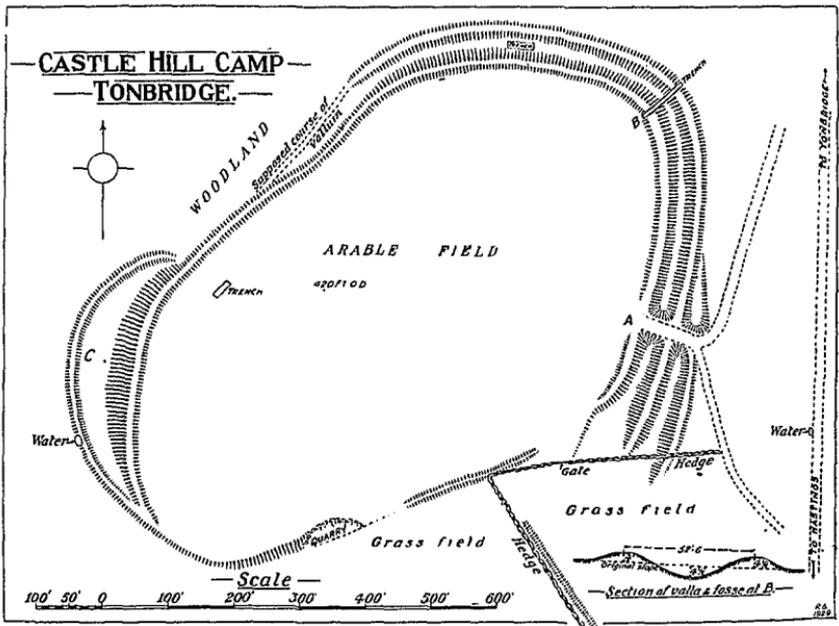


CASTLE HILL CAMP, TONBRIDGE.

THE results, chiefly negative, of excavation at Castle Hill Camp, Tonbridge, in August, 1929, are as follow. Though it has big earth-works, the place is very little known, has never before been systematically dug, and was included in the O.S. 6 in. map only as late as 1912. With the kind permission of Mr. O. E. d'Avigdor-Goldsmid I had two diggers and several voluntary helpers at work for a fortnight, with Mr. J. C. Isard as organiser and treasurer, and monetary assistance from the Tonbridge and Tunbridge Wells antiquarian societies.

The site is at 420 ft. above O.D., on the west side of Pembury Road, with a remarkably extensive view over the Weald eastward to Wye Downs, and is a great hill-top camp, with an area, inside the line of the complete outer vallum, of some 17 acres. Its form is ovoid, with a greatest axis, north-east to south-west, of about 360 yards. The entrance (A) is due east, 120 ft. long and 10 ft. broad, and was found by digging to be paved firmly with iron-stone nodules and sandstone slats, the sandy sides being supported by biggish sandstones. On the outside the North side of the entrance overlaps the South side by 15 ft. There are apparently ancient approaches from north-east and south-east. North of this two big valla, with intervening fosse curve round to north-west, where the inner vallum degenerates into a bank bounding the enclosed arable field of 10 acres, and the outer has been used to fill up the fosse. South of the entrance there are three valla and two fosses, but they all peter out towards the south-east. The peculiar feature of the camp is that on the top of the south-west slope a kind of loop (C) is added by a single vallum and fosse with a slight outside bank, describing an arc of about 500 ft., which looks like a later addition, made in order to bring the defences right up to a strong spring of water, which breaks out on the clay underlying the

Tunbridge Wells sand forming the hill-top. There is also a spring just below the camp on the east on the Pembury Road. On an average the fosse is 12 ft. below the top of the inner vallum, which is 50 ft. distant from the top of the second vallum. An 80 ft. trench (B) dug right through these to below the level of the original level of the slope produced not a particle of evidence of date, and showed merely to what height the two valla had been piled and the fosse dug—namely maximum 4 ft., $4\frac{1}{2}$ ft., $4\frac{1}{2}$ ft. (see section on plan).



A big trench along the fosse to the north revealed an ancient burnt layer of charcoal and burnt sandstone, 6 in. thick, obviously on the original fosse bottom, and under 2 ft. of silt. This extended for 15 ft. and showed in section on both sides of a trench 4 ft. wide, and continued farther both in width and length. It must represent much cooking in this part of the fosse. The result of digging and systematic surface searching in the enclosed arable area was: Five flint implements, many flakes and cores, many pot-boiler flints, and a good quantity of ordinary broken flints. All flints are

imported, probably from the gravels of the Medway. Beyond this were some horse teeth and plenty of iron slag, pronounced probably ancient by Mr. Ernest Straker. There remains along the hedge of the grass field south-east a very distinct (? causeway) bank, but its antiquity and purpose are not proved. Inconclusive trenching was done in many other places than those shown on the plan.

Such are the slender indications found in the assiduous searches of fifteen days. The flints suggest the settlement on the hill-top of flint-using people, whether in neolithic or later pre-historic times. The general character of the earthworks suggests an Early Iron Age date for the camp, and the iron slag accords with this, as at Saxonbury. (See *Sussex Arch. Collections*, 1930). Diligent search found no burial mounds and no pottery; hence it may be inferred that the place was a camp of refuge rather than a continuously inhabited township. It seems highly probable that the camp was reached by a prehistoric ridge track on the line of the present Tonbridge-Hastings road.

The flint finds have been submitted to Mr. Reginald Smith of the British Museum, and Dr. Eliot Curwen of Hove, both of whom are in general agreement about them, and both find specially interesting a piece of a Neolithic celt (date about 2,500 B.C.) which has been worked up again and adapted as a smaller implement (Dr. Curwen suggests possibly as a child's toy). There are three scrapers, one square-ended (an uncommon type). Another is a good specimen of a push-plane. The flints are deposited in the Tonbridge Public Library.

S. E. WINBOLT.