecting chronological and regional differences (see Fowler 2013), but can include inhumations and exhumations in rectangular cists or pottery vessels, sometimes set within circular or, less-commonly, square-shaped bounded spaces defined by ditches and/or stone or earthen mounds. Confusion may occur in distinguishing ring-ditch ceremonial monuments from unenclosed roundhouses, highlighting a particular problem in the determination of monument types from aerial photographic evidence and, in some cases, even from excavated examples when the structural form of the remains is undiagnostic, especially as settlements of the Bronze Age, particularly the early-mid Bronze Age, tend also to be of unenclosed ring-ditch type. Confusion may also arise, prior to excavation, in distinguishing burial cairns from clearance cairns, although the latter often occur in association with farmed landscapes at

lower altitudes than burial cairns. Other features associated with settlements, but not burial monuments, may include pit alignments and field systems, the latter including cultivation terraces produced from narrow-rigg contour ploughing, and cross-contour ridge and furrow cultivation features.

Thus, the most common form of burial monuments represented in the Northumbrian uplands are clusters of small, stony mounds, or cairns, often circular in form and characterised by the presence of kerbs set at or just above ground level, which would originally have defined the lateral extent of the stone mounds. Along with field systems, these represent the most ubiquitous types of upstanding remains of the prehistoric period, but cairnfields associated with burials prevail in the uplands, where they are often found above the 200 m contour level.

Although the two, excavated Fawdon Hill cairns are considered, for the reasons outlined above, likely burial monuments, further excavation will be required to determine this with certainty by revealing expected remains of burials within, or below the mound structure. Further field survey, preferably carried out in late Winter when the low vegetation is most conducive to field survey, should also be carried out to determine the full extent of the cairnfield revealed partially in late Summer 2019.

With regard to the original motivation for this research, namely, testing Capn. Walton's theory concerning the location of the Battle of Otterburn and, specifically, the position of medieval military burials, it can be concluded that, since the burials alluded to are of likely bronze age origin and no remains of likely securely medieval date survive on the south side of Fawdon Hill, the field survey has not provided positive evidence in support of his theory. However, as discussed in Appendix 1, the absence of tangible evidence provided by the 2019 fieldwork does not entirely disprove the notion that the battle may have occurred on that site.

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APPENDIX 1: Brief overview of arguments concerning the Site of Otterburn Battlefield.

In his measured examination of ancient and modern guides to the site of battle, Tyson (1992) notes that Walton was not the first to suggest Fawdon Hill as an alternative to that generally accepted; indeed, as early as 1812, James Ellis, occupant and owner of Otterburn Hall, wrote to Sir Walter Scott that Fawdon Hill was “tolerably well ascertained” as the battle site (Tyson 1982, 71-2). Tyson considers what he regards as the eight main medieval sources on the battle, four of which are English, three Scottish and one, perhaps the most well-known, by Jean Froissart, he regards as neutral. Froissart’s account and another, which Tyson regards as superior, by an unknown author in the *Westminster Chronicle*, were probably based on conversations with participants and written in the period 1390-1. The only other account given significant credence by Tyson is that of John Hardyng which, although set down some fifty years after the battle, was by a man of military experience who served two leading participants in the battle, Henry Percy (Hotspur) and Sir Robert Umfraville, lord of Redesdale. Amongst modern analyses of the battle, Tyson regards only the account of Lt. Col. A. H. Burne as important in providing the most “coherent, scholarly and convincing modern account”, citing, as with Hardyng, the author’s military experience and analytical methods (curiously, he ignores Capn. Walton’s status in this regard). Thus, while acknowledging the scholarly virtues of White’s *History of the Battle of Otterburn* (1857), the standard work on the subject and a “mine of information”, he points to “some lack of military sense in the text”.

His analysis of the site of battle derived from the medieval sources and modern (19th & 20th century) writers leads him to the conclusion that arguments for the traditional site on Battle Croft are convincing and that Burne’s study, which places it there, “is the nearest anyone will ever get to the reality of what happened at Otterburn in August 1388” (op. cit. 78). His reasoning for this appears to rest on Burne’s authority as a military man and the open, naturally well-drained, relatively flat ground which would have made “an excellent location for the Scots to receive the English”, this being a site where the Scots had chosen to meet the English in the formal context of medieval warfare. Tyson accepts Burne’s siting of the Scottish camp on the road to Scotland some 500m west of the current Percy Cross site, at and below the Iron Age enclosure at Greenchesters, dismissing Froissart’s description of the site of the Scottish camp in, or at the edge of a marsh. Taking the site between camp and border ridge as his battleground he is able to match the local topography with descriptions of the battle.

