

2861

Fussell Place

Hyde Park W

6 May 1892

Dear Sir,

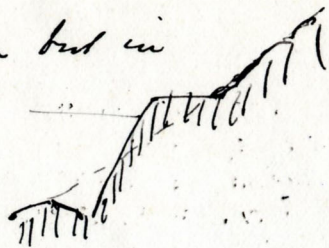
I am much obliged to you for your kind note in reply to my letter respecting the banks at Balcombe. I cannot but feel that you are almost certain to be right in the conclusion you come to as to the purpose for which they were made from a very distant to a very recent period the Forest was utilized mainly as a rabbit warren, and it would not be improbable that extensive works might be undertaken with a view to this purpose. At the same time I cannot understand why banks thrown up merely for rabbit burrows should have had such regular

forms, appearing at all points the character of defensive works, or been carried out to such an extent in straight lines.

They are nearly all on or near the brow of the hills towards the south and extend for a distance of more than a mile from east to west while from north to south they are all within 2 or 300 yards, and generally much less. Some of them are certainly of great age as there are very old pollard beeches upon them.

Habitations they cannot have been or forts, and therefore I should not expect to find pottery or other relics in them. If not as you consider them merely rabbit banks the only conjecture I can form is that they were shelter banks and trenches thrown up for the purpose of assisting to repel some expected invasion from the south, and possibly never completed. The general form is shown in the

Sections I sent to you but in some places this form is also found which does not look like a rabbit bank.



And if they were so there seem to be so very much more of them than was required. There are a few rabbit holes in them but not a very great number.

The little enclosure shown in the plan can hardly I think have had anything to do with rabbits. I had thought of digging them to try if any remains were to be found but the ground has been much disturbed about 15 or 20 years ago by planting Scotch firs over it.

If I should carry out this idea you will perhaps kindly allow me to trouble you again with a report of the result.

Yours very truly
Edmund de Pitt-Rivers

P. L. Nichol