

Ericstane Farm, Moffat. [Borders Forest Trust]

Old map research of the historic Braefoot Wood, now known as Dairy Wood

By Peter Quelch for Dendrochronicle, May 2024

Introduction

First let us define the study area for this project, by showing below the first reliable map image of Braefoot Wood, which is from the First Edition Ordnance Survey six inch to the mile scale. This map series for all of Scotland is available on the website of the National Library of Scotland (Map Images) and one of the ways of viewing this map series is through a seamless composite found by simply inserting a modern place name eg Moffat. The map can be moved around and focused in and out by the computer mouse. Then selected images can be saved as jpg files, for inserting into reports, or as pdf documents for printing and encapsulating A4 maps for use in the field and to show others.



Figure 1. Braefoot Wood, Ericstane farm. OS 1st Ed 6 inch, surveyed 1857, pub 1861

During two days of field survey on 23 and 24 April 2024, the author got to know the woodland structure, and took well over a hundred photos of the site, the wider surrounds and the trees themselves. Limited old map research before visiting the site provided selected relevant encapsulated maps for comparison during the survey. Of course, the up-to-date folded maps in the OS Explorer series at 1:25,000 scale (Sheet 330 for Moffat) are invaluable in the field to show modern farms, buildings, roads, tracks and woods, including the extensive areas of plantation forest

throughout the Borders. Further map research takes place in the office following the field work, when the place-names and the topography are better known.

The NLS website is easy to navigate, and is free to anyone to use, though images may not be used for commercial publication. Selecting County Maps, then Dumfriesshire, brings an extensive list of old maps for the county in date order, usually starting with early maps c1600 and hopefully some 18th C maps, especially the Military Survey of c1750, if they are available and have survived. Estate Plans for land improvement from the late 18th C are invaluable in woodland research, but may not be held in the NLS collection, and none were found for this study. The help of archivists and historians is needed to locate these documents. The NLS map list continues through the various 18th C County maps and then of course the Ordnance Survey maps which begin, like the example above, around 1860 as the First Edition. They can be available in three different scales: one inch to the mile, six inches which provides the best all round field map, and more rarely (except in urban areas) at 25 inches. Then the Second Edition OS maps based on survey revision in the late 19th C are listed and available on the NLS website, followed by later revisions and sheet number changes which happens especially with the one inch sheets (several are shown below). This sequence of 160 years of accurate and well-preserved Ordnance Survey maps is invaluable to woodland history research.

Early Maps 1600-1800. The early maps, including Roy's Military Survey (which took place immediately after the Jacobite rebellion of 1745), are often colourful, but are not so easy to read and understand (see the example from Blaeu's Atlas below). The County maps were a good intermediate before the Ordnance Survey was commissioned. Most of these maps will be sampled in the sequence which follows.



Fig 2 Joan Blaeu's Atlas 1654 Evia et Escia Scotis, surveyed by Timothy Pont c1590



Fig 3 Joan Blaeu's Atlas 1654 Upper Clydesdale including part of north Annandale

Blaeu's Atlas is a huge work of that era, as it was published in Amsterdam, using actual surveys from all over the world. We are fortunate that much of the survey work by the prodigious and brilliant early Scottish surveyor Timothy Pont (1560-1614) has been incorporated in Blaeu's publications. The example in Fig 2 covers all of Eskdale but only touches the bordering regions including Annandale. Of particular importance to this study is that the experienced surveyor Pont has added very many small natural woodlands within the hills of Eskdale including large parts of the old Ettrick Forest.

So, a third extract from Blaeu (Fig 3), covers the study area rather well with the Annand river heading north from 'Muffat' past rather mountainous and yet lightly wooded hills, to recognisable place-names at Annand head, Tweeds head, Earls haugh, and the Airik Stone.

So, returning to Blaeu's comprehensive map of Eskdale in Fig 4 below, this extract gives a closer look at the relatively well wooded area around the heads of the Black Esk close to Annandale, and the White Esk. The extensive woodlands to the east, at the head of the White Esk, include the 'Blaberry Wood in Forrest', while similar patches of natural looking woodlands in the Ettrick forest are shown in the SE corner of this extract. The Dryfe water flows down from its head in the Black Esk hills as shown on this map extract, to enter the River Annan just east of Lochmaben.



Fig 5 Herman Moll (d1732) 'Anandale, part of Dumfreis Shire' published London 1745

William Roy's Military Survey of Scotland 1747-1755. The military survey is a landmark in mapping history as for the first time an extensive series of maps includes all the pre-improvement settlements, as well as early towns like Moffat and their connecting roads. The first extract (Fig 6) follows the River Annan from Moffat up to Ericstane farm and Braefoot. Two further extracts will focus first on the study area, and then north to the dramatic Devil's Beef Tub which the Military surveyors call: 'Marquis of Annandale's Beef Stands'.

Looking at the layout of the settlements in north Annandale named on the Roy maps, shows immediately that the small clusters of red coloured buildings and their associated arable land cultivated by rig and furrow run all the way up the west side of the river. However, from Granton to the steep slopes above Braefoot, arable fields occur on both sides of the river, as they still do. The place names are on the whole recognisable, indeed many names are more or less the same as today, especially in the main study area. If we look to the first edition OS one inch map for a standard nomenclature, then Erickstane, Braefoot, Newton, Granton, the Lochan Burn and the Auchencat Burn are more or less unchanged. The sites of the early settlement buildings are not always the same as the sites of the improvement farms which take their names. This is particularly obvious at Granton where on Roy's map the settlement is shown on the east side of the large arable field. However, a new name arises on Roy with 'Birkburn Tree' almost exactly on the site of the later improved Granton buildings. Just below this evidence for a special tree, is the settlement of (what looks like) 'Micklemuccle' on Roy, but which is clearly the OS named farm of Meikleholmside, located in a key position on the west side of the river, reached by a bridge from the old road north of Moffat, and located on a track which continues north-west above Ericstane farm.