Walton (1962, 218) suggests, with regard to Burne as well as White and other modern scholars, that “the only supporting evidence for (the battle site) consists of a cross-socket, called locally the ‘Battle Stone’ and the fact that, in the past, there have been found near-by some fragments of swords, spear heads and horse trappings”. Quite reasonably he points to the lack of survival of any of the metalwork supposedly found on the battlefield in the 18th century, the discovery of which is also cited by Tyson, and suggests that they could have been deposited during any of the ‘local engagements’ that occurred over the centuries of Border strife (op. cit. 219). He also suggests that the supposed site of the Scottish camp at Greenchesters makes no sense if the object of attack was Otterburn Tower.

Alternative proposals for the battle site are examined and dismissed by Tyson, some for obviously valid reasons, including Wesenraft’s misreading of *Combure* – the tower besieged by Douglas before the battle – for Cambo and Ramsay’s placement of the battleground in a vulnerable position on marshland just east of the confluence of the Otter burn and Rede. The alternative account given greatest attention by Tyson, although ultimately dismissed, is that of Walton who, as a result of fieldwork carried out in 1961-2 (See *Illus. 10*, below), placed the battlefield on Fawdon Hill almost directly above Otterburn to the north.

Walton’s account seems to be dismissed by Tyson for the following reasons:

1. Over-reliance on the accuracy of Froissart, especially with regard to what Walton regards as his “grasp of military technique”.

However, should Froissart be dismissed so readily? Even if not a military man, his sources were military and he lived in a militarised society. Why should Capn. Walton, who was a military man, not have similar standing to Burne in this regard?

2. Suggestion that Otterburn could not have been the site of the tower attached prior to battle because Otterburn tower was not built until later and does not sit in a marsh, as described by Froissart.

This is correctly disputed by Tyson who notes documentary evidence (citing Pease 1924) suggesting the tower existed as early as 1245 (actually more likely to be a manorial two-storey hall house at that stage). By analogy the tower is likely to be a 14th-century construction. The royal survey of border fortifications in 1415, which lists the tower, provides a terminus ante quem for its construction. Tyson might also have pointed out that Walton's alternative 'tower' site, Girsonfield, is a bastle site, therefore too early for this period - although it is possible that there was an earlier settlement on the site, as suggested by the later find of part of a medieval cross-head (now in Otterburn church) there.

3. Mis-identification of the name Combure as 'Camp Hill', an earlier name for Fawdon Hill.

4. Valid doubts are also cast on Walton's identification of a triple line of earthworks running approximately north-south across the putative east side of the battlefield, and on the discovery of "over a hundred single and mass graves" on Fawdon Hill.

(Neither of these were critical factors in determining the site of battle, however.)

5. In addition, doubts are cast earlier in Tyson's paper, though not specifically in response to Walton's article, about the Scottish Army's postulated use of the drove road from Elsdon - if it existed at that time - as a route into Scotland, since medieval armies preferred to keep to lower ground.

It also has to be acknowledged that much of Walton's account, particularly with regard to troop movements and their commanders' intentions during the battle (see *Illus. 11*) are somewhat fanciful, or at least embellished, in the style of Froissart himself. And, like Burne and White before him, Walton fits the somewhat sketchy accounts of the battle to fit his chosen battlefield landscape.

A flavour of Capn. Walton's seemingly authoritative tone yet largely conjectural content is given in the following account of the aftermath of battle:

"For one day following the skirmish with the Bishop, they worked at the unpleasant task of covering the dead with a little earth and a great number of loose stones which they dragged from the Park wall and from the other earth dikes. It is a wonderful thing that they did this. It was hot weather and if the work had been left, as it usually was on these occasions to the local people, it could never have been done at all. As it was, all the bodies were given protection from dogs and foxes and the mere shadows of these bodies, outlined only by the rust of their chain mail, can be seen under the stones to-day.

It is possible that some special memorial stone was placed at the battle-field at a later date, but none has yet been found. There is a well-known fragment of the head of a cross which was found in the wall of Girsonfield farm yard many years ago. This can be seen in the porch of Otterburn Church. When I examined it for the first time, I was surprised to see that no one seemed to have noticed that this cross is a saltire cross. Whether it has come from some church roof or from the battlefield, it cannot be denied that it is, in all probability, of Scottish origin.

