

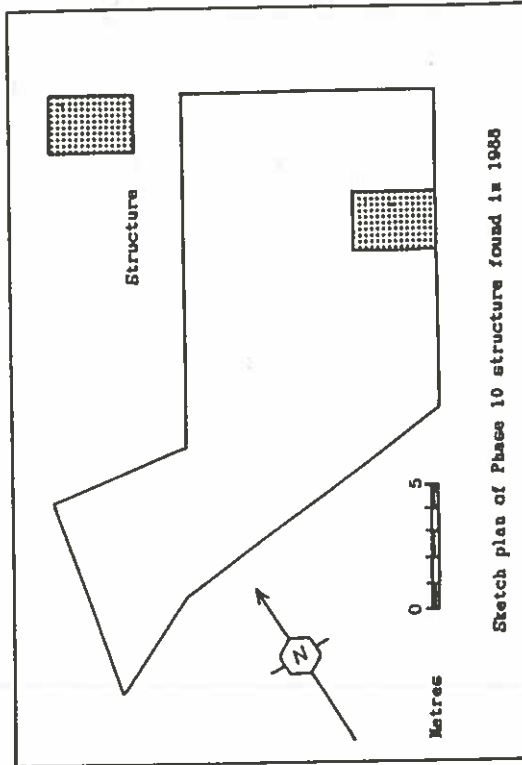
BRAUDY HILL-FORT 1988 FOURTH INTERIM REPORT

Work in the field and in post-excavation analysis during 1988 have greatly clarified both the nature and the chronology of the site.

The later Iron Age

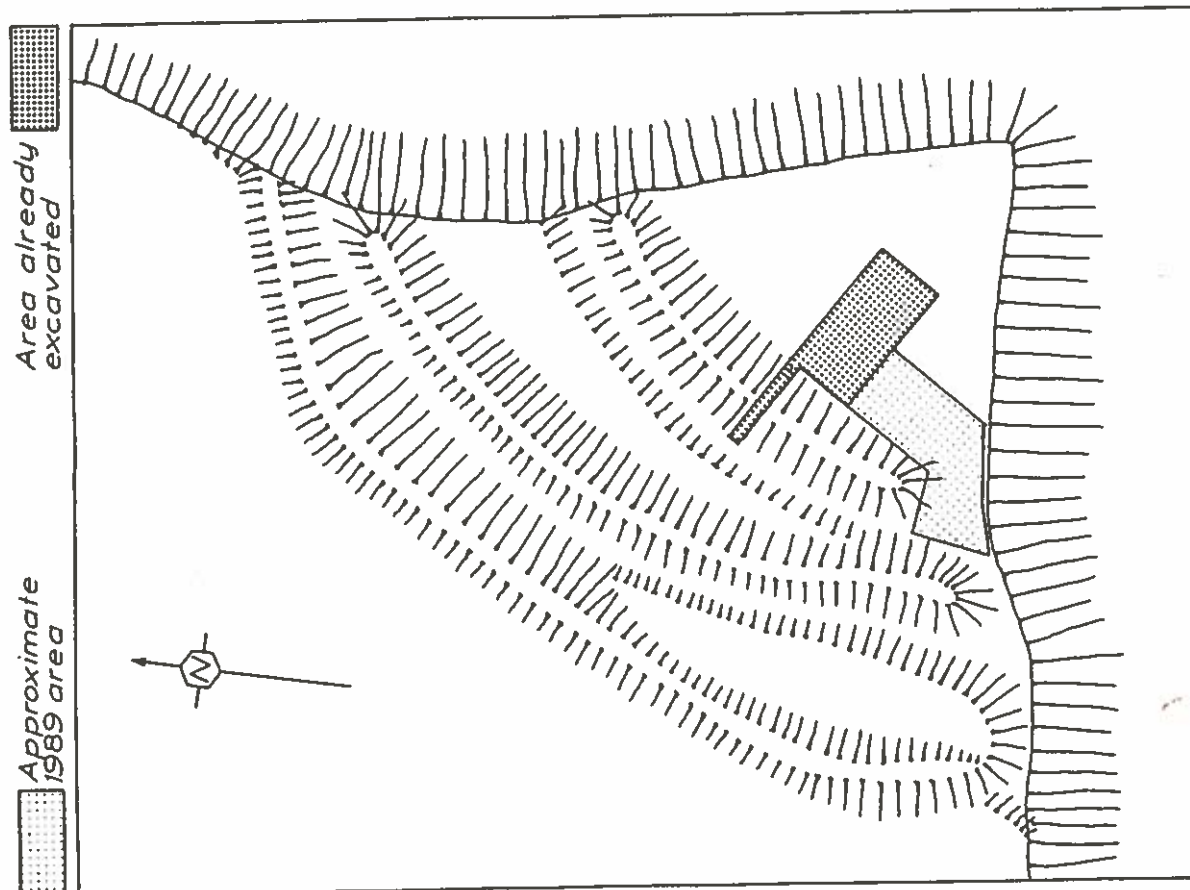
Six discoveries have been important for dating and elucidating the character of the interior sequence:

- (i) the recognition, in the gateway area, of a rectilinear post-hole rectangular structure 2.3m x 3.2m (at least) showing as 'drying marks' on the surface of a roughly cobbled (?associated) yard, and minor post-hole or stake-holes in the surface of the yard, on which also lay a small amount of ironwork and slag. These features will be excavated at the start of the 1989 season, but it is already clear that they postdate all the structural phases recovered in previous seasons.



