

CHESHIRE ARCHAEOLOGICAL BULLETIN



No. 9 1983

ISSN 0307 6628

EDITORIAL

1983 was a good year for archaeology in Cheshire. Aerial archaeology has continued to reward the many years of patient observation and photography. Observation and survey at ground level too has produced significant scatters of pottery fragments or other artefacts which have given us the first sighting of one or two hitherto unrecognised ancient sites. Excavation, mostly on sites already known and previously sampled, has brought its own rich rewards of new information about the county. It is probably true to say that the prehistory, the Roman history and that of the earlier medieval period in Cheshire will have to be reassessed and even rewritten in the light of discoveries now being made. All in all, 1983 has been a very good year.

Neither the editor nor the assistant editors are responsible for the opinions and interpretations published in the Bulletin; they are, of course, those of the contributors alone. Comments and reasoned arguments on the content of articles and reports are always welcome, provided they are not politically motivated.

The editor and his colleagues are very pleased to welcome Miss Fay Longworth to the editorial board as Distribution Secretary. Fay has already rendered excellent service in this respect and the editor acknowledges it with gratitude.

By the time this issue of the Bulletin is published, the editor will have retired from his position as County Archaeologist for Cheshire. He is delighted to say, however, that the County Council has invited him to retain his editorship and that he has agreed to do so. Readers are therefore invited to send material for publication c/o the County Planning Department as before.

Rhys Williams

The cover design is by Kerry Maddrell and Jean Ashley. It shows a Roman tile stamp from Vale Royal House (see pages 107 and 111 below).

The Editor is grateful to all those who have produced the many illustrations of objects etc. In particular, he would thank Jean Ashley and Elaine Bell of the County Planning Department.

C H E S H I R E A R C H A E O L O G I C A L B U L L E T I N

General Editor

S R Williams, M.A., F.S.A., R.I.B.A., M

Advisory Editors

E K D Davey, M.A.

J E H Ellis, B.A.

G Fox, B.A.

J A Rutter, M.I.F.A.

T J Strickland, M.A., F.S.A., M.I.F.A.

M Warhurst, M.A. A.M.A.

Distribution Secretary

F Longworth

Contributions for inclusion in future issues should be sent to the editor c/o Fay Longworth, the Planning Department, Cheshire County Council, Commerce House, Hunter Street, Chester, CH1 1SN.

Roman tile stamp from Vale Royal

front cover

	<u>Page</u>
<u>Editorial</u>	1
<u>Contents</u>	3
<u>Contributors to this issue</u>	5
<u>Short Articles:</u>	
A Mediterranean trade with Wirral in the Iron Age?	6
Evidence of Roman centuriation at Manchester.	9
The topography of Nantwich in the medieval period.	18
Mottram Old Hall, Mottram St. Andrew.	22
The search for Etinghalle.	25
The defences of Roman Chester.	31
<u>Excavation reports and sites observed:</u>	
Ashton - Peel Hall	34
Bickerton - Possible Roman signal station	34
Burton - Chapel Field, Denhall	37
Chester - City Walls I	48
City Walls II	49
City Walls III	49
Duke Street	50
Foregate Street	50
Garden Lane - Canal Street junction	51
Grey Friars House	52
Grosvenor Precinct	52
The Groves	53
Hunter Street	53
76-84 Lower Bridge Street	54
Sealand Road	57
Shipgate Street	57
3-5 Shipgate Street	58
Upper Northgate Street	59
Church Shocklach - Castletown	
The "moated" site	59
Church Shocklach - Castletown	
A deserted hamlet?	61
Claverton - Field survey	61
Delamere - Junction of two Roman roads	63
Eaton-by-Tarporley - Roman villa	67
Foulk Stapleford - Brereton Park	73
Grafton - A deserted hamlet?	73
Lyme Handley - Standing stone	75

	<u>Page</u>
Nantwich - National Westminster Bank	75
Neston - Earthwork at Willaston	77
Northwich - Roman fort at Castle	82
Runcorn - Norton Priory	86
Tarvin - By-pass	87
Tatton Park - Old Hall and village site	88
Tatton Park - Tatton Mere mesolithic site	95
Tushingham - Road improvements	97
 <u>Stray Finds:</u>	
Prehistoric	98
Roman /Post-Roman.	98
Medieval	102
Post-medieval	105
Unclassified	110
Additional items	111
 <u>News and items of interest</u>	 113
 <u>Distribution map of finds and excavation sites in Cheshire</u>	

C O N T R I B U T O R S T O T H I S I S S U E

Mr T Cane, University of Manchester

Dr P Carrington, Grosvenor Museum, Chester

Miss G Chitty (G.Ch), formerly Director, Archaeological Survey of Merseyside

Dr N J Higham, Department of Extra-Mural Studies, University of Manchester

Prof. G D B Jones, Department of Archaeology, University of Manchester

Mrs J Laing, private researcher

Dr L Laing, Department of History, University of Liverpool

Mr G Mills, private researcher

Mr D J P Mason, Grosvenor Museum, Chester

Mrs M G Morris, Grosvenor Museum, Chester

Mrs S Muldoon, Director, Norton Priory Museum

Mrs B Noakes, Norton Priory Museum

Miss D O'Hanlon, Christ's and Notre Dame College, Liverpool

Mr P Reynolds, University of Manchester

Dr A Richardson, private researcher

Mrs J A Rutter (J.A.R), Grosvenor Museum, Chester

Mr B Sale, Director of Excavations, Norton Priory

Mr T J Strickland, Field Officer, Grosvenor Museum, Chester

Mr R C Turner (R.C.T), Assistant County Archaeologist, Cheshire County Planning Department

Mr A C Waddelove, private researcher

Mr E Waddelove, private researcher

Mrs M Ward (nee Bulmer), private researcher

Mr S Ward, Grosvenor Museum, Chester

Mr S R Williams (S.R.W), County Archaeologist, Cheshire County Council Planning Department

Miss E Wilshaw, Heritage Centre, Chester City Record Office

Mrs J Zarek, private researcher

Jennifer and Lloyd Laing

Among the coins published by Hume in Ancient Meols are three Carthaginian silver pieces (Hume 1863,290). From the description, it is fairly clear that the coins are half shekels or drachms of the period 220-210 BC.

Carthaginian coins are among the commonest Greek autonomous issues found in Britain (rivalled only by Ptolemaic Egyptian pieces). In all there are around thirty known examples, with a generally westerly distribution. There are notably three examples from Wales (from Caerleon, Monmouth and Towyn) and in the North-West in addition to the Meols coins there is one from the River Irk at Manchester.

It is now generally accepted that while some of the Greek autonomous coins reached Britain in Roman times, and others are modern losses, a great number are pieces that came to Britain in the pre-Roman iron age. Some of the coins are from genuine iron age contexts, for example with pottery of Southern Second B type at Winchester (Cunliff 1965,75). One of the Carthaginian coins came from the iron age fort of the Caburn, Sussex, although it was unstratified. A discussion of the evidence (up to 1966) was set out in a previous study (Laing 1969).

The interesting feature of the finds of Carthaginian coins is their westerly distribution - although finds occur in the Home Counties they are comparatively sparse. In the 1969 discussion it was suggested that they were brought to Britain by Mediterranean traders to a point or points of entry on the south coast, probably the Isle of Wight. In all probability, the Isle of Wight was a depot to which tin was brought from further west, from Cornwall. It is not impossible to envisage an extension of the trade by way of the Irish Sea, with another depot at Meols.

But what was the commodity sought? There were apparently no desirable materials in Wirral. There were however deposits of minerals in North Wales, in particular of lead in Clwyd.

A lead pig is known from Clwyd with C Nipi Ascani on the top. Frere has suggested that C Nipius Ascanius was working lead in Hampshire as early as 60 AD - there is a pig with his name from Stockbridge (Frere 1974,322), and Frere has also noted that the composition of the Hampshire pig is similar to that from Clwyd. He has rejected however the suggestion that the Clwyd workings were as early, preferring a starting date around 74, which is the earliest date that appears on any of the Clwyd pigs (Frere 1974,340). More recently Salway has favoured a date around 60 for the earliest operation of the Clwyd mines (1982,634). He gives no reason, but it seems very likely that the Hampshire pig is a Clwyd product, not native to Hampshire. In this context the series of twenty pigs recorded by Camden as having been found near Runcorn on the Dee foreshore with the names of Domitian and Vespasian are significant. Camden notes that one is dated to AD 70 (IMP V), a fact seemingly overlooked by most later commentators on the Clwyd lead industry. (Camden 1695,564).

Other Evidence for pre-Roman Trade

In addition to the Carthaginian coins, Hume lists three Celtic coins. Two of these he describes as being of the usual type found in the Channel Islands with crude head on the obverse and horse on the reverse with wheel beneath. He is clearly thinking of the coins of the Coriosolites found commonly in Jersey, and well exemplified by the Le Catillon hoard of 1957. The commonest types have either a boar or a comet beneath the horse rather than a wheel, but the wheel also appears as a symbol on Armorican issues. Gaulish coins are to be found fairly densely distributed in Dorset, where the great majority of Greek autonomous coins have been found, though outside the tribal area of the Durotriges they are rarer.

Hume also records a small gold Celtic British coin from Meols, of unidentifiable type. This could have been a Westerham quarter stater, current in the Durotriges area, though of course other identifications are possible. On the opposite side of the Mersey, the OS Map of Southern Britain in the Iron Age plots a hoard with Gaulish coins from Liverpool.

Celtic coins are extremely rare in the non-coin using areas of Britain, and three from Meols are worthy of special consideration. Taken with the Carthaginian coins, it perhaps provides a clue to the early importance of Meols, whose Roman finds begin with an Aucissa brooch, a type commonly found on Claudian sites. Were the Romans interested in Meols as a trading depot for the lead?

None of the coins is now traceable.

Thus it can be seen that the evidence of coins from Meols points to the possibility of the Clwyd lead working starting in pre-Roman times, the trade being conducted through a base at Meols.

REFERENCES

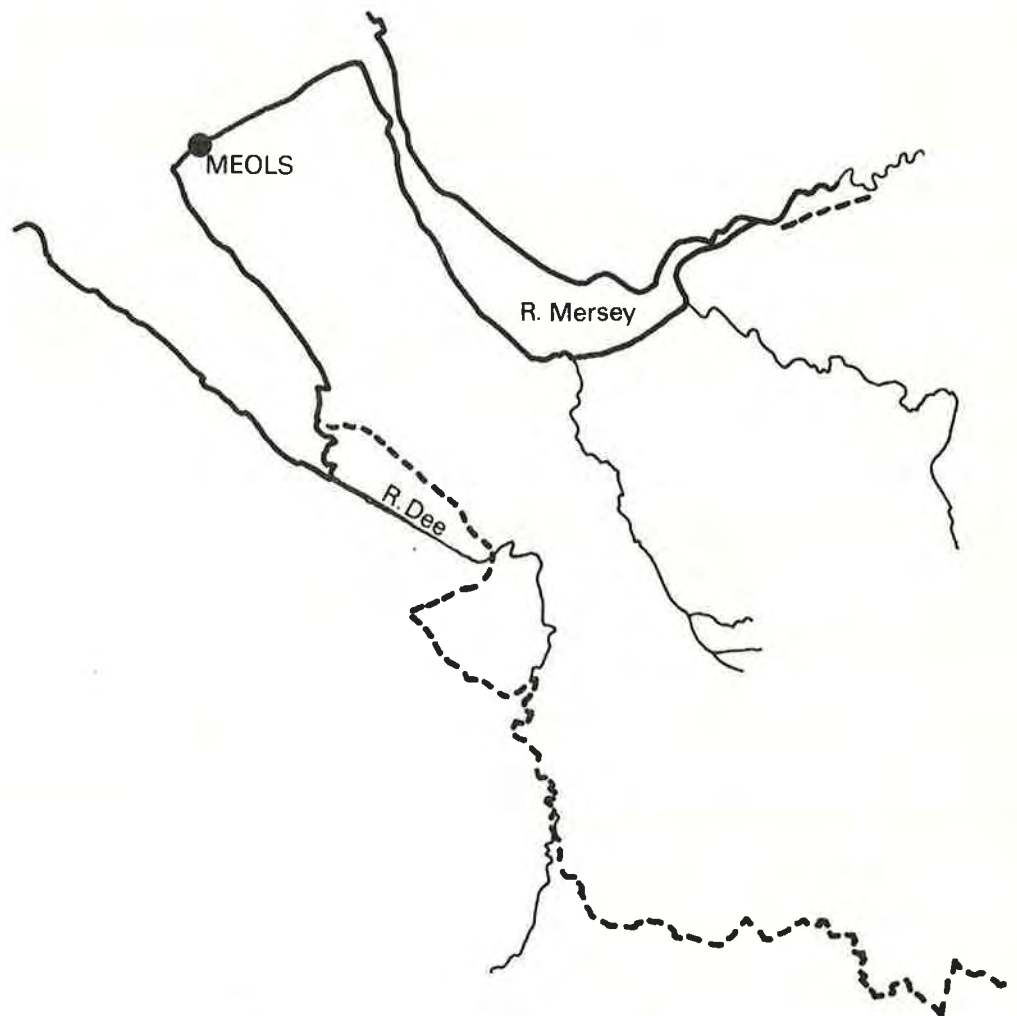
- Camden, W. 1695 Britannia (Ed Gibson, E)
Cunliffe, B 1965 Winchester Excavations, I
Frere, S S 1974 Britannia
Laing, L 1969 'A Greek Tin Trade with Cornwall?'
Cornish Archaeology 7 (1968), 15-23
Salway, P 1982 Roman Britain

Appendix - Check-list of Carthaginian Coins in Britain

(Excluding finds from Dorset published by J G Milne in Finds of Greek Coins from the British Isles (1948))

- | | |
|-----|---|
| 1 | BUCKINGHAM, Gerrards Cross, silver |
| 2 | " Lee, aes |
| 3-4 | " Great Missenden, two aes |
| 5-7 | CHESHIRE, Meols, three silver |
| 8 | ESSEX, Colchester, aes |
| 9 | GLOUCESTERSHIRE, Charlton Kings, aes |
| 10 | " Bourton on the Water, aes |
| 11 | HERTFORDSHIRE, Ashwell, aes |
| 12 | " St Albans, aes |
| 13 | LANCASHIRE, Manchester (River Irk), aes IIIBC |

- 14 MERIONETH, Towyn, aes
- 15 MIDDLESEX, Ealing, aes
- 16 " Staines, aes
- 17 " Ashford, aes
- 18 MONMOUTH, Monmouth, Goldwire Lane, aes III-IIIC
- 19 " Caerleon, aes, III-IIIC
- 20 OXFORDSHIRE, Tackley, aes
- 21 RUTLAND, Thistleton, Black Holmes, aes 200-180BC
- 22 SURREY, Staines, River Thames, aes
- 23 SUSSEX, Glynde, N of Caburn, aes, IIBC
- 24 " Lewes, aes
- 25 EAST SUSEX, no provenance, silver
- 26 WILTSHIRE, Amesbury, aes
- 27 " Downton, Charlton Down, aes



EVIDENCE OF ROMAN CENTURIATION AT MANCHESTER

A Richardson

Introduction

In 1905, H T Crofton put forward an ambitious hypothetical outline of Roman land divisions within a ten mile radius of the centre of Manchester. He had been intrigued by the frequency of straight lengths of parish boundary and estate limits, many of which ran parallel or at right angles to each other, even though separated by considerable distances. From a study of the 18th century plans of the Lloyd Estate in Hulme, he concluded there was good reason to believe that south of the Roman fort, across the River Medlock, there was an anciently marked-out parcel of land measuring 3000 by 1500 Roman feet. Kirkmanshulme, in Gorton, had straight artificial boundaries and to its north lay an adjacent rectangular plot whose east-west dimension was also 3000 Roman feet. He cited a lot of other evidence for suspecting that Roman land surveyors had been at work in the Manchester area but he was unable to produce a thoroughly convincing hypothetical scheme because he could not relate his observations to what is now known of Roman centuriation elsewhere, and because he drew into his scheme medieval and pre-Roman sites in a manner similar to Alfred Watkins of ley-line notoriety.

The Mickle Ditch

From its dimensions and geometry, Crofton suspected that the Mickle Ditch, with its bank on the northern side, was a Roman work. It ran for five miles from Ashton Moss, six miles east of the centre of Manchester, to the westward-flowing Platt Brook in Rusholme, about two miles south of the city centre. Nowadays, its whole length is swallowed up in the Greater Manchester conurbation, though portions are still detectable on the ground. It was mentioned in several medieval documents (see Crofton 1905, Esdaile 1892), as the "magna fossa" in Rusholme (1150), the "Mykel Diche" in Audenshaw (1200) the "Milk Wall" at Slade, near Stockport Road (1270), the "Muchil Dich" in Reddish (1322) and the "Mekel Dyche" in Rusholme (1317). It was also known as the "Nico Ditch", a name allegedly derived from the Latin necare or the Anglo-Saxon noecan, both meaning to kill. The presumption was that it commemorated a battle fought in AD 780 between Saxons and Danes (Crofton 1885). Crofton (1905) recorded the tradition that the Ditch was dug in a single night by an army from Manchester as a defensive work against these Danes, each man digging his own body-length. He rejected this, however, and supposed the tradition referred to no more than a cleaning-out operation undertaken in a moment of crisis. Melland (1935-36) concurred with Crofton's view that the Ditch was not defensive and noted that near its western end, behind Platt Chapel, it was six feet deep, and in a central portion south of Melland Playing Fields in Gorton, the dyke top which was on the north was only five feet above the bottom of the channel. He cited a reference to the effect that O.G.S. Crawford suspected it was a defensive work dating from late in the Roman period, and from an examination of the map, concluded wrongly that it had run into Ashton Moss via Williamson Lane in Droylsden. In short, the available literary evidence suggests the Mickle Ditch dates from the twelfth century at the latest.

The Hedgerow Line in Gorton and Rusholme (Fig.1)

H T Crofton appreciated that modern maps may afford clues to ancient activities and he seems to have used the 1845 six inch Ordnance Survey map to measure and describe the Mickle Ditch. Curiously, he overlooked one feature which stands out on more modern street maps of south Manchester and which can be readily traced on the 1845 map. On the modern map, this is a straight and more-or-less continuous series of roads running north-eastwards from Rusholme, roughly related to the curve of the Mickle Ditch as is the string to a bow. The line is now marked by Platt Lane, Dickenson Road, Stanley Grove, the recently obliterated Cross Street and the southern end of Abbey Hey Lane. The 1845 map shows these roads have been laid down in close association to a series of hedgerows which ran in a dead straight line for two and a half miles from Wilmslow Road to Abbey Hey, Gorton. This is not a vaguely straight line, but one as straight as a ruler, and on it there are eight separate stretches of hedgerow occupying 46% of its length, as shown in the table below.

Lengths of Hedgerow in Roman Feet, on a straight line from Wilmslow Road to Abbey Hey, Gorton, as shown on the 1845 six inch Ordnance Survey Map

Section

	<u>Length of Sections</u>	<u>Length of Hedge</u>
Wilmslow Road to Stockport Road	4620	352, 1672, 528
Stockport Road to Lwr.Catsknowl	4312	352, 1584, 264
Lwr. Catsknowl to Gorton Lane	2552	704,
Gorton Lane to Abbey Hey	1320	440,
	12,804	5,896 (46.04%)

These hedges must be based on a pre-enclosure feature which once probably extended a good deal further. If the line is extended north-eastwards, it cuts the Mickle Ditch in Audenshaw at the junction of Lumb Lane with Audenshaw Road and south-westerly, it runs through Rusholme without meeting the Ditch, unless the line of the latter is prolonged beyond Platt Brook. The distance along the line from that point to the other end in Audenshaw is 26,287 feet, or 27,100 Roman feet of 11.64 inches, which is 9 x 3000 Roman feet plus an error of 0.4%. Furthermore the hedgerow line runs exactly parallel to Kirkmanshulme Lane and that block of land to the north whose east-west dimension Crofton noted was 3000 Roman feet. It also runs at right angles to two ancient lines running roughly north-west. One is the line of Edge Lane, Droylsden, which may be projected southwards to Abbey Hey and which, in the Middle Ages, ran directly over the River Medlock and past Culcheth Hall, Newton, to join the Roman road from Manchester to York (Bowman 1960). The second is the line of a road known to Higson (*) as "Th'Owd Green Lane" which ran northwards from Kirkmanshulme, forming the eastern boundary of Gorton township, through Openshaw and by Philip's Park in Bradford. Local tradition said it was Roman and formed part of a road running from Stockport

(*) undated.

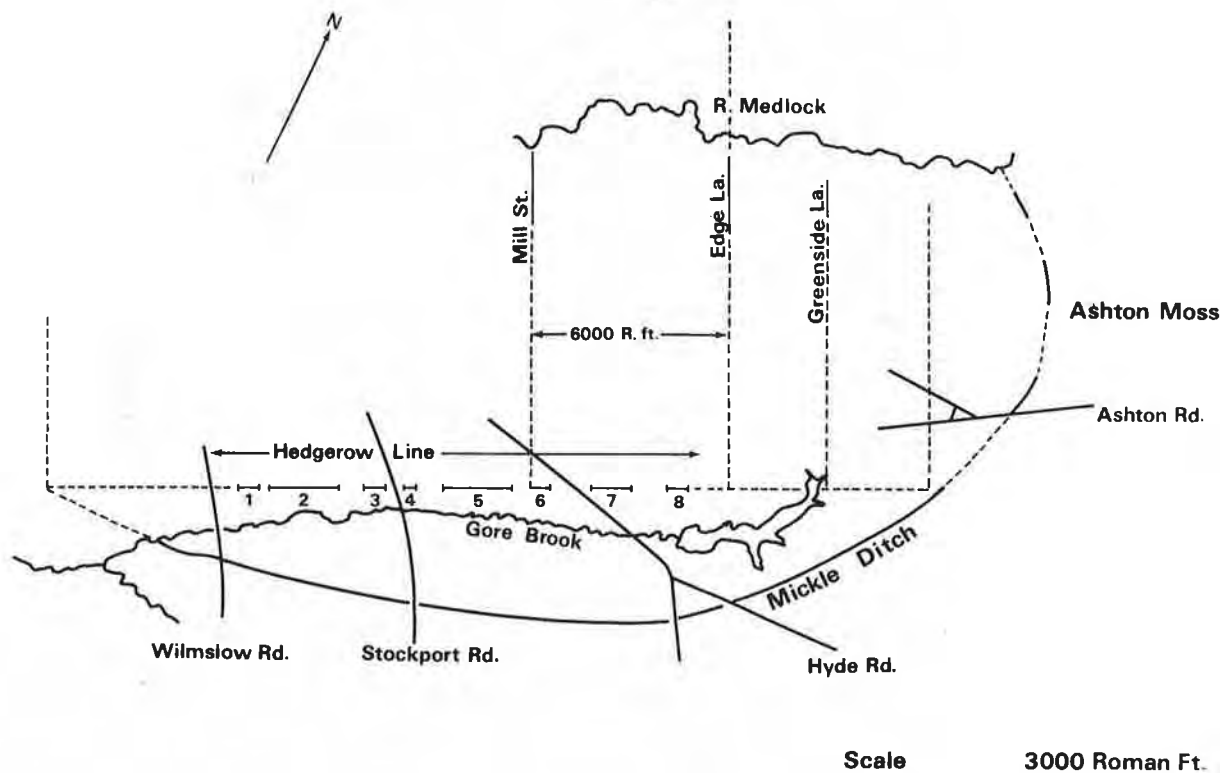


Fig 1. Alignment of Hedgerow shown on 1845 O.S. Map

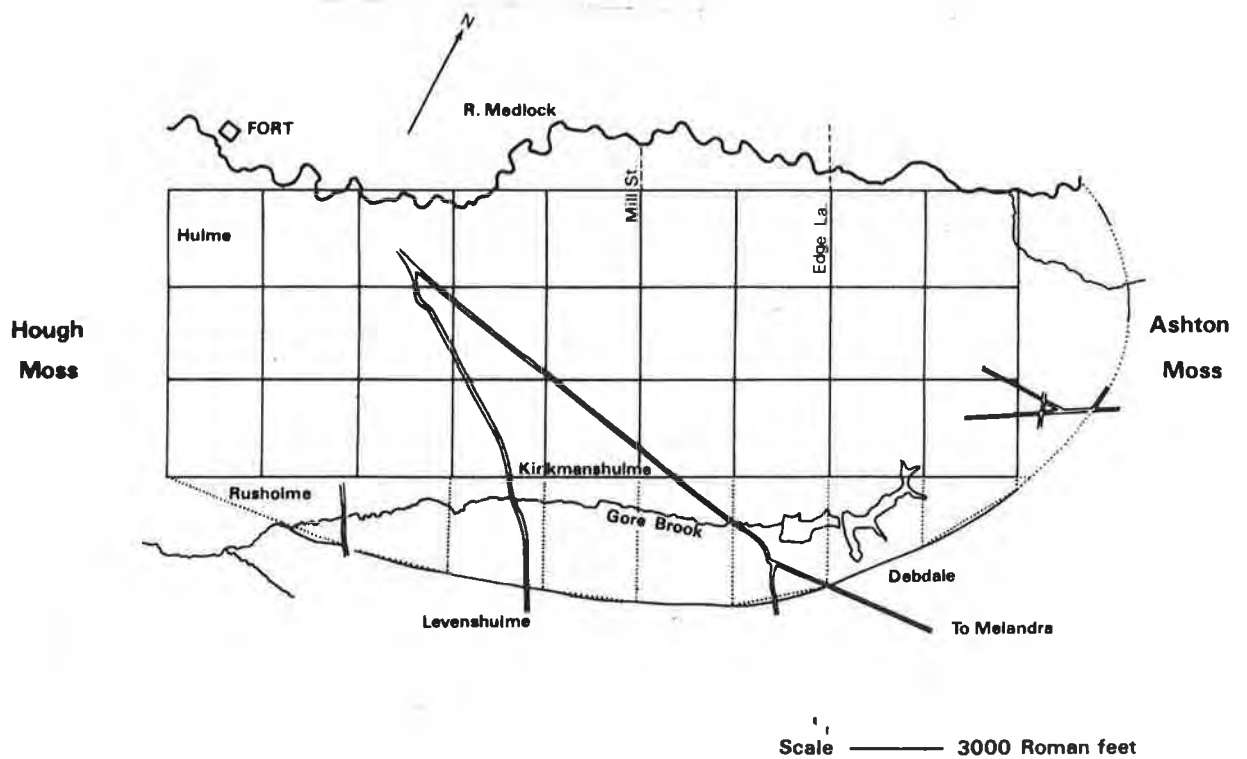


Fig. 2. Manchester - The Mickle Ditch and Proposed Centuriation

Road via Pink Bank Lane, Gorton, to Rochdale. Mill Street, Bradford lies exactly on this line. The perpendicular distance between these two lines is exactly 6000 Roman feet and both when projected southwards cut the hedgerow line exactly at the 3000 Roman feet intervals along it. The most northerly portion of Greenside Lane, Droylsden, lies exactly 3000 Roman feet east of Edge Lane. Figure 1 shows all these features in relation to each other.

The Centuriation (Fig.2)

These observations prompted the elaboration of a scheme of centuriation which explains many of the questions Crofton posed and which is consistent with the findings of more recent studies of Roman centuriation (Dilke 1971). It strongly suggests that the Mickle Ditch was Roman and figure 2 shows the Ditch in relation to the proposed grid, the main water courses and the Roman roads to Melandra and Buxton. The grid consists of twenty seven squares whose sides are 3000 Roman feet, or 25 actus long. The most north-westerly square overlies the area of Hulme where Crofton suspected centuriation with both Moss Lane and Jackson Street roughly coinciding with grid lines defining the western half of the square, that is the plot of land he mentioned. The northern boundary is not quite on Chester Road as he suggested, but a possible explanation can be found on the free-hand drawn map of the Lloyd Estate which he used. This shows that both lanes were roughly straight and parallel for most of their lengths, but were connected by winding portions to Chester Road at their northern ends. The figure also shows that Kirkmanshulme neatly occupies one half of a square. The grid covers the freely-draining, westward-sloping land between the natural features of Medlock Vale, Ashton Moss, the Gore and Platt Brooks and Hough Moss. Its central portion is drained by the significantly named Corn Brook and is the site of Manchester's medieval cornfields. The soil here is a good loam on a stiff clay subsoil, hence the name Clayton. Centuriated land was usually, but by no means always, divided into blocks of 2400 Roman feet, or 20 actus (Dilke 1971). Probable evidence of squares of 25 actus has been found in Germany, (Dilke, personal communication) and for the present scheme it was suggested by Crofton's observations on Hulme and Kirkmanshulme, the distances between Edge Lane and Mill Street and the length of the hedgerow line in relation to the Mickle Ditch.

The Relationship of the Mickle Ditch to the Centuriated Land (Figs.2 and 3)

Figure 2 shows that when the line of the Mickle Ditch is prolonged westwards beyond its end at the Platt Brook, noting that it is gently curving northwards just before that point, it impinges on the south-west corner of the grid. Crofton noted that the western boundary of Rusholme ran northwards and parallel to Wilmslow Road from a point opposite the junction of the Ditch and the Brook, and this boundary would be coincident with the grid-line. The beautiful line of the Mickle Ditch, always difficult to reconcile with a supposedly Dark Age defence-work, is formed of two main sections which meet at a point coincident with the grid-line lying between those of Edge Lane and Mill Street, when projected southwards. From that point, the Ditch curves to meet the southern corners of the grid, the western portion following a more shallow curve than the eastern. Both sections seem to be the arcs of circles because from any point on the curvature, the angle formed by bearings on each end of the section is always the same. In the western segment, the angle is 168 degrees and in the eastern part, 164 degrees.

Previous writers refer to the ending of the Mickle Ditch on Ashton Moss without specifying exactly where. Following the curve of the Ditch with the eye on the map through Audenshaw, suggests that the deep, wide ditch marking the Ashton-Audenshaw boundary along the gently-curving lane beside the Snipe Inn is also a portion of the Mickle Ditch. Allowing the eye to wander further along this trajectory reveals another curved length of ditch on the Droylsden-Ashton boundary just beside Moorside Stadium in Droylsden, and going further round, it picks up the curved lane from Cinderland Hall Farm (formerly Sunderland) down towards the River Medlock. With compasses, it can be shown that these three features, all neatly curved themselves, fit snugly on to the same arc which joins that of the Mickle Ditch at its most easterly recorded limit. This is shown on figure 3. It seems very likely that the Mickle Ditch originally went as far as the River Medlock and therefore bounded the eastern end of the proposed grid.

A closer examination of the line of the Mickle Ditch between the Snipe Inn and Rusholme indicates that its line is made up of straight sections and shallow arcs which can be related to the grid (see Figure 2). The joining of two distant points by an arc is a very simple operation using the Roman groma and applying the theorem of the equality of angles formed between the two ends of a chord and any point on the circumference within the segment. If the arms of the groma were fixed at an angle and sightings made on two fixed points, the groma would always stand upon the arc and by moving along, keeping the points in sight, its course would be traced.

The Ashton-under-Lyne and Clayton Boundary Dispute (Fig.3)

The extension of the Mickle Ditch to the River Medlock could explain the origin of a prolonged and bitter dispute over turvery rights on Ashton Moss between Sir John Ashton of Ashton and Sir John Byrom of Clayton at the beginning of the fifteenth century. Sir John Byrom claimed that his rights extended east of the stream known as the "oselache" as far as the "Ewe Wall" and that Sir John of Ashton had encroached upon his ground. The "Ewe Wall" has not been identified as the bank of Mickle Ditch, but if that were the case, it would probably once have served as a boundary between the two manors, as it did elsewhere. The final inquest which settled the dispute held in 1425 did not entirely uphold St John Byrom's case, but a new boundary was staked out as part of the settlement. From the description of its course cited by Bowman (1960), it is clear that it remained unchanged until modern times. It incorporates the previously mentioned section of ditch beside the Moorside Stadium, and the likely explanation is that the encroaching Moss had obscured the intervening section of ditch, allowing the Ashtons to advance their boundary.

One further feature of the Droylsden-Ashton boundary supports the possibility of the Mickle Ditch having originally gone as far as the Medlock. The triangular area of land known as Sunderland which formed part of the manor of Ashton was bounded by the Medlock to the north and the Lumb Clough to the south. The proposed extension of the Mickle Ditch to the Medlock would have "sundered" Sunderland from the manor of Ashton and could thus have given rise to the name.