Fig 7 William Roy, Military Survey of Scotland 1747-1755. Erickstane and Braefoot study area



Fig 8 William Roy, 1747-1755. 'Marquis of Annandale's Beef Stands', with a building shown in red.

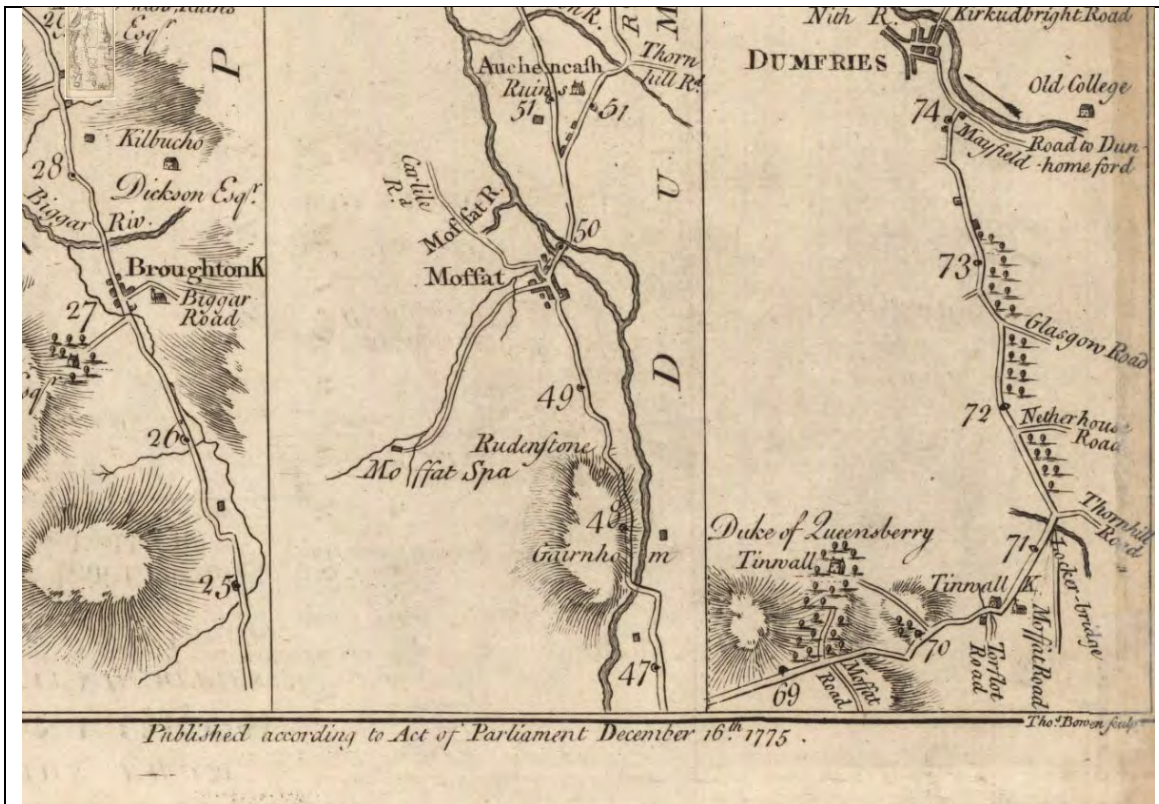


Fig 9 George Taylor and Andrew Skinner. Survey of the Roads of Scotland: Plate 6 The Roads from Edinburgh to Moffat, Lochmaben and Dumfries, published 1776. Shows old road to Edinburgh along, then crossing the R Annan above Gairnholm (Gardenholm). Nb: north is inverted on this plan.

The pre-OS County Maps

The series of maps begins with a useful map by John Ainslie (Fig 10, below), published in Edinburgh in 1812. This example fits my earlier comment that the county maps formed a very useful bridge between the early maps until the Ordnance Survey set cartography at a new level in the mid 19th C.

Ainslie's map is focussed on the main road system, and Moffat is at a crossroad for several key roads. This is emphasised by the key role Moffat plays in the roads south from Edinburgh illustrated in Fig 9 above. Even Roy's map shows the route of the Roman road heading north (Fig 6).

Place-names are straightforward and easy to read. For example, Garden Holme Head and Wickholm are now clear, and Riddings has appeared. Braefoot is shown but not Ericstane farm adjacent. No buildings are shown yet at Corehead, though there is a major map crease running through here. However, 'Presland' is shown, not a name seen on other maps before or after Ainslie.

It is only after Ainslie's early 19th C map that we begin to see major improvements and the creation of designed landscapes, small woodlands and shelterbelts, and roadside avenues of planted trees. Crawford's map at Fig 11, and then John Thomson's Atlas (Fig 12) both published in 1828 show the beginnings of a park and shelterbelts at Granton, and indeed Granton House was built in the 1830s. First edition OS maps at both 6inch and 25inch scales show the new layout at Granton in some detail, which makes an interesting case study (Figs 15-18 below).