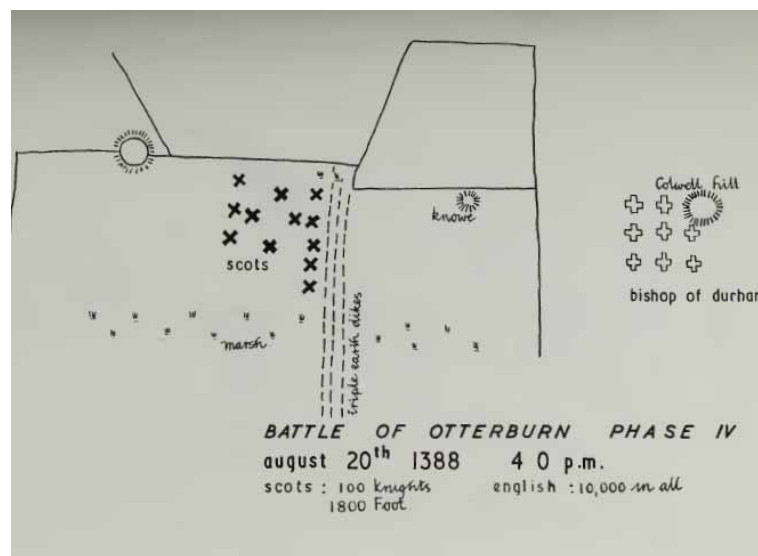
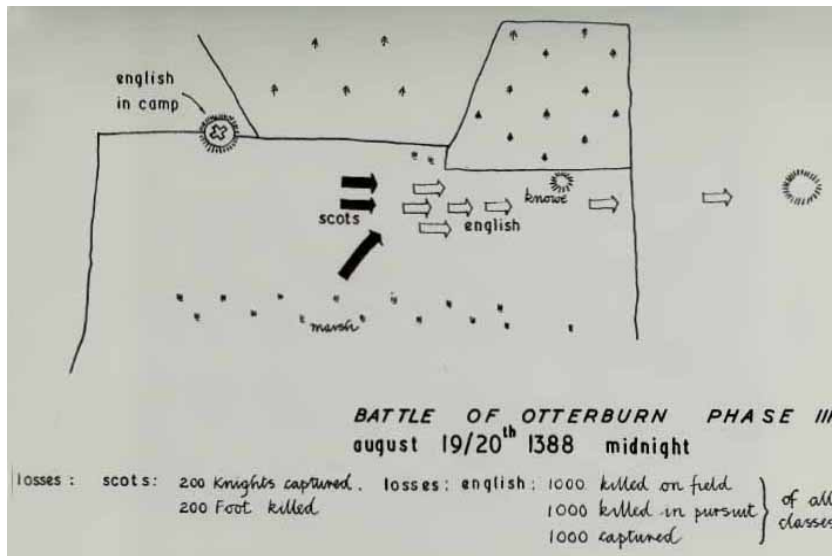
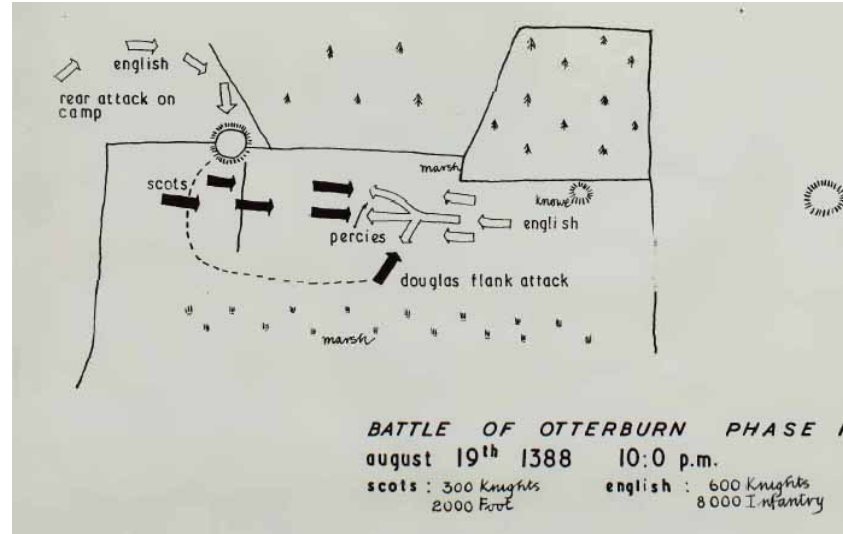
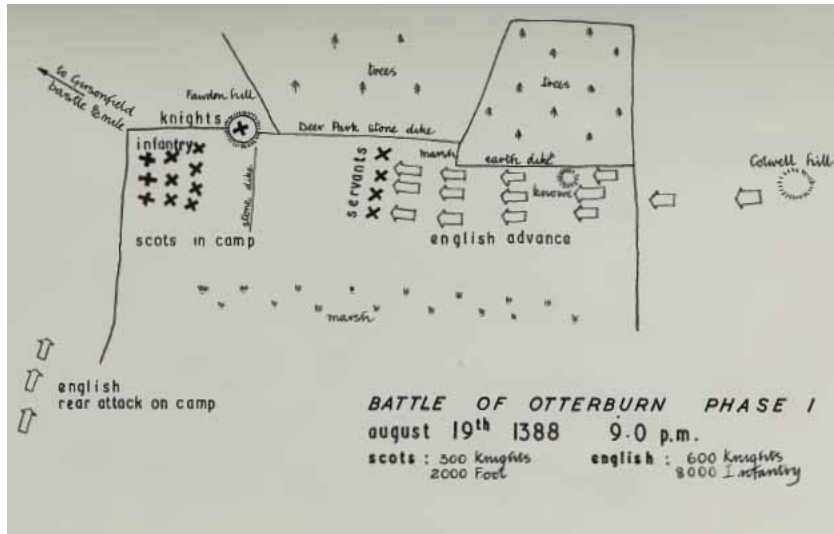
As they marched away, the Scots burnt their huts and to-day nothing but the dead remain to tell us that here on Fawdon Hill there was once a great battle. They spent the first night near the border, possibly at Chew Green and, carrying the bodies of Earl Douglas and Sir Simon Glendenning, on the next day they reached Melrose where their hero was buried" (Walton 1962, 245).