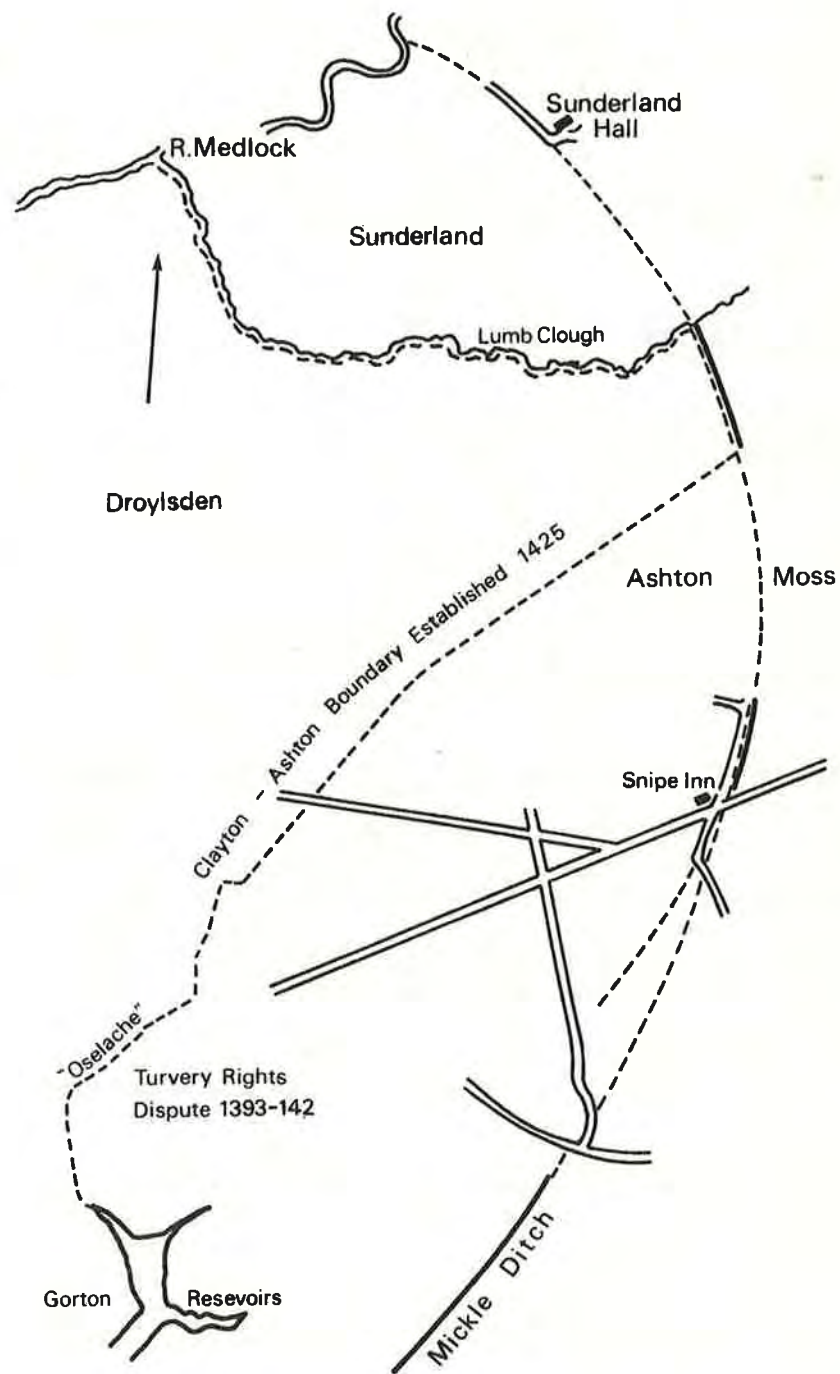


Fig. 3
The Eastern End of Mickle Ditch

Scandinavian Placenames

H T Crofton was surely correct in rejecting the tradition that the Mickle Ditch was a ninth or tenth century Saxon defensive work. Its length and graceful sweep across the country would argue against it being a hastily thrown-up defence, for it would have taken longer to mark-out than to dig. As a defensive earthwork it would have been indefensible without an army so enormous as not to need such a device. He suspected the tradition of its being a single night's work referred to a cleaning-out operation, and a reasonable conclusion might be that it was re-commissioned as a boundary between two hostile groups who nevertheless still fought somewhere near Gorton. The greater part of the proposed grid perimeter, on all sides save the northern, is associated with Scandinavian placenames, Hulme, Rusholme, Levenshulme, Kirkmanshulme, Debdale and perhaps also Knutsford Vale on the Gore Brook in south Gorton, (1845 6" O.S. map). The Scandinavian elements "dale" and "shaw" occur in some old spellings of Droylsden ("Drysdale", see Higson), where there is an Alderdale, and in Audenshaw. A possible explanation would be that the Anglo-Saxon occupiers of the corn land within the grid perimeter stubbornly defended it against the Norse invaders who are thought to have entered the district from the Mersey and forced them to settle around the outside.

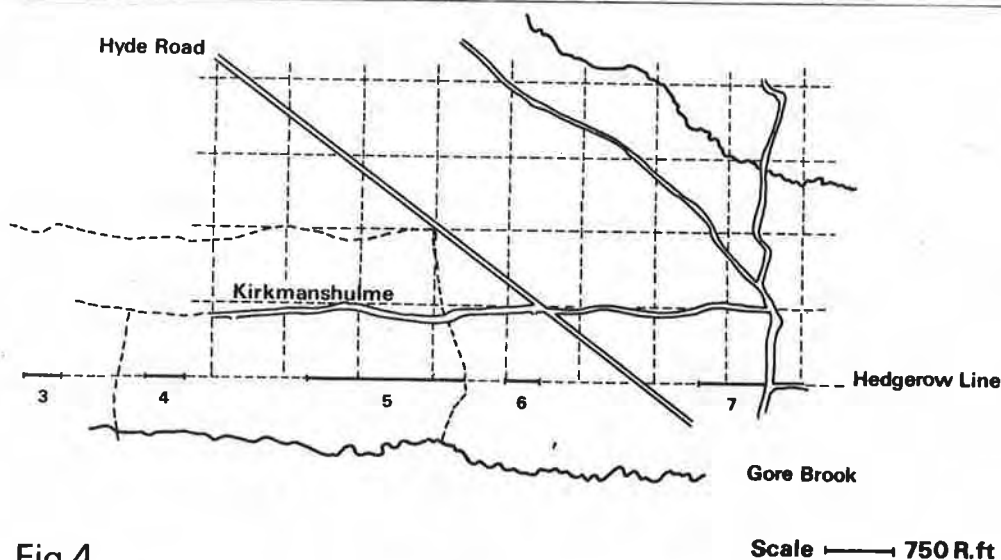


Fig 4.

Boundaries of Kirkmanshulme in 1845

Sub-division of the Centuries (Figure 4)

Roman centuries were sub-divided in a regular fashion. The 25 actus square covers 940,900 sq.yards (194.4 acres) and so could have been divided into sixteen sub-squares of 12.15 acres, measuring 750 Roman feet square. The 1845 map shows that Kirkmanshulme Lane and its continuation across Hyde Road (now known as Church Lane) ran parallel to the hedgerow line at 750 Roman feet to the north, and the northern boundary of the Kirkmanshulme Estate lay a further 750 Roman feet beyond. Figure 4 shows the sub-squares in relation to the hedgerow line, the Kirkmanshulme Estate boundary and the neighbouring lanes and streams.

There is a suggestion here that the standard English acre of 4840 sq.yards might be derived from the sub-division of the 25 actus square. The difference in linear dimension between a plot of 12.15 acres and one of exactly twelve acres is five Roman feet and therefore insignificant. Thus a barbarian people using a duodecimal system could have divided the one-sixteenth sub-square of the 25 actus square into twelve units of area. On the other hand, if the 25 actus square is divided into 120 parts, then the resulting units are equal to the old Lancashire acre of 7840 sq.yards, traditional in this district (Bowman 1960). Thus, the "carucate", the area of land which an ox-team could plough in a season, was said to consist of 120 customary acres and it is likely that the Lancashire carucate was therefore derived from the 25 actus square. The evidence from Kirkmanshulme suggests the Manchester grid was divided into sixteen twelve-acre plots, allowing 2.4 acres for trackways. However, it is possible that some squares were divided so that each quarter was further split into three plots each of ten Lancashire acres.

Discussion

Evidence of Roman land centuriation in England is scant, but in a recent paper, Dilke (1981) refers to possible examples in Essex, Kent, Sussex, Yorkshire, Gloucestershire and Cumberland. However, there seems to be an assumption by some others that if centuriation cannot be detected at Colchester or Lincoln, then it is inconceivable that it should occur elsewhere, or at least literary and epigraphic evidence should be available before field evidence can be accepted. In their book on Roman Manchester, Jones and Grealey (1974) do not discuss the possibility of centuriation.

The basis of the proposed scheme lies in the significance of the hedgerow line and its relation to the Mickle Ditch, the medieval route along Edge Lane, Droylsden, the line of "Th' Owd Green Lane" by Philips Park in Bradford and the distances between them being defined in multiples of 3000 Roman feet, or 25 actus, the very measurement that Crofton suspected defined centuriated land in Hulme. If these relationships are not associated with centuriation, they must be due to a most remarkable series of coincidences. The proposed scheme explains many of Crofton's observations and supplies the answers to his questions about the widths of parishes. Almost all the area covered by the grid has been built over during the past century, but it may be possible to test the hypothesis should the opportunity arise to examine archaeologically significant points along the major grid-lines where ancient tracks ought to occur. The predicted line of the Mickle Ditch in Little Moss could be examined where it crosses the fields of Buckley Hill Farm before it impinges on the track beside Cinderland Hall. It was probably filled in at some time in the past, but yet might be still detectable.

The author has produced evidence similar to that presented here for the existence of centuriated land beside the Roman fort at Old Penrith, Cumbria (Richardson 1982). That scheme seems to be based on the 20 actus square and its total acreage appears to be about double that of Manchester, 10,950 acres compared to 5,184. There are similarities however: both rectangles lie on flat, freely-draining land between two roughly parallel streams and both have streams running along their longitudinal axes.

The main difficulty in the way of accepting the hypothesis lies not so much in the nature of the evidence as in the questions it raises about the sheer scale of the Roman settlement in Britain. Crofton appreciated this and was clearly embarrassed by the magnitude of the scheme which his observations led him to conclude must have been laid out at Manchester, so he tried to soothe the indignant reader by suggesting that the whole could have been run by a few officials with an army of slaves. The view that Roman Manchester was but a collection of huts huddled around a fort of 500 auxiliaries whose duty was to police a wilderness of forest and marsh, would have to change. This ought not to prove difficult for it is known that Sarmatian auxiliaries were granted land near Ribchester and the reforms of Severus included land grants to units serving on the frontiers (Frere 1967).

Acknowledgements

It is a pleasure to record my thanks to Prof. O A W Dilke for his constructive criticism and kind interest.

References

- | | |
|--------------------------------|--|
| Bowman W (1969) | <u>England in Ashton-under-Lyne</u> . John Sherrat. |
| Crofton A (1885) | <u>Lancashire and Cheshire Antiquarian Society</u> , Vol. 3, p. 190. |
| Crofton H T (1905) | <u>Lancashire and Cheshire Antiquarian Society</u> , Vol. 23, p. 112. |
| Dilke O A W (1971) | <u>"The Roman Land Surveyors"</u> , David and Charles, Newton Abbot. |
| Dilke O A W (1981) | "De agrorum divisione in provinciis septentrionalibus ad occidentem vergentibus". <u>Proceedings of International Latin Conference</u> , Trier, W Germany, 1981. |
| Esdaile G (1982) | <u>Lancashire and Cheshire Antiquarian Society</u> , Vol. 10, p. 218-22. |
| Frere S (1967) | <u>Britannia</u> , Routledge & Kegan Paul, London. |
| Higson J (undated) | <u>"The Gorton Historical Recorder"</u> , published by Higson. |
| Jones G B D & Grealey S (1974) | <u>"Roman Manchester"</u> Manchester University Press. |
| Melland C H (1935-36) | <u>Journal of Manchester Geographical Society</u> , Vol. XLVI p. 59-62. |
| Richardson A (1982) | <u>Transactions of Cumberland and Westmorland Archaeological and Antiquarian Society</u> . Vol. LXXXII. p. 67. |

Rhys Williams

The old salt town of Nantwich stands at a convenient crossing point on a bend of the River Weaver where brine springs occur along its banks.

Recent archaeological studies have thrown considerable light on the topography of the town in the medieval period. These studies comprised a series of rescue excavations in advance of building redevelopments and road building, and careful observation of other works in the town centre. The latter included a major sewerage scheme and pipe and cable laying by various statutory authorities. The archaeological excavations were summarised in Cheshire Archaeological Bulletin No. 7 of 1980-81, pages 29-33, and the trenches etc. which were observed will be reported in the next issue, No. 10.

Medieval Nantwich was dominated, as it still is today, by the church of St. Mary (Figure 5.1) whose unusual 14th Century octagonal tower is visible from miles around. Immediately to the west of the church and its burial ground, High Street (the Alta Strata of AD 1260) widens into a triangular space (Figure 5.2) which is typical of the shape and location of many early medieval general market places. A map of 1794 (figure 6) shows an island block of buildings within this space. This too is a feature common to many former market places, where the original traders' stalls and booths have, in the course of time, been replaced by permanent buildings. Local tradition claims that the southern end of the island block in Nantwich (shown dotted on the map of 1794) was a covered butter market.

A little way down the slope of High Street at the end of Beam Street (Figure 5.4), to the north, stood two more specialised and presumably later markets, still identifiable by the street names Oat Market and Swine Market. These names do not appear until 1794 but could, nevertheless, indicate the use to which these sites were put before that date. A "forum animalium" or beast market in Beam Street is mentioned in AD 1454. Specialist markets such as these mark Nantwich as a regional rather than a local centre which would only have had a market for locally produced perishable goods such as butter and eggs. Such goods were always divorced from livestock and bulky goods such as corn or salt. It is likely therefore that medieval Nantwich always had its general market near to the church and more specialised ones at the west end of Beam Street.

Almost opposite the church and the site of the general market place stands the Crown Hotel (Figure 5.3) which replaced an earlier building, known to have been the premier inn of the town, which was destroyed in the great fire of AD 1583.

High Street, after running north - south, begins to curve westwards at the Crown Hotel to cross over the River Weaver at the Town Bridge. Excavations have suggested that this curve approximately follows that of the outer ditch of a castle (probably of the motte and bailey type) that stood on the high ground between the church and the river (Figure 5.5). The castle is mentioned in 1288 as "Castrum Wici Malbani", this being the old name for Nantwich.

Adjacent to the Town Bridge, on the east bank of the river, is the known site of the well that was the main source of brine for salt-making in the medieval period (Figure 5.6). It is not surprising, therefore, to discover that the wych or salt-boiling houses were also in this same general area (Figure 5.7). Those so far excavated were on the west bank in Wood Street, and brine must have been supplied to them from the well by wooden channels which spanned the river.

This small complex of church, market places, inn, salt-works and a river crossing, at one time dominated by a castle, comprised medieval Nantwich (Figure 5). Within this area, there were a number of small streets and lanes ultimately connected to the High Street and presumably lined with small timber-framed town houses.

The church marks the eastern limit of the town proper. There were no houses to the east of it but the narrow house plots did extend for quite a way eastwards as a ribbon development along Hospital Street (Hospitalstrete in AD 1319) and probably along Beam Street (Bemstrete in AD 1319). The ribbon development of properties along Welsh Row, to the west of the river crossing, is probably of later origin. This street was not known by that name until AD 1520. Before that it was called Frog Rowe (AD 1412) or Frogstrete (AD 1485) and had a stream running down its length. The appellation "Rowe" suggests the presence of houses but the existence of a stream, the association with frogs and the proximity of a salt works suggests little more than a shanty town type of development near the foot of the bridge. Hospital Street takes its name from a hospice of St. Nicholas which stood somewhere near the eastern limit of the narrow house plots i.e. about halfway along its present length (Figure 5.8). Another hospice, for lepers and dedicated to St. Lawrence, stood somewhere near the further (western) end of Welsh Row, probably in an isolated position (Figure 5.9).

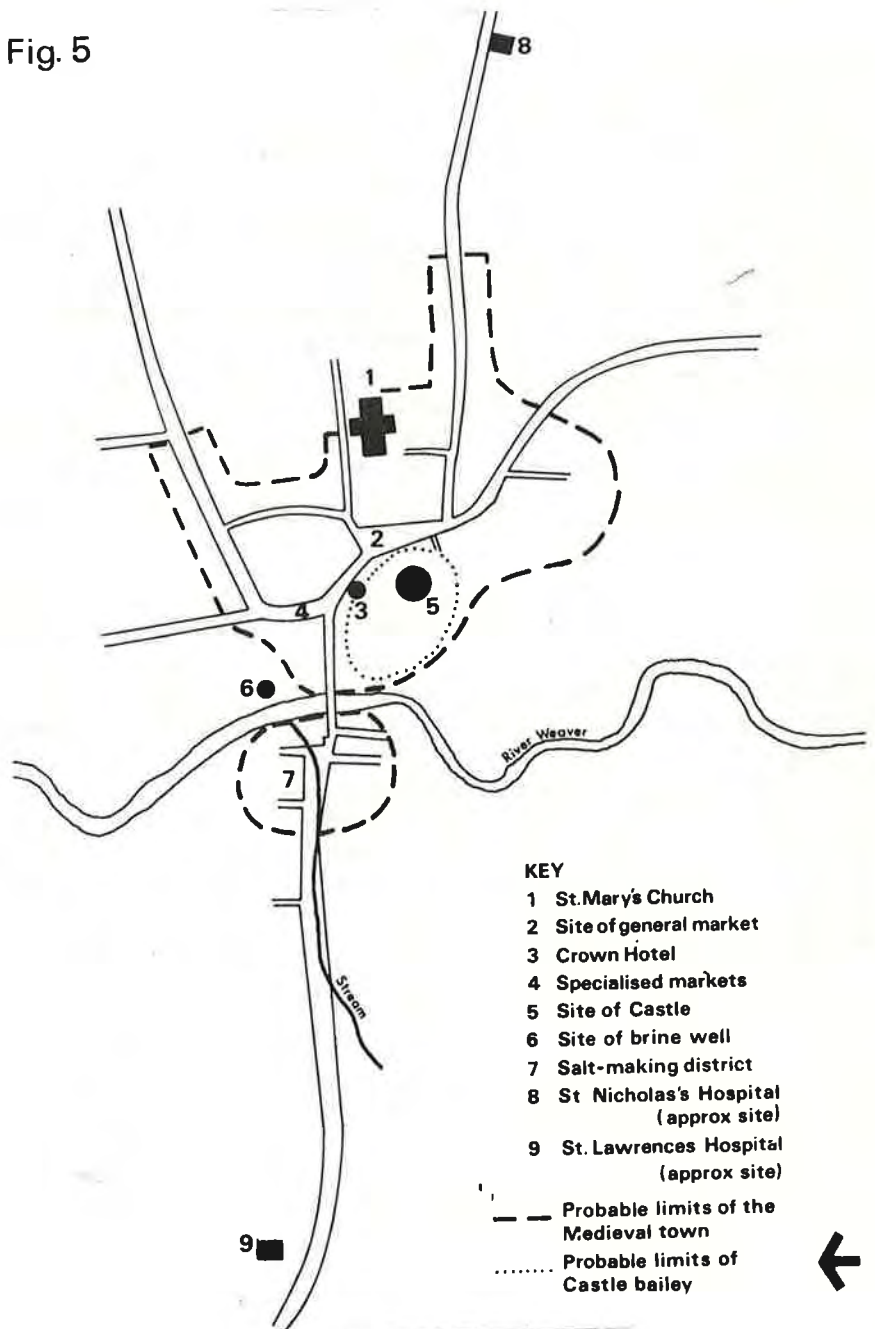
Among the other streets known to have existed in the 14th century are Pillory Street (Pillorestrete in 1314), First and Second Wood Street (le Wodestrete in 1353, Church Lane (1385) and a lost street, Flessherowe i.e. Butcher's Row (first mentioned in 1394). Other streets are not mentioned until the 15th century. Among these are Barker Street (le Barkerslone in 1421), South Crofts (Tynkers' Croft in 1439), Churchyardside (Church Syde in 1465) and Dog Lane (1467). There are at least three other streets, now lost, dating from the 15th century. They are a Barbers' Lane (le Barberslone in 1440), a Ratonrowe (first mentioned in 1445 and apparently situated between the churchyard and the beast market in Beam Street, possibly where Pepper Street later stood) and a Beaverhold (Baywardesholt in 1454).

It is known from historical sources that salt was consistently made in Nantwich before the Norman Conquest but no definite evidence for this period has, so far, come to light. Fragments of pottery, two lead salt-boiling pans and a Roman cremation burial (see p 101 below) show that there was also a Roman interest in the area. This interest seems to have been centred near the site of the main medieval brine well. It is therefore probable that the pre-Norman Anglo-Saxon centre was also in that area.

Bibliography

- | | |
|-----------------|--|
| Dodgson, J McN | <u>The Place-names of Cheshire Part III.</u>
(English Place-Name Society Vol. XLVI), 1971. |
| Hall, J | <u>A History of the Town and Parish of Nantwich,</u>
1883 (Republished 1972). |
| McNeil-Sale, R | "Nantwich, Three Years of Excavations and
Observations", <u>Cheshire Archaeological</u>
<u>Bulletin</u> , No. 7, 1980/81, pages 29-33. |
| Ordnance Survey | 25 inches to 1 mile map, Cheshire Western
Division, <u>Sheet No. LVI.13</u> , Surveyed 1876 by
OS Office, Southampton. |

Fig. 5



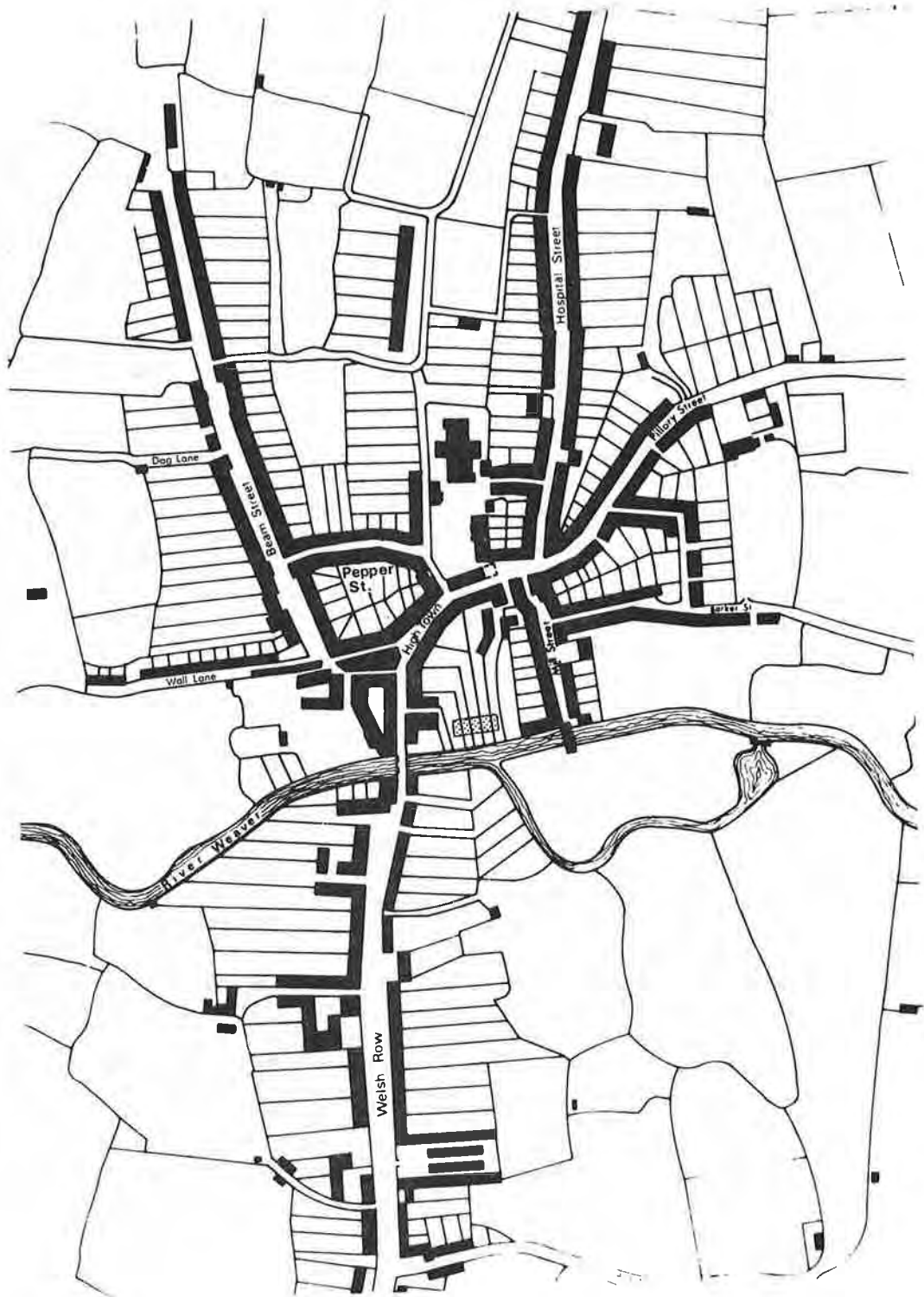


Fig. 6
Nantwich in 1794.



72549

MOTTRAM OLD HALL, MOTTRAM-ST-ANDREW

R C Turner

Mottram Old Hall provides an interesting architectural and historical puzzle and probably had a more prominent place in East Cheshire's later Medieval history than previously recognised. It is still surrounded by three arms of a large, defensive moat. Recent work of dredging this moat has revealed that two of the sides were revetted with sandstone and may have bridge abutments. The surviving building must only be about a half of what it would have been at its full extent. It shows three major periods of construction and several extensive restorations and partial demolitions. An attempt to unravel these is made below.

The eastern portion is square in plan and contains the oldest parts of the house (the left hand part of the main elevation in Figure 7). The lowest storey and the massive chimney to the right are in ashlar red sandstone. These contain a number of later Medieval features. The ground storey is an undercroft or half-cellar and the doorcases inside are rebated and one has a four-centred arched head. To the front of the chimney there is a chamfered coping and to the rear are two tiny windows, one a round-headed light, the other a two-light stone mullion. There is a break in the stonework on the eastern side which indicates that the house continued some distance to the left.

72549

At some time this stone house was reduced so that the upper two storeys could be replaced in timber framing. The style of the timberwork (though much restored) is close-studding with a middle rail, and inside the floors are underpinned with dragon beams. This may suggest alterations in the later 15th century. In the first half of the 17th century the L-shaped portion to the right was added. The style of a stone lowest storey and timber upper storeys was copied but the workmanship in both cases was inferior. The two portions are separated by a passageway containing a major doorway but there are no existing ways between both parts. The modern plan is around a picturesque cobbled courtyard but this 17th century addition may have been built to balance the now demolished left hand part to give a fashionable E-shaped plan. An interesting feature is the quarter oriel window in the angle of the top storey, giving a view across the courtyard. Also of this period are the windows and the interior details of the older part. Stone-mullioned windows were inserted in the ground floor and large, wooden, mullioned and transomed windows above. The surviving staircase and the door surrounds are also of this date.

From this time onwards the house underwent several restorations. To the rear all the timber framing was replaced in brick in the early 18th century when the buttresses may also have had to have been added. The side walls have later brick repairs and the interior has evidence of early 19th century work.

There have been at least three attempts to restore the hall in the 20th century which have introduced both concrete and steel to the list of structural materials in the house but the present owner Mr Holland is intent on restoring the house to its original state.

72549

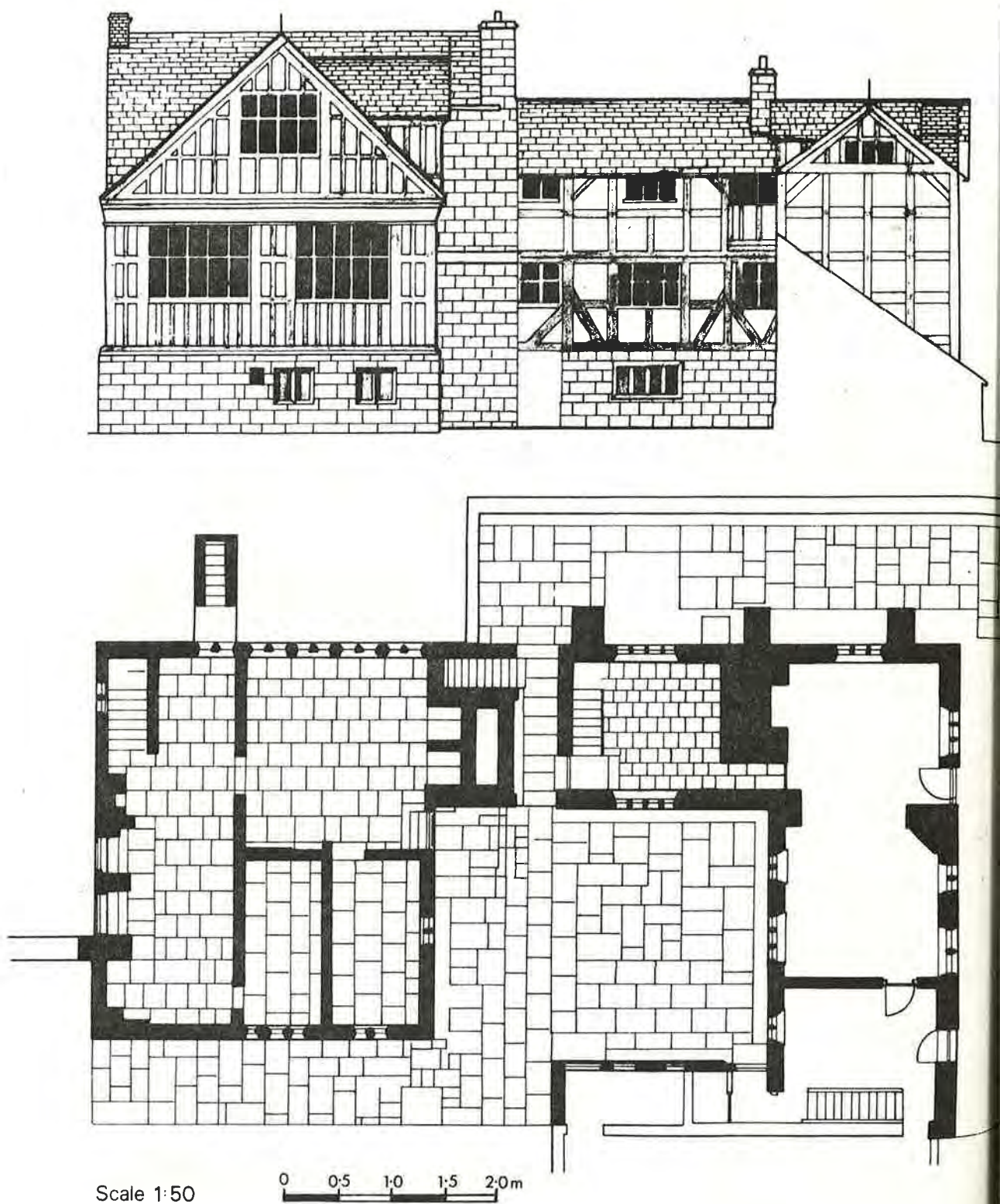
The documentary history of the house is very sparse and mainly second hand, as the papers to the Mottram estate are now lost. The initial phase of the hall must have been a semi-fortified manor house, probably all in stone and contemporary with the moat. The earliest owners, the de Mottram family, were the hereditary gaolers of Macclesfield and were involved in a number of disputes. In the 14th century East Cheshire was a lawless place (see Harrop, 1983) and there are remains of a number of semi-fortified houses. In Macclesfield itself John de Macclesfield was given license to crenellate his house in 1398. The moat at Foxwist, Prestbury (Renaud, 1894), of similar size to that at Mottram, has stone foundations a yard thick. Harden Hall in Stockport (Taylor, 1884) was another example of a stone fortified house, also with later timber additions. The many branches of the Legh family were involved in much of the feuding and all had moated manor houses.

The timber framing of the late 15th century may have been the work of Archbishop Thomas Savage, the founder of the Savage Chapel in St. Michael's Church, Macclesfield and later Archbishop of York. The Macclesfield local historian Walter Smith wrote "Worth Hall was formerly Archbishop Savage's house and his residence when in Macclesfield, from Mottram St. Andrew where he had a large establishment."

The surviving part is only the solar wing of what must have been a large house. This would have contained the main bedchambers on the upper floors and the undercroft used for storage. The great hall, screens passage and service wing must have made up the part now demolished.

In the 16th century the manor passed to the Calveleys of Lea Hall, near Chester, who must have been responsible for the 17th century additions and alterations. Their line died out in 1644 and Mottram became the property of Nathaniel Booth, a Parliamentary supporter. The repairs to the rear in brick would have been the work of his son, also Nathaniel, who held the estate until 1738. It was bought by William Wright of Offerton Hall who seemed to collect country houses in this area. He had the new hall, now a hotel, built for his son who died in 1753 before its completion. From then on the Old Hall became the home farm until the estate was sold off in 1922.

- | | |
|-----------------|--|
| Harrop, S. 1983 | "Cheshire Moats", <u>Cheshire History</u> 11, pages 8-17. |
| Renaud, F. 1894 | <u>"The Ancient Parish of Prestbury"</u> Cheetham Society, Vol 97. |
| Smith, W. | <u>"Macclesfield in Olden Times"</u> scrapbook of local history articles, Macclesfield Library. Page 73. |
| Taylor, H. 1884 | <u>"Old Halls in Lancashire and Cheshire"</u> Manchester 1884. |



Mottram Old Hall

June - August 1965 Measured and Drawn by A.J. Pass

Fig. 7

THE SEARCH FOR ETINGEHALLE

Gordon Mills

This report represents a summary of the result of three years investigation within the parishes of Tarporley and Iddinshall with the aim of furthering the understanding of the Roman and immediately sub-Roman settlement of rural Cheshire. It is no exaggeration to state that a lack of significant evidence had given rise to a generally accepted viewpoint which saw the Cheshire borderland to have been left virtually deserted and void of any deliberate policy of local-barbarian or veteran agricultural development. A development could have been expected similar to that so adequately documented in, for example, the colonisation of the large forward areas of the German Upper Rhine or the Belgic lowlands and eastern coastal areas of Britannia.

The weight of investigation and of evidence lay inside the walls of Chester; the paradoxes present therein, of occupation and semi-abandonment still remain enigmatic, as do the final years into the fifth century. And what was the status of that strategic location, assumed to be something between that of a legionary frontier-base and a 'city' of the Empire, as posited by Professor Eric Birley? The one other major site on the very border of the County Palatinate, the legionary industrial depot at Holt, does however give support to the proposition of a more intensive and planned Imperial policy for the area during the four hundred years of occupation. This entire question could not be advanced or resolved until further concrete evidence might be ascertained in the landscape.

The recent excavation of a small-scale villa or farm at Eaton-by-Tarporley, by D J P Mason of Liverpool University (reported in CAB No. 8, 1982, pages 49-52), must be seen to have opened the way to a new assessment of the problem. In no way can his contribution be seen as an isolated example of a praedia (farm), whether its owner was a discharged veteran or a colonist transported to a quiescent third-century erstwhile frontier-zone. There must be a supportive context to Mr Mason's unique site; for while his deduction and detection may have arisen from a singular insight, it is not possible for his villa-farm, with its reasonably high standard of basic amenities, to have existed, for whatever purpose, as a one-off and isolated farm-holding.

It is not possible here to describe fully the background to and the process through which the following summary of findings was derived. For the present purpose it can be said that the primary source and hence motivation for an investigative direction was rendered by the Harleian Manuscript Folio 1965-36.6. This document, now in the library of the British Museum, was the recognition by Richard de Done, Lord of Tarporley, of the legal boundary between his property and that of the parish or manor of Iddinshall, part of which at the time of this record, which Tait dates to be earlier than 1293 AD, was still certainly held by St. Oswald's at Chester.