Fig 10 John Ainslie: Map of SE Scotland, published by Thos Brown, Edinburgh 1812

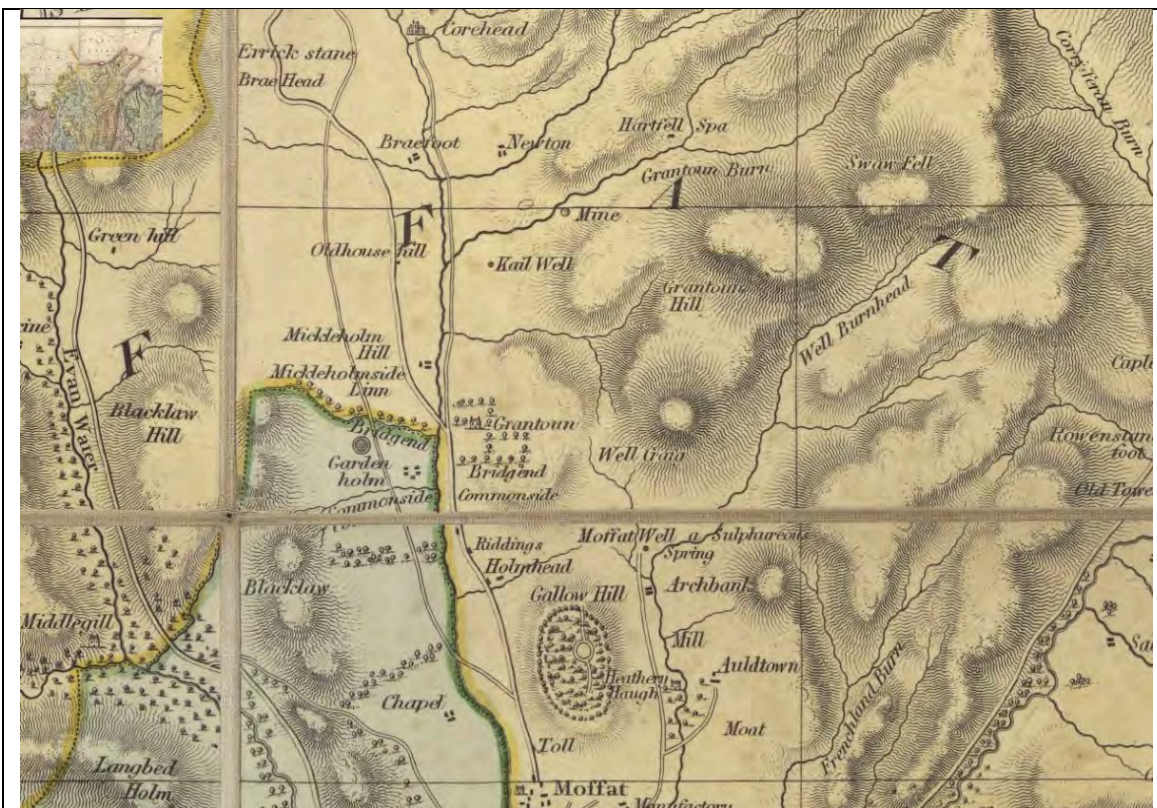


Fig 11 William Crawford (1774-1828) Dumfries-shire, pub Edinburgh 1828 by John Thomson

