

Bexley, Kent

Býxleah

Joyden's Wood

Earthwork

Grid ref TQ 502 720

Fæsten Dic

In Joyden's Wood, Bexley, Kent there is a linear earthwork called Fæsten Dic (meaning 'strong dyke'). Running roughly from north to south, the dyke is approximately 1½ miles long. It was probably longer originally, but today all traces of the dyke south of the wood have been destroyed by cultivation.

Fæsten Dic is believed to have been constructed by the Jutes around AD550 following the battle of Crecganford (Crayford), after which the defeated Britons fled to London. The ditch is to the west of the bank, suggesting that the dyke was designed to be defended from the east.

In 1934, A. H. A. Hogg made a detailed survey of the earthworks in Joyden's Wood. Trenches cut across the dyke revealed that it was originally 3' deeper, with the bank being 5' high and 14' wide.

The best-preserved section of the dyke can be seen at grid reference TQ 502 720. At this point, the ditch is approximately 2.05m deep from the top of the bank, and approximately 12.66m wide at the highest point.

Fæsten Dic is a Scheduled Monument by English Heritage.

Sue Rees

Photo by Sue Rees