Several distinct topographical elements are contained in the boundary description and from these a basic picture was sketched, the details of which, as a result of two seasons of field-work, were to be both confirmed and also to surprise (Figure 8 (a) to (g)). The line of the present Chester District boundary holds closely to that of the earlier ecclesiastical division and upon this a search was undertaken for the following elements as described in the documentary record:

- a) 'which begins at the high road'
'incipiunt ad altam viam'
- b) 'the Hidden Ford'
'le Derneford'
- c) 'thus descending the aqueduct'
'sic descendo aqueductum'
- d) 'the road that leads from the Hermitage to Iddinshall'
'viam que ducit ab Heremitorio.....versus Idinchale'
- e) 'Iddinshall' (Township)
'Idinchale'
(This place-name is already quite late - see below.)
- f) '- the said road that leads on the further side of the conduit'.
'a dicta via que ducit ultra ductum'
- g) 'close to the upper part of the Flaxyard'
'iuxta superiorem partem de Flaxyard'

The other descriptive elements in the document are natural features which are no longer to be located or have altered beyond recognition. Leaving aside element (a) for the moment, we may begin with the location of the Hidden Ford (b). This is given by Dodgson as being at SJ 536.626 or 537.620, but the former reference is preferable and fits more comfortably into the contiguous elements - there is still a stone-constructed crossing at this point. It was considered that the recorded pre-Conquest township (i.e. settlement) of Iddinshall might have been located inside the boundary ditch of the large moated site adjacent to this fording place. This could not be validated in following the description given in the recognition deed, either logically or in terms of topographical space.

Indeed the document tells us that the township must have had its existence below the ford, after following the fall of the 'aqueductum' (c). The location of this water-supply was hedged by many other questions. Was its existence above or below ground? If extant in the thirteenth century, did it represent either an inheritance from earlier times or a construction by skilled monastics, echoing the known provision of a water-supply to Chester from Christleton in medieval times? These and other problems were to be solved in part, thanks to the intimate local knowledge of Miss M A Cowap of Tarporley who was able from a study of drainage and hedge-patterns to indicate two points in the landscape - the one a subterranean entrance taking water from a natural brook, at SJ.537.619, the other, an outlet

SJ.536.625, at a distance of approximately half-a-mile, close to the site of the Hidden Ford. A line between these two points follows the boundary description. No excavation has yet been undertaken to establish the age or structure of the water-course. Resistivity surveying techniques have established the fall of the aqueduct which is shadowed by a present-day County Authority conduit, using presumably the same inclination of the water plane.

The location of the medieval village of Iddinshall, (e), the earliest recorded form of that place-name being in the Domesday Survey as Etingehalle, (the derivation and meaning of which remain vexed questions better relegated to another discussion), was established by prospection and field-work. A node of footpaths and early swing-plough patterns again observed by Miss Cowap, at SJ.539.617 and 538.616 respectively, directed attention finally to evidence of settlement either side of a modern hedge-line at SJ.539.616 to 539.618. A number of buildings appear to have lined a central main thoroughfare, as evidenced by trial probes and a profusion of iron fragments in the sub-soil. In fact, on the First Edition of the Ordnance Survey for the County, two farm dwellings are still shown to be in existence at this site.* At the height of a very hot summer in 1983, water was still in evidence from a natural source near the centre of the village. Final confirmation of this location came from a source that has been overlooked or misunderstood - D and S Lysons' 'Magna Britannia - Cheshire' (1816)

'The township of Idinshaw, or Iddinshall containing only two houses is situated about nine miles from Chester and about a mile and a half South-West of Tarporley.'

This simple and adequate reference appears to have later been usually aligned with that of Ormerod and attributed to the two later houses, Iddinshall Hall and Iddinshaw Grange, on the turnpike road at Road Street, one and a half miles North-West from Tarporley.

Thus, having identified another element, an attempt was made to fix the given line of the road (d) which led from the settlement site to the Hermitage. Ormerod presents a rather thin case for the location of the latter, in Hermitage Field, SJ.545.626, close to the site of the mill near Tarporley; his case resting on the earlier discovery of a skeleton and stone cist at that place. No further evidence has been encountered at this time to support or deny that premise.

More significant was the clear indication of two vicinal roads branching from a point just to the North of the township site. The first does indeed lead towards the suggested area of the Hermitage and thence via the Back Lanes to Tarporley but a continuation may be determined at several points at modern ditch crossings leading North to meet the present main Chester road at SJ.543.633. The second and unsuspected road branches directly towards the above-mentioned moated site and having met the single (remaining) entrance to that site at a tangent, proceeds on a presumed line in the general direction of Clotton.

* These recent dwellings were just over the modern boundary in Tiverton (Ed.)

A trial excavation on the line of this road, at SJ.536.625, revealed a five metre surface set into a natural clay trench. The metalling was in two layers, possibly based upon a sand layer. The lower foundation consisted of a 15 to 20 cm. layer of gravel aggregate and over this was a road 'surface' of hand-sized, worn river stones, i.e. pebbles. Lying at the rather shallow depth of about 20cm., much of the upper layer had been lifted in ploughing or deliberately stripped for other purposes. Both of the above roads may be seen to continue via the township site to the South; thence, on an alignment along Pudding Lane, ('pudding-stone' lane?) to a fording of the River Gowy below Beeston Castle. It is hoped that full sections of these early routes will be excavated, with the techniques of their construction made available for comparison with other minor roads. Located to the East of the general area described above and on the line of the boundary there should be found the Flaxyard (f) and its contingent road. So far, no clues have presented themselves but the large farm and section of domestic moat to the South-east of Tarporley, known today as Flaxyards, cannot really be considered as candidates and a location for an earlier Flaxyard may perhaps be sought in the vicinity of Birch Heath.

The author has suspected for some time that the large moated site known as Iddinshall Rough is an anomaly in the Cheshire landscape. The size of the enclosure, an area of about four acres, the great depth and width of the surrounding ditch approximately 150 metres square and the selective nature of its strategic position guarding or menacing the Beeston Gap, all meet some of the various criteria for an hypothesis proposing the presence here of an early Roman auxiliary fortlet, with a continuous and varied purpose throughout the occupation, and later. No evidence of an early archaeological nature has been uncovered on the site which is densely wooded and overgrown. The discovery of a Victorian artificial fox-earth during investigation certainly provided an interlude of intense speculation. It is fairly certain that the Elizabethan dwelling of the Hurlestons was located there, if not an earlier monastic house or grange - various timbers and pieces of dressed stone have been met scattered through the copse. The several elements which have been outlined above, in the vicinity of this site, give rise to a first-class case for supposing a tradition of activity and a focus of settlement centering upon its unique defensive character.

To possibly corroborate the above proposition, we must return finally to the primary source for these investigations and we have before us the statement that the Tarporley-Iddinshall boundary line began at the High Road from Tarporley to Chester (a). The author and his colleagues overlooked initially that this might not have been on the present line of Road Street, for part of the parish of Iddinshall is recorded as being annexed to that of Clotton Hoofield. In the Autumn of 1983 it was realised that the point of commencement did in fact lie several hundred yards to the North of the present main road and the line of the 17th century turnpike road. From the former position the first elements of the boundary description fall more correctly into a context. Investigation on the more Northerly line revealed a road surface of a very similar nature to that leading from the Iddinshall township site. Parts of the surface cobbling were greatly in evidence at the soil surface and the route led past the Southern edge of Ash Wood and is presumed to bear directly for Eaton, passing behind modern Tarporley. Ash Wood itself shows signs of coppice management with

several large excavated pits within a ditch or woodland bank. Two fields at its southern edge are named 'Priest Field' and the field flanking its western side has the intriguing title of 'Coal-Pit Field'. A preliminary examination of the ground has shown signs of occupation and it is hoped to obtain funding to approach the matter of a detailed investigation in 1984/85. There are a number of tantalising possibilities raised by a site in this position for it lies on the line of an early road which, given the probability that it is Roman, would offer in the first instance a tentative source of speculation at a point nine and a half miles via Holme Street from the PORTA PRAETORIA of the City of the Legions.

I thank all those individuals who have assisted in this investigation and in particular Peggy Cowap for her sound knowledge of the local history of the area with her often welcome opinion. Also to Mrs P Sherwin, Mr and Mrs Bates and Mr E Boughey of Iddinshall for permission to reconnoitre their land. Professor R L Wilson of the Geophysics Department and Ms Pauline Round, Map Curator, Geography, at Liverpool University have from the outset given their time and encouragement. The Cheshire County Record Office has helped with a patient expertise. My personal thanks also to Chris Dunn of Caerwys, Catherine Sommerville and Mr C Butler; also, of course to A R C Oldham for his technical assistance. The Editor of the Bulletin has offered an ever-open fount of advice and experienced direction.

Bibliography

- | | |
|-----------------|---|
| Dodgson, J McN | <u>The Place-names of Cheshire</u> Part III, 1971, pages 286-297. |
| Lysons, D and S | <u>Magna Britannia</u> , 1816. |
| Mason, D J P | Eaton-by-Tarporley Roman Villa, <u>Cheshire Archaeological Bulletin</u> , No. 8, 1982, pages 49-52. |
| Ormerod G, | <u>History of Cheshire</u> , 1882. |

Harleian M S Folio 1965 36.6.

(Abstract)

'incipiunt ad altam viam que ducit a Torperley versus Cestriam extendunt se a dicta via versus meridiem per le Witokestonel usque ad superiorem partem de Netstallis et sic a superiore parte de Netstallis versus Torperley et sic directe sequendo usque ad superiorem partem de Geylmaresiche et sic directe a Gaylmaresiche usque le Derneford et sic descendo acqueductum cum mediatate eius dem cursus aque usque viam que ducit ab Heremitorio ultra predictum dictum versus Idinchale et sic a dicta via que ducit ultra ductum iuxta superiorem partem de Flaxyard versus Torperley usque ad Boteokeweye et sic sequendo Boteokeweye usque ad divisas de Teverton.'

/Translation

Translation

'beginning at the High Road that leads from Tarporley to Cheshire and proceeding from the said road to the South past the Stone Hill of the White Oak as far as the upper part of the Cattle Ponds. From the upper part of the Cattle Ponds in the direction of Tarporley and thus following in a straight line as far as the upper part of the Boundary Stream that grows with Myrtle. From there directly to the Hidden Ford and thence along the fall of the aqueduct, together with half of that water-course (or, with half the length of that water-course) as far as the Road which leads over to Iddinshall from the Hermitage on the further side of the aforesaid conduit. Thence from the said Road that leads on the further side of the conduit, close by the upper part of the Flaxyard, in the direction of Tarporley as far as Bota's Oak Tree Way and thus along that Way to the boundary of Tiverton.'

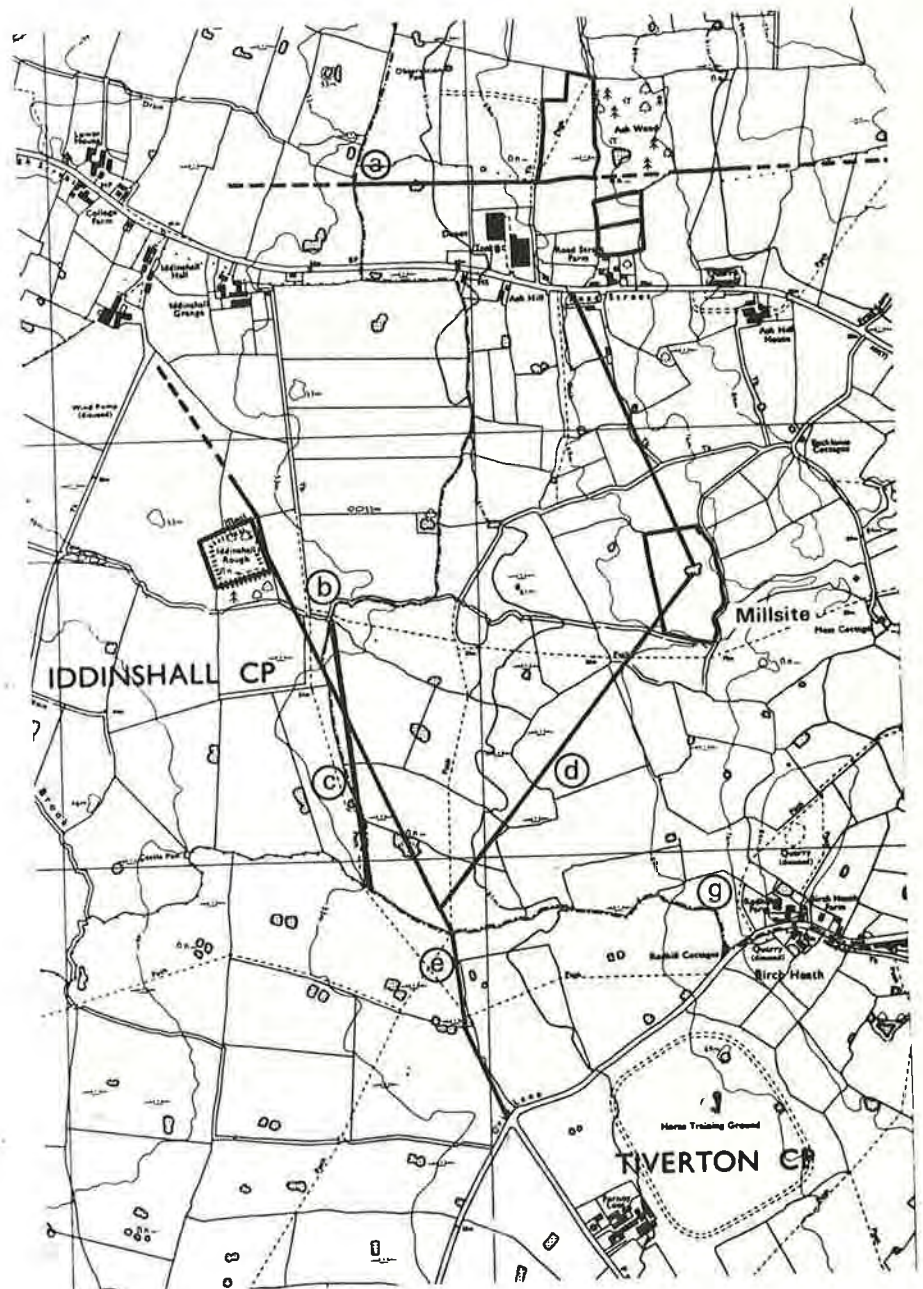


Fig. 8

T J Strickland

For some years now Chester City Council's Department of Technical Services (Conservation Section) and the Grosvenor Museum (Excavations Section) have been collaborating in a programme of research into the structure and history of Chester's City Wall. Much of this work has been connected with consolidation and repair of the Wall and has had the financial support of the Department of the Environment. However, with one or two exceptions, it is not to be confused with the 'rescue' work of the Chester unit. Nevertheless, when considered in general, this research has already produced some interesting results on, amongst other things, the Spur Wall (see elsewhere in this edition of CAB) and on the Civil War siege of Chester of which the full report is to be published shortly as a monograph in the Grosvenor Museum's series. One part of this operation is to acquire photogrammetric coverage of the complete length of the City Wall and its associated structures, large stretches of masonry already having been thus recorded by the Conservation Section.

As an integral part of this research programme, the author has conducted two specific projects related, in particular, to the Roman masonry in the North Wall (East of the Northgate) and in the East Wall (50 metres North of the Kaleyad Gate) aimed at throwing new light on hitherto somewhat insecurely based assumptions concerning the Roman defences. The first project, carried out in 1982, has already been reported (CAB 8) and the 1983 work is summarised elsewhere in this volume. However, when taken together with the author's now completed research into the rampart etc at Abbey Green (1975-8), the results of this work have made possible a new appraisal of the sequence of events on the legionary fortress defences throughout the Roman period. These are now summarised as follows:-

Dates AD

1. c75-c90
Although there remains a slight possibility that LEGIO II ADIUTRIX constructed a Box Rampart in this period, there are considerable problems with interpretation of what has been thought to be evidence for this structure. Re-examination of this suggests an alternative; that the first rampart was of the conventional turf and timber-strapped type.
2. c90-c120
LEGIO XX VALERIA VICTRIX replaced LEGIO II ADIUTRIX at Chester in c90 and, contrary to all hitherto widely held assumptions, latest research has produced evidence strongly suggestive of a complete dismantling of the original rampart and construction of a new one to replace it towards the very end of the first century. The new defences included wooden gates, towers and palisade.

0557L

3. c120-c125

In this relatively short period (although possibly starting a few years earlier) the Twentieth Legion appears to have been reconstructing many hitherto wooden buildings in stone. This activity included the defences; a series of stone interval towers were inserted and this must surely imply that a stone curtain wall and gates had been added as well. These structures replaced their wooden predecessors but the rampart remained. Barely had the work on the defences been completed when building work came to an abrupt halt. This can be seen to have occurred soon after c120 and may reasonably be explained by Hadrian's decision to use the legions, including the Twentieth, in Northern Britain.

4. c125-c165

Nothing appears to have been done to the defences in this period. With the absence of all (or at least a major part) of the Twentieth Legion, the fortress appears to have been reduced in status to that of a rearward depot. Occupation continued but it appears to have been so "scrappy" - and many buildings were left incomplete - that it is even possible to conclude that the place may no longer have had military significance.

5. c165-c230

The Army appears to have returned to Chester, in strength, in this period. Although it is known that the Twentieth Legion (or at least part of it) was again in residence there is a hint of the presence of other units as well (LEGIO II AUGUSTA and Sarmatian cavalry). As a result there was an appreciable upsurge in building activity throughout the fortress. In this period - possibly c200 - a brand new, superbly built, curtain wall replaced the early second century one. The interval towers would have been partially dismantled and then rebuilt to accommodate it. Impressive lengths of this wall can be seen in the City Wall today, on the North and East sides. Some at least of the Twentieth Legion were at Chester until after c250.

6. c300

At some point between c250 and c300 the Twentieth Legion - or at least most of it - appears to have been brigaded permanently elsewhere. Many barracks became derelict in this period. But Chester remained an important place and much effort was expended on the defences in c300. The rampart buildings and other related structures were dismantled and buried under the rampart, which was now made into a low wide bank to facilitate unrestricted access to the wall-walk area. This change may well have been carried out to render possible the defence of the entire wall-circuit by a relatively small garrison.

However, it also meant that the curtain wall, which was merely a stone facing to the earlier rampart, had now to be rendered stable by the insertion of additional masonry at the rear. This may be the true meaning of the reuse of redundant monumental masonry, tombstones, etc, which have been recovered from the wall in recent times.

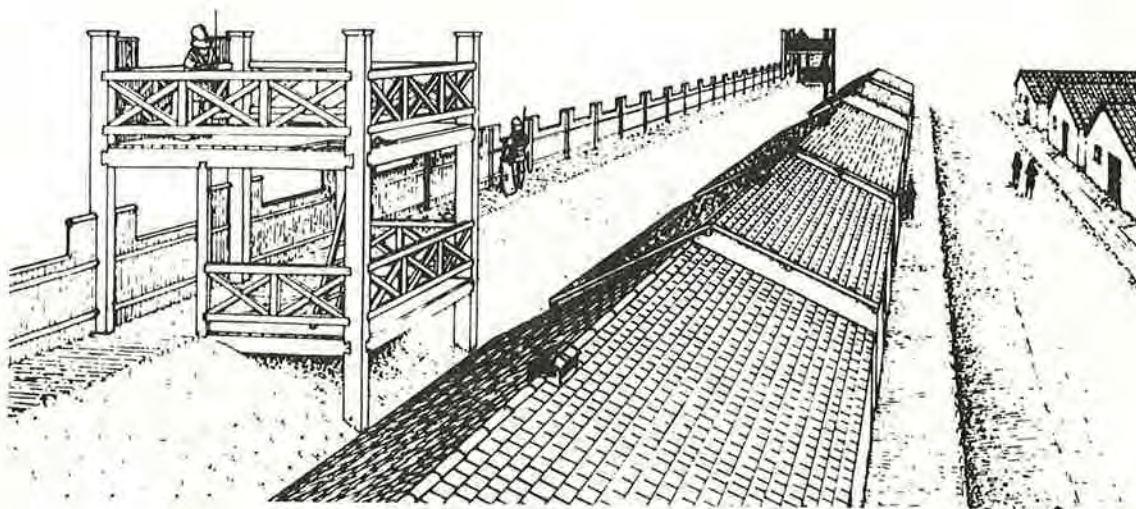


Fig. 9

The defences of the Legionary Fortress at Chester c 100 A.D.
(Drawing by T J Strickland).

Footnotes

1. For a report on the North Wall (1982) see T J Strickland, J Chester Arch Soc LXV (1982), 25-35
2. For a report on the East Wall (1983) see T J Strickland, J Chester Arch Soc LXVI (1983)

ASHTON, PEEL HALL SJ 498696

Peel Hall, as the name implies, is associated with a medieval peel tower, which is said to have stood within a circular defensive moat the gardens of the present building. Jackson, 1952, records the surviving fragments of the moat with stone or brick revetment. A semi-circular mound, south east of the farm buildings, which is shown on modern OS maps seems to indicate the site of the moat.

At an unknown date the Peel was demolished, and the materials re-used in the construction of barns and outbuildings for a second building, erected on or near the site of the present hall. Jackson suggests that this later building was timber framed. This seems to be the house named on Saxon's map of 1557 as "The Pyle". The building would appear to have been quite old at the time of its demolition in 1637, for Webb, writing in the 1620's records "the goodly ancient house called the Peel or the Pile".

The 1637 mansion, fragments of which still survive, was built in the Italian style. However, Ormerod claimed that it was "... but an indifferent specimen of the taste which prevailed on the restoration of Italian architecture in this Country". The gardens were surrounded by brick walls "fancifully arranged in escallops and semi-circles". Jackson suggests that at this time the moat was repaired to become a feature of the garden and that a brick summer house was erected on the mound within. The foundations of a small square brick building were removed during this Century.

Most of the Italianate structure was demolished between about 1813 and 1820, and from that time Peel Hall was used as a farmhouse. Part of one wing of the 1637 building has survived and other fragments may have been re-used. Jackson suggests that stone carvings which include the date 1637, now on the west wall, were once part of the interior of the building.

Ormerod, G History of the County Palatine and City of Chester, 1882 (ed) Vol II.

King, D Vale Royall of England, 1656.

Jackson, Samuel Ashton Hayes, 1952 (Cheshire County Council Records Office).

E Wilsh

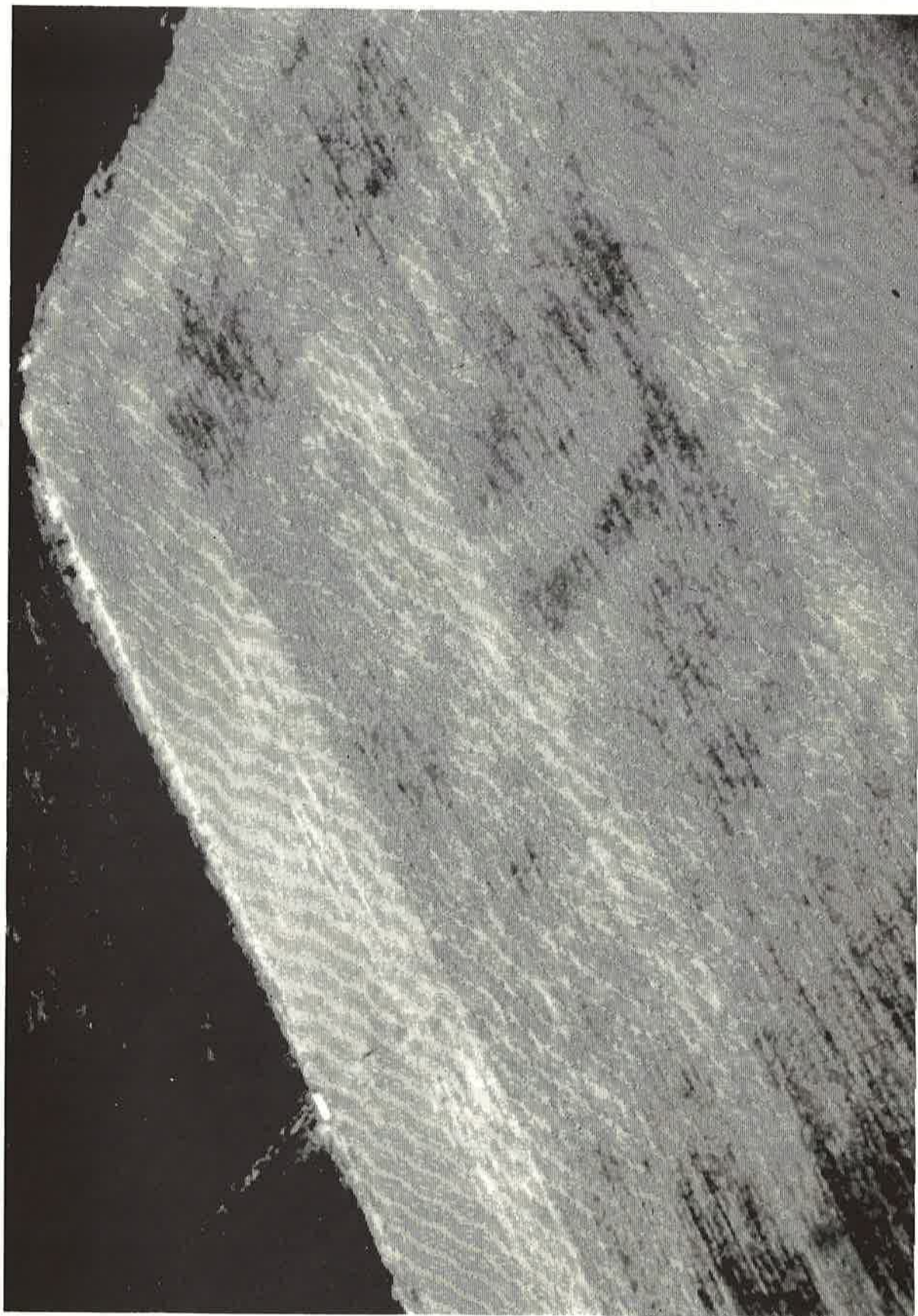
BICKERTON Location Confidential

A possible Roman signal station

A prominent cropmark (Plate 1) was observed from the air on 12 August 1982 which apparently represented a site of two periods of occupation.

/The later

Plate 1.



The later period was represented by a fairly broad dark band which marked a formerly existing ditch of defensive character and which was interrupted on one side by an entrance causeway. These features were roughly aligned with existing field boundaries, i.e. NE to SW, but they were clearly not of recent agricultural origin. There were few features on the hilltop to which the mark could be related and which could give it scale. Nevertheless, sufficient was obtainable to suggest that the ditch probably enclosed an area of about 50 feet (15m) square. No structure was visible in this rectangular enclosure, but it could have been a post-hole construction leaving little trace. The north and west corners of the enclosure were distinct and were rounded but the south-east side with its corners was less clear.

The fainter part of the cropmark is presumed to be earlier and consists of a circular ditch line, slighter in character than its later counterpart and partly cut or overlain by it. The circular ditch has a dark round blob at its centre.

Various possible interpretations of the cropmark complex have been considered, including a medieval moat for the rectangle and a windmill site for the circular feature. A moat is extremely unlikely on a hilltop and there is no record of a mill in the vicinity, certainly none so recent as to leave this type of cropmark. There is also the possibility that the circular cropmark is that of a prehistoric barrow. That, however, makes the superimposition of the later but still ancient rectangle unlikely as, presumably, the barrow would still have been visible, to some extent at least, and would have been avoided in favour of flatter ground.

The two main contending theories for the purpose of the site are that it was a prehistoric or Romano-British religious site of more than one period, or that it was a signal station or beacon site of the Roman period. The latter view, which is the writer's, would see an early round structure, presumably a tower within a circular ditch, which was replaced on virtually the same spot by a later structure within the more usual rectangular defensive ditch. The apparent size is acceptable for a signal station and the location is ideal, on high ground and clearly visible for a considerable distance in the direction of Chester (Deva) to the north-west, towards Whitchurch (Mediolanum) to the south and of course other locations.

A more positive interpretation must await further observation.

Bibliography:-

- | | |
|---------------|---|
| Frere, S. | <u>Britannia: a history of Roman Britain.</u> Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1974. |
| Jones, G.D.B. | <u>Hadrian's Wall from the Air,</u> Archaeological Surveys Ltd, 1976, p.21. |
| Piggott, S. | <u>Ancient Europe.</u> 'Edinburgh University Press, 196 |

Rhys William

Contour Survey of Chapel Field, Denhall

Denhall lies in the manor of Burton in the south of the Wirral peninsula. With the silting of the Dee at Chester, which by the late 14th century was inaccessible to sea-going ships, Denhall's importance as a port increased, only to decline when the harbour at Denhall itself became choked with silt.

Chapel Field, Denhall, lying just above the old shoreline of the River Dee, is traditionally the site of the hospital of St Andrew and is marked as 'chapel' in the Admiralty Survey of 1869 and subsequent Ordnance Survey maps.

Documentary Evidence

The earliest record of Denhall occurs in the Pipe Rolls of 1184/5 where an item in the account of revenues is the income from the 'Prebend of Bauewell', thought by some scholars to be a clerical error for Danewell, an early form of Denhall (Stewart-Brown 1938, 43; Dodgson 1972, 220). The first certain reference to the hospital appears in 1231-4 in the Great White Register of Lichfield (Ormerod 1882, 542; Savage 1924, 343). Bishop Alexander de Stavensby had constituted the church of Tarvin a prebend instead of Burton in Wirral, and the church at Burton was appropriated to the hospital. This was confirmed by charter in 1238 and the receipt of the revenues of Burton enabled the hospital to give aid for the support of the poor and shipwrecked (Wilson, 1905, 132).

The existence of the hospital depended largely on its location at the port. It is described in 1319 as 'giving shelter to travellers from Ireland' (Savage, 1924, 307), and derived income from its rights to privilege in fishing, trade and transport, and in claiming 'all manner of wrecks, etc.' (Ormerod 1882, 542; Stewart-Brown 1935, 63). References to the port at Denhall include instructions from King Edward I to his clerks in 1283 'to send the ship which is at Danewell or at Parcum laden with wine (Irvine 1950, 50-51) and in 1399 eighty archers were to assemble outside the Watergate at Chester for inspection and be conducted to Burton in Wirral and Danewall for shipment to Ireland (Beazley 1907, 9).

The hospital appears to have closed in the late 15th century; Young (1909, 116) gives the date 1485. In 1495/6 the foundation was amalgamated with the hospital of St John at Lichfield (Ormerod 1882, 542), and the buildings rented to the curate at Burton (Booth, Mawby and Cullen 1975, 20). The port, however, continued in use and Beazley, writing in 1907 (p. 9), says the parish registers refer to passengers from Ireland in 'comparatively modern times'.