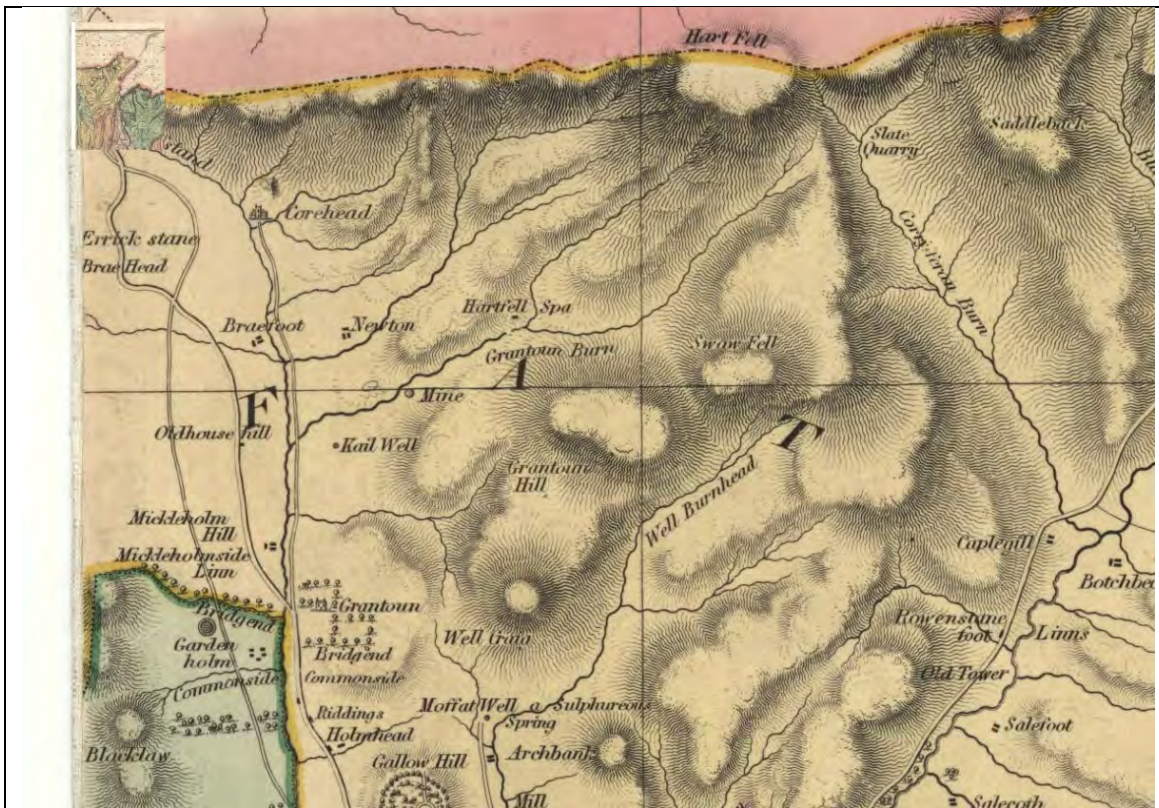


Fig 12 John Thomson's Atlas 1832: Imprint of Dumfriesshire, Edinburgh 1828



Fig 13 W & AK Johnston: Dumfriesshire with Railways, Edinburgh 1850

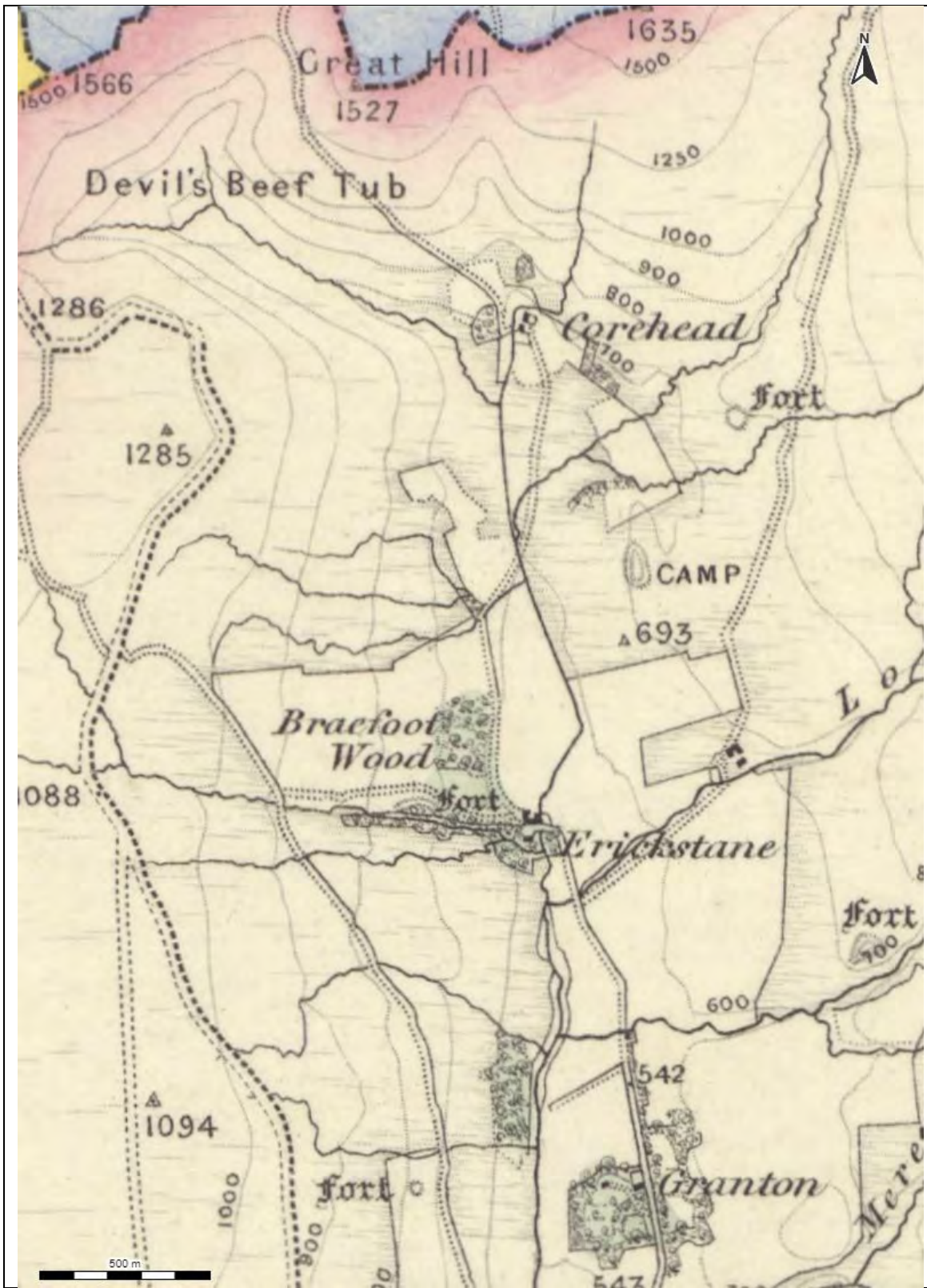


Fig 14 Ordnance Survey 1st Ed One inch to the mile scale Sheet 16 s 1856 – study area overview

The one inch to the mile map gives a true bird's eye view of the study area from the first OS survey of 1856. The road network is much the same as on the last of the County maps, for example William Crawford's survey of 1828 (Fig 11). However, for the first time the trees, woodlands and plantations are being shown in some detail, especially on the six inch scale maps as we will see.

There are in fact four centres of woodland on this map, with a designed landscape around Granton House which was a grand mansion built in the 1830s (Canmore ID 89681). It is a listed house (HES LB16858) which was once a hotel but was gutted by fire in 1997. The next map (Fig 15) will show in more detail the elegant landscaping and creation of formal gardens that a rural grand house of that type required in the 1830s.

