

General Pitt Rivers
Rushmore

PR BOX 1/14

Salisbury.

58, West Regent Street,

Glasgow. 30 April 1891

Dear Sir

I have delayed troubling you a second time until our work was further on. The Croy sections have had to be covered in on account of the danger to lambs on the hill. The Marlhill cuttings however are still open.

New sections have been made in the vicinity of Bonnybridge, two at Seabeg's wood a mile west of Bonnybridge and several on Bonnygade and at Rough Castle. Of the Rough Castle ones I shall speak shortly, but meantime a note should be given about the ordinary sections of the vallum at Seabeg's wood and on Bonnymuir. These disclose the same features as we saw at Croy. The crepitations - purely crepitations -

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character of the vallum becomes ever more apparent. The batter of the wall in its original state however remains in as great obscurity as ever. We had good indications two or three times in the former cuttings which seemed to make for a nearly upright face but we have no clear data in the new sections. The layering is very faint at Seabeg but very pronounced on Bonnymuir. I have a little box containing two layers just as cut out. If you care to have it I shall be very glad to send it on.

As yet I have not seen complete sections of the vallum and fosse. I arranged last Saturday to have these done if possible in two instances and I learn that the results are very satisfactory proving as we have all along believed that the ditch was festigate, making a sharp ∇ at the bottom. On Saturday we shall take as exact a survey as is possible.

A suggestion which strikes me as of very great value has been thrown out by

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Mr Macgregor Chalmers a clever young architect who is one of the most energetic members of the Committee appointed to report on the cuttings. You are probably aware that in the Antonine wall just as in the murus of Hadrian and the vallum of Hadrian the wall does not stand close to the ditch but has a platform between it and the ditch. This averages from 20 to 30 feet from the edge of the ditch but once comes down to 15 and once is 35, in cases where no marked natural feature such as a precipice is a factor in the case. The precise reason for the platform does not appear on the surface but I think Mr Chalmers has hit on an ingenious idea when, founding on medieval military engineering, he suggests that the depths and angle of the ditch are, when taken in conjunction with the kerbs, a clear key to the original height of the wall for, he contends, the Roman soldier on the top must have been just high enough up to sweep the whole ditch

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with his missiles. Now it certainly bears out this theory that we find that on Barhill where the ditch is narrow and the angle sharp the kerbs are only 15 feet from the edge. All this of course is in the meantime mere hypothesis but if you can from your military experience and antiquarian knowledge put us on the track of information to what the edge of our research it will be a great favour.

The military way at Croy was made of rough stones as a found and had smaller stiff land on above. So is it at Leabeg but beside Rough castle and in the western gateway the road is paved.

Now we come to Rough castle. Our good friend and director general Mr Wm Jolly is anxious to be up and at this place but Chalmers and I wish to hold off a little till we complete our report on the vallum proper. I think it likely that the Rough castle digging will be held over for a little. They will require the

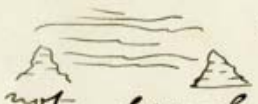
concentration of all our efforts and I venture to hope that before we proceed with them we may be honoured by a visit from you and have the advantage

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of your advice. Two sections have been made in this station, one through the north wall and another through the west. That on the ^{north} ~~west~~ has traces of stone work and in the wall itself has on each side a kind of shell of stone work with the layers of cespiticious matter between thus - the stone work being very irregular  not firmly compacted and only about 3 feet high.

The other ^{that thro' the west wall} section revealed some very unexpected results. What scarce seemed to rise above the level of the hill top and differed little in appearance from the neighbouring soil proved to be the finest bit of cespiticious building we have yet seen. We count 14 successive

black layers with ^{thick} sandy layers between. Adjoining the east side of this wall there is a mass of earth and stone bearing signs of disturbance but indications of something like a floor and ending in a kerb 22 feet from the east side of the cespiticious part. The debris was partly fine sandy soil and partly rough freestone. At the ^{marked} point ^x in this very sad sketch



of urine, charred or decomposed wood was found. Amongst the material from the same spot some bits of rough earthenware were turned up. Hitherto we have found nothing, except at Croy station where a little bit of Samian ware was found - not in the wall but in another section.

The best place from which to see the seabed sections is Greenhill Station on the Baledomain Railway or from Bonnybridge on the North

British. The Barhill cuttings we
last approached from Croy station on
the North British. I hope when
you come that Mr Solly Mr Chalmer
and I may have the opportunity of
meeting you on the ground and
getting your good counsel.

Rough Castle will need to be
very judiciously explored and on that
point as on some others our little
experience makes us very conscious
of the need of such trained skill
as yours.

This is a long letter. The
interest the matter has for me must
excuse its length.

Yours faithfully
Geo. Neilson