/The area

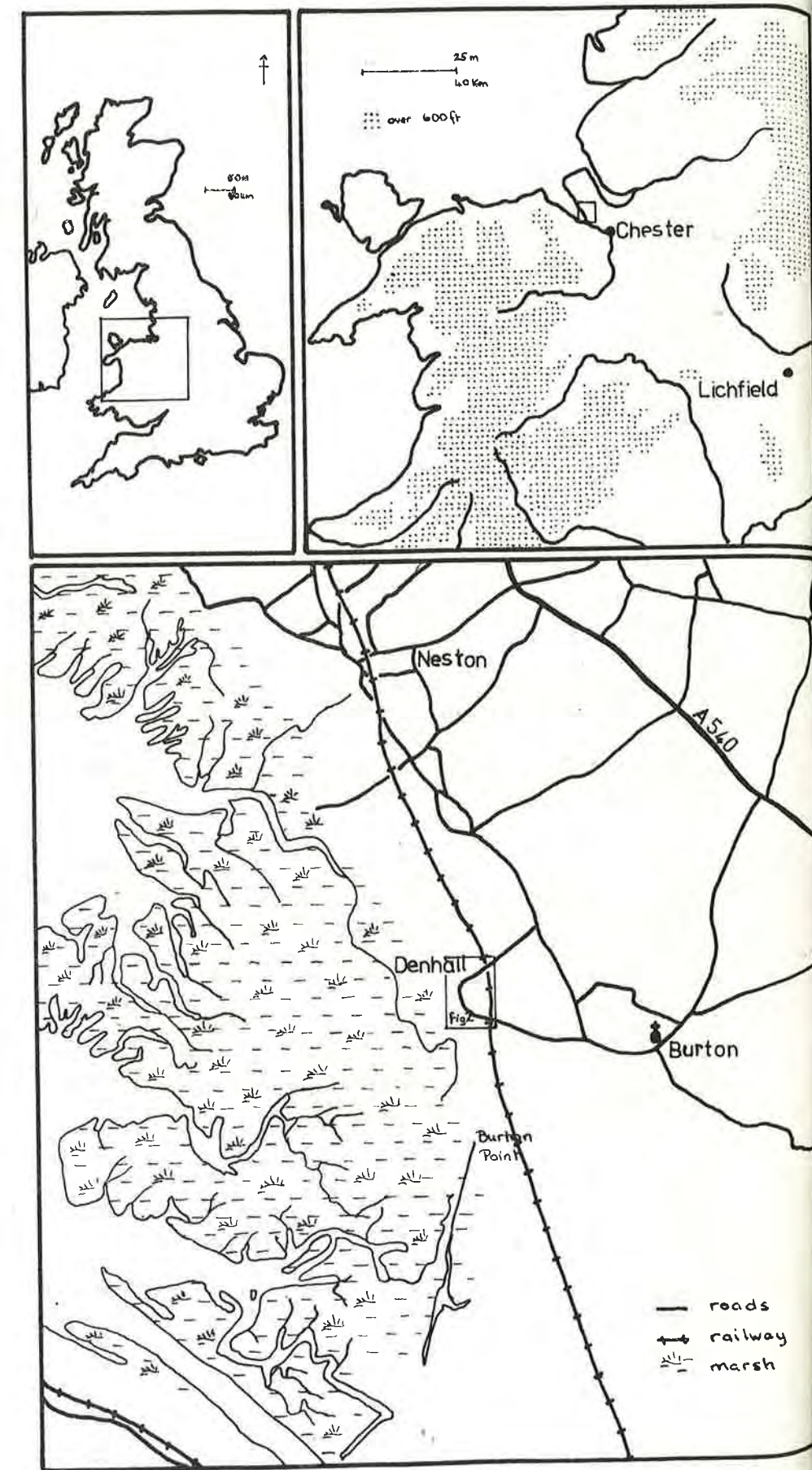


Fig. 10 : Location

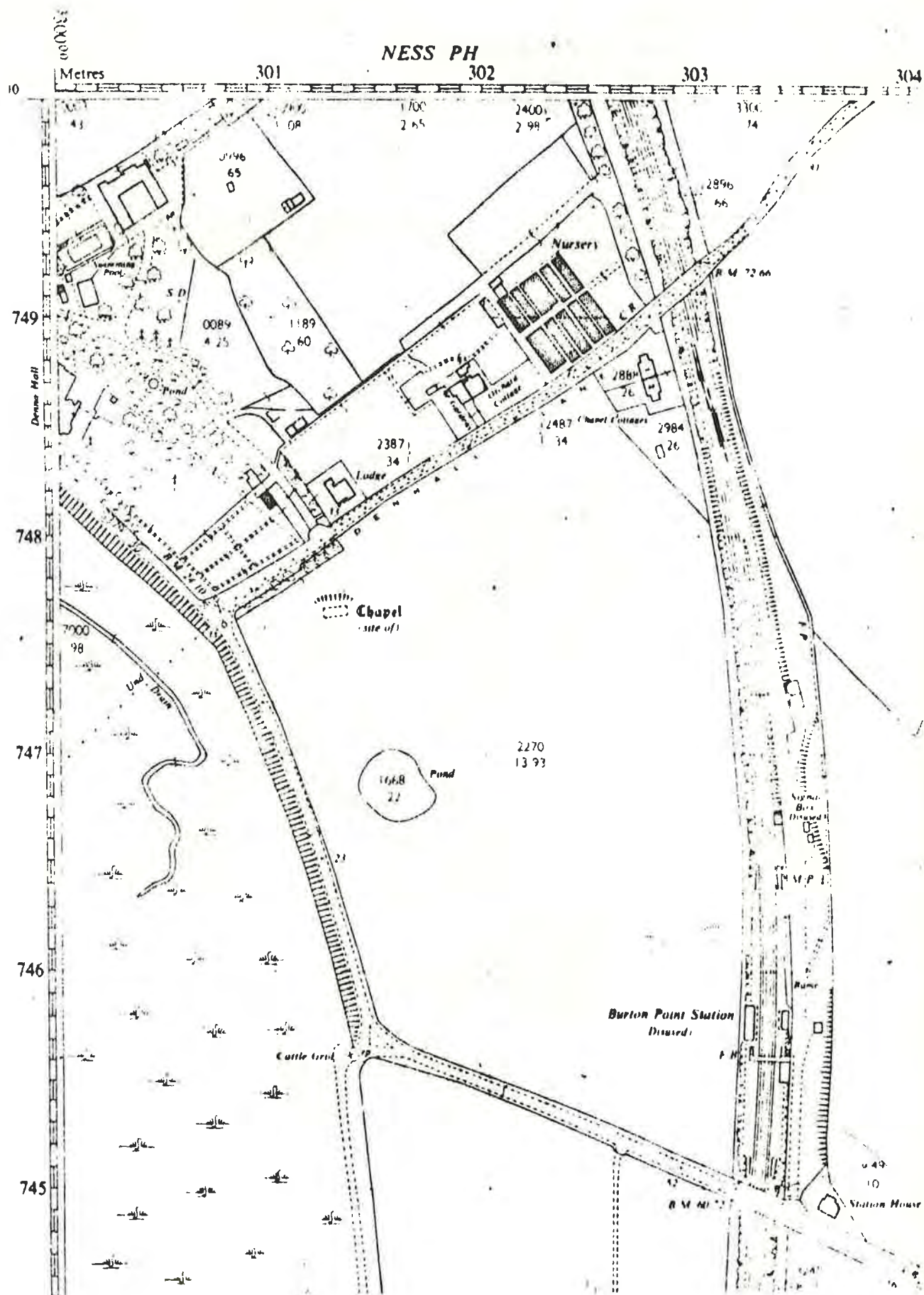


Fig. 11
Ordnance Survey sheet SJ 3074. Scale 1 : 2500

Fig.12
Plan of Chapel Field.
Scale : 1:2000

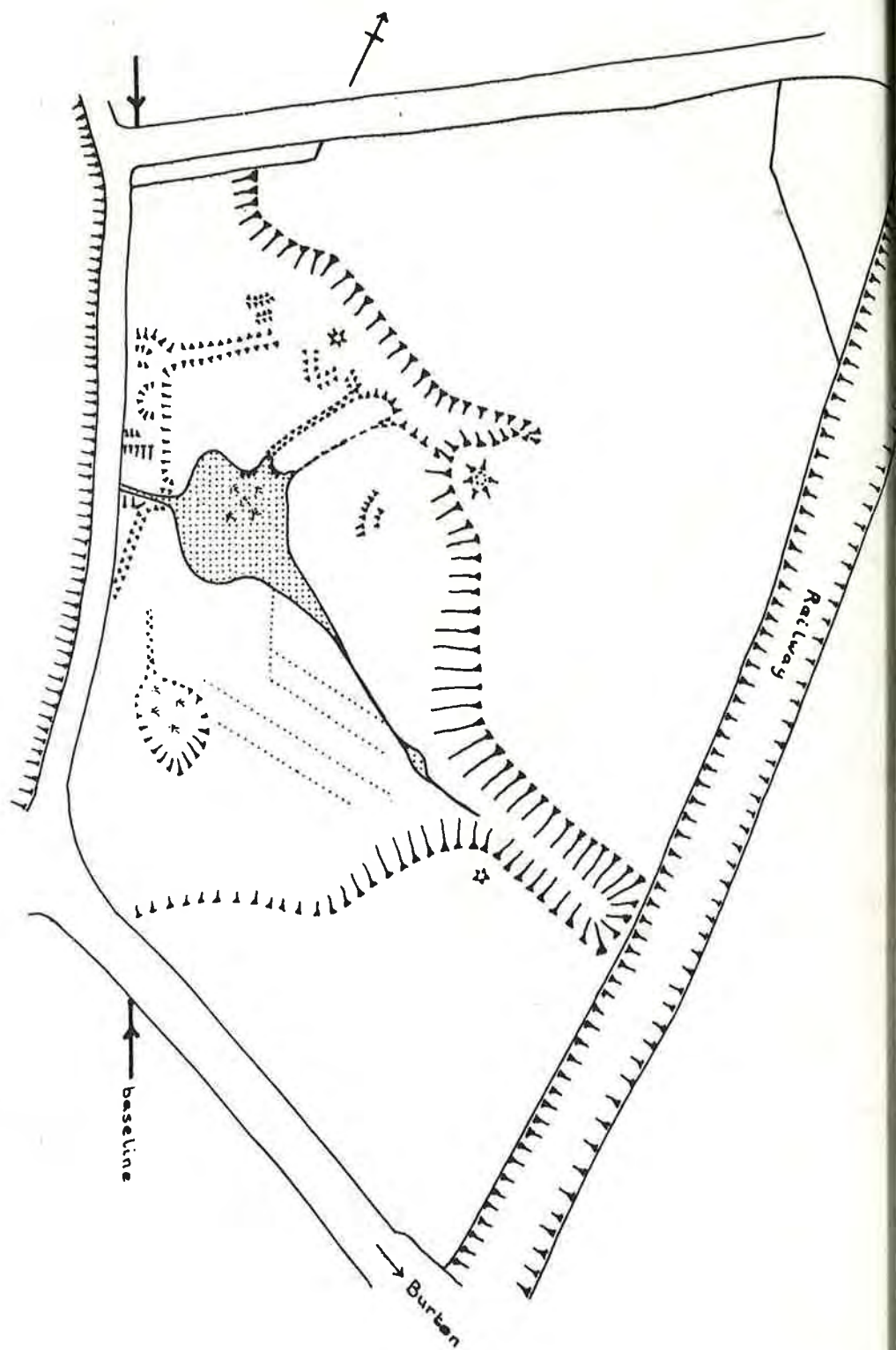
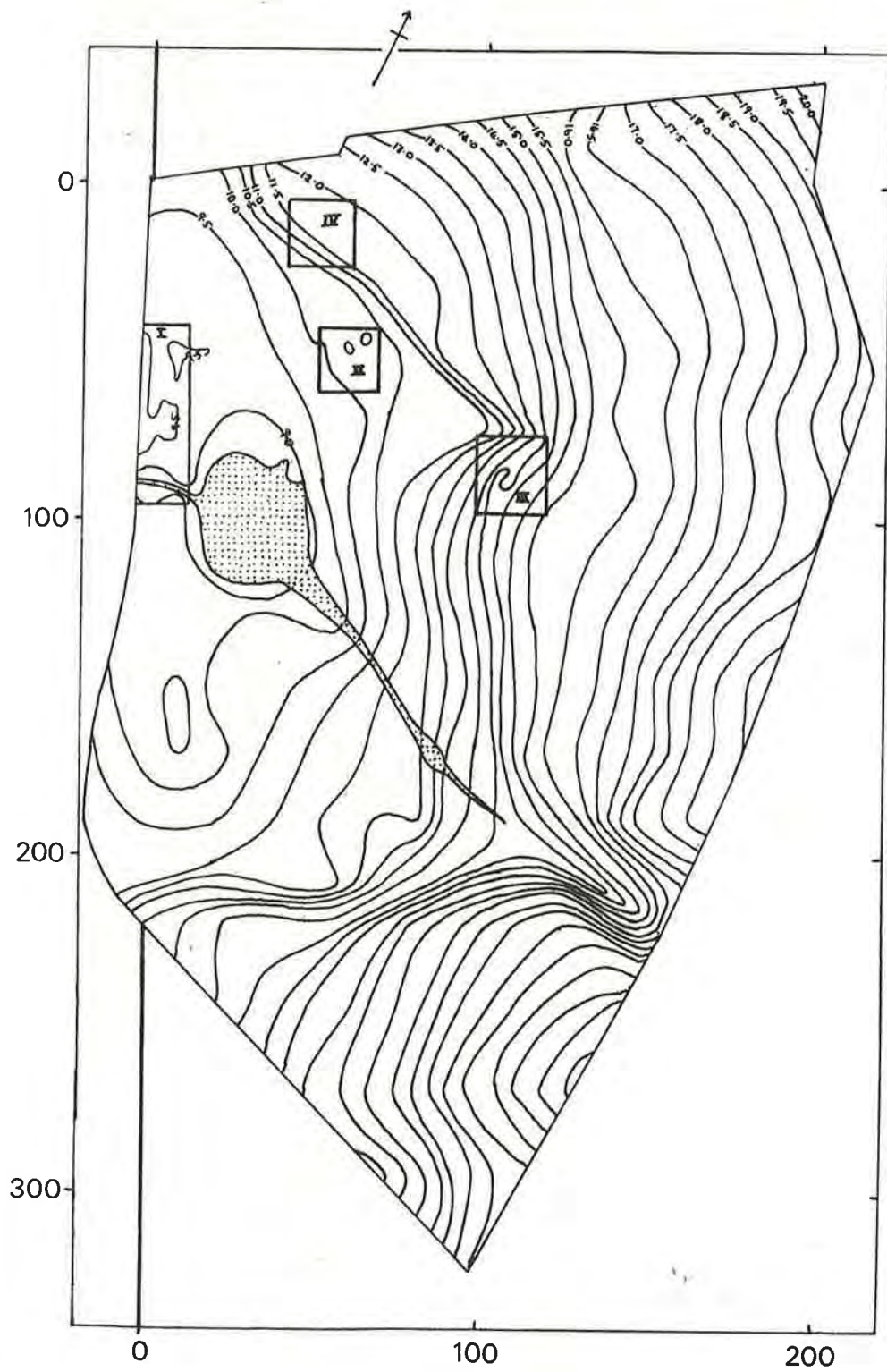


Fig.13

Contour survey of Chapel Field.

Scale 1 : 2000

Contour interval 0.5m w.r.t.site 10m datum



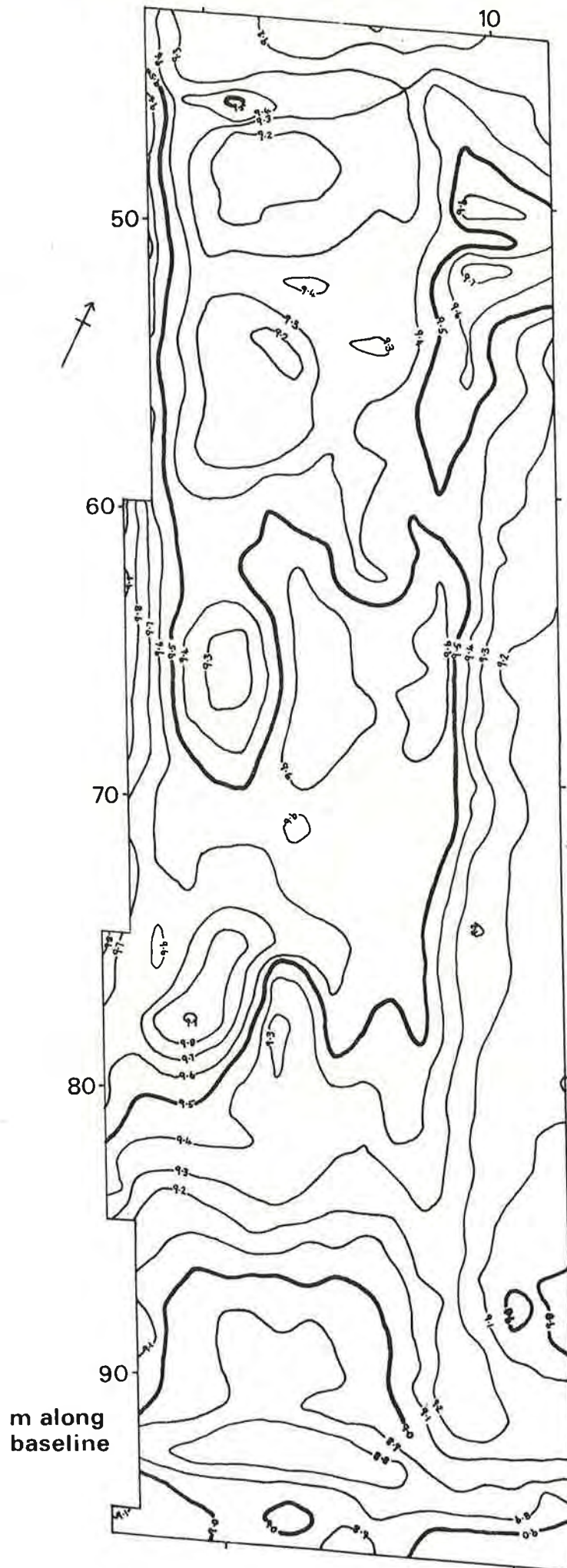


Fig.14 Area I

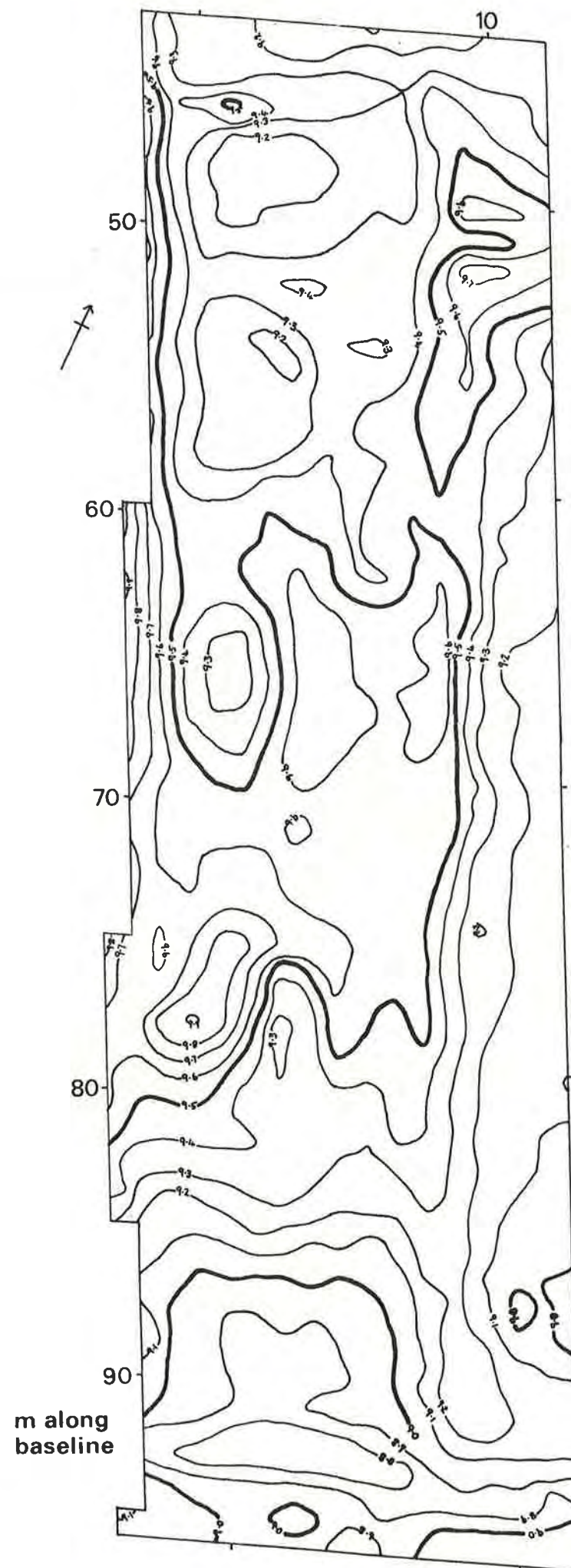


Fig.14 Area I

The area designated 'chapel' by the Admiralty Survey is a flat shelf forming an intermediate terrace between the western level area of Chapel Field and the eastern slope behind the cliff-line (figs.11 & 13). However, this area contains no significant features and at present there is no visible evidence for the identification. Other areas of the same field show extensive traces of former structures not scheduled as an Ancient Monument and in order to record extant features, teams of two to nine people, under the supervision of Mr P J Davey, conducted a survey of Chapel Field in the summer of 1980. The survey involved recording visible features by triangulation (general plan, fig.12), a large-scale contour survey of the site from parallel traverses (fig.13), and detailed contour surveys on a 1m grid of areas containing small-scale features (figs. 14-17).

Description of Visible Features

Chapel Field lies on a west facing slope above the shoreline of the Dee (SJ 302 747). A gully runs east-west across the field widening out to form a low cliff-line, and is now virtually dry. Before the excavation of the railway cutting, this may have been a stream forming a natural creek (fig.13). A spring near the mouth of the gully feeds the pond and runs out westwards into the marsh. The western boundary of the field lies east of the road, about 15m from the shoreline which is marked by a drop of about 2m to the level of the marshes.

Area I (Fig.14)

Visible irregularities in the ground surface are of the order of 0.5m in height. The ground slopes sharply down from the hedge for about 2m, and the area surveyed is bounded by a bank sloping down to the general level of the field, parallel to the hedge and about 12m from it. At the southern end, the ground slopes down to the pond outlet, the 'boundary bank' turning eastwards parallel to the outlet. A series of raised areas and dips has roughly rectilinear form. At the northern end, the 'boundary' connects with a bank running out into the field, then curves in to meet the hedge at right angles. The character of the masonry visible in the hedge changes at this junction, becoming to the north more clearly coursed ashlar with rubble fill about 0.6m across, against a width of about 0.5m in Area I, although the bank of tumble is more apparent there. A depression runs from the pond outlet to meet the hedge obliquely some 30m to the south.

Area II (Fig.15)

An apparently formless series of features, about half a metre in height, is rectilinear when seen in conjunction with an exposed stone which appears to be part of a wall connected by a bank at its south-east corner to the parallel gullies running down to the pond; it is also apparently connected at its north-west corner to the bank running across the field from Area I. There is a circular mound to the north-east, surrounded by lower ground which forms a dip running along the foot of the cliff-line, west to the gully below Area III.

Area III (Fig.16)

A bank about 2m wide forms a circle about 5m across on the slope of the upper part of the field, behind the cliff-line and adjacent to the steep slope forming a dry gully in the cliff. The position and form of this feature suggest it is a lime-kiln; the enclosure map of 1817 shows a lime-kiln in a similar position just above the cliff-line in the adjacent field to the south-west.

A circular mound about 4m across and 0.5m high lies on the slope of the field at about the mid-point of the south side of the stream gully. The ground to the east of the mound forms a dip which may run across the field to the present gateway.

The pond has a well defined margin except where the stream runs into it through a marshy delta. The outflow is west, alongside Area I, and two dry gullies run parallel north-east. The gullies are about 7m apart, the northern one 2m wide and the southern generally less than 1m across; each is a depression 0.4-0.5m deep. An area of reeds occupies a large proportion of the north-eastern quadrant, with the appearance of being shallower than elsewhere.

An oval, flat and marshy area south of the pond contains different vegetation from its surroundings and appears to be a virtually dry pond bed. A shallow ditch runs to join the outflow of the main pond.

The lines of four field drains (dotted lines in Fig.12) were visible as darker areas of vegetation.

The north, west and south boundaries of the field contain masonry visible to a greater or lesser extent, in places forming a bank up to 1m high. Up to three courses of ashlar are visible in the western hedge. No gateway is now evident in the wall, and the stone appears to be continuously coursed at the point where the possible track from Area I meets the hedge.

Discussion

Identification of the extant features must take into account the recorded presence of quays and a possible port settlement, in addition to the chapel or hospital buildings.

The lower part of the field is only about 2m above the level of the marshes, and may have been susceptible to flooding at very high tides. A more logical site for the hospital would seem to be the higher gently sloping part of the field, perhaps with the chapel in its traditional position, which would be accessible from the quays. Closer examination of the site however reveals no evidence of features, except patchy areas of vegetation on the higher ground. The nature of the field boundary too lends itself more to interpretation as a wall line rather than a harbour revetment. Writing in 1897, Mrs Gamlin said 'The wall skirting the field in which the hospital stood is constructed with the stones of the ancient edifice, traces of which are perceptible on the rising ground to the eastward of the wall. In this pile of stones may be seen, for about 18ft, courses of the coigns of the windows...Some of the remaining portions were used to erect Burton Barn.' (Gamlin 1897, 234-5). The quality of the ashlar walling still visible and its relationship to the features of Area I suggest

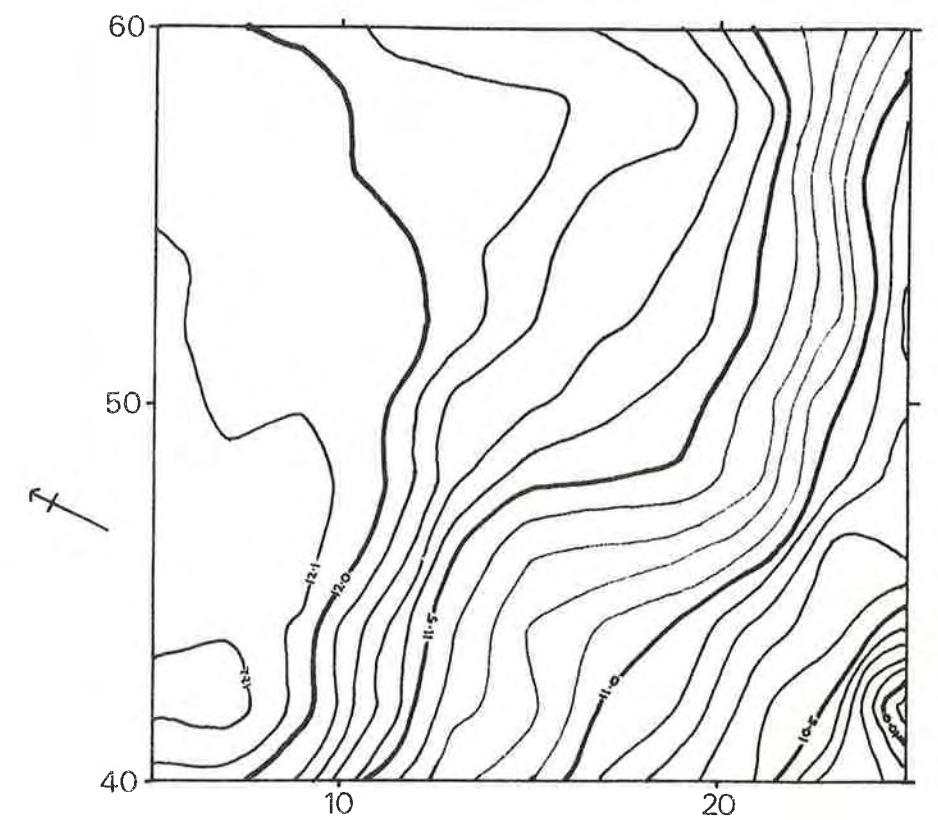


Fig.17 : Area IV

Scale 1 : 200. Contours at 0.5m interval
with respect to site 10m datum.

that the masonry is in situ, rather than reused as Mrs Gamlin states, and her report of moulded stonework may indicate that Area I is the site of upstanding buildings. The reuse of masonry from the hospital to build Burton Barn suggests systematic robbing which would leave little trace of wall lines; and a similar fate might have befallen the chapel when the hospital closed in the late 15th or early 16th century. Some of the domestic buildings however were rented to the curate of Burton, and may have gradually fallen derelict as the area was abandoned, leaving clearer traces of their presence.

Given the wide variation in layout of hospital sites as classified by R M Clay (1966, 111-25) it is impossible to attribute specific functions to the individual structures, although it is likely Denhall comprised buildings loosely grouped within a precinct wall rather than a more compact plan required by an urban setting. In summary, the clearest structural evidence points to a building 10 x 30m in size in area I, associated with a boundary wall and a depression, possibly a track, crossing the pond outlet and running across to the modern road. The present road seems to follow the line of the original road from Burton to Denhall, since it runs outside a wall which, except in the north west corner, appears to be long established.

Structures in Area III may be related to the two gullies running into the pond and perhaps drew water from the smaller south-east gully and allowed it to drain into the larger gully downstream of the intake. The reedy area of the pond may hide further evidence of water control systems.

A low bank running just above the cliff-line and parallel to it may represent the eastern boundary of the precinct.

Little evidence exists for the position of the harbour. The channel for the harbour ran along the shoreline (still shown as a stream on the O.S. map), and the marsh to the west of the channel has only supported grass within the last century. Areas of long reeds interspersed with grass occur in the marsh, but so many streams, ditches, drains and pipes cut it that close inspection is needed to identify the position of the quays. It is possible that they lay in the 40-50m between the slope of the shoreline and the reed-filled channel.

Acknowledgements

Thanks are due to the following people for their help in various aspects of the survey; Mr G K Caffir, the owner of Chapel Field, for allowing the survey to take place; Paul Booth, Eric Greenwood, Ron Jones, Dr N E Mawby and Rhys Williams, for advice on various matters; Cheshire County Council, for financial assistance; Bevis Sale, for teaching techniques of surveying; Peter Davey, for directing the project; R A Philpott, for carrying out the final editing of the text; and to all the members of the Chester Diploma in Archaeology Class.

References

- Beazley G. 1907: 'Notes on the Parish of Burton in Wirral.' Trans. Hist. Soc. Lancs. & Chesh. 59 (1907).
- Booth P.H.W., Mawby N. and Cullen M. (eds.); 1975: 'Burton Church and People'. Burton Local History Research Group.
- Clay R.M. 1966: 'The Medieval Hospitals of England.' Cass, London (1966), reprint of 1909 edition, Methuen, London.
- Dodgson J.McN. 1972: 'The Place Names of Cheshire.' English Place Name Society 47, Part 4, C.U.P.
- Gamlin H. 1897: 'Twixt Mersey and Dee.' Marples, Liverpool.
- Irvine W.F. 1950: 'The King's Wine Supplies from Cheshire in 1283'. Cheshire sheaf, 3rd Series, 45 (Nov. 1950).
- Ormerod G. 1882: 'History of the County Palatine and City of Chester.' Volume II. London.
- Savage H.E. (ed.) 1924: Collections for a History of Staffordshire: 'Magnum Registrum Album.' William Salt Archaeological Society Stafford.
- Stewart-Brown R. 1935: The Chester Pleas of 'Quo Warranto' in 1499; The Hospital of Denhall.' Cheshire Sheaf, 3rd Series, 30 (Aug. 1935).
- Stewart-Brown R. 1938: 'The Hospital of St Andrew at Denhall.' Cheshire Sheaf, 3rd Series, 33 (May 1938).
- Wilson R.A. (ed) 1905: Willaim Salt Archaeological Collections; Lichfield Episcopal Registers, Register no. 5 (Second Register of Bishop Robert de Stretton), folio 62a.

J Zarek

CHESTER SJ 667407

The City Walls I

In May 1983 several post pits were dug immediately outside the eastern side of the city walls c.80 metres south of King Charles' Tower for the insertion of new steps for access to the city wall. Archaeological surveillance showed that this particular stretch of the walls is of a modern build down to and below the present ground surface and was almost certainly built during the last 200 years.

The digging out of these post pits yielded a considerable amount of dressed Roman masonry which had obviously come from one of the smaller Roman buildings inside the fortress and not from the defensive wall. The presence of these building blocks at this point outside the walls may be due to the supposed postern gate found by Robert Newstead in 1935 (Annals of Archaeology and Anthropology Vol. XXIII).

M G Morris

CHESTER

The City Walls II

Recording work was conducted at two sites along the City Wall.

i) The Spur Wall to the Water Tower (SJ 400666). Restoration work on the south face permitted examination of the embrasures in the parapet. The Water Tower with its Spur Wall joining it to the City Wall was built in 1322/3 to defend the river approach to the City. The Spur Wall has two flights of steps to descend from the wall level to the tower. On the intermediate landing there are two embrasures on each side. These appear to have been originally normal medieval embrasures. At some time, however, they were converted into gun-posts by lowering a portion of the base of the embrasure and infilling it with a thin screen wall which left just a small rectangular opening.

ii) Shipgate Street, Chester (SJ 407668). Building work at the south-west corner of this site revealed a corner of the near face of the City Wall in the section that was demolished in 1831 when Castle Drive was laid out. The City Wall formerly traversed this gap from the Bridge Gate to the south-west corner by dog-legs. The corner discovered is that of the first dog-leg west from the Bridge Gate. The Ship Gate formerly stood in the West facing part of the second dog-leg.

S Ward

CHESTER SJ 406665

The City Walls III

The East Wall (North of Kaleyad gate)

Conservation work on the City Wall presented an opportunity for further detailed archaeological analysis and recording, together with controlled excavation of the berm area, approximately fifty metres to the North of the Kaleyad gate during the Summer of 1983. The results have been most useful and can be seen as a next step in the on-going programme of research into the City Wall and, in particular, they complement the results achieved on the North Wall in 1982 (C A B 8). Once again, the Roman masonry was found to be substantially intact and identical in character to that seen in the North Wall. It will be remembered that, in 1982, it was not possible to rule out the possibility that this masonry was of the early second century in date, although a Severan date was in fact held to be more likely. In 1983, examination of the sequence of deposits and features in the berm area has confirmed that the surviving masonry cannot be earlier than 150 in

CHESTER 8205/2
8206/5
8547
8548

construction. Furthermore, the berm contemporary with the surviving Roman wall contained weathered dressed sandstone masonry which must have come from a pre-existing structure - possibly an early second century curtain wall contemporary with the interval towers which have been excavated on various occasions and most recently at Abbey Green (1975-8). As with the North Wall in 1982, there was no evidence of the reuse of monumental masonry in the outer face of the curtain wall late in the Roman period.

For a detailed report on the work on the North Wall see T J Strickland, J Chester Arch Soc LXV (1982), 25-35.

For a detailed report on the work on the East Wall see T J Strickland, J Chester Arch Soc LXVI (1983).

T J Strickland

CHESTER SJ 408660

CHESTER
8009
6100
9013/15

Duke Street

A small excavation was conducted at the site of the old Drill Hall while it was converted to residential accommodation. This site lies south of the Roman Fortress and east of the main road to the south, in a little explored area of the civil settlement. The earliest activity noted was alignments of small post holes probably indicating fences. These were replaced by a large pit with a thick clay lining. It was not possible to excavate the full depth of this feature but its lining and size would suggest that it functioned as a well or cistern. A gully immediately adjacent to the pit became choked with rubbish so the clay lining was extended over it to prevent it contaminating the pit. All these developments occurred within the 2nd century. The pit was finally filled with demolition material. These finds indicate that there are substantial structures in the vicinity. Large numbers of finds were made during the building work and show occupation continued until the end of the 4th century at least.

CHESTER
10164

In the medieval period a clean soil accumulated over the site, probably as the result of cultivation. This was replaced by garden deposits and rubbish pits in the post medieval period associated with the development of properties along Duke Street. These in turn were replaced by the Drill Hall which was erected in 1869.

Excavations were conducted by the Grosvenor Museum for Chester City Council.

S Ward

CHESTER SJ 664408

Foregate Street ECH 5132

The re-surfacing of the southern half of Foregate Street during the early months of 1983 necessitated a watching brief by the Grosvenor Museum Excavation Unit because of the depth to which the earlier surfaces were being removed. The findings were difficult to interpret owing to the many disturbances of the services which have been installed and repaired over many years.

In the east/west section thus exposed along the centre of the street, 9 metres east of the junction with Frodsham Street, was a cobbled surface running eastwards for a distance of 22 metres but with extensive patches going on further. The depth of the cobbling was 60 cms below the present-day surface. The cobbles were sealed by a thick layer of sandstone quarry-waste which was possibly the foundation for a surface of granite sets similar to those seen elsewhere in the city. The sandstone was in turn sealed by make-up for the modern-day tarmac. The pre-modern cobbled road was not visible in the south section.

Just east of the junction of Frodsham and Foregate Streets and 4 metres north of the southern payment edge there was a line of very large (c50 cm across on average) undressed sandstone blocks running east for a distance of 5 metres. This gave the appearance of a large foundation on an east/west line.

45 metres from the junction there was a very dark silty deposit going on for an unknown distance eastwards and of unknown depth. This deposit contained an amount of animal bone which could be an indication of it being a rubbish pit.

Conclusion

Accurate dating for this particular project is impossible but I think it can safely be said that the layer of sandstone, make-up and tarmac, are 19th century and later. The lower cobbled surface, directly sealed by the sandstone, may not be much earlier in date but no conclusion is possible.

The cobbled surface only being present in the north section and not in the south one, coupled with the fact that the "foundation" and "pit" appear to be contemporary with it, suggests that Foregate Street was previously narrower than it is today, situated further north and bounded on the south side by a rubbish pit and a foundation for a building of some kind.