On the west side of the river opposite Granton is a rectangular woodland called Auldhousehill Wood, which was not visited during our field work but does look to be a similar semi-natural wood like Braefoot Wood to its north. The fourth collection of woods is at Corehead, where small plantations were planted, probably for providing shelter to the two houses in this hilly location.



Fig 15 1st Ed OS at 6 inch scale: Granton House and garden, and Auldhousehill Wood. surveyed 1856

It is worth comparing the above first edition OS (Fig 15) with the later second edition 6 inch OS revision of 1898 (Fig 16, below). The way ancient monuments are labelled has changed: for example, the moat beside the road just north of Granton is now a 'mote'. However, the cartography of the second edition map at six inch scale is much clearer and less cluttered, as can be seen in Granton garden. However, the natural appearance and extent of Auldhousehill Wood remains much the same on each map. The cartographic comparison between the natural woodland and the designed

landscape woodlands which often contain imported conifers, is even more pronounced on the map extracts at 25 inch to the mile shown below in Figs 17 and 18.



Fig 16 2nd Ed OS at 6 inch scale: Granton House and garden and Auldhousehill Wood. Survey 1898

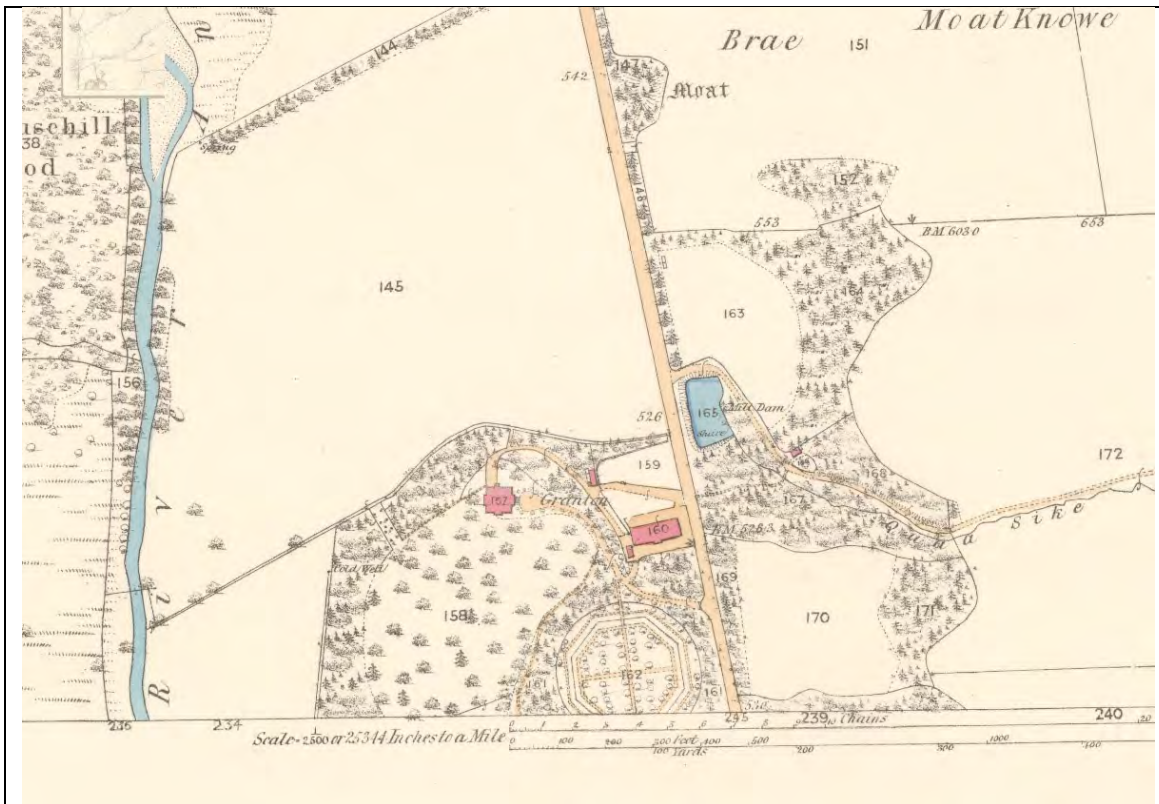


Fig 17 1st Ed OS at 25 inch scale: Granton house and garden, with a mill dam. Survey 1857