Despite these objections, notably the dismissal of Walton's main place-name evidence, *Combure*, and, linked with it, probably also Girsonfield, there remain positive reasons not to reject out of hand his siting of the battleground on Fawdon Hill. Foremost is the topography of battle, which seems at least as well matched to contemporary descriptions as the accepted site at Battle Croft. Specifically, the Fawdon Hill site includes an extensive area of marshland on its south side, currently in the process of reinstatement following attempts to drain it in the past. Tyson may well have been unaware of the existence of this marsh, since it was drained at the time he wrote, and seems to ignore that aspect of Froissart's description, or to regard it as the fanciful creation of a non-military mind, although it is one of the few topographical features mentioned and rather an unusual one at that, which seems to make it more, rather than less plausible. But the existence of this marsh, within 250 m of the hill-fort on Fawdon Hill, removes at least one of his objections to the Fawdon Hill site, that of an absence of drinking water for soldiers and stock. The Fawdon Hill enclosure would also have been, as it remains, a more impressive and effective monument than Greenchesters to site a base-camp within and around, and its position relatively near to the road from Dere Street to Elsdon would have allowed passage into Scotland by that route.

On balance the traditional site of battle at Battle Croft still seems most plausible of all five sites previously suggested by various modern authors and listed by Tyson, although direct evidence is vanishingly thin and some of Tyson's reasons for supporting it - unverified finds of weaponry, and over-emphasis on Burne's possession (and absence in Froissart) of a 'military mind' - as well as some of his reasons for not supporting the Fawdon Hill site (which he nevertheless seems to regard as the next best option) - lack of water, and unwillingness of a medieval army to use the Dere Street-Elsdon high road - seem weak, while the presence of extensive marshland on Fawdon Hill, of which Tyson was seemingly unaware, is a point in its favour. While only a small sample of the burial features he most closely identified with the battle ground were investigated, it is now clear that these are likely to be bronze age burial mounds rather than those of fallen medieval soldiers, and the misidentification of three Enclosure Period linear earthwork features as defences constructed by the Scottish army after the battle, further weakens confidence in Walton's argument for the position of the battleground on Fawdon Hill.

Thus, with respect to the field investigation carried out in 2019, no evidence was forthcoming to support the site of battle proposed by Walton, other than the circumstantial or contextual evidence of topography fitting the description of battle provided in contemporary accounts, including an undulating battlefield and presence of a prehistoric enclosure near marshland.

Illus. 11 i-iv: Walton's schematic phased representation of the Battle of Otterburn.





Illus. 10 i-1v (above) & v-viii (below): Captain Walton's Investigations on Fawdon Hill in 1961.



APPENDIX 2: *Photographic Record*

Photo. 1: View northwards from the north-east corner of the site.

Photo. 2: Adder seen on the site during a site visit on 22nd February, 2019.