CHESTER SJ 403667

M G Morris

Garden Lane/Canal Street junction

During the development of this corner site in 1983-1984 a group of 19th century pottery was collected. This consists of fragments of two black glazed dishes or pancheons together with bodysherds of two wide rimmed heavy based pots manufactured in a coarse open fabric, probably purpose-made for an industrial process.

I am grateful to the finder Mr K Armstrong-Braun for showing me the finds, which have been returned to him.

J A Rutter

CHESTER
8051

CHESTER SJ 403660

Grey Friars House 1983

Grey Friars House is a large town house at the south west corner of Grey Friars. The house has been expanded and altered in many periods but at its core there is a timber framed late 16th or 17th century building. The house lies directly south of the Grey Friars Court excavation (see C A B 8, 1982, 36-38) within the precinct of the medieval house of the Dominican Friars. Opportunity was taken of the plans to erect an extension to this house to mount a short rescue dig. It was hoped that the south claustral range of the Friary would be found. This hope was disappointed however; instead the main structural find formed part of a substantial Roman building. One room, estimated to be c9 metres square, had a small hypocaust inserted through the mortar floor, in the centre of the room. The south half of the room was heated by ducts passing beneath the floor. The furnace may have lain in the north half which could not be examined. This discovery further emphasises the significance of the civil settlement on this side of the Fortress. The buildings show sophistication of design and density of distribution.

The medieval period was marked by the robbing (apparently for tile) and levelling of this structure. Above this lay a fine, smooth, dark soil deposit with considerable quantities of 'pea grit' at its base. This pea grit is indicative of intensive undisturbed worm action. It is most probable therefore that this area still lay within the cloister garth of the Friary and that the south range lay further to the south, the cloister being somewhat larger than had been anticipated.

Excavations were conducted by the Grosvenor Museum by kind permission of Perryvale Ltd for Chester City Council and the Department of the Environment.

S Ward

CHESTER SJ 406662

Grosvenor Precinct Revitalisation (Pepper Street)

CHESTER 8156/13 The recent extension of the Grosvenor Precinct presented an opportunity to re-examine part of the South Wall of the internal legionary baths last seen in 1964 by Mr Petch. Contrary to all expectations, a considerable length of well preserved masonry survived and this was thoroughly recorded prior to its partial demolition by the contractor. The via sagularis (INTERVALLVM) to the South was also examined and records of it made. Almost the entire overburden had been rendered archaeologically meaningless in 1964 and, unfortunately, it was not possible to elucidate the subsequent history of the site.

T J Strickland

CHESTER SJ 660408

The Groves

Redevelopment of the area previously known as Bithels Boat Yard during the early months of 1983 gave opportunity for archaeological investigation by the Grosvenor Museum Excavation Section.

Before building commenced, the developers brought the level of the site down to the same as that of the Groves. This entailed the removal of tons of earth northwards for a distance of c40 metres. The removal of this material revealed a quarry face on the west side which follows exactly the contours of the city wall and tower. This would suggest that the quarrying had taken place later than the building of the tower but before 1875 as the quarry face appears on the OS Map of Chester 1875 edition (scale 1:500). This must mean that it was an abandoned quarry in 1875 and the material which has been removed by the developers was backfill brought in after quarrying had ceased, probably to "tidy up" the area. This tidying-up process happened some time later than 1875. Quarrying marks were still very pronounced on the rock-face.

On the northern half of the site, bedrock was visible at Groves level but not at the southern end. This could mean that quarrying went deeper at this point or there is a possibility of it being the site of an inlet. If the latter is the case the inlet is smaller than had previously been assumed.

Souter's Lane, which bounds the site on the eastern side, was constructed in a defile as the rock rises considerably on either side. This could either have been a natural feature or created for the insertion of the lane.

M G Morris

CHESTER SJ 402665

Hunter Street

Due to continued support from Cheshire County Council (Mr S R Williams) it has been possible to continue this important, though necessarily small-scale, excavation in the area to the south of King's Buildings, at the western end of Hunter Street (C A B 8). The Roman building previously reported is most likely to have been a granary and can now be seen not to have been one of a pair as was considered at one time to have been possible. Although there was extensive evidence of at least one earlier, possibly timber, building on its site, the stone-built granary cannot have been constructed before c150. The foundation of its northern wall contained a number of reused column bases and capitals from a structure similar in size to a barrack verandah. Although it is possible that dereliction had set in after c300 there can be little doubt that the building survived substantially intact into the early medieval period, when it was completely stripped of all re-usable materials. From at least as early as the thirteenth century the whole site, including the

surrounding area had reverted to open ground. This situation pertained until the construction of this part of Hunter Street, and adjacent houses, in the nineteenth century. It is hoped that further work will be possible in 1984. Its principal objectives will be to establish the position and layout of the legionary barracks which are assumed to lie to the North, and to establish the existence or otherwise of the postern gate previously referred to (C A B 8).

T J Strickland

CHESTER SJ 40626587

CCM 3889

76-84 Lower Bridge Street *CHE 10862*

During April and May 1983, immediately prior to the redevelopment of 76-84 Lower Bridge Street including the garden areas behind the properties, the first stage of archaeological surveillance raised a few points of interest.

Firstly it seems probable that the surviving patches of sandstone masonry in the basements may be medieval but it is impossible to be definite about this.

The standing properties have been set into and on bedrock. Trial holes by Pochins Ltd., in the area west of the street front properties, show this. Together with the considerable depth of bedrock on the south side of Shipgate Street (see below), this suggests that there is a sharp fall in bedrock below Shipgate Street. (Fig. 18.1.)

M G Morris

CHESTER SJ 405665

CCM 3239

Northgate Street Area 1983

*CHE 814
8312*

During the reconstruction of large areas of Northgate Street between and adjacent to its junctions with Hunter Street and Princess Street it was possible to record additional portions of the enormous Roman building which is now known to have existed behind the PRINCIPIA (see C A B 8). The latest discoveries have confirmed its overall dimensions (157m North-South by approximately 65m wide). In plan the building consisted of a range of more or less equal sized peripheral rooms which faced inwards, across a corridor, to a portico. Within was a large open space containing separate centrally placed buildings. The function of this building (HOSPITAL?) remains a matter for conjecture. However, it is unlikely to have been the PRAETORIUM: that building must be looked for elsewhere, probably to the East of Northgate Street.

For a detailed report on this see T J Strickland, J Chester Arch Soc LXV (1982), 5-24.

T J Strickland

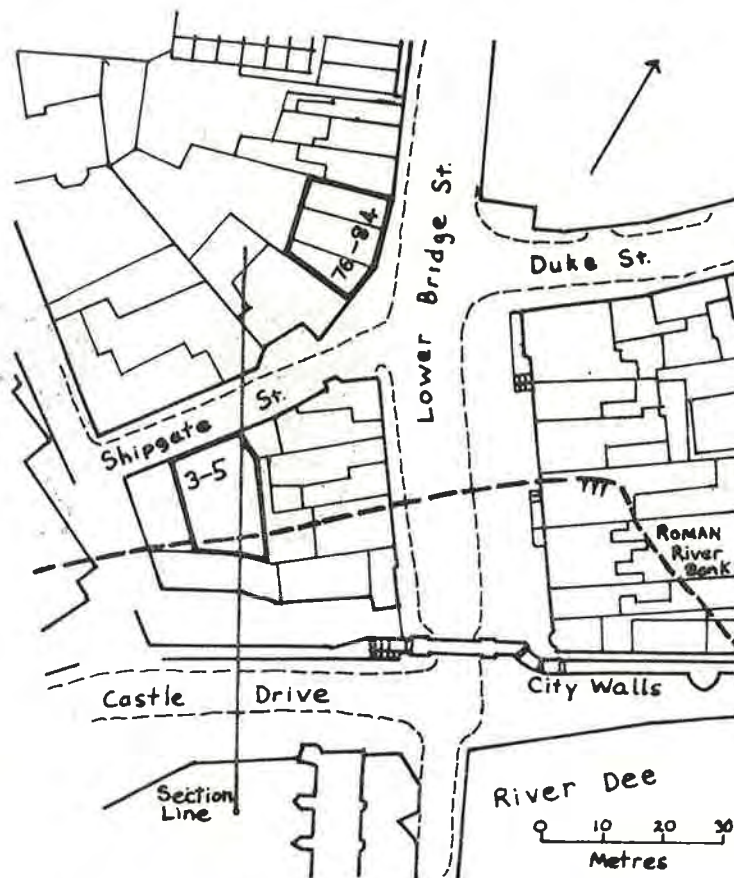


Fig. 18.1

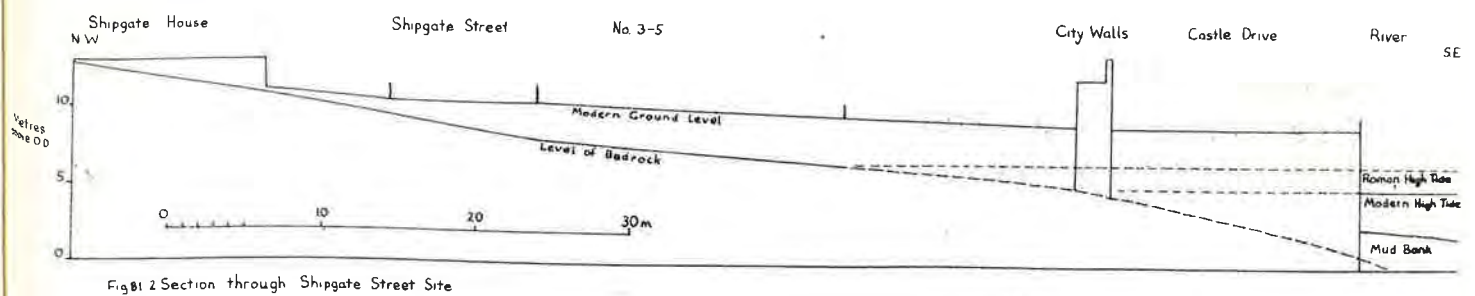
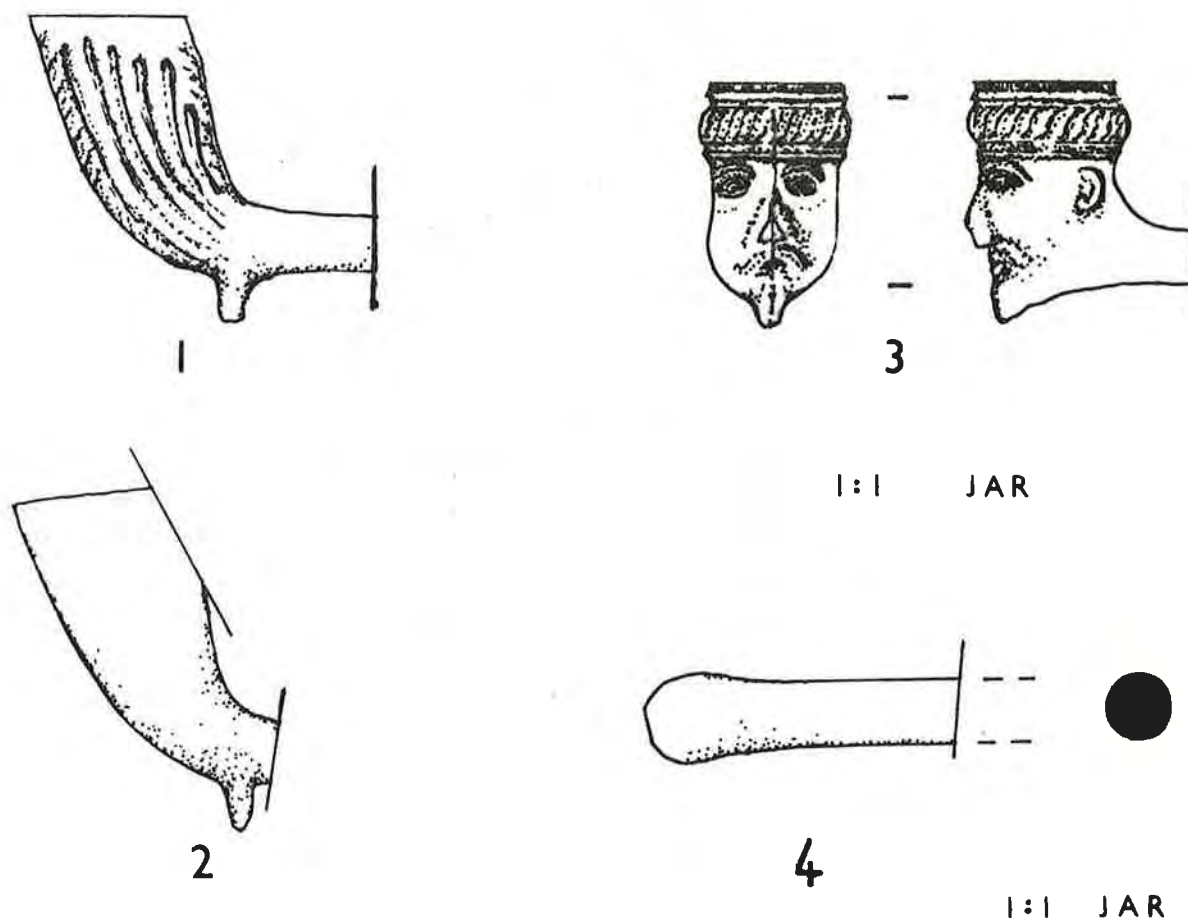


Fig. 18.2 Section through Shipgate Street Site

Fig. 18.2

Fig.19



Chester.
Objects from Shipgate St.
and Lower Bridge St.

CHESTER SJ 386668

Sealand Road

A field immediately west of the 'Manweb' offices has recently yielded a small collection of Roman, 18th and 19th century material. The position of this site on the flood plain if not the former bed of the River Dee makes it unlikely to be a site of any antiquity but rather that these finds are redeposited, possibly from a redevelopment site in Chester. The majority of fragments are black glazed utility types of 18th-19th century date and clay tobacco pipes belonging to the first half of the 19th century. There is also, however, a fragment of a late 18th century pipeclay wig curler (Fig 19.4), a large contemporary mother-of-pearl button and part of a 3rd-4th century red colour-coated Oxford ware bowl.

I am grateful to the finder Mr K Armstrong-Braun for showing me these finds the majority of which have been returned to him.

J A Rutter

CHESTER SJ 406658

Shipgate Street

As planned in 1982 (C A B 8), further work, which on this occasion included formal excavation of part of the site, took place late in 1983. At a considerable depth (3.30m) below the present-day surface a sequence of Roman structures and deposits was recorded. The results have been of considerable interest for understanding of the changing levels of the River Dee and can be seen as a small, but as yet very important part of the continuing programme of research into this aspect of Chester's landscape. Excavation revealed a well preserved junction of Roman mains culverts falling southwards to the River Dee. These represented primary occupation of the site, probably in the late first to early second century. Both culverts had gone out of use and had been backfilled long before the end of the Roman period, at which point occupation of the site only seems to have been possible at a somewhat higher level, when a substantial Roman building of unknown function and overall plan occupied the site. The eastern part of this building appears to have consisted of a verandah, facing eastwards across a substantially metalled road. The edge of the building was delineated by a tile eavesdrip gully. By the end of the Roman period the evidence suggests that the building had come down and that the site had been abandoned. Analysis of environmental samples from a silty deposit which overlay the Roman stratigraphy has produced evidence of a wetting of the site (waterlogged sedge, elder and nettle seeds), which would explain the abandonment. It is suggested that this sequence of events is best explained by a considerable, but gradual, rise in the level of the River Dee throughout the Roman period, to the point at which High Water Mark was 2 metres higher than it is today.

T J Strickland

3-5 Shipgate Street

In August 1983, further observation work was carried out on this site in the south part of the city (Strickland 1982). The whole area of these properties on the south side of Shipgate Street was excavated to a depth of c2.6m. The only features noted were the cellars, possibly of 17th century date, of the buildings formerly standing here on the street front and the property boundary between them traversing the garden behind. The deposits removed from the garden area were virtually sterile and what material there was would indicate a post-medieval date. It must be admitted, however, that the circumstances of building work made conditions far from ideal for observation and recovery, though it is unlikely that the numerous pits that would have been associated with intensive medieval occupation of the street front could have escaped detection. A notable feature of the deposits was the considerable organic content, especially in the west half, which was almost like peat.

Important evidence was recovered on the depth of the natural sandstone which shelves sharply southwards towards the river. North of Shipgate Street the houses are built on platforms cut into the bedrock. South of the street, bedrock lies at a depth of c2.4m (8m O.D) falling to c2.9m (6.6m O.D) to the south. In the south-west corner it was even deeper, below the depth of the excavation. As there was apparently little soil accumulation on the bedrock before the post-medieval period this area was potentially affected by the river. Present high tide level reaches just over 5m O.D. Late Roman sea level was as much as 1.7m higher than present (Tooley 1980) and if this was reflected in tide levels, the Roman river bank would have lain along the southern edge of the Shipgate Street properties. This corresponds to the line of a scarp cut in the bedrock east of Lower Bridge Street beneath Bridge Gate House (Carrington and Ward 1977) and is further evidence for an inlet of the river here, spanned by the causeway for the Roman bridge.

The river had obviously retreated somewhat by the 12th century when the City Wall was built. It probably stood on the contemporary river bank. The proximity of the water level is possibly the reason for the paucity of early occupation and development only occurred after a large amount of infilling had been done. The construction, in relatively recent times, of Castle Drive has pushed the river bank further south again. (Figs. 18.1 and 18.2).

References

Carrington P and Ward S 1977

'Bridgegate House, Lower Bridge Street' CAB 5, 19.

Strickland T J 1982

'Chester, Shipgate Street' CAB 8, 43.

Tooley M J 1980

'Theories of Coastal Change in North-West England' in Thompson F H ed. Archaeology and Coastal Change, Society of Antiquaries of London Occasional Paper I, 74-86.

S Ward

CHESTER SJ 404667

CH 2561

Upper Northgate Street (East)

CHER 8012

10853/1

10853/7

As a result of recent work in the area of 'James Edwards Garage' a group of Roman, medieval and recent pottery was collected from the disturbed surface area of the site. The Roman consists of roofing tile, a 2nd century local greyware jar, coarse local orange ware and one 4th century Severn Valley ware jar rim (identified by P Carrington). The medieval comprises sherds from two 13th, possibly early 14th, century red/grey ware jugs. Post-medieval pottery includes fragments of 18th-19th century black glazed storage vessels and a bodysherd of a sugarloaf mould, together with a group of unused 19th century clay tobacco pipe bowls. These do not have a manufacturer's mark on them but all six appear contemporary c1820-1840 types and presumably represent waste from a clay tobacco pipe industry in the town if not at this site. Referring to the typology published in Rutter and Davey, 1980, (216-223), two are plain versions of Form 101 and 107 (not illustrated); two are examples of Form 104 (one illustrated: Fig 19.1) and one is a more upright variant of Form 104 (Fig 19.2). The last is a cracked and stained Turks head (Fig 19.3).

Rutter, J A and Davey, P J 1980, 'Clay Pipes from Chester', in Davey, P J (ed) The Archaeology of the Clay Tobacco Pipe, III; the North and West; B A R 78, British Series.

I am grateful to the finder Mr K Armstrong-Braun for showing me this material. The Roman, medieval and clay tobacco pipes are retained within the Grosvenor Museum, the other recent material has been returned to him.

J A Rutter

CHURCH SHOCKLACH SJ 43345078

Castletown: The "moated" site

Aerial observation (Plate 2) of the moated earthwork on the east side of the Farndon to Worthenbury road shows it to have been divided by a curving ditch running parallel to the moat ditch bounding its northern side. This dividing ditch, which may never have been finished, would effectively have separated a southern almost circular mound from a northern crescent shaped one. The whole complex resembles a very small version of Shotwick Castle in Wirral which has a similar circular and a crescent-shaped mound.

The Church Shocklach earthwork is presumed to be of the same period and to have been connected to the well preserved motte in the wood (Castletown Rough) on the west side of the modern Farndon to Worthenbury road.

/Aerial observation

Plate 2.

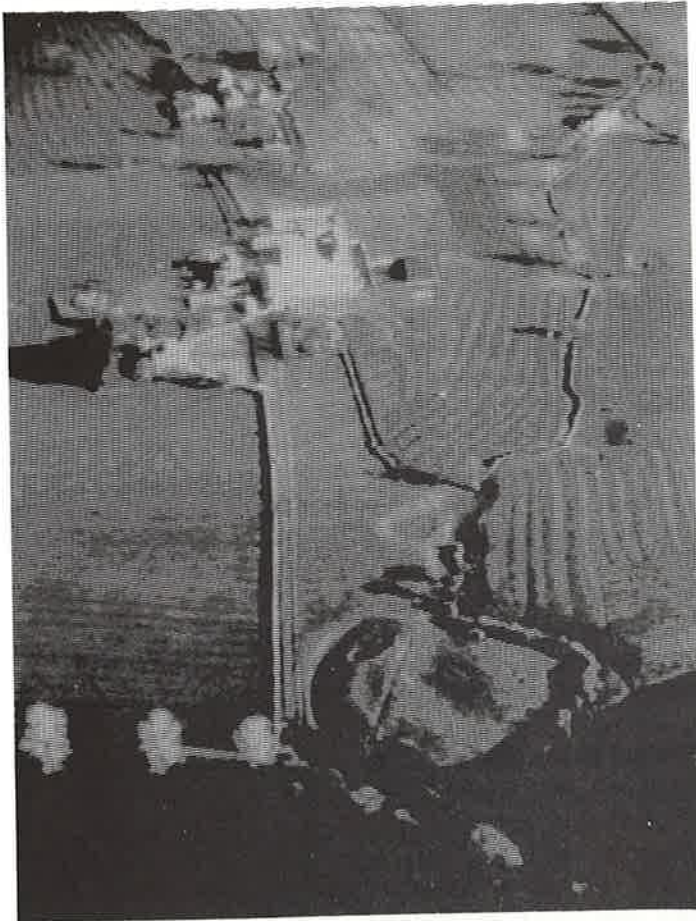


Plate 3.



Aerial observation (Plate 2) has also highlighted other features on the earthwork, namely a narrow ditch marking the parish boundary between Caldecott and Church Shocklach (which runs over the crescent shaped mound) and a modern sandpit. There is also a curious small oval enclosure, bounded by a low bank and shallow ditch, which is only clearly discernable with a low sun, sited on the circular mound and partly on the slope of the (?unfinished) dividing ditch. It is possible that the enclosure marks the site of the formerly existing Shocklach windmill but this is unlikely. Local opinion has it that the mill was situated on the castle motte in Castletown Rough and another purpose has to be sought for the oval feature.

Rhys Williams

CHURCH SHOCKLACH Centering on SJ 43885110

Castletown. A deserted hamlet?

The name Castletown, which refers to a "hamlet at a castle", is first mentioned about 1360 as Castletown Shoglach (Dodgson J McN, The Place-Names of Cheshire Part IV 1972 pages 64-65). There is no trace of a hamlet in the immediate vicinity of the castle site (see previous entry) and the name Castletown is perpetuated as that of a farm immediately within the parish of Church Shocklach.

Immediately to the east of the Castletown farmhouse there is a small group of buildings one of which is a single house within Church Shocklach. The others are mostly farm buildings just over the modern parish boundary in Grafton. A narrow metalled road runs from the vicinity of St Edith's Church in Church Shocklach to pass between Castletown Farm and the single house. From this point, the road continues northwards as a green lane to Caldecott Green and beyond to Wetrein's Green.

Immediately south of the single house, referred to above, there are at least three small ditched enclosures of toft and croft type. One of them is backed by two short ridges and furrows of hand-dug type (Plate 3). An apparent small ditched enclosure also exists to the north, on the green lane at SJ 43855111 but the prominent corner of this feature may merely mark a right angled bend in the parish boundary between Caldecott and Grafton.

It is suggested that the small toft and croft enclosures, plus the doubtless ancient sites of the standing buildings including Castletown Farm, represent the "lost" hamlet of Castletown.

Rhys Williams

CLAVERTON SJ 411636

Heronbridge Field Survey 1983 - Interim Report

From March - October 1983 a field survey was carried out at Heronbridge as part of a wider examination of the evolution of the West Cheshire landscape. Our interest in Heronbridge was originally stimulated by the putative 'Dark Age' earthwork and reported 'Dark Age' finds. A considerable amount of help was given to us by Mr Brian Bowden and Mrs Baker of Eaton Estates Office to whom we are very grateful.

The chief results of the field survey were as follows, and the detailed report and arguments will be set out separately in the near future.

1. The semi-circular earthwork at Heronbridge was proved to have been thrown up by the Roundheads in March 1645.
2. The Dark Age ecclesiastical site known from the placename of Eccleston was not at Heronbridge but at Eccleston old churchyard.
3. The extent of the Roman settlement at Heronbridge is very unlikely to exceed greatly the area already excavated.
4. The Roman settlement is most likely to have been small and primarily agricultural rather than industrial or urban.
5. The associated Roman ditch and field system has considerably modified and dictated the later and present landscape.
6. The roads of unknown date found along the line of the known Roman route in excavations from Greenbank south to Aldford are probably later roads built out of old Roman slabs on the berm of the original road.
7. Evidence points to the line of a Roman road leading west at the north of Heronbridge.
8. The bumps and hollows visible in the adjacent fields are almost all concerned with the 18th century, and medieval field system.
9. The war burials suggested as being datable to about 200 AD are more likely to be Anglo-Saxon.
10. Several pieces of evidence point to an ecclesiastical centre at Eccleston in the Anglo-Saxon period (as well as the post-Roman).

The work in 1983

These conclusions were reached by the following means: observation in the field, photography, aerial photographs, 18th century and later maps, and published and unpublished excavation reports. Surveys were carried out by Professor Wilson of Liverpool University Dept. of Geophysics and others, with an electromagnetic resistivity meter, with an automatic fluxgate gradiometer linked to an Apple computer (kindly lent by Dept. of Geophysics, University of Manchester), and with a proton magnetometer.

Some financial help was provided by Liverpool University and by Cheshire County Council, and equipment was mostly from Liverpool University or privately owned by J and L Laing.

The work was carried out by history and archaeology students from Liverpool university.

We are grateful to Mr Rhys Williams, Cheshire County Archaeologist, Mr Dennis Petch of Cheshire Museums Services, Mr John Eames of Liverpool University, Dr A T Thacker of the VCH, Mr G Fairclough of the Dept of the Environment and Mr Tim Stickland of the Grosvenor Museum in particular for their thoughts and their practical help, and to Miss G Lloyd Morgan of the Grosvenor Museum for her useful descriptions over the telephone of the finds from Heronbridge excavations of the 1930's.

Jennifer Laing, Lloyd Laing

DELAMERE SJ 53786884

The Junction of two Roman Roads in Delamere Forest

The course of the Roman road between Deva and Mamucium (Margary 7a) leaves Chester by the Eastgate in the direction of Stamford Bridge and climbs the sandstone ridge of which Kelsall Hill is a part. In a detached portion of Delamere Forest known as Nettleford Wood, approximately nine miles from Chester, it rises in a cutting. An identical feature branches to the south-east, about 30 yds inside the boundary of the wood (Fig.21).

This₂ surviving evidence was examined a century ago by Watkin¹ and Kirk² who decided₃ that the junction was Roman in origin, but more recently Thompson³ and Margary⁴ have questioned their findings. Moreover, although the Roman site near Middlewich has been identified⁵ as Salinae and could have been its destination, the branch road is not marked as Roman on any edition of the Ordnance Survey maps. In an attempt to resolve this problem, permission was sought in March 1982 from the Forestry Commission for an excavation across this junction, at SJ 5378 6884.

The underlying bedrock of sandstone in Nettleford Wood is covered by varying depths of glacially deposited sands and gravels with, intermittently, small amounts of clay and marl; the ground surface is hummocky with hollows of greatly varying depths and extent, and there are spasmodic outcrops of the bedrock. The wood is between 350 and 450 feet above sea level.

The excavation trench was 56 feet long across the junction from the face of the cutting on the north of the accepted Manchester road to that on the south of the supposed Middlewich one. It was originally cut 6 feet wide but, in part, was later increased to 15 feet; standing trees dictated to a great extent the line and width of the trench.

The northern face of the cutting rose from the base, initially on a slope of one in two which increased to near vertical; the depth, including the spoil, was about 4 feet. A narrow gully, with a V-shaped base 12 inches from the foot, had been cut in the bedrock which sloped gradually upwards to the south. An area of erosion then commenced, but beyond that, smooth bedrock was encountered under some 3 to 4 inches of peaty, sandy soil. Where natural fissures occurred, they were, for the most part, filled with sandstone rubble (3) which appeared to have been shaped to fit. Roots of bracken were plentiful in the spaces between the rock and the rubble.

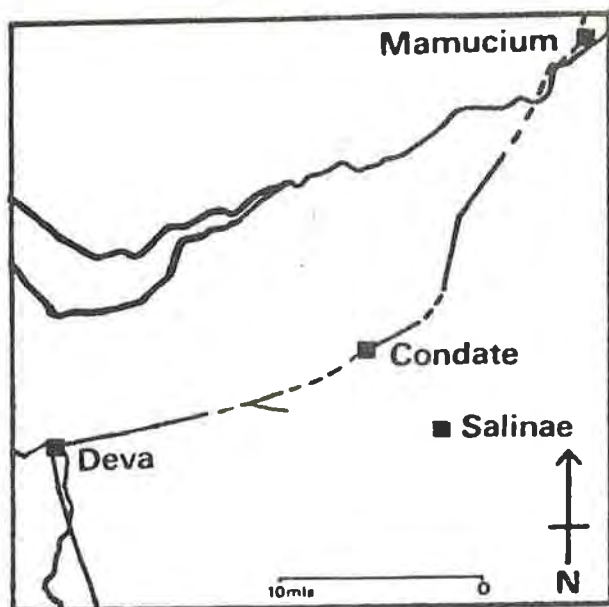


Fig 20

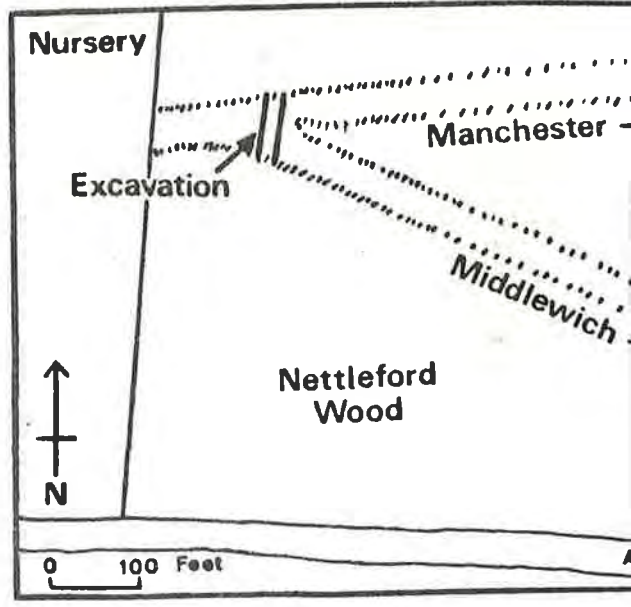


Fig 21

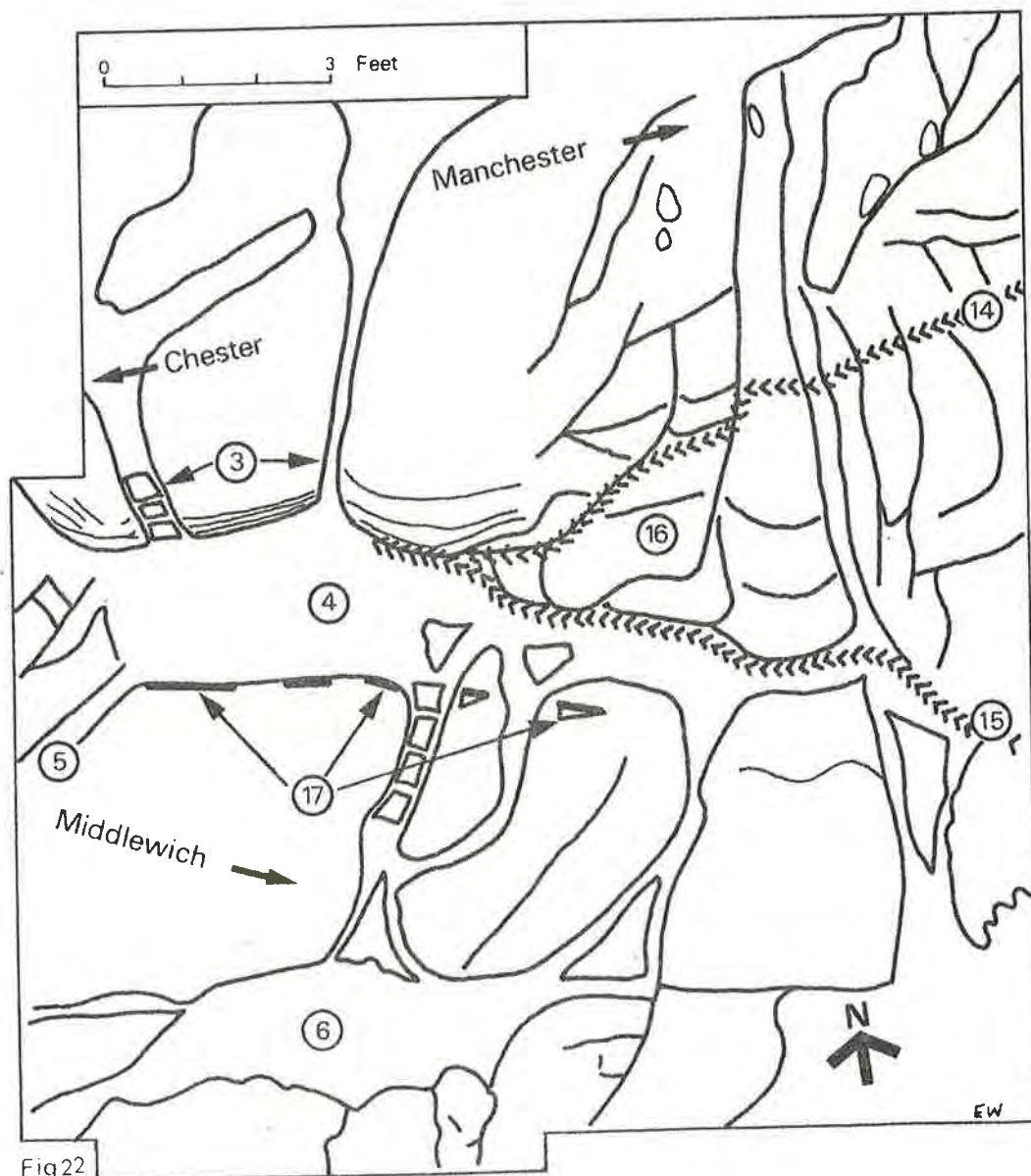
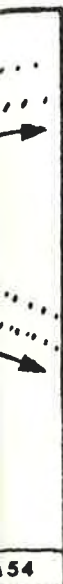


Fig 22



There was a channel (4) in the bedrock, 21 feet from the inner edge of the northern gully, running along the line of the road (Fig22). Between 1 and 2 feet wide, its base dropped laterally from south to north along the bedding plane, the depth increasing from about 6 to 9 inches, and it rose from west to east. In a line along its southern face, there were several steps (17) cut vertically and horizontally, and where these crossed fissures, they had bevelled edges. These edges were taken to indicate that when the work was done, the fissures already existed and that the rubble filling them had been placed there, and was not the result of natural splintering of the rock.