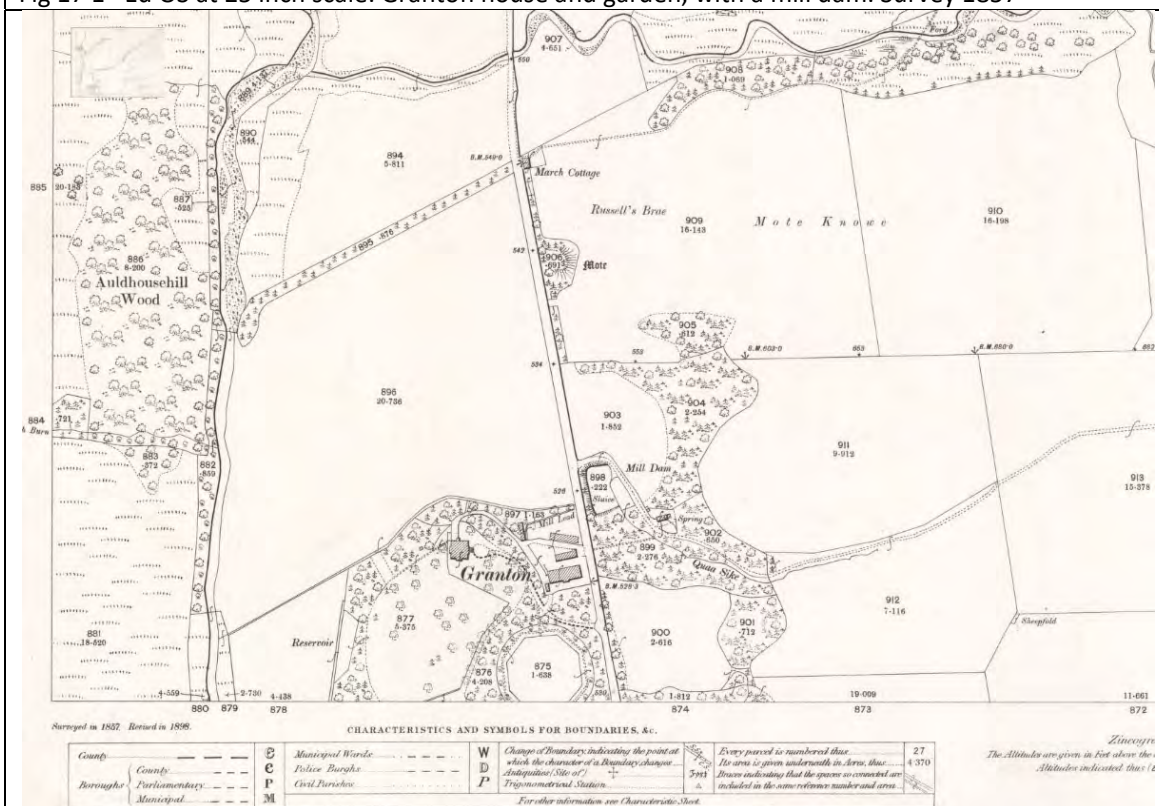


Fig 18 2nd Ed OS at 25 inch scale: Granton house and garden, plus Auldhousehill Wood. Survey 1898



Fig 19 1st Ed OS at 6 inch scale: Erickstane - and a return to the core study area. Survey 1856



Fig 20 2nd Ed OS at 6 inch: Ericstane and Braefoot. (Nb 'k' in 'Erickstane' now omitted). S 1898

The layout of Ericstane farm and the woodlands along the Braefoot Linn and around the farm itself are little changed between 1860 and 1900 (Fig 19, Fig20, see also Fig 21, Fig 22), although Ericstane Cottage is now added west of the Fort earthworks (Fig 20). The amazing thing for our study is that the Braefoot Wood has maintained its location and extent throughout the 19th C. The 2nd Ed OS in Fig 20 does not show woodland south of the cross dyke nearest the farm, although field survey shows that there are groups of alders etc in that field still. Some conifers have been planted along the Braefoot Linn, but none in Braefoot Wood. This map makes it clear that upper Annandale is archaeologically rich, and three early forts are shown in this small area alone. It is noticeable on the series of maps above that topographic features are often named after people with Adie's Brae and Roger Gills at Braefoot, Bessie's Knowe up near Auldhousehill Bridge, and Russell's Brae at Granton.

However, we must admit that not a single map earlier than the first edition OS actually shows woodland in the study area. Roy's military survey does not show any woodland at Braefoot and neither do any of the county maps. It could be that Braefoot and Auldhousehill Woods seeded naturally when the old rig and furrow fields were abandoned or improved and enclosed before the first Ordnance Survey. The author has seen evidence of that at other lowland and upland sites, but normally in that case the old rig and furrow is still very visible, even under a canopy of tall broadleaved trees of oak, alder and birch. Previous rig and furrow was not readily visible at Braefoot Wood, which is perhaps evidence that this patch of mainly wet woodland may indeed be of natural origin, though perhaps not ancient as such? The composition and structure of the wood will be covered in the third part of my report. This report finishes with two OS one inch maps which bring the study area into the 20th C, with Fig 23 showing all the small woods in upper Annandale in 1926.