Photo. 3: Aerial view over the site from the east during excavations, with Fawdon Hill hillfort and Otterburn village to rear of view.

Photo. 4: Aerial view southwards during excavations showing triple line of earthworks running through the marsh in the south-east part of the site.

Photo. 5: Ground level view southwards of the triple line of earthworks descending from the north and south into the marsh in the south-east part of the site.

Photo. 6: Fieldwalking in September 2019.

Photo. 7: Earthworks on a hillock just east of the survey area.

Photo. 8: Circular gully (Site 38) of c. 8 m diam. Close to the eastern edge of the survey area.

Photo. 9: Site no. 36 prior to excavation in February 2019.

Photo. 10: Site no. 36 during excavation of Trench 1 in September, 2019.

Photo. 11: Site no. 36 following clearance of turf from the mound.

Photo. 12: Cup-marked stone 'A' in the central part of the lower mound, Site no. 36.

Photo. 13: Site no. 36 following removal of upper mound material.

Photo. 14: Cup-marked stone 'B' found in upper mound material in the north-east part of Site 36.

Photo. 15: Cup-marked stone 'B' photographed in oblique sunlight, highlighting the cup-mark.

Photo. 16: Paved surface forming the south-west part of Site no. 36.

Photo. 17: Site no. 28, viewed from the north-west in February 2019, prior to excavation in September, 2019.

Photo. 18: Aerial view of Site no. 28 during excavation (unexcavated half of the monument to south (bottom) of view).

Photo. 19: View from the south of the exposed stone mound, or cairn of Site. No. 28 following partial excavation.

Photo. 20: View from the west of the exposed stone mound, or cairn of Site. No. 28 following partial excavation in Trench 2.

Photo. 21: Aerial view of exposed bedrock comprising Site no. 26, following excavation of Trench 3.

Photo. 22: View of Site no. 26 from the north-west.

Photo. 23: View from the north-west of Site no. 26 with burial mound excavations in progress to the south-east.

Photo. 24: View from the west following excavation of Site no. 27 in Trench 4, September 2019.

Photo. 25: Close-up view from the west of an upstanding orthostat and a loose agglomeration of stones forming part of a bank recorded as Site no. 27, revealed in Trench 4.



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Dedication

In appreciation of Captain R H Walton, a past president of the Berwickshire Naturalists Club and fellow of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland (FSAScot). Born in Powys, Wales in 1908, he trained as a mechanical engineer at Vickers Armstrong, Newcastle and in World War II served in Burma as a firearms instructor, rising to the rank of Captain in the Royal Tank Corps. He subsequently returned to civilian life as an engineer, soon moving with his wife and three daughters, Philippa, Barbara and Frances to live at Carlcroft in remote upper Coquetdale, from where he commuted to work on Tyneside by car. In 1953 the family moved down the valley to Wilkinson Park, near Newton, which Barbara remembers as a spacious, if rather dilapidated grand residence. Living in Coquetdale enhanced and cemented Capn. Walton's strong attachment to the Northumberland countryside and its history, leading to his association with the Berwickshire Naturalists for which he became a prodigious contributor writing, in addition to an analysis of the Battle of Otterburn, articles for its journal on subjects as diverse as Lordenshaws prehistoric enclosure, the Roman Link road from High Rochester to Learchild and some enigmatic cup marks on the bedrock of Goswick beach.

The following account, in Reports of Meetings for the Year 1959 (The History of the Berwickshire Naturalists Club vol. XXXV), gives a flavour of Capn. Walton's interests and contributions to the Club:

Later in the month a second additional meeting was held, members assembling at Alwinton and driving up the Coquet valley to ... the site of the mediaeval village of Lynnbrig. Captain R.H. Walton, F.S.A.Scot., who has done much excavation work here, pointed out the site of the various buildings and gave detailed plans of the original village. Specimens of ferns, plants and lepidoptera were collected. Mrs Walton had previously invited those present to tea at Wilkinson Park; a gracious and thoughtful gesture. The house, built in the 1920's, has panoramic views, and members were able to inspect at their leisure the well-known Walton collection of fire-arms, and the many museum pieces which it contains. It was at a late hour that the last member was able to drag himself away.

In addition to historical pursuits, he maintained an interest in firearms and related technologies, being responsible for the first firearms training course provided to Northumbria Police and developing the prototype for a bullet-proof waistcoat, which he demonstrated without mishap on a live edition of BBC television's Tomorrow's World. He continued to explore, collect, write and invent at Wilkinson Park until his death in 1977, and is still remembered locally as an eccentric but highly popular member of the Coquetdale community.