At its eastern end, the channel was terminated by rounded bedrock, to the north and south of which, narrow and shallow gullies (14 and 15) were apparently provided. Both were little more than scratches in the rock. The bedrock on the north (the Manchester road) was badly fissured across the line of the gully which, as a result, followed a very irregular course; the one to the south, through less broken rock, was more definite. There appeared to have been some undercutting of the rock along the bedding plane by water action in all three channels.

These features combined to make a Y-shaped figure with the sandstone between the arms, not only significantly higher than that on either side, but also rising to the east (16). The evidence is interpreted as suggesting that there was a shallow ditch on the south of the Manchester road and a similar one on the north of the Middlewich branch. From the point of their junction, a culvert was cut in the sandstone to carry the water under the road surface with the steps cut into the sides presumably having had flat slabs resting in them to cover the channel.

This channel was seen to continue to the west for a short distance before being lost in a completely eroded area. A narrow fissure (5) which appeared to have been worked in order to widen and deepen it, had smooth parallel sides and branched off towards the south-west. It was intended, apparently, to take the water away under the Middlewich road, since it was deeper than the channel.

There was a similar feature (6) to this culvert, running parallel to it, 4 feet to the south, with a step cut in one side, but it was blocked by untouched bedrock to its east. Thus it could not have been a culvert, although this may have been the original intention, perhaps until a change of plan became necessary. Southwards the bedrock, smoother and less fissured than on the north of the culvert, but with a very neat and close-fitting packing in an oval depression, extended to the lip of another shallow but clear ditch, at the base of the southern face of the cutting which rose to a height, with the spoil, of some 7 feet. There was no evidence of wheel ruts in any part of the uncovered bedrock.

The width of the Manchester road, from the centre of the outside ditch to the middle of the culvert, was 22 feet, compared with 27 feet across its Middlewich counterpart. The two cuttings are generally the same width, as shown on the Ordnance Survey 1:2500 map, but that also shows a slight twist to the north of the two inside faces immediately east of, and to, their junction (Fig.21). Perhaps some unexpectedly hard rock caused this slight deviation which in turn could have thrown the already started culvert out of line, reduced the width of the Manchester road at that point whilst increasing that of the Middlewich one, and altered the course of the southern ditch of the former. This would explain the Y-shaped junction of ditches and culvert rather than the V which is the overall shape of the cuttings and which could have been expected to be reproduced in the ditches. As near as could be ascertained, the uncompleted culvert was in line with the southern ditch of the Manchester road east of the deviation.

Certainly it would seem that there are enough similarities in the work, north and south of the culvert, to indicate that the whole is of a common Roman origin. For the four ditches match in pairs, with those on the extreme north and south of identical character and better defined; the smooth bedrock in both cuttings is at the same level; and the patching of the fissures and the filling of the oval depression were done with equal skill. In addition, the lay-out of the uncompleted culvert and the finished version with its complementary ditches, would seem to suggest, not only a common origin, but a construction of the whole at one and the same time, with neither route being obviously the more important.

Acknowledgements

The authors wish to thank the Forestry Commission's conservator for north-west England Mr Alistair Rowan and the chief forester at Delamere Mr P J Dineen for permission to excavate; Mr W J Morrey for allowing access and for helpful advice; Mr T J Strickland of the Grosvenor Museum for his guidance; and members of the Border Counties Archaeological Group and the Kelsall and District Rural Amenity Society who assisted with the work.

References

- 1 W T Watkin, Roman Cheshire (reprinted edition 1974), pp 32-34
- 2 E Kirk, Roman Roads in Delamere Forest and Neighbourhood, Trans Lancs Chesh Antiq Soc (Vol III, 1885), pp 124-125
- 3 F H Thompson, Roman Cheshire (1965), pp 21-22
- 4 I D Margary, Roman Roads in Britain (1973), pp 300-301
- 5 A L F Rivet and Colin Smith, The Place-Names of Roman Britain (1979), p 451

A C and E Waddelove

Excavations at the Roman villa, 1982

A third and final season of excavation in the grounds of Eaton Cottage during 1982 exposed the remainder of the Roman building discovered in 1980¹ and confirmed its identification as a villa. Much new information was recovered concerning the sequence of occupation on the site which is now thought to have been as follows:

Phase I (fig23). The only structural features belonging to this phase encountered within the area of excavation were two postholes found sealed beneath the floor of the succeeding building, in the area of rooms (e) and (h) of the Phase III stone villa. The structure to which they belonged appears to have been laid out on an alignment different from that of all the later buildings. Any associated floor levels or occupation deposits which may have existed had been totally removed by preparation of the site prior to the construction of its replacement.

Phase II (fig23). In this phase a large timber building was erected which was delimited on the north and west by drainage ditches. Three postholes together with extensive patches of clay flooring belonging to this phase were found, the distribution of which suggests that the building was approximately the same size as its stone successor. Possible of aisled-plan, its dimensions can be estimated as having been about 9.00 by at least 22.00m. A two-period stone hearth of this phase was discovered in the centre of what was later to become the western half of room (h) in the stone villa. There were no signs of post-renewal or re-floorings in this timber building and so it presumably had a relatively short life. On the other hand, there was ample evidence of it having been destroyed by fire, though whether accidentally or as part of the demolition process could not be determined. The ditches running along the north and west sides of this building were associated with large pits which may have functioned as emplacements for wooden tanks, the whole system perhaps being designed to convey water from the spring on the hillside to the north-west rather than merely draining the site. Fragments of tiles, stone 'roofers' and slates in the fills of these ditches seem more likely to have derived from the adjacent timber building than the construction phase of its replacement.

Phase III (fig24). This saw the construction of a single-storeyed stone building of winged-corridor plan with overall dimensions of 26.30 by about 14.40m. The south wing, 4.00 by c14.40m, whose walls were 0.62 - 0.76m in thickness, contained three rooms, (a)-(c), which formed a baths-suite. The easternmost chamber (a), equipped with an ordinary opus signinum floor, was probably the apodyterium/frigidarium while (b) and (c), which were both provided with hypocausts, probably functioned as a tepidarium and caldarium respectively. The furnace which heated these rooms lay beyond the west wall of (c) and for at least part of its life it was enclosed within a timber structure which may also have acted as a fuel-store.

EATON BY TARPORLEY ROMAN VILLA

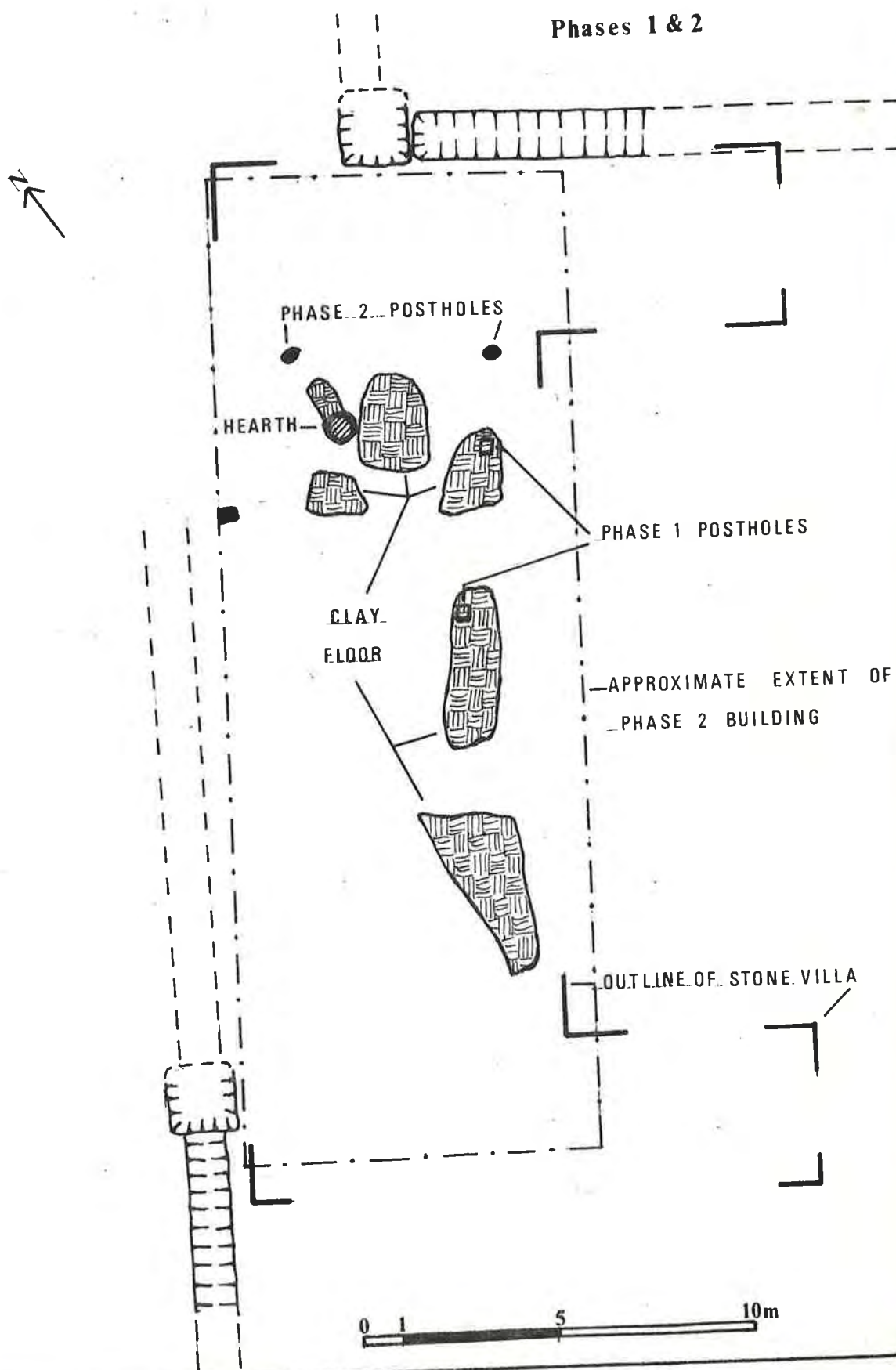


Fig 23.

The main range, 17.90 by 8.15m in size, contained five rooms, (d)-(h), separated by partition walls 0.45 - 0.50 thick. The front and rear walls of this part of the building were 0.85 - 0.90m wide at the foundation course, being reduced to 0.50m above ground level by means of a single external offset. All the rooms in the main range were decorated with painted wall-plaster and were provided with floors of either opus signinum or mortared pebbles. Room (f) was equipped with a hypocaust and probably served as the dining-room while (g), immediately to the north, contained a hearth and presumably functioned as the kitchen.

The north wing, with walls 0.70 - 0.80m thick, also contained three rooms, (j)-(l), the western and central ones being heated. The furnace serving the latter was positioned outside the north wall and the partition wall dividing (j) from (k) was constructed in such a way that both rooms received equal amounts of heat.

A colonnade 2.60m wide (including the width of the offset on the front wall) ran along the eastern frontage of the building between the two projecting wings. Spacing suggests that there had been six columns, those at the ends probably being engaged. A layer of mortared pebbles and tile-chips in the colonnade had probably been overlain by stone flags originally but these had been removed in Phase IV.

Although lacking some of the more luxurious embellishments such as tessellated floors, the Phase III building was nevertheless constructed to a high standard. The masonry was extremely solid and considerable care had been taken to obtain stone with a high degree of durability. The building was roofed with hexagonal-shaped stone shingles, though quantities of clay roofing-tiles were also used.

Phase IV (fig25). After a lengthy period of use (indicated by a sequence of re-floorings) the house underwent a thorough reconstruction which entailed the rebuilding from ground level of the walls in the main range. The hypocaust in the dining-room (f) was now demolished and its basement backfilled, while rooms (j) and (k) in the north wing also ceased to be heated. However, although the furnace serving the latter was demolished, the suspended floors in these rooms were retained. On the other hand, the hypocausts and furnace in the south wing were refurbished and the baths-suite continued to function as before.

The major alteration to the layout of the building, however, concerned the colonnade. All except the terminal column bases were removed and a new wall constructed immediately to the east. At the same time, the front wall of the main range was increased to a width of just over 1.00m by placing a line of blocks against the outer face of the foundation course. The offset portion of the latter and the new work were then overlain by several courses of mortared tile-work. That this wall continued above ground level at its full width of c1.00m was proved by the presence of patches of wall-plaster in situ on its outer face. The north wall of the south wing and the south wall of the north wing were also increased to a thickness of just over 1.00m for the short distance between the front wall of the main range and the new wall to the east. That the construction of the new east wall did not merely represent the replacing of a line of individual column bases by a continuous stylobate is indicated both by the laying down

EATON BY TARPORLEY ROMAN VILLA

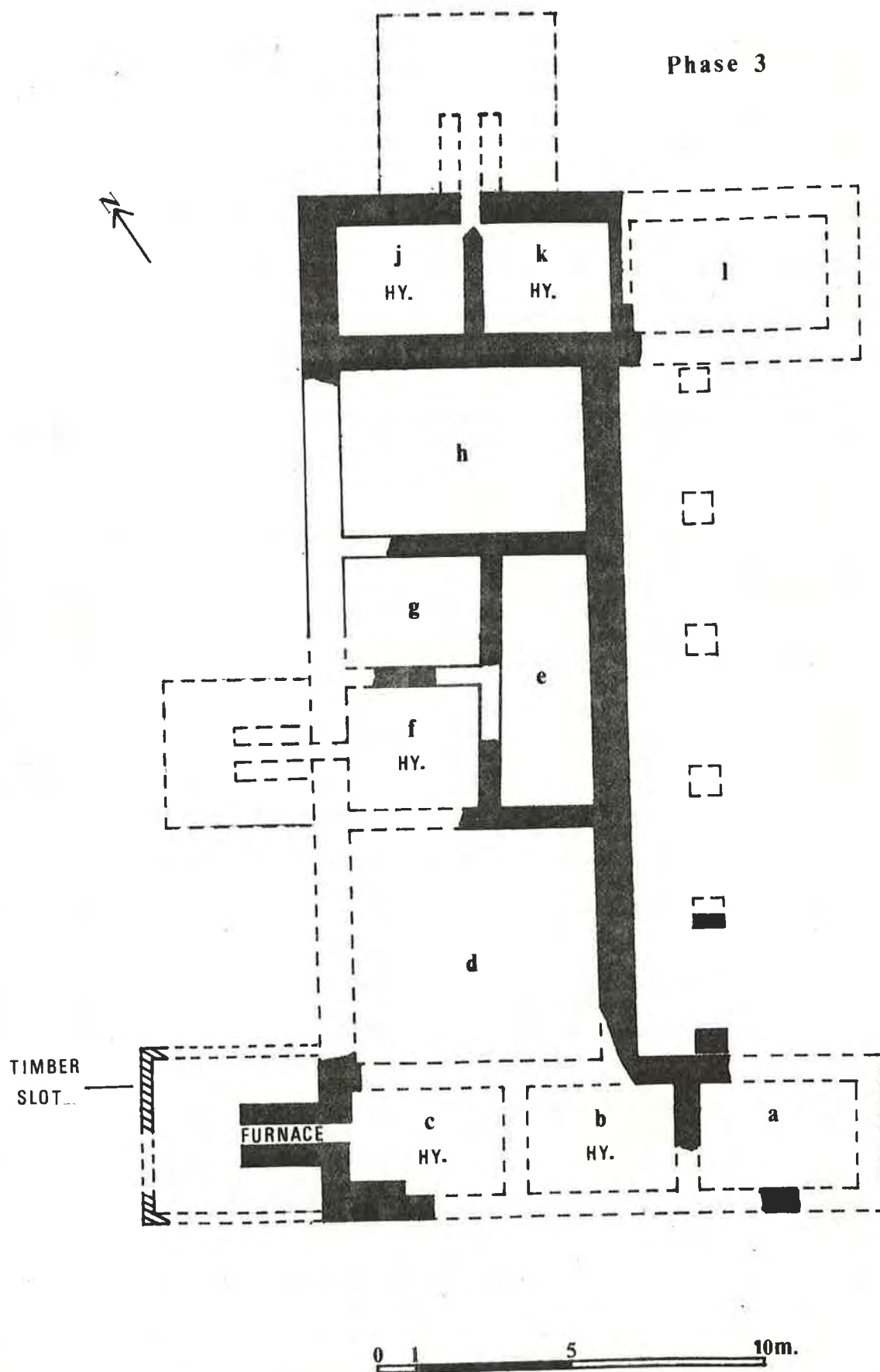
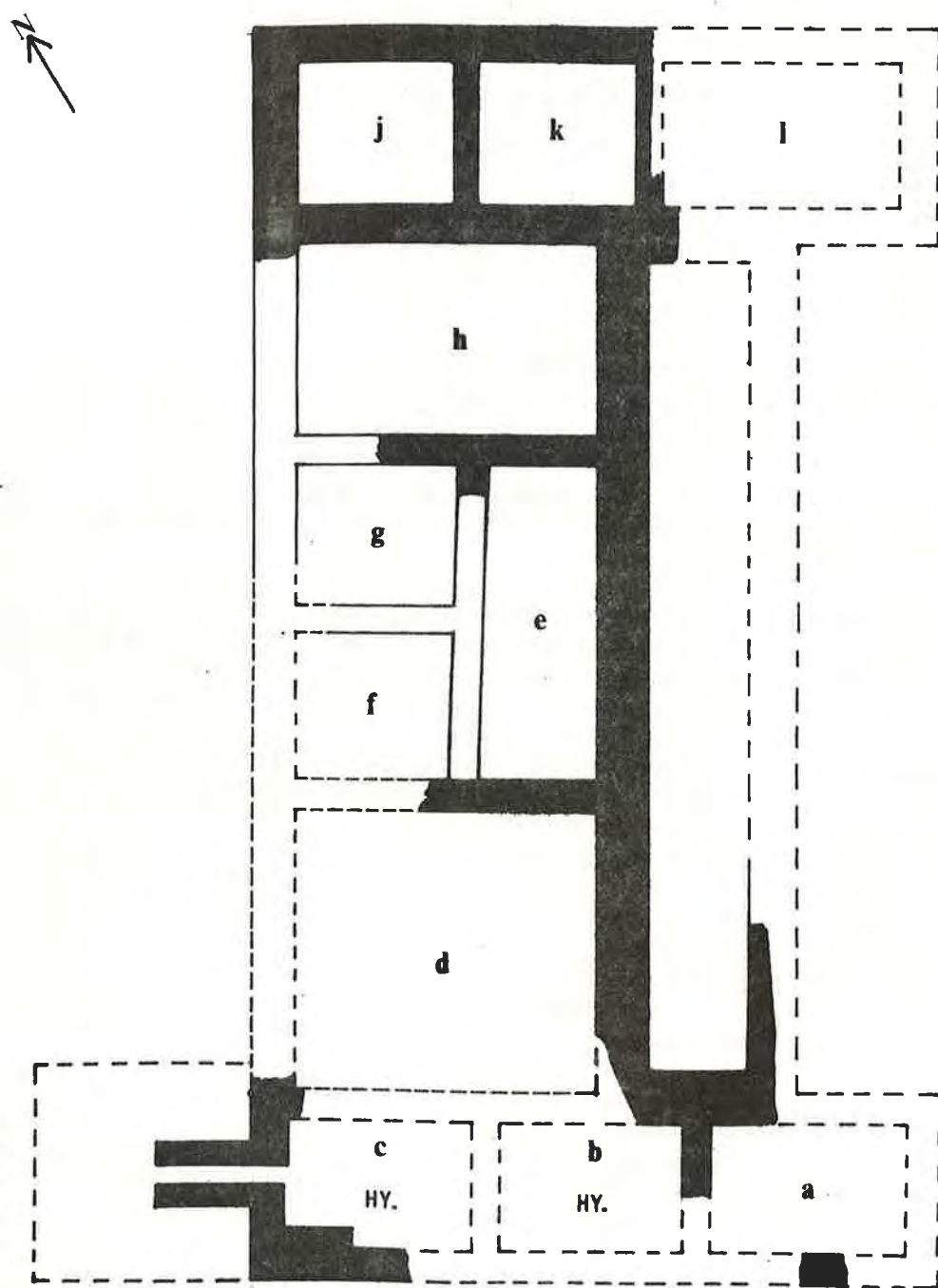


Fig. 24

EATON BY TARPORLEY ROMAN VILLA

Phase 4



0 1 5 10m.

Fig. 25

of an opus signinum floor in the area of the former colonnade and by the decoration of its interior with painted wall-plaster. In fact, the colonnade now became part of the building proper, while the widening of the adjacent walls (and the internal partition walls) suggests that a second storey was now added to the main range. Stairways to the upper storey could have been located at the ends of the long narrow room formed out of the earlier colonnade. The standard of workmanship in this phase, although competent, was much coarser than that of Phase III, while slate now appears to have been the predominant form of roofing material.

The latest stages in the building's occupation saw the construction of (corn-drying?) ovens in rooms (g) and (h). When and how the villa eventually came to be abandoned is unknown as the very latest deposits had been destroyed by medieval robbing and post-medieval ploughing.

Chronology. Dateable finds only became plentiful in contexts associated with the very latest stages of the building's occupation. The reconstruction of the stone house (Phase IV) is dated by pottery and coins recovered from a group of builders' refuse-pits and from the backfill of the demolished furnace of the north range to the late third/early fourth century. That occupation continued well beyond AD 350 is proven by the recovery of fragments of late fourth century calcite-gritted vessels together with coins of the House of Constantine and of Magnentius from deposits associated with the oven in room (h) and from a refuse layer overlying the opus signinum floor in the colonnade area.

The construction date of the original stone villa (Phase III) is less easy to determine for although some pottery was found in the make-up for one of the primary floors this is not closely dateable. However, the building's solid construction together with the evidence for at least three re-floorings in some of its rooms implies it was in use for some considerable time before the reconstruction occurred. In addition, a small collection of second century pottery, although either unstratified or occurring residually in later contexts, suggests that occupation of the site began around AD 150, or possibly a little earlier. Most of this material can be presumed to derive from occupation of the timber buildings. The earlier of these may well have been only of a temporary nature while the Phase II timber building seems unlikely to have had a life of more than about thirty years. Consequently, it is tentatively proposed that the original stone villa was built at some time in the period AD 170-200².

Medieval. As in the two previous seasons of work, large amounts of medieval pottery-wasters were recovered from the deposits overlying the remains of the Roman building. Excavation of an area outside the south-west corner of the latter in 1982 successfully located the poorly-preserved remains of a complex of fourteenth century pottery-kilns and their associated stoking-pits³.

Footnotes

- 1 See CAB, 8 (1982), 49-52.
- 2 The construction of a bungalow on land adjoining and immediately to the east of the villa site in late 1983 failed to produce any finds or structural discoveries.
- 3 Thanks are due to Mrs R Pyewell for allowing excavation to continue in 1982 and to Cheshire County Council for grants towards the cost of this work.

D J P Mason

FOULK STAPLEFORD SJ 501635

Brereton Park

This is a preliminary note on an important medieval find in Chester District. In January 1984, the first sherds of what subsequently has become a large selection of post-Roman pottery fragments were picked up from the surface of furrows of a freshly ploughed field.

The bulk of the finds date to the 18th and 19th centuries, comprising household and dairy, finer and utilitarian wares together with some 17th century pottery fragments of similar status. In addition, however, there were some seventy fragments from a medieval pottery industry. Within this group are clear signs of firing disasters during manufacture but a high proportion of the jug sherds also show a varied amount of decoration and this, together with the range of form present in the group as a whole recovered so far, suggests that it can be related to types current in the 13th century. Systematic fieldwalking, survey work and possibly excavation are proposed in the next eighteen months.

I am grateful to Dr A J P Campbell for showing me the original finds and Canon and Mrs M H Ridgway for help with the fieldwalking.

J A Rutter

GRAFTON SJ 448503

A deserted hamlet?

A roughly rectangular complex of several small ditched enclosures have been observed from the air (Plate 4) immediately west of the site of the now demolished Grafton Hall. A roughly triangular feature consisting of a low mound or platform surrounded by a shallow ditch and planted with a few trees has been created in the centre of the complex. Its purpose is unknown and it may have been a purely ornamental feature at the end of a vista along the drive from Grafton Hall. The complex of small ditched enclosures have the appearance of being earlier than the triangular feature which is presumed to have been superimposed upon them.

/The area



Plate 4.

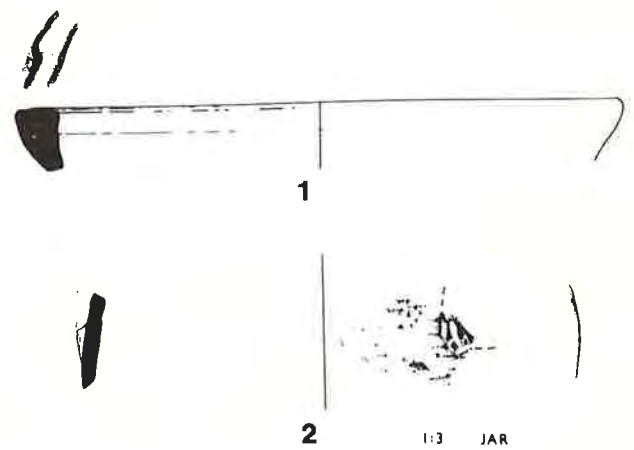


Fig. 26

The area generally has marked ridge and furrow which is crossed by a former road or track, now a hollow way, coming from the north in the general direction of the hall site. The hollow way takes note of the ridge and furrow parcels but ignores the modern driveway. The ridge and furrow stops at the complex of enclosures and there is no evidence that the latter has obliterated it.

The enclosures are not considered to be sufficiently regular to have been part of a formal garden and it can be argued that they are too regular to have been the tofts or crofts of a deserted hamlet. Nevertheless, this interpretation appears at present to be the logical one. It is therefore suggested that the complex of small enclosures, set amidst ridge and furrow, in close proximity to a hollow way and significantly adjacent to Grafton Hall, represent at least some of the tofts and crofts of Grafton. The placename first occurs in 1319 and according to Dodgson it was still a distinct hamlet within Tilston parish in 1724. (See Dodgson J McN, The Place-names of Cheshire Part IV 1972 page 61).

The site, which is within a private estate, has been surveyed by students of Chester College with the kind co-operation and permission of the owner.

Rhys Williams

LYME HANDLEY SJ 98438110

Standing Stone

A sub-triangular, brown gritstone block stands c1.20m high on top of a long low hill, about 170m north-west of Cornfield Farm. No surviving earthworks are associated with the stone but it is visible from all directions except the North-east for some considerable distance.

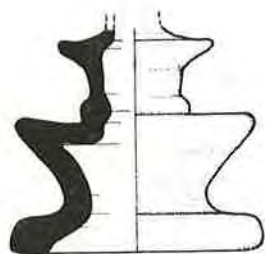
R C Turner

NANTWICH SJ 65045234

National Westminster Bank

During 1974-76, a team from Manchester University led by Dr David Hill excavated the available part of the site of extensions to the National Westminster Bank, adjoining the Crown Hotel. Deposits and features ranging from the present day to and including the medieval period were recorded.

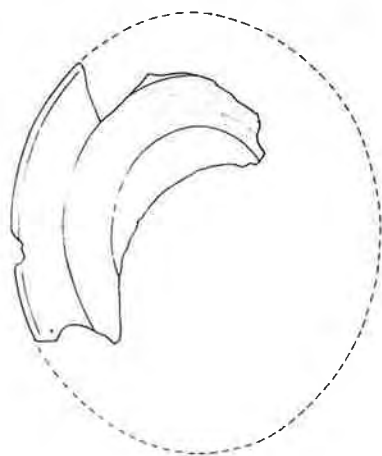
Subsequent examination of the ground surface, on unexcavated parts of the site, which were disturbed by building works, revealed a quantity of animal horn and bones (mostly pig, sheep and cattle, similar to those recovered by Dr Hill) and a scatter of pottery fragments. Most of the latter were of Victorian and later date but nineteen fragments were retained for further examination. Seventeen of them dated from the 17th century and two from the 18th.



1. 1:3



2. 1:3



3. 1:9



4. 1:3



5. 1:3



Fig. 27

Illustrated potsherds:-

- Fig 27.1. Most of a candlestick. Buff, white fabric, clear glazed with slight red staining on one side. Midland Yellow type ware. Early to mid-17th century.
- Fig 27.2. Rim of a hollow ware. Buff, clear glazed fabric. Midland Yellow type ware. Mid-17th century.
- Fig 27.3. Large oval dish. Pink fabric, white slipped on the interior, clear glazed. Mid-17th century.
- Fig 27.4. Cup base fragment. Red fabric with a clear glaze. Early to mid-17th century.
- Fig 27.5. Cup base. Buff body with a slip-trailed interior surface. Mid-17th century.

Postherds not illustrated:-

1. Fragment of a dish. Pink fabric with trailed cream slip decoration on the interior. The design is similar to one illustrated in the Woodbank Street, Burslem, report although this is a darker combination (Greaves, 1976, Fig. 15, 130). Mid-17th century.
2. A body sherd from a German stoneware jug with brown speckled exterior. Frechen type. 17th century.
3. Fragments of two press-moulded slipware plates of 18th century date.

Reference

- Greaves S J A Post-medieval Excavation in Woodbank Street, Burslem, Stoke-on-Trent, Staffordshire. City of Stoke-on-Trent Museum and Archaeology Society, No. 10, 1976.

J A Rutter

NESTON SJ 326789

An Earthwork at Willaston

Situated at SJ 326789, to the north of the village of Willaston in the parish of Neston, this earthwork lies in the north eastern corner of the grounds of the house now known as Mill House (Fig28).

On inspection, the earthwork is a low, sub-circular mound with a diameter of approximately 26m. Parts of the mound adjacent to the road are very uneven, and may have been disturbed at some period. No knowledge of this was ascertained among the local people. Traces of what may be an external bank and internal ditch may also be seen, particularly in the western sector of the structure. A lane runs in a northerly direction alongside the grounds, and just cuts the edge of the earthwork. It is noticeable that the level of the lane is much lower than the surrounding garden and fields (Fig29).