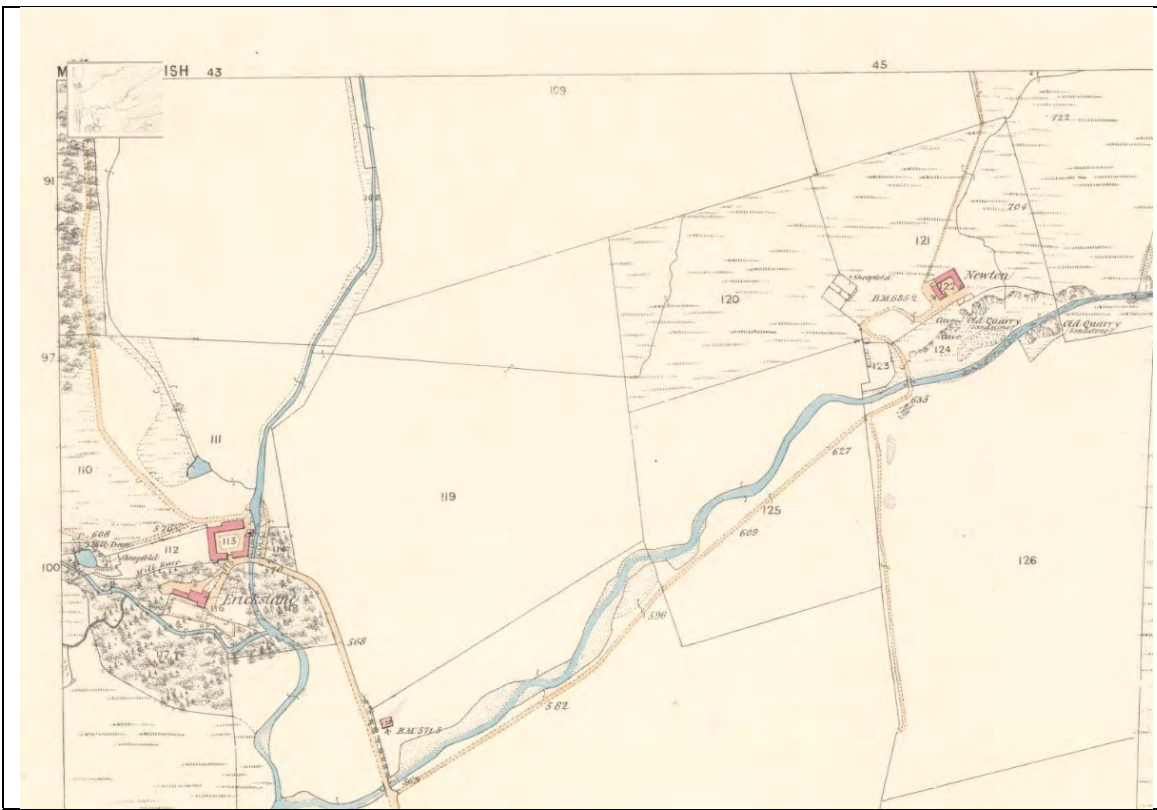


Fig 21 First Ed OS at 25 inch scale: Erickstane and Newton farms. Survey 1857

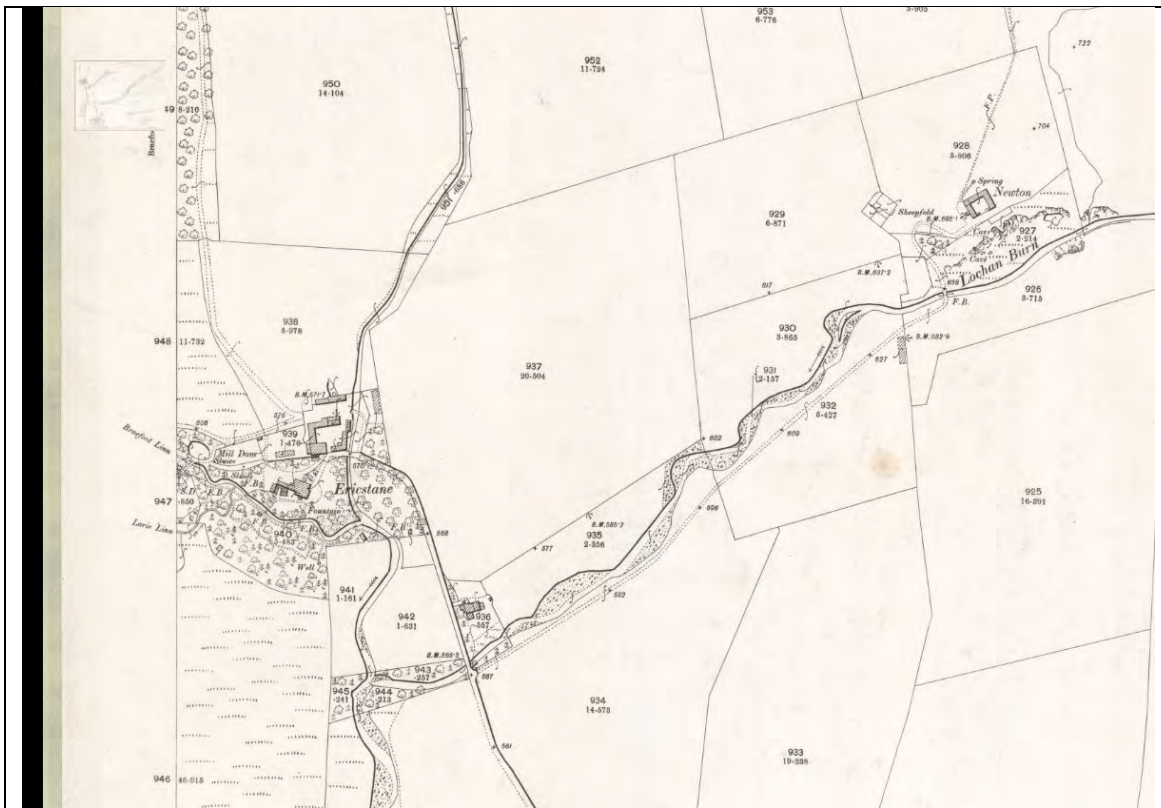


Fig 22 Second Ed OS at 25 inch scale: Ericstane and Newton farms. Survey 1898

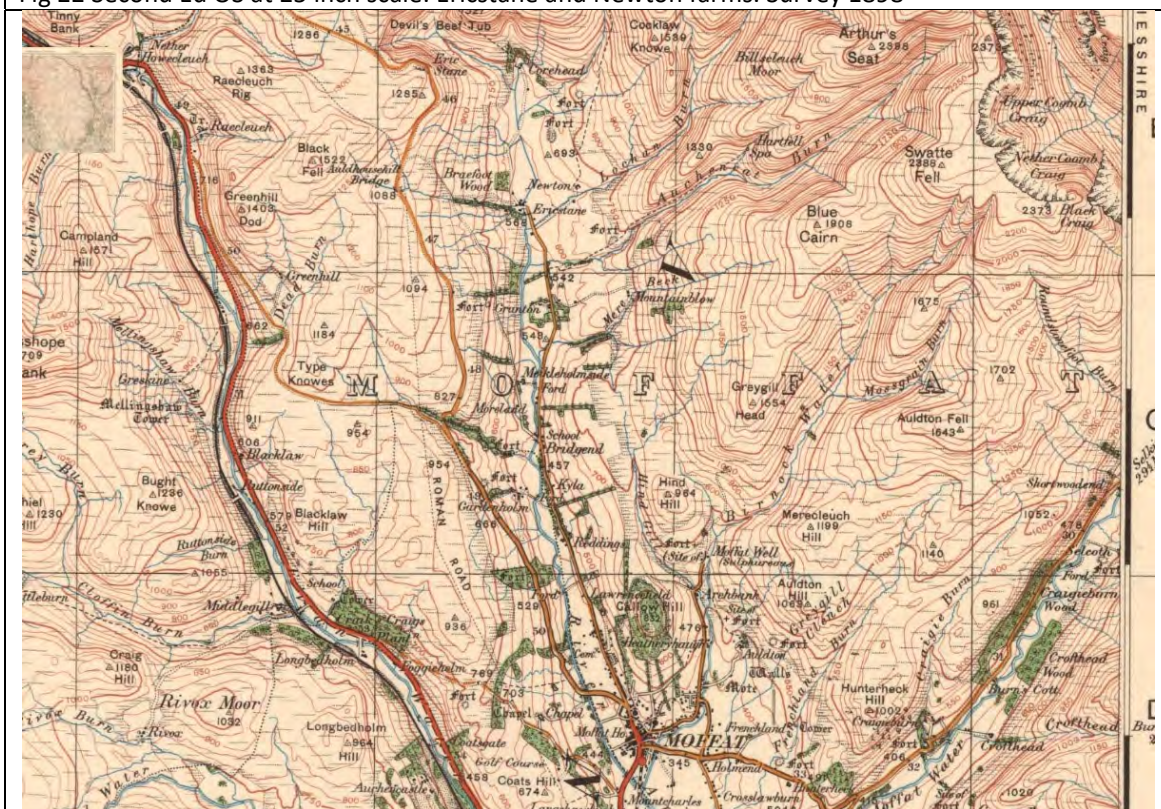