Sketch plan of Phase 10 structure found in 1988

- (ii) the spatial and stratigraphical association of roofing slate and coal with Phase 5.
- (iii) the recognition of possible Romano-British pottery and vessel glass, also probably associated with Phase 5.
- (iv) a radiocarbon date (paid for by Lloyd's Bank Dating Fund) of 2390 ± 60, B.P. for one of the Phase 4 hearths. This may give a terminus



100 metres
0 20 40 60 80 100
0 100 200 300 feet

ante quem for the prehistoric round-house sequence, given the nature of the dated context,

(v) the identification of all the possible mediaeval pottery as post-mediaeval by Paul Courtney. He stresses that few vessels are represented and that this is unlikely to be a domestic assemblage.

There is thus no mediaeval pottery from the site at all, and

(vi) the identification of a sherd of a circular tynere of the type found at Cathedral Hill, Armagh (Ireland), Kiondroghad (Isle of Man) etc. amongst the finds from the gateway area. This type of tynere seems wholly of 'Irish Sea' distribution and early mediaeval date.

It is thus now clear that four major periods may be discerned:

1. Probably early-middle Iron-Age, roundhouses, and other posthole features, with domestic and metal-working debris (Phases 1-4).
2. Probably Romano-British, slate-roofed rectilinear timber structures and domestic debris (Phase 5).
3. Perhaps early mediaeval, rectangular timber-framed buildings (Phase 7). Tynere sherd?
4. A rectangular posthole building with an associated yard (Phase 10). Iron-slag and iron-objects.

A phase (of site clearance?) represented by a large sub-rectangular pit and some postholes (Phase 6) preceded Period 3, and the postholes of a small rectangular structure cut the gravel floors of one of the Period 3 buildings prior to erosion preceding Period 4 (Phase 8).

The large pits (Phase 9) recognised in previous seasons may belong to, or more probably post-date, Period 4 (Phase 10).

As all these major periods are separated by erosion deposits, and as Period 1 can be divided into four phases (1 to 4), while the buildings of Period 2 (Phase 5) were rebuilt, at least once, obviously a long duration of occupation is indicated.

The date of Period 3 (Phases 7) remains a problem, a post-Roman date looks increasingly unlikely, but a late-Romano-British date cannot yet be finally ruled out. The possible structural parallels may suggest, however, an early mediaeval date, while no comparable local Romano-British site lacks associated pottery, but early mediaeval sites with few, or even without, datable finds do occur in Wales. The (approximately 10) sherds of possible Romano-British pottery and one possible piece of ribbed, possibly Roman, vessel-glass are not stratigraphically or

horizontally associated with this phase; they may perhaps belong to the preceding period of slate-roofed buildings (Period 2, Phase 5).

The Bank

It is now clear that the inner bank divides into three main phases:

1. A dump rubble bank revetted with a well built timber fence at its rear.
2. A dump of gravel and clay against the rear of the first phase rampart.
3. A major dump of rubble revetted near its summit, at the rear, by a row of roughly squared blocks wedged into place, with slabby stones, on a cut shelf. A smaller shelf occurs at the front of the rampart near its summit, but now contains no stones. On the top of this bank was a row of possible post-holes, perhaps a palisade.

Each of these phases is also separated by erosion deposits. In addition, finds of the type associated with the Iron-Age (Phase 4) hearths in the interior occur on, and not in, the Phase 1 bank and in the Phase 2 bank. Finds of the, possibly Romano-British, interior phase 3 -- such as roofing slate -- occur in the Phase 3 bank but not in the Phase 2 bank.

Thus the three major bank phases may be tentatively correlated with the three major interior periods:

- Bank Phase 1 - Interior Period 1
- Bank Phase 2 - Interior Period 2
- Bank Phase 3 - Interior Period 3

It is clear that the fourth (and fifth?) major interior periods (Phases 9 and 10) mentioned above, overlies the erosion deposits derived from the latest of the banks (Bank Phase 3).

Further radiocarbon-dating and post-excavation analysis will proceed in 1985/9, and work on the site will continue in 1989, in the area begun in 1988.

K. E. Dark, 1988.