WILLASTON MILL

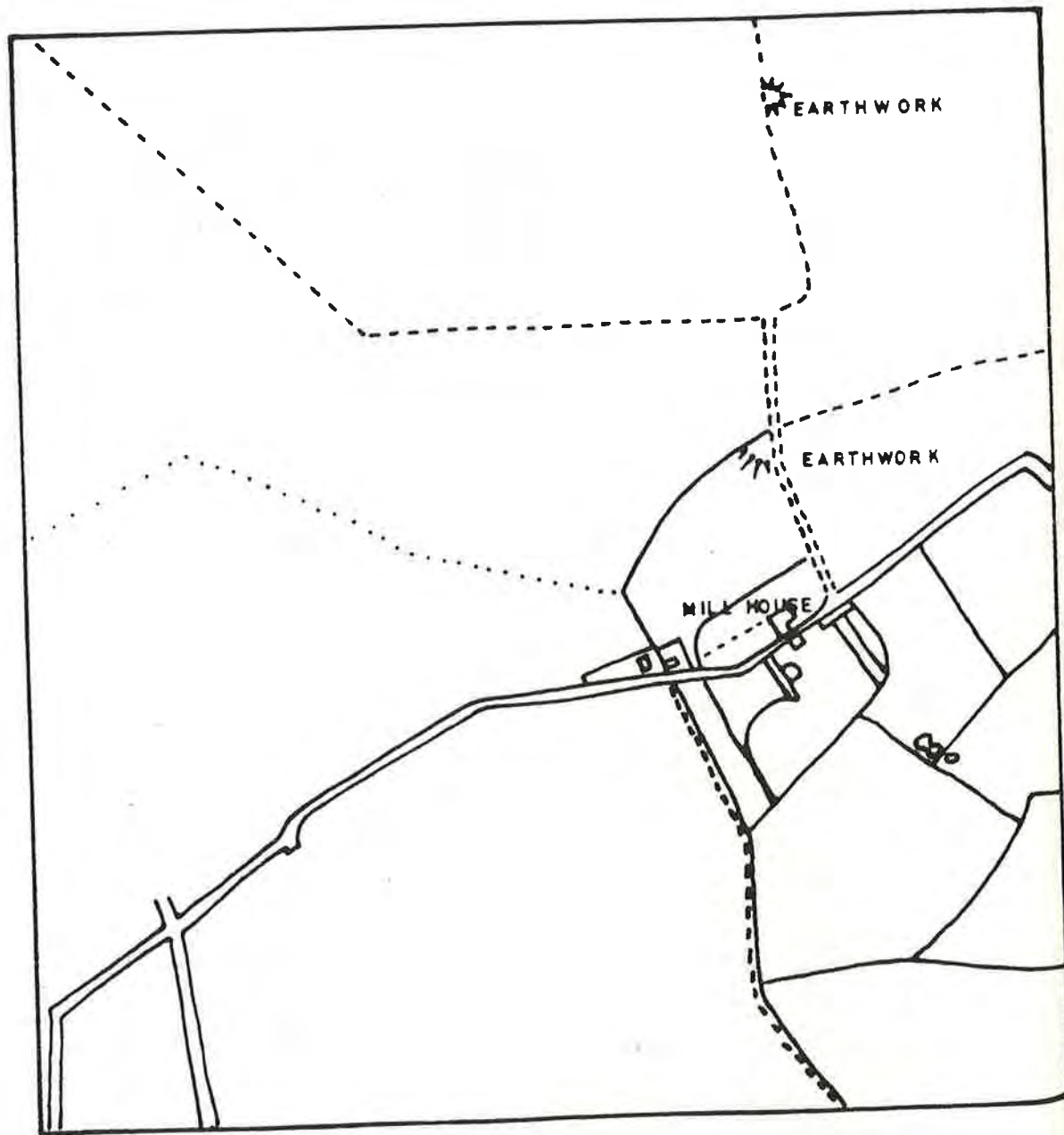
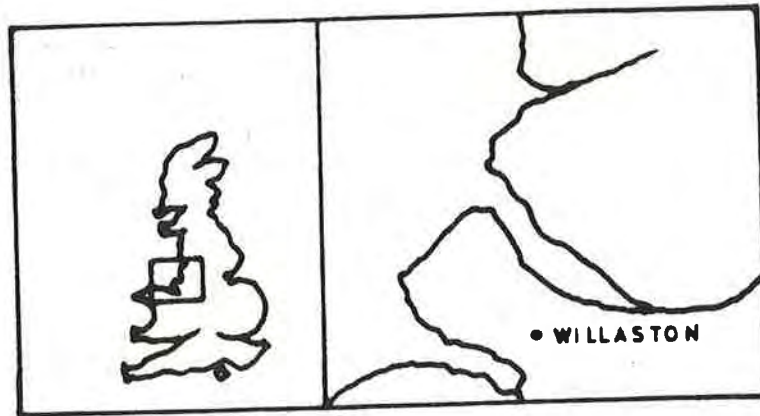


Fig. 28

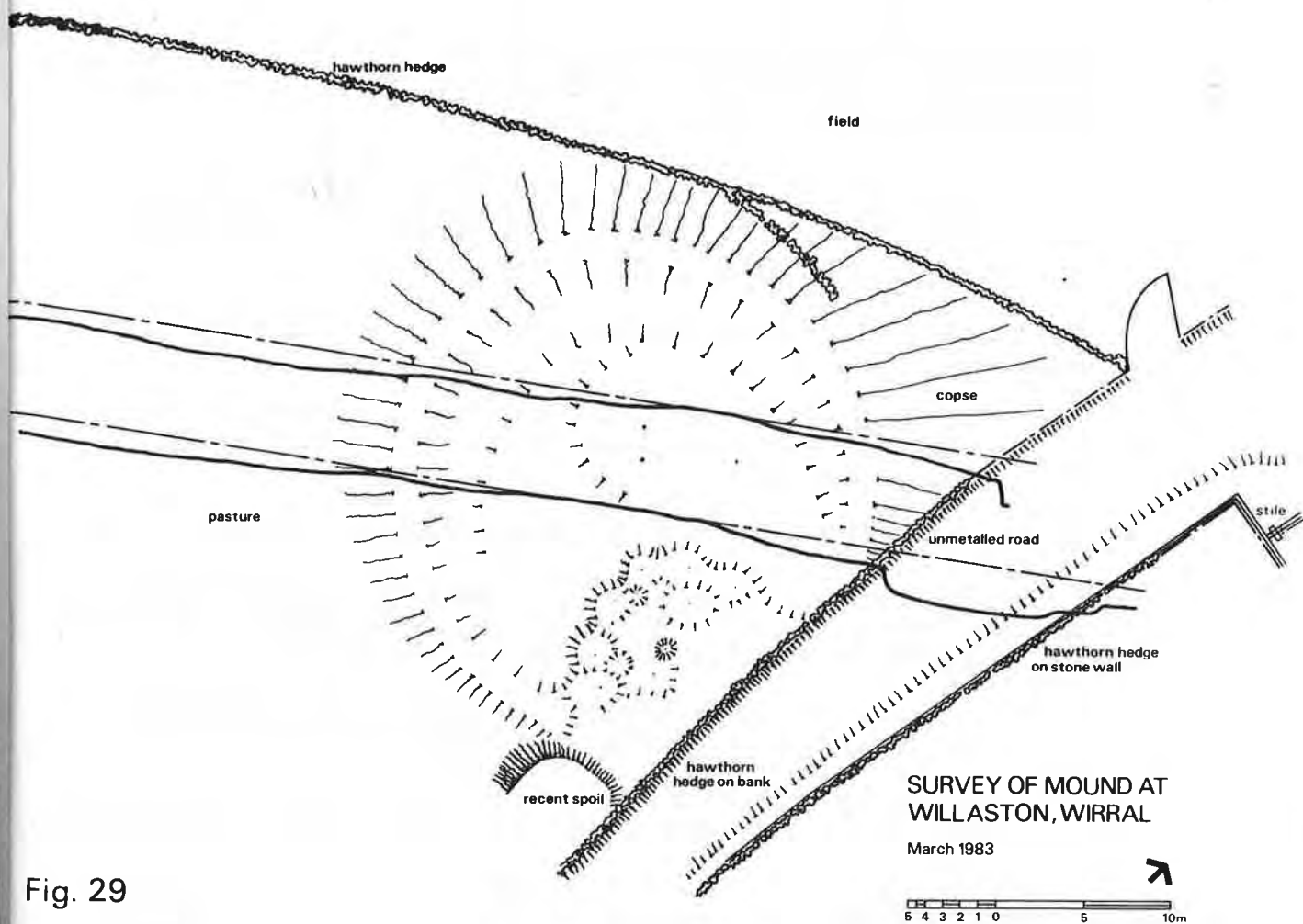


Fig. 29

The function of the earthwork is difficult to determine. In an effort to throw some light on the problem, a survey of the site was made during the winter of 1982-3, by members of an Adult Education Class from Liverpool University. A documentary search in the Cheshire County Record Office was carried out. A survey was made using tapes and quickset level and a scale plan drawn up (Fig 29).

The documentary search indicates the presence of a windmill in this vicinity from medieval times (Bryan, 1975, 10), but its exact location is not clear. In the seventeenth century, references to the windmill occur but again the location is not defined:

...' to James Bennett, John Heye of Eastham and others a messuage and cottages in Willaston with a proportion of the wastes, windmill and courts ...'
(1616-18, Abstract of conveyances, CCRO, 1616).

In 1784 a covenant between James Lyon of Gray's Inn and Edmund Lyon describes:

'a parcel of ground of the said Edmund Lyon formerly enclosed from the common in Willaston called Mill Hall ...'
(CCRO, 1794).

As fig.30 shows, Mill Hill is in the vicinity of the earthwork.

A tower mill stands today at SJ 327785, on the south side of Mill Lane, According to Abraham (1903, 133), this mill was built in 1800 to replace an earlier mill which had occupied a nearby site:

'This large tower mill was built early in the last century and succeeded a peg mill situated thirty yards to the west.'

It is possible that a raised flower bed bounded by a curving hedge, in the south west corner of the adjacent Mill House evidences this (fig 28).

The field names (fig 30) show that the area was much concerned with mills and milling. The fact that the site of the present mill is on one of the highest points in the area is perhaps significant. It cannot be assumed on present evidence, that the earthwork is clearly related to the milling activities of the area.

The position of the earthwork suggests that it may have had a function related to boundaries. There may be significance in the fact that it is positioned at a point where three boundaries meet (fig 28) to mark the division between Little Neston, Neston and Eastham. The explanation of the mound as a moot hill or meeting place is not impossible.

It is tempting to see the earthwork in prehistoric terms. The evidence for this is slight, but the possibility to its being one of a series of prehistoric earthworks must not be overlooked. A low circular mound of dimensions similar to the Willaston earthwork is situated by the side of a footpath approximately half a mile to the north (fig. 28). Further investigation is indicated, and a resistivity survey might not be out of place.

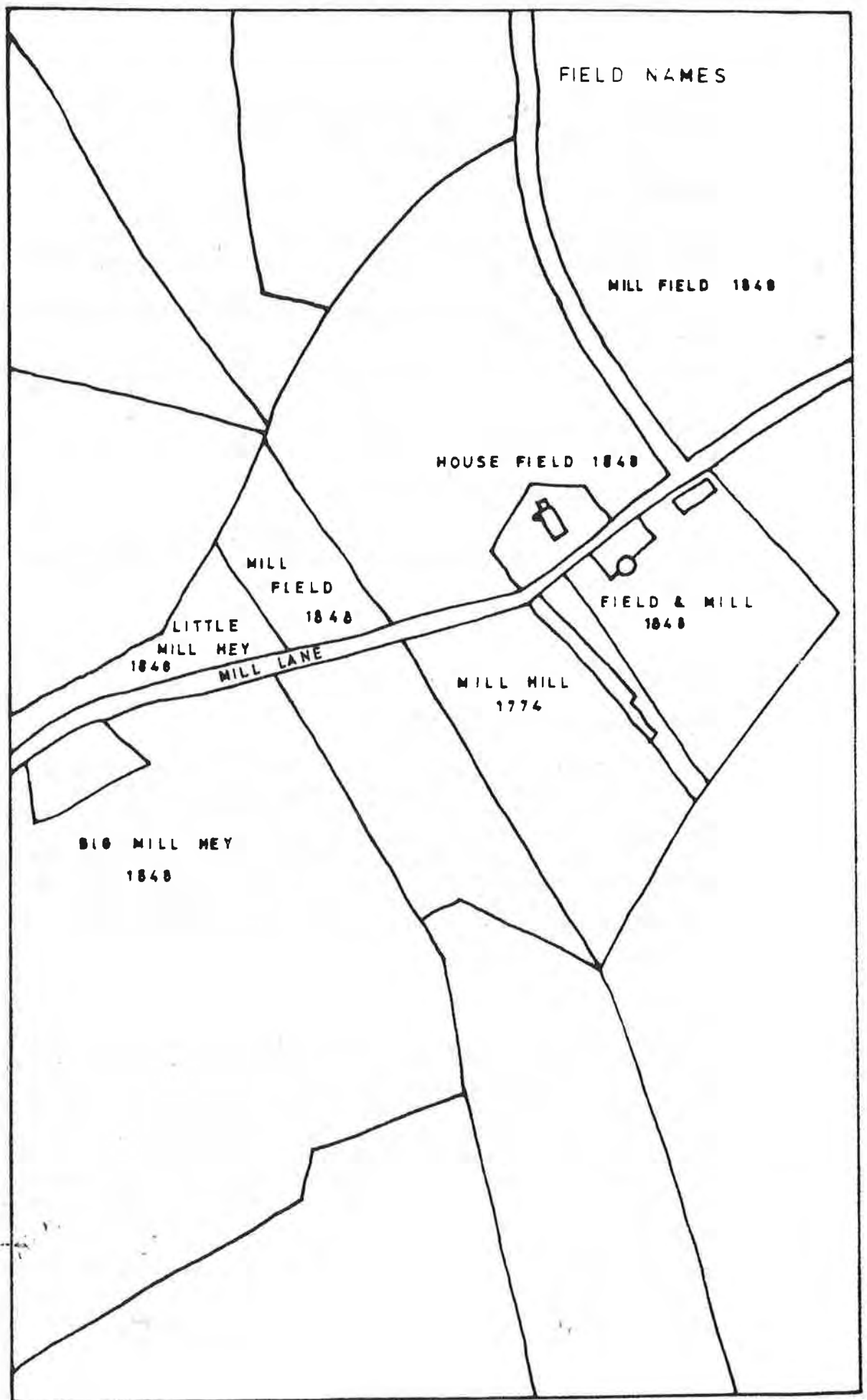


Fig. 30

I am grateful to Mr and Mrs Gee of Mill House, Willaston, for permissions readily given to examine and survey the mound; also to Mr Keith Pealim for his drawings.

References

Abraham, E Mitford, 1903, The Old Flour Mills of Wirral Tr., Hist., Soc., Lancs., and Ches., 194, LV pp & LVI pp. (NS XIX & XX.)

Bryan, E C, 1975, Willaston's Heritage, (Willaston Residents and Countryside Society)

Cheshire County Record Office, Abstract of Conveyances 1616-18 GGG HHH

Cheshire County Record Office, Covenant 1784 DHL

List of Contributing Class Members

Peter Booth, Peter Brown, Beryl Callaghan, John Coppack, Brian Henhey, Moira Keeler, John Kerridge, Sheila McInerney, Keith Pealin, David Randall.

D O'Hanlon

NORTHWICH Centering on SJ 65407357

Excavations at Castle, 1983

For a period of four weeks in July/August 1983 investigations were conducted on the extensive Roman deposits underlying the former Bowling Green on the north side of the Chester Road at Castle, Northwich. The work took place through the courtesy of Vale Royal District Council, the landowners who are developing the site for housing, and was made financially possible through Cheshire County Council (through the courtesy of the County Archaeologist, Mr Rhys Williams) and latterly Vale Royal District Council and Northwich Town Council.

Background

Although the area of Castle at Northwich has long been known as a hill crest overlooking the confluence of the Dane and the Weaver that consistently produced large quantities of Roman material, it was not until the late sixties that the character and development of the settlement began to be revealed. By 1970 it was clear that the earliest major site on the hilltop was a Roman fort belonging to the last quarter of the first century and like Manchester forming a link on the strategic route between Chester and York. The evidence for this depended on the discovery of a two-phase rampart and ditch forming the north-eastern defences of the fort. At that time only small parts of the interior could be examined but it was clear that two major phases of occupation were involved in the military period. Later evidence included a pottery kiln which was published along with other material in a major report in Arch.Journal 1971.

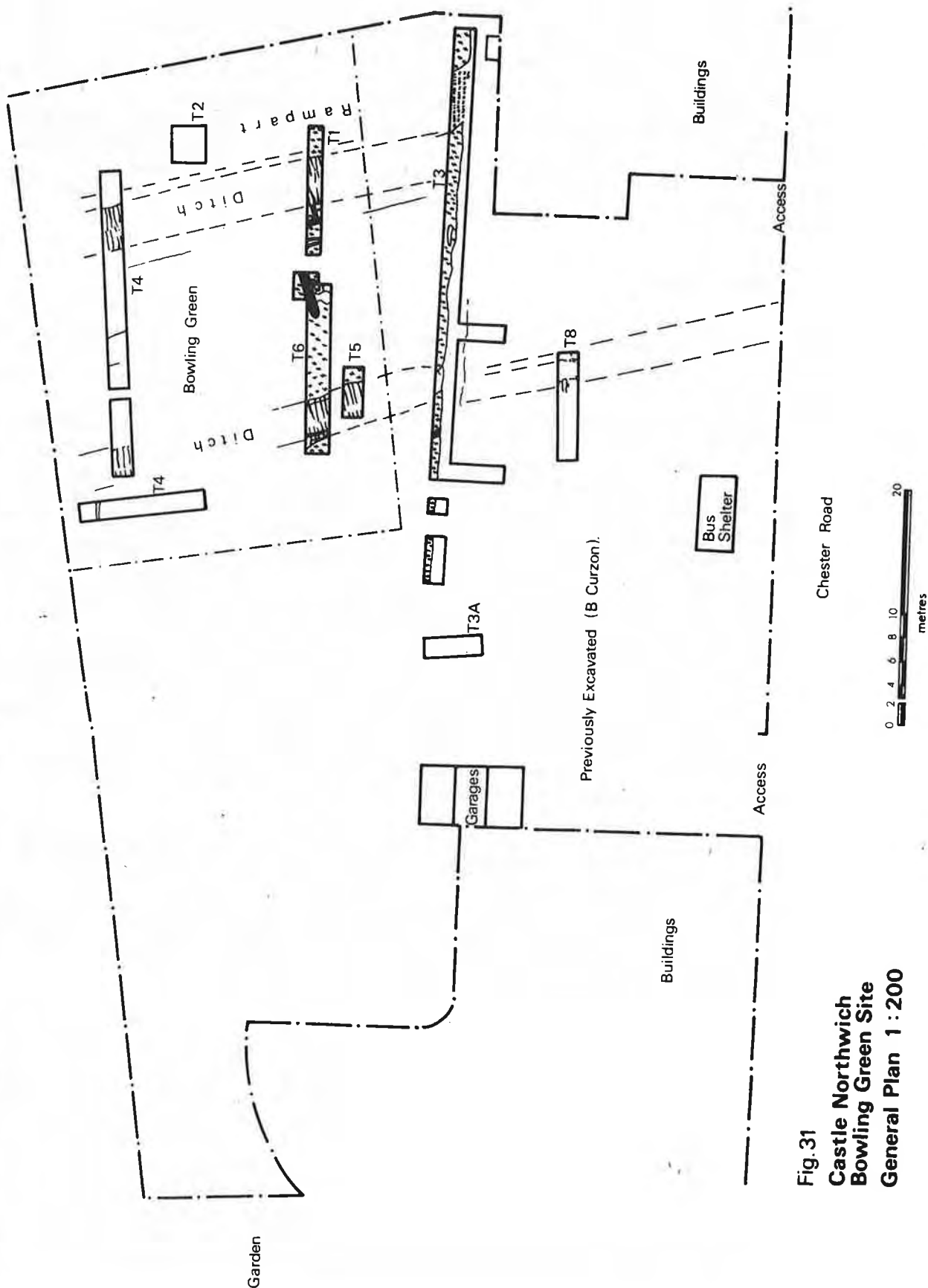


Fig.31
 Castle Northwich
 Bowling Green Site
 General Plan 1:200

Subsequent excavation in the interior in 1976, and more particularly in 1978, on the north side of the Chester Road produced further evidence of the north-east rampart at Ryder Place. It also became clear that there was a period of abandonment between the two military occupations of the site which appeared to end in the mid 2nd century AD. Northwich Castle is a prime example of infilling in terms of modern planning and in recent years one planned rescue excavation and one watching brief have produced further information. The site of the Bowling Green remained the one large currently open space from which substantial archaeology could be expected. In reality these hopes were more than justified. Evidence of an entirely unsuspected military site emerged on a different axis than from that of the known fort.

Excavation 1983

The excavation was conceived in two stages. The Bowling Green site formed the last major area of open land on Castle other than that to be made available in a later stage of the housing scheme (Stage 3). Stage 1 comprised the trial excavation of the Bowling Green site in a series of east/west trenches initially dug by hand and later by mechanical trenching. This operation was designed as a preliminary to any possible area stripping in a second stage of operation. The trial trenching rapidly produced substantive results in the form of two parallel ditches aligned north-north-west to south-south-east running across the entire length of the site. The two ditches lay 24 metres apart over the centre; their size and parallel layout suggested that they were of military rather than civilian origin, particularly as there was evidence to suggest that one of the ditches at least had been located continuing across and south of Chester Road during previous construction work. This theory was strengthened when it also became apparent that the remains of a rampart based on decomposing sandstone and at least 8 metres wide ran behind (i.e. to the east) of the eastern ditch. No comparable bank existed at the western ditch. Instead there appeared in the initial trenches (Fig. 31, T1, T6) the remains of two periods of substantial timber buildings truncated by the two above mentioned ditches forming the fort defences.

With these positive results it became clear that Stage II should be put into operation, namely area stripping of the space between T1, T6 and T4. This was achieved at the beginning of Week 3 of the excavation and as a result it was possible to identify further remains of the timber buildings lying between the two ditches, and to confirm that the buildings had indeed been cut by the ditches, and therefore preceded them.

It also became apparent, however, that the structures were carefully aligned on the same axis as the ditches, suggesting that the overall interpretation lay in terms of a regularly spaced Roman fort that had been reduced in size rather than random earlier buildings overlain by a later fort. Accordingly, to substantiate this hypothesis, a further trench was extended to the west of the fort. Confirmation emerged immediately 24m to the west (north of the present set of garages) in the form of a 5 metre wide ditch with rampart and inter vallum road on the eastern side. Traces of buildings began immediately in the interior and it is now possible to argue from the detailed structural evidence that the layout in the second of the two periods of the

larger fort comprised barrack or stable buildings measuring approximately 40 metres and aligned east/west. In the primary phase within the large excavation, the presence of a structure with a verandah with other features running parallel to the later ditches and at right angles to the Phase 2 building suggests the presence of a row of barracks in this part of the original fort.

Very substantial quantities of pottery have been obtained from features within the primary fort and more especially from the ditches of the reduced fort. Most of the ditch contents were wet sieved and further samples have been taken for pollen analysis. The quantity of pottery has meant that it is not yet possible to say to what period this military installation belongs, save to state that it lies within the second century.

Interpretation

There can be practically no doubt, however surprising it may seem in view of the discovery of one fort site in the period 1970/73 on the eastern edge of Castle, that another Roman fort has been located in this 1983 operation. The different axis of the two installations need not cause surprise and there is a relatively similar arrangement visible at Birrens in Carlisle where an early second century fort was succeeded by a later one. The major problems lie in unravelling the chronological relationship between two military installations, and it may be (for argument's sake) that the fort located in 1983 occurred in the middle of the second century, during one of the abandonments of the Antonine Wall, because it is already established that the other fort site was relinquished at about the time of the establishment of the Antonine Wall in Scotland in AD142.

Implications and Proposals

Vale Royal District Council has taken over the area of land now given over to garages to the east of the Bowling Green. This area now assumes prime archaeological importance because it not only contains the central third of the newly discovered fort but also the western defences of the previously known military site. The relationship between the two is vital for any interpretation of the site overall and is the prime remaining archaeological objective in Northwich.

The presence of this new site also explains many of the structural defects visible in the older houses in Northwich, notably on the north side of Ryder Place and on the south side of Chester Road where very extensive remains of timber structures, presumably of the late vicus, or civilian settlement, were located in the cellar of a motor cycle shop.

The third stage of excavation cannot be contemplated using the small labour force employed in July 1983. In view of the complexity of the site a larger and more skilled labour force with adequate supervision will be required, together with the facility to cover part of the site. It should be emphasised that the ground water table is very high even in a month of drought (July 1983) and that pumping will always remain a problem in the soft sands at Castle. Meanwhile the excavators' thanks are due to all those who made possible this important step forward in the understanding of Northwich's archaeological past.

Norton Priory. 1983 Excavations

Excavations took place for three weeks during September, supported financially by a grant from Cheshire County Council Planning Department.

The area investigated was to the south and west of the major building, uncovered in 1982, the primary purpose being to reclaim the rest of the deposit of smashed medieval decorated glass fragments associated with the building, and to see whether the complex of buildings south and west of the medieval kitchens continued.

The remains of the demolition layer of the 1982 building were revealed, overlying the decorated glass deposit; both layers were shown to rest on a thick dark brown deposit which, where it was not covered by demolition material extended over the rest of the trench.

Examination of the make-up and artifacts of these three layers produced information which added to, or modified, the understanding of the history of the 1982 building. Pottery and clay pipe fragments found in the dark brown layer, both where it was covered by demolition debris and elsewhere, demonstrated a date in the early eighteenth century for the demolition of the building. This is the first time that a monastic building, outside those adapted by the Tudor house, has been shown to continue in use until the demolition of the Tudor house sometime between 1727-1757.

Study of the glass material recovered in 1982 produced conclusions which were confirmed by recovery of the remaining glass and associated roofing material. Two distinct types of glass were present: decorated medieval fragments and pieces of the bulbous centres resulting from crown glass manufacture. The condition of these centres would tend to indicate a significantly later date than the decorated glass, and leads to the conclusion that there were two separate phases of glazing, the later of which coincided with some degree of roof repair.

The dark brown layer appears to have been a ground surface; from its homogeneous nature, the even distribution of charcoal, the presence of sandstone only in small rounded fragments, and the obvious damage to underlying layers, this ground surface appears to have been cultivated for a considerable period.

Under and within this ground surface, their horizons destroyed by cultivation, were two stone-capped drains running approximately south-north, one cut by the other, and possibly indicating a building south of the excavation.

Earlier still, a clay surface, as yet unexcavated, borders the edge of a massive pit which appears to cover half the area of the trench. It is hoped to finish the excavation in 1984 in order to discover the purpose of these last two features.

We would like to thank Cheshire County Council Planning Department, especially Rhys Williams, for their continued support and interest. Also Heather Jones, Supervisor, and all those who helped on the excavation, in particular those who were able to come for the whole time.

Sara Muldoon, Bevis Sale, Beryl Noake

TARVIN SJ 491662

Tarvin by-pass

The construction of this by-pass within Chester District in 1983-84 involved the disturbance of a large area of pastureland in a wide swathe around the western and southern side of the settlement. Examination of the area was carried out with a view to recording anything Archaeological that could be seen on the ground but no trace was found. Before, during and after the road had been excavated, the area of the south western arm in particular, extending from the A51, was intensively walked and post-Roman pottery collected. The finds consist in the main of between 300 and 400 small fragments of 17th-18th and 19th century tableware, utilitarian black glazed redware containers and clay tobacco pipes. In addition however, sherds of medieval vessels were also picked-up from very disturbed soil, upcast from the path of the road but nevertheless from roughly the same area pinpointed by the grid reference above. These small abraded sherds belong to three locally made pink/white hollow wares and a red/grey ware dish or bowl (Fig 26). The material could represent rubbish collected from the village and cast on the fields or indeed remnants of some earlier occupation site on the periphery of the present settlement. The post-medieval pottery was spread over most of the area but seemed more concentrated between SJ 485663 and SJ 491662.

Illustrated Finds:

1. Rim of an open ware vessel, possibly a dish or bowl rather than a cooking pot. Red/grey fabric, clear glazed locally made 13th century ware (Fig26.1). The fabric is close to that recovered as waste material from the site not far distant at Brereton Park and has been given the Chester Fabric Ref. Series No. 523.
2. Body sherd of a jug. Pink/white fabric with incised decoration probably on a handle attachment and some slightly green tinged glaze remaining on the exterior. Local possible 13th-14th century ware (Fig26.2). Chester Fabric Ref. Series No. 524.

Two small Ewloe-type fabric fragments, one the sherd possibly of a small 14th century type jug or bottle (Rutter, 1977, 18-21), the second a bodysherd of a larger 15th-16th century type storage vessel, are not illustrated. Stamps within the clay tobacco pipe collection comprise (cf. Rutter and Davey, 1980):

- | | | |
|----|--|--------------|
| 1. | Border 16 (Fig. 58) | 1 x 5/64th's |
| 2. | Chester shield stamp with the initials
RG, stamp no. 10 (Fig. 52) | 1 x 5/64th's |

3. Oval Chester shield stamp no. 52
(Fig. 56) with Border 91 (Fig. 61) 1 x 5/64th's
4. Border 108 (Fig. 62) 1 x 5/64th's
5. Indeterminate full name mark, probably
late 18th-19th century in date, not
necessarily of Chester manufacture 1 x 6/64th's

Rutter, J A, Old Market Hall Pit Group, in, Davey, P J, (ed) Medieval Pottery from Excavations in The North West, Institute of Extension Studies Liverpool University (1977).

Rutter, J A and Davey P J, Clay Pipes from Chester, in, Davey, P J, (ed) The Archaeology of the Clay Tobacco Pipe, III; The North and West, BAR 78, British Series (1980).

I am grateful to Mr and Mrs H Bradley for showing me this material.

J A Rutter

TATTON PARK SJ 756813 and SJ 757803

Excavations at Tatton 1978 to 1983: A Summary Report

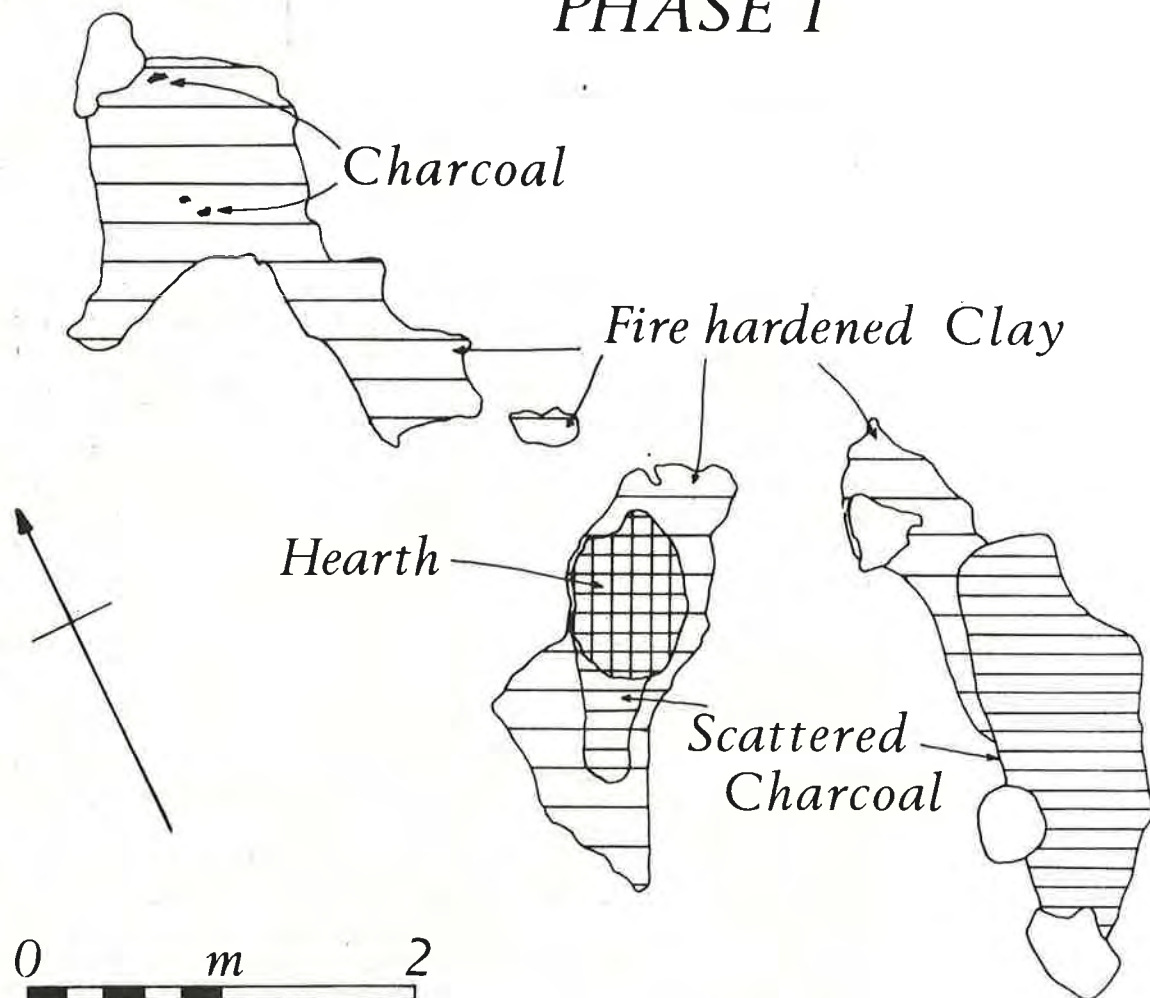
I. The Old Hall and Village SJ 756813

Annual excavations have now been undertaken for a short season at and around Tatton Old Hall each year since 1978. In 1978 and 1979 work was confined to the Old Hall and the area immediately adjacent to it, prior to the refurbishment of the site as an educational facility open to the public. The timber-framed nature of the early hall was established, and it was clear that the structure had been foreshortened, probably in the early 18th century. A minor, probably contemporary structure was located outside, which was thought to be the kitchen and which was occupied broadly in the late 15th-early 16th centuries. The earliest occupation of the Hall was in the latter part of the 15th century, and no evidence for earlier structures was found in the site. In order to investigate earlier occupation of the settlement, work began on the village area in 1980, and has continued up to 1983. A range of occupation material has provided evidence for at least six episodes of human activity, briefly as follows:

- I. A group of 3 hearths was exposed in 1983. A substantial deposit of charcoal was obtained from 1, which has provided a C^{14} date of $4310 \pm 100^* \text{ bc}$ (HAR 5714). Despite the absence of associated artifactual evidence from this context, the date provides a prima facie case for some late mesolithic use of the site, but any definitive statement must await further analysis. Excavation on the Tatton Mere site in 1983 produced evidence of late mesolithic activity in the general vicinity.

* Preliminary date, subject to recalibration.

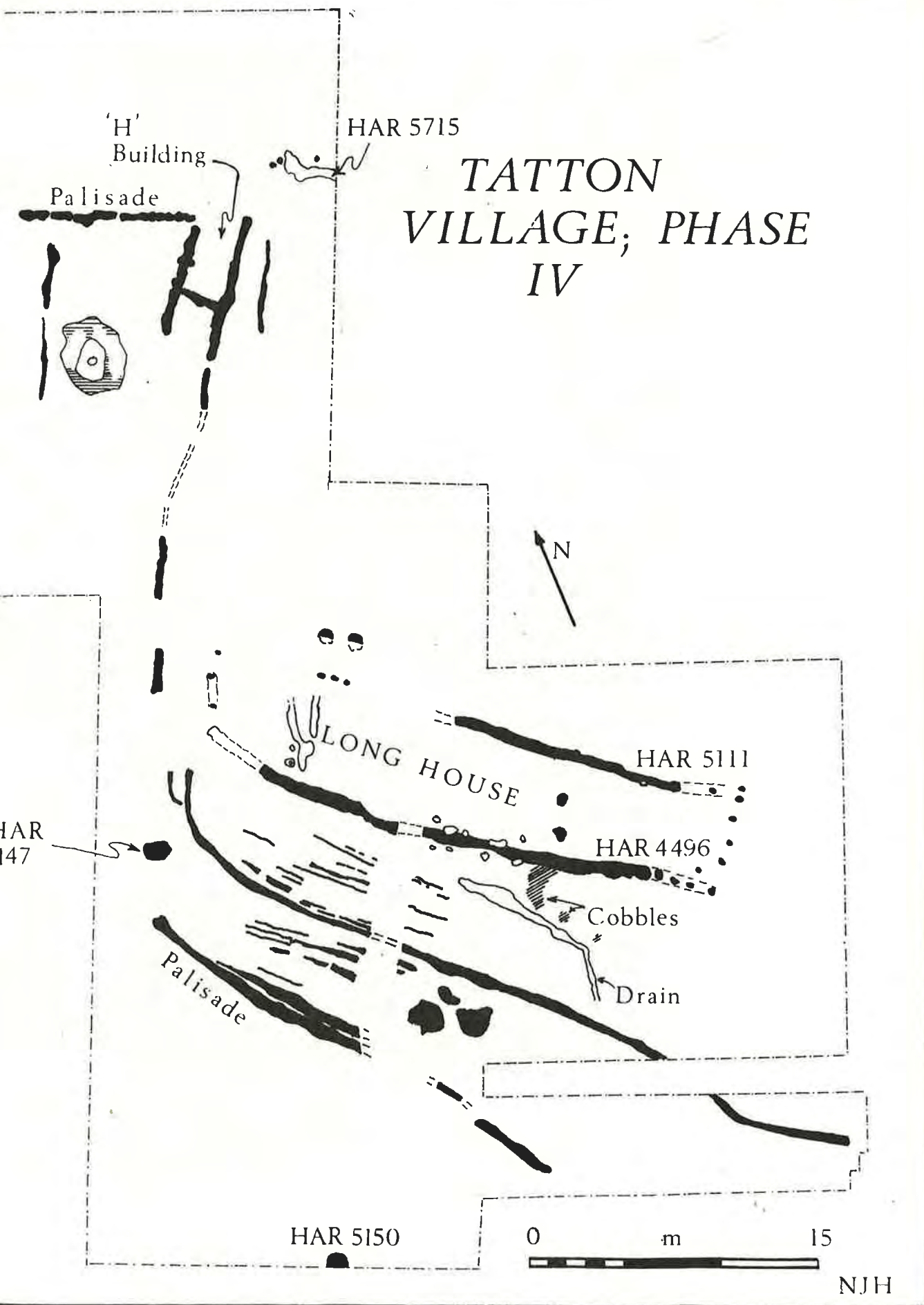
TATTON VILLAGE PHASE I



NJH

- II. A pit was dug (c140cm diam, 43cm deep) to bury a mass of carbonised material, which included charred barley and a single grain of oats, with an uncalibrated C^{14} date of 2530 ± 60 bc (HAR 5146). Pits of this type are common in neolithic sites². In addition a group of post and stake holes almost wholly within the episode IV 'long-house' provided samples with an uncalibrated C^{14} date of 2590 ± 70 bc (HAR 4495). These were interpreted as a shelter or hut. A scatter of flints provided the only artifactual evidence of occupation, and these were not concentrated in any way, although flints were recovered from two of the 'hut' post-holes. Two further, circular groups of post-holes on the site have to be evaluated in the light of this data.
- III. A shallow pit approximately 148 x 93 cm (max) and 18 cm deep had been used for a fire. The debris provided a C^{14} date of 390 ± 120 bc (HAR 5147). Other features in the immediate vicinity may be of comparable date, including post-holes which are not otherwise accounted for.
- IVa. Three pits have been excavated (averaging about 1-1.5m across) with structural evidence in the form of stake-holes around the inner perimeter. Only one provided a small find (of flint) which was redeposited and may have been unrelated. Inwash of carbonised material into one has provided a C^{14} date of AD 200 ± 110 (HAR 5150). A few sherds of Roman pottery came from a later ditch fill, and may be associated. A further sherd of Romano-British white ware derived from material sealing a cobbled path adjacent to the 'H' building, and charcoal from this deposit provided a C^{14} date of AD $240 \pm 100^*$ (HAR 5715).
- IVb. A 'longhouse' was excavated in 1981, the long sides consisting of untrimmed, close set timbers sealed by daub, set in a construction trench. Due to root disturbance and later activity, the west end has been slighted. The internal dimensions were between 23.5-27m and 5.5m (at greatest) and the south long side at least was bowed outwards in the centre. There was one internal division. Dating of the structure was complicated by the existence of the collection of post holes, almost entirely within, which provided a date of 2590 ± 70 bc (HAR 4495), and the chronological problem has yet to be fully resolved. One small carbon sample from the construction trench provided a C^{14} date of AD 40 ± 110 , but a second assay provided a clearly intrusive date, AD 1540 ± 110 . A chronologically undiagnostic, rotary quern fragment came from an associated context, but a single sherd of 'Chester ware' (c AD 950-1100) came from an adjacent later deposit. The structure was apparently associated with palisade fences of similar form and by these to a second building of 'H' plan, excavated in 1983, constructed initially in very similar style with timber uprights in close set postholes, 5.5m-2.2m internally with a near central divide, and no evidence for

* Preliminary date, subject to recalibration

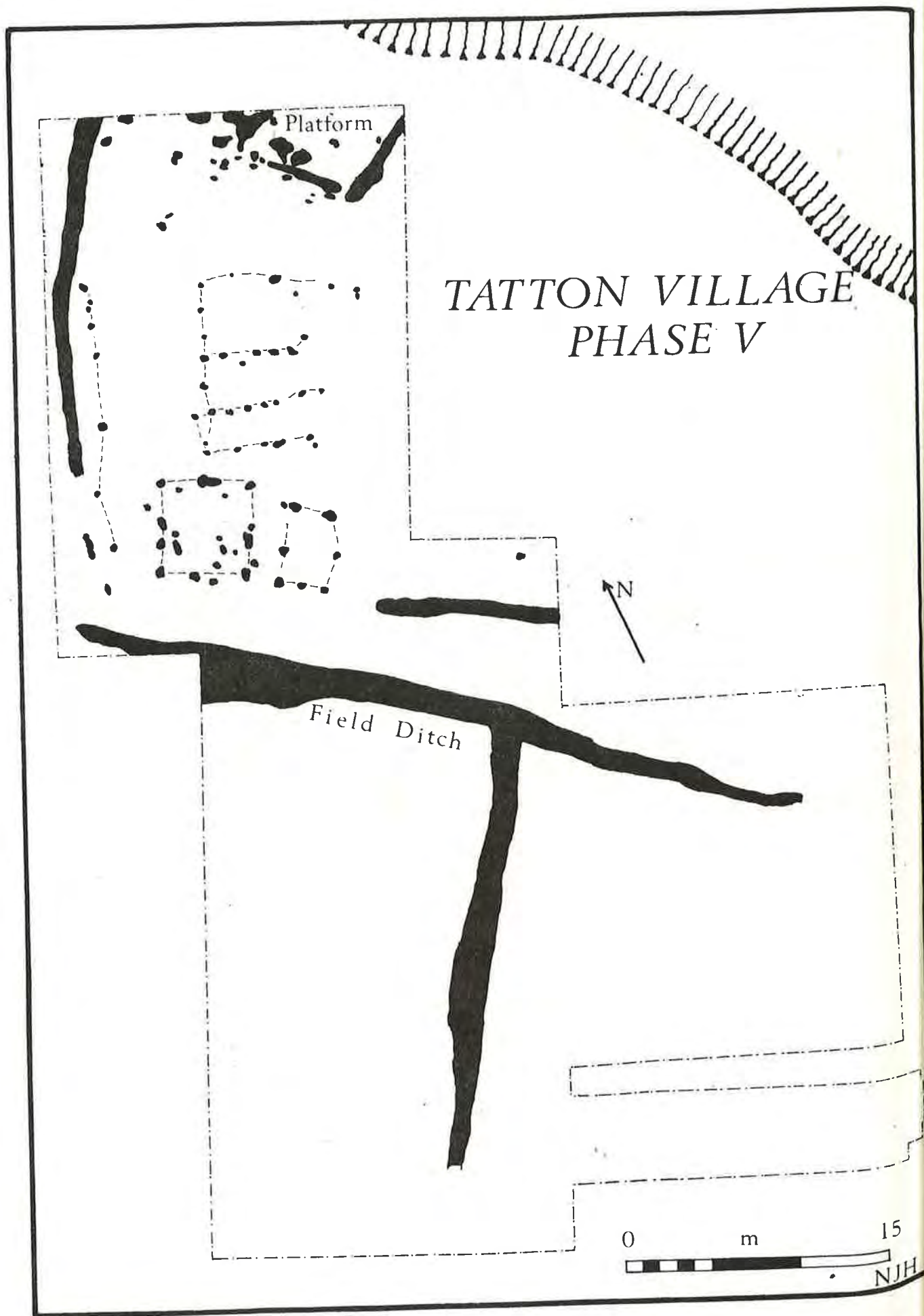


closed ends. This building was probably reconstructed in a second phase on beams set in shallow slots on the same alignment. Ploughmarks or wheel ruts parallel to one of the palisade fences and the longhouse must be broadly contemporary. These were represented by approximately 1-2cm deep grooves, up to approximately 25cm broad and approximately 40cm apart, cut into the subsoil. Tiny fragments of charcoal were collected from one of the palisade trenches from the infill clay and provided a C^{14} date of 7440 ± 180 bc, suggesting that there was a background of early prehistoric charcoal on the site which could push back dates where unsealed deposits were examined, and this has become an important factor in the C^{14} dating strategy applied to the site. The site was comparatively longlived, with evidence of the northern fence being rebuilt subsequent to the final demolition of the 'H' shaped building. However, the alignments were totally ignored by those constructing the next episode. Adjacent to the 'H' building there was a circular working area, with a central patch of cobbling, which may have been a threshing floor, and which superseded the use of the area of the hearths described under I. Parallels exist for this type of working area at Old Durham and Langton, near Malton³. The initial hypothesis concerning the chronology of the 'longhouse' derived from the common occurrence of structures in this architectural tradition in the period AD 500-1,000 and it was, therefore, provisionally termed 'late Saxon', and the single sherd of 'Chester ware' seemed to lend this some support⁴. Specifically, there are close parallels between this structure, and, for example, the Cheddar palace site⁵, or, nearer home, the Ribbleshead complex⁶. However, carbon dating has so far failed to support this hypothesis, and until further evidence becomes available from the laboratories it must remain at best ill-supported. An alternative hypothesis is that the complex represents an occupation in the late prehistoric/Roman period. In this context parallels are less obvious, largely because of the apparent absence of the round house tradition. However, there are no excavated examples to call upon of rural, Romano-British settlements in Cheshire or Lancashire, and a tradition of late-Roman, rectilinear⁷ architecture is well established in Cumbria and elsewhere, although it is less easy to find close parallels to the continuous post style of construction in this context. This hypothesis receives some support from the small amount of pottery on the site which attracts a Romano-British identification. More important is the substantial group of late pre-historic/Romano-British C^{14} dates from the 'Longhouse' and adjacent features.

Definite solution of this problem will derive from further laboratory analysis and excavation, but the balance of evidence from the site is now weighted on the side of the second, rather than the first of these hypotheses.

V. A pattern of ditched boundaries were laid out to distinguish a group of rectilinear enclosures, of which one was a messuage with structures and a road frontage onto the sunken lane. The new alignments took no account of the buildings and fences of episode IV, suggesting that these were not visible and that any associated property rights had decayed. The farmyard was 35-40m in length, but the road frontage is still unknown, though possibly about 45m, and remains of four structures or parts of structures have been excavated. The most substantial was a 4.5m (int) square, timber-framed building, with four posts, down two opposing sides (west and east) and a single central post-hole at each end. This building may have been substantially rebuilt, judging by the numbers of post-holes in this area. A second structure was apparently aligned on the south-east corner of the first, with a south wall based on 3 substantial posts, but the remainder were far flimsier in construction, almost in the manner of a 'lean-to'. Four lines of smaller post holes near parallel to these may have provided pens for livestock, and may not have been roofed over, forming a rectangle approximately 10m by approximately 5.5m divided into three small enclosures. On the road frontage various pits, shallow trenches and a slight platform were suggestive of another building, and the high proportion of pottery and food bones from this area implied that this might be the residential structure, with the buildings behind forming the farmyard. A circular arrangement of postholes approximately 3.7m across may have supported a wooden platform, perhaps to support a rick, or may have served as a specialised enclosure, but its chronological context is insecure and may lie with an earlier phase of occupation⁽¹¹⁾. Close by, a scatter of posts grouped in pairs may have supported racks for drying. Pottery from the ditches and several internal features suggested an occupation within the period 1200-1400, probably concentrated in the central century. The farm site seems to have been abandoned by c1400, but the property boundaries remained in use and formed the basis of the hedge and bank system in the village, up to emparkment.

VI. There is no evidence of occupation of that part of the village so far excavated for most of the 15th century, during which the Old Hall was constructed. Pottery re-emerges in the 17th century, and possibly in the later 16th, but no new structures were erected on the medieval messuage. A clay floor, located but lying largely outside the area excavated in 1982, probably represents a part of this reoccupation which was only ended by emparkment in the mid to late 18th century, when map evidence suggests that buildings were grouped on those areas which had not attracted settlement in the 13th century. The construction of this last period of buildings on the site was at some distance from the sunken road, on land immediately adjacent to the farmyard buildings of the Old Hall complex, and it seems likely that they were in some respect associated, either as habitative units or as elements in the range of farming buildings. The discovery of a series of livestock burials in the area dated c1740-50 seems to support the notion that this was a non-habitative area, as well as lending substance to the significance of the local livestock murrains



of that period. The limited area so far excavated would support the hypothesis that the settlement had shrunk during the late medieval population decline, and that the construction of the Old Hall had led to a process of settlement drift away from the important road frontage of the 13th century, towards the novel Tatton Green and the demesne farm buildings to the south.

N J Higham

II. An early Mesolithic Site at Tatton Mere SJ 757803

A flint working site was identified on the shores of Tatton Mere (SJ 757803) after chance finds were made by Thomas Sprott in August 1982, and by Dr David Coombs in 1979. Field walking produced about thirty pieces, including an obliquely blunted point. A trial excavation in October-November 1982 established the nature of the site and isolated a concentration of flints at a depth of approximately 70cm-90cm, below plough soil and accumulated hill wash. The wash also contained flints, which had been transported from areas uphill from the Mere, probably when the soil was exposed to erosion during cultivation (medieval to c1750). In addition, the sand shore of the Mere was sieved for flints. About 900 flints were recovered, about two thirds from the excavation and one third from the Mere edge. They included 16 microliths, 10 scrapers, 1 saw, 7 awls and 8 cores. The assemblage was thought to be a consistent one, with the exception of a very few examples which displayed traces of later reworking (including one core and one scraper) which came from the upper layers of wash.⁽¹⁾ Using the results of 1982 excavations to formulate strategy, a second season was undertaken in June/July 1983. The area which had revealed the greatest concentration of flints was extended in an attempt to establish the limits of the site. In this area, the flints were considered to occupy an in situ deposit, in grey leached sand overlying natural red sand, sealed by a layer of redeposited red sand and by plough wash. The date gained in 1983 is subject to final analysis, but is consistent with the results of 1982 - that is, a site with an early mesolithic assemblage: obliquely blunted points, a point blunted down the whole of one side, one elongated trapeze, numerous scrapers, awls, one possible sandstone rubber, and one transverse axe sharpening flake. Despite close examination of the sealed deposit, no traces of fire or structural remains were uncovered. It is intended to continue work on the site. Tatton Mere is in part a recent product of damming, and in part an ancient, flooded, stream bed, first documented in the early 13th century. It seems likely that the mesolithic site overlooked a marshy stream valley, rather than open water.

(1) The excavators would like to thank R M Jacobi for examining the material.

T Cane and N J Higham

III. Acknowledgements: 1983

The director would like to express his gratitude to Rhys Williams and to Cheshire County Council for their continued and unstinting advice and financial aid. The Granada Foundation, the British Academy and the Manchester Geographical Society also made grants towards the excavation and post-excavation work which are gratefully acknowledged. Samples for carbon dating from the site in 1981 and 1982 have been financed by British Nuclear Fuels and carried out by Bob Orlett and Jill Walker at Harwell, without whom identification of prehistoric and Romano-British activity would have been impossible. Many assisted in the excavation. Terry Cane provided valuable expertise and supervisory skills, assisted by John McPeake, Roger Matthews, Howard Atkinson, Adelle Mayer and Felicity Bosworth. Many others gave of their skills and enthusiasm, including the first year archaeology students of Manchester Polytechnic. All who worked on the site are deserving my grateful thanks. Without the approval of the National Trust and the Department of the Environment, the project would be untenable. In addition, the kindness and support of Com. Peter Neate and Michael Graystone of Tatton Park have been unfailing. Janet Rutter has examined the pottery with sympathy and enthusiasm, and much of it has been drawn by Joan Dearden. Carbonised deposits have been identified by Alison Donaldson, and the bones by Robin Hillman. Peter Davey and D A Higgins have examined the clay pipes. Pollen sampling has been undertaken by Prof. Jim Schoenwetter of Arizona State University. This preliminary report has been repeatedly retyped by Mrs V Seth. To all go my sincere thanks.

Bibliography

I. Interim Reports, by N J Higham.

'Tatton Old Hall. A Preliminary Report on Excavations conducted at Easter 1979'. Cheshire Archaeological Bulletin 6 (1978/9) p 72-4.

'Excavations at Tatton D M V 1980-81: Preliminary Report Cheshire Archaeological Bulletin 7 (1980/81) p 49-56.

'Excavations at Tatton Deserted Medieval Village' Popular Archaeology (Sept 1981) p 36-39.

'Excavations at Tatton D M V 1982: Preliminary Report Cheshire Archaeological Bulletin 8 (1982) p 63/64.

II. References

1. L McKenna 'From Post Hole to Timber Framed Building' Cheshire Archaeological Bulletin 7 (1980/81) p 22-27.
2. e.g. PSAS (1947-8) p 225; Antiquity (1967) p 220; Yorkshire Arch. J 40, (1959-62) p 619. C Burgess, 'Meldon Bridge: A Neolithic Defended Promontory Complex near Peebles', BAR 33 (1976) p 164.
3. R P Wright and J P Gillam Archaeologia Aeliana 4 XXIX (1951) p 203. P Corder and J L Kirk A Roman villa at Langton near Malton, E Yorkshire p 40.

4. P V Addyman 'The Anglo-Saxon house: a new review', Anglo-Saxon England ed. P Clemoes (1972) CUP p 273 ff; P Rahtz 'Buildings and Rural Settlement', Anglo-Saxon England ed. D M Wilson (1977) p 49 ff.
5. P Rahtz 'The Saxon and Medieval Palaces at Cheddar, Somerset - an Interim Report of Excavations in 1960-62' Med. Arch 6-7 (1962-3) p 53 ff.
6. A King 'Gaubert High Pasture, Ribbleshead - an interim report' Viking Age York and the North ed. R A Hall (1978) London p 22 ff.
7. N J Higham 'The Roman Impact upon Rural Settlement in Cumbria', Rural Settlement in the Roman North ed. P Clack and S Haselgrove (1982) p 105 ff.

N J Higham

TUSHINGHAM SJ 523463

A watching brief on the A41 road improvement scheme produced a few sherds of Roman pottery, together with some possible evidence of pre-Roman activity, adjacent to Tushingham School. Despite an intensive search no structural evidence was forthcoming. The site remains under close surveillance.

Footnotes

Thanks are due to Cheshire County Council (Highways) and to the Malpas Field Club for their continued co-operation.

T J Strickland

STRAY FINDS

PREHISTORIC

HENHULL SJ 63405391

Gold bracelet with expanded terminals. Late Bronze Age date. Made from a round gold bar approx. 4 mm in diameter, beaten, except for the terminals, into a flat ribbon approx. 6 mm wide x 1 mm thick. The total length is 173 mm. The bracelet had been opened out with one of the terminals bent inwards.

Dr Joan Taylor, Head of Prehistory, University of Liverpool, who has examined drawings of the bracelet, reports that it is almost identical to one found at Potterne near Devizes, Wiltshire, two from Brean Down, Somerset and two from Llanarmon-yn-Ial near Ruthin. (Dr Taylor has a short article on this new class of gold ribbon bracelets in the forthcoming number of the Wiltshire Archaeological Magazine).

The location of the find so near a Roman road and the deliberate opening out of the bracelet suggests it had been found during the Roman period, perhaps in Wales, retained for its gold, and lost at Henhull en route for somewhere else.

Found and reported to the Police by Mr D Stubbs, 4 Ullswater Avenue, Winsford. (Fig. 32.1 and 32.2).

S.R.W.

MALPAS Area of SJ 488479

Fragment of cast bronze recognisable as part of a very small flat axe of Early Bronze Age type. The butt end is missing and much of the cutting edge. The proportions of the remaining original features suggest an axe of about 70 mm long by about 40 mm at its greatest width.

Several other pieces of bronze of varying age, some recent, have been recovered from the same general area suggesting a hoard of scrap metal. The axe therefore may well be intrusive into the Malpas area. Reported by Mr T G Holman, 31 Millfields, Nantwich. (Fig. 32.2)..

S.R.W.

MALPAS Area of SJ 484470

Spindle whorl of very fine sedimentary rock. One surface is very smooth with a few incised lines (? scratches); the other surface is slightly rougher. Diameter 55 mm. Hour glass perforation. The object is broken and about a third is missing. Found by Mrs A Richards of 2 Welsh View, Church Street, Malpas. (Fig. 33.3).

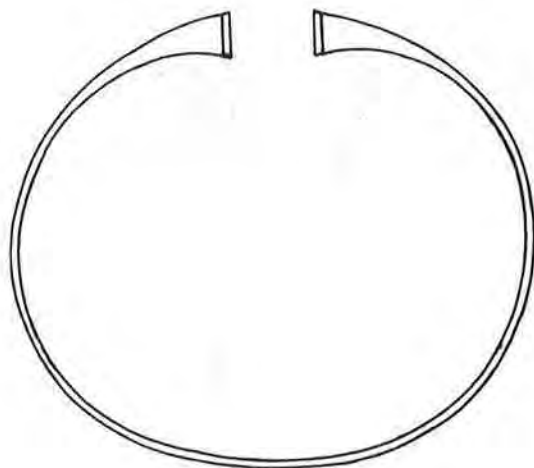
ROMAN

Chester 8030/54
CHESTER SJ 40566559 - 30 Duke Street

A small red sandstone fragment of a column drum was noted and left in situ in the back garden of the above house, March 1983. I am grateful to Mr & Mrs H O Pate for showing me this item (see also below p.105).

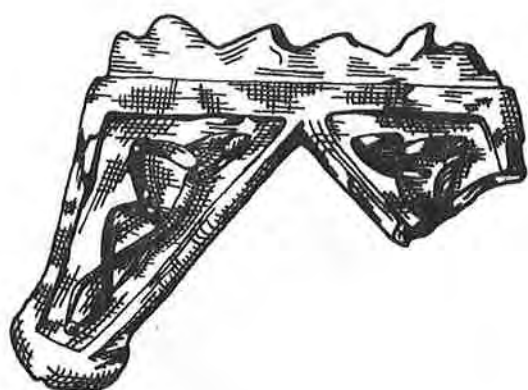
J.A.R.

Fig. 32



1. Gold Bracelet as
reconstructed 1:1

2. Gold Bracelet
as found 1:1



3. Anglo-Saxon Mount 2:1
Drawn by Carolyn Tyson

Fig. 33.1
Lead Seal from Henhull
1:1

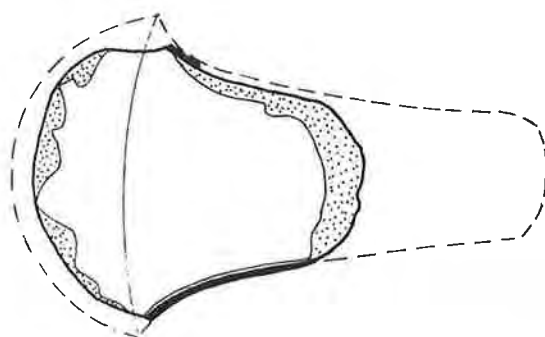
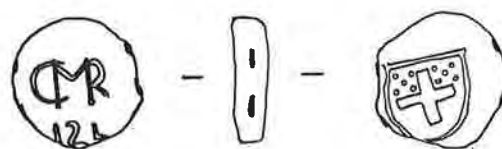


Fig. 33.2
Fragmentary Axehead
from Malpas 1:1

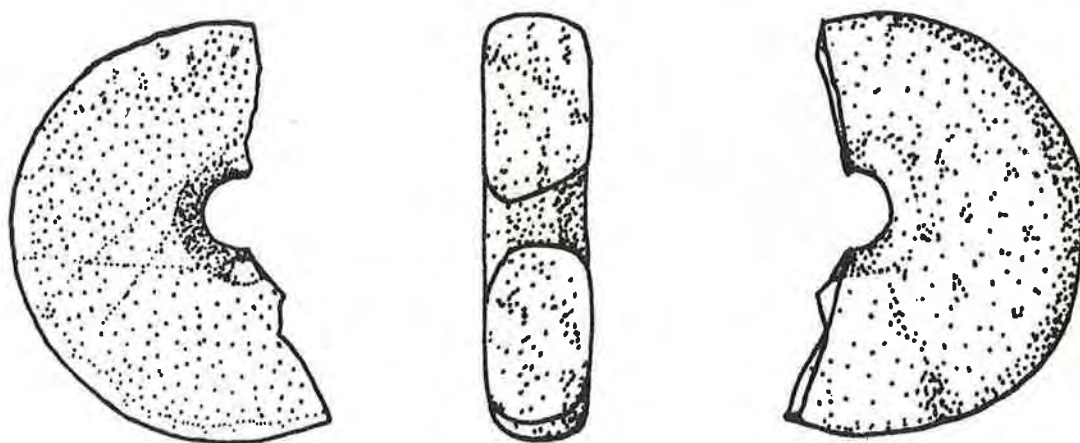


Fig 33.3
Spindle Whorl from Malpas
1:1

CHESTER SJ 411665

Found in the gutter of the slip-road of the City Road roundabout, a large fragment of the footring of a South Gaulish samian dish, from Dr. 18R, dated c. A.D. 80-110. Found by Mr A K Whitehouse, 76 Gladstone Road, Chester and retained by him.

Margaret (Bulmer) Ward

HENHULL SJ 641538

Flared rim of a jar or beaker in green glass. Glass doubled over at rim and fused to the vessel's body. Reported by Mr G Ellis and Mr J Morris of Crewe.

S.R.W.

HENHULL SJ 64815299

Two large salt-boiling pans of lead, found north of Nantwich near the Roman road (RR 700). The exact circumstances and context of the discovery are uncertain. The pans are now in the Salt Museum, Weaver Hall, Northwich. I am grateful to Mr Dennis Petch, Assistant Director (Museums) for Cheshire, for this information.

S.R.W.

POST ROMAN

NANTWICH Find spot unknown

An Eighth-Century Anglo-Saxon Mount (Fig. 32.3).

Our attention has been drawn by Mr John Morris of Crewe to a bronze mount found by him in fieldwalking just outside Nantwich. The mount, which is of cast bronze, measures 27 mm by 39 mm, and takes the form of two triangles joined at their bases and decorated with triangular panels containing single-strand interlace. One of the triangles is incomplete, but the other terminates in a very stylized bird's head. Along the base are the remains of a series of four perforated projections presumably for attaching the mount to a leather or cloth backing. There are faint traces of what may be yellow enamel in the decorated panels.

The mount was probably for a horse harness and belongs to a series of similarly decorated pieces which can be assigned to the eighth and early ninth centuries. The interlace is non-zoomorphic, but stylistically is closely related to that which appears on the mounts from Caenby, Lincs, where the strands have vestigial heads (Akerman, 1855, pl XV). The very stylized birds' heads are reminiscent of the heads of the lacertines on these mounts and on the interlaced pieces from King's Field, Faversham, Kent (Kendrick, 1938, Pl xxxvi, 1) or on that from Hardingstone Down, Northants (Kendrick, 1938, pl xxxvi, 2).

The closest parallel for the interlace design however is to be found on a stylus from Whitby Abbey, Yorks, that has been frequently discussed and illustrated (Wilson, 1964, no 131; Peers & Radford, 1943, 64 and fig. 15,7). The Whitby Stylus has a sub-triangular head with symmetrical interlace on a silver repousse plate. A similar type of interlace, executed in shallow relief, appears on a series of strap fittings from Viking graves. The most notable of these are the mounts from Balladoole, IOM, which Wilson has suggested are of Scottish manufacture (Bersu & Wilson, 1966, 25-26). Similarly simple interlace appears on a fragmentary strap tag from Meols, Cheshire (Bu'Lock, 1972, Fig 9e). Closer in technique to the Nantwich mount is a strap end of English origin from Foss, Sogn og Fjordane, Norway (Bakka, 1965, Pl. 1d).

Although without precise parallel, then, the Nantwich mount nevertheless seems to fit in with a series of eighth century pieces. By the ninth century, interlace was usually being executed in a chip-carved technique, and enamelling had gone out of fashion. Certain features of the Nantwich mount point to an early date in the century. Its great interest lies in the fact that with the exception of a few pieces from Meols and Chester, Anglo-Saxon decorated metalwork is extremely rare in Cheshire, and metalwork of this period is comparatively rare in England as a whole. The proximity of the discovery to Nantwich, one of the Anglo-Saxon salt towns of Cheshire, is also of particular interest, since there is a dearth of evidence for activity there so early in the Saxon period. (Fig.32.3).

References

- | | | |
|-------------------------|------|--|
| Akerman, J | 1855 | <u>Remains of Pagan Saxondom</u> |
| Bakka, E | 1965 | 'Some decorated Anglo-Saxon and Irish metalwork found in Norwegian graves' in Small, A (Ed) <u>Fifth Viking Congress</u> , 32-40 |
| Bu'Lock, JD | 1972 | <u>Pre-Conquest Cheshire</u> |
| Kendrick, T | 1938 | <u>Anglo-Saxon Art to AD 900</u> |
| Peers, C & Radford, CAR | 1943 | 'The Saxon Monastery of Whitby', <u>Arch lxxxix</u> , 27-88 |
| Wilson, DM | 1964 | <u>Anglo-Saxon Ornamental Metalwork 700-1100</u> |

Jennifer Laing
Lloyd Laing

MEDIEVAL

DUTTON Area of SJ 592775

Lead spindle whorl; 3.2 cms. diameter, said to be similar to one illustrated in CAB No. 4, 1976 p. 39. Specimen not submitted for examination. Reported by Mr D Speechly, 15 Kent Close, Bromborough, Wirral.

G.Ch./S.R.W.

DUTTON SJ 59357755

Silver penny of Edward I, II or III. Specimen not submitted for examination. Reported by Mr D Speechly, 15 Kent Close, Bromborough, Wirral.

G.Ch./S.R.W.

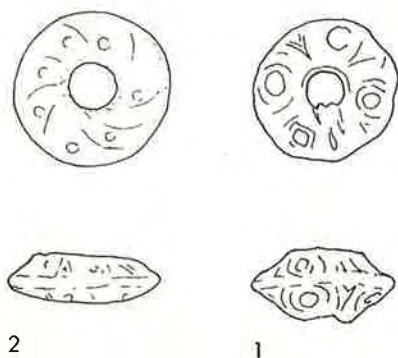
HENHULL SJ 64605313

Dyer's seal in lead, approx. 19 mm dia. x 4 mm thick. Design on one face based on dyer's initials with, perhaps, an indication of the length or weight of the cloth. Design on the other face is presumed to be the badge of the manufacturer or his company or guild. The seal was probably attached to a bale of cloth by means of a tape. In the possession of the finder, Mrs D McLeod. Reported by Mr R Tomlinson, 158 Minshull New Road, Crewe. (Fig.33.1)

S.R.W.

HENHULL SJ 642534

Two lead spindle whorls:-



1. 28 mm dia. x 11 mm thick, with 8 mm diameter central hole. Decorated with dots in concentric circles.
2. 30 mm dia. x 8 mm thick, with 9 mm diameter central hole. Decorated with round blobs in separate compartments on one side and with eight dots set against a catherine wheel motif on the other.

2:3

Both spindle whorls are rather worn. Reported by Mr J Morris of Crewe.

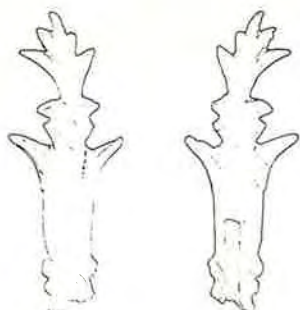
S.R.W.

HENHULL SJ 6426 5332 SJ 6428 5318 SJ 6429 5287

One lead spindle whorl found at each of the above locations. Condition good. Specimens not submitted for examination but presumed to be medieval as several spindle whorls of that period have been found in Henhull. Reported by Mr G Ellis, 225 Badger Avenue, Crewe.

S.R.W.

NANTWICH Find spot uncertain



Lead finial, probably from a small shrine or reliquary. The object has been pushed slightly out of shape. The tip has plainly been broken off in antiquity and the stump allowed to wear down before a new tip was added. Length 118 mm; thickness 10 mm. Grey patination.

S.R.W.

1:3

SMALLWOOD

Area of SJ 803606



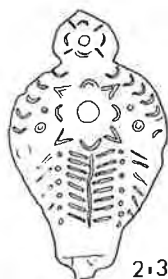
2.3

Pilgrim's flask (ampulla) in lead or pewter, 42 mm long x 31 mm across the body. Two pierced lugs at base of neck. One side plain, other side decorated with a star motif within a circle. Found and reported by Mr D Stubbs, 4 Ullswater Avenue, Winsford.

S.R.W.

WORLESTON

SJ653543



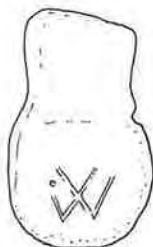
2.3

Belt decoration (or possibly a fastener with the hook missing). Pear shaped, length 54 mm x 32 mm at greatest width x 2 mm thick. Possibly made of bronze but has a ferrous content or has been in contact with iron for some time. The upper surface, which was gilded, is decorated with two flower motifs and with chevrons and small crescents. Condition fairly good. Reported by Mr G Ellis and J Morris of Crewe.

S.R.W.

WORLESTON

SJ 653543



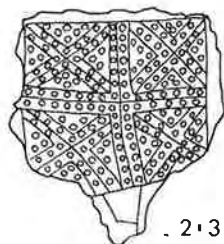
2.3

Pilgrim's flask (ampulla) in lead or pewter. 45 mm long x 29 mm across the body. One side seems to have a W motif and a four-leaved flower or star on the other. Reported by Mr G Ellis and Mr J Morris of Crewe.

S.R.W.

WORLESTON

SJ 65285433



2.3

Belt fastener, bronze with hook missing. Length 42 mm, width 38 mm, thickness 1.5 mm. The upper, decorated face is quartered by incised lines, each quarter being further quartered diagonally. Each quarter is decorated with punched dots and the entire surface is gilded. Condition fragile. Reported by Mr G Ellis and Mr J Morris of Crewe.

S.R.W.

POST-MEDIEVAL

ALDERSEY Area of SJ 455554

Barbed and tanged iron lance or spearhead with attached ferrule. Length 24.4 cms; weight 150 gms. The bottom of the tang has been divided into two strips which have been spirally and tightly wound around the upper end of the ferrule. Condition is pitted and rusty.

The object is too large to be an arrowhead but does not fit into a known spearhead category for the British Isles. The spirally twisted link between tang and ferrule is not normally found on military spears of West European manufacture. The nearest parallel to it has been traced to the Lancashire Fusiliers' military museum where there is a collection of spearheads taken from the Dervishes at the Battle of Omdurman.

I am grateful to Mr J E