

CIRCULAR ENCLOSURES AT RULLION GREEN, MIDLOTHIAN

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The site is on the SE slopes of the Pentland Hills, in rough grazing at nearly 1200 ft OD, about six miles from Edinburgh (NP 22096224; RCAMS, 1929, 75-6, no. 104). It consists of eight small enclosures showing either as circular ditches, some with a slight internal bank, or as circular banks without surface indications of a ditch. The enclosures lie close together, in some cases touching, in one case overlapping.

One of the larger enclosures was partially excavated in 1948, but not published because of its puzzling nature (Fig. 1). It consisted of a ditch, 32 ft in diameter overall and 2 ft 6 in deep. A narrow ring of stones, resting on the bottom of the ditch and rising to the old ground level, gave the appearance of a rough flimsy wall. Otherwise the ditch was filled with soil without silting but with a high-level iron-pan layer. Round the inner lip of the ditch was a shallow bank of clayey soil, and the inner edge of the bank was made irregular by a series of small but very distinct depressions. In the centre of the site was a post hole. To the S of the post hole was an intensely black area of charcoal with fragments of burnt bone too small for precise identification. Over this was a spread of soil in which was embedded an irregular scatter of stones. The only finds were some flint chips.

The site can now more confidently be interpreted as a burial structure. Within the ditch, which had no entrance gap and had been filled deliberately, there had probably been erected a slight wooden wig-wam about 16 ft in diameter, its base resting against the continuous bank which was designed to hold it. The affinities appear to lie with such sites as Broughton Knowe, Peebles-shire (MacLaren, 1967, 99-103), though at Rullion Green there was only an earth layer over the cremations instead of a barrow or cairn.

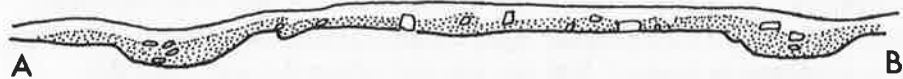
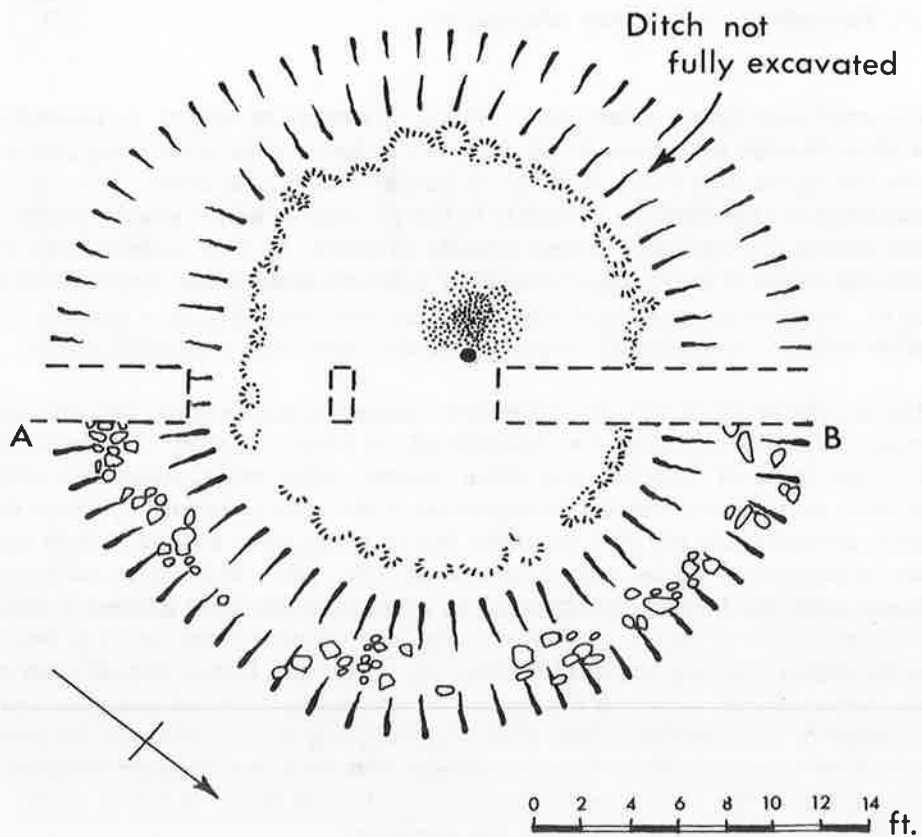


Figure 1.