Fig 23 OS one inch scale Sheet 84: Moffat up to Devil's Beef Tub, with all woodlands. Revised 1926

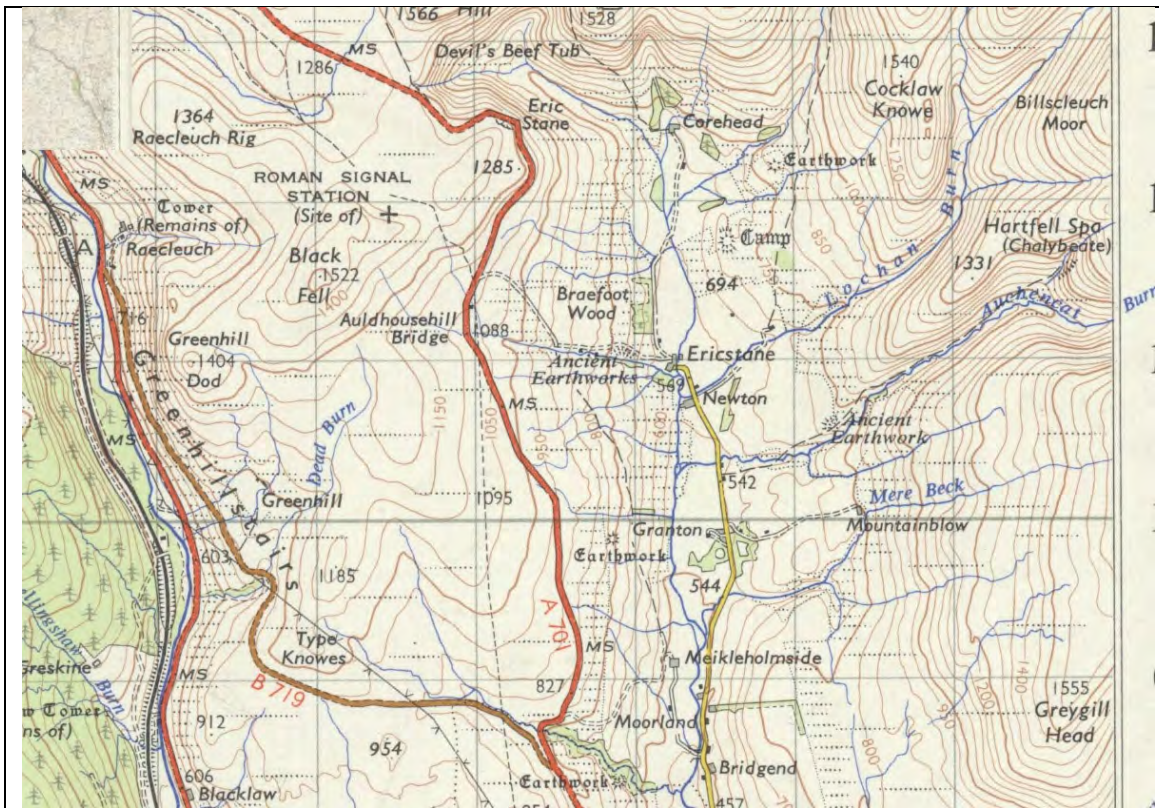


Fig 24 OS one inch scale Sheet 68; focussed on study area. Revised 1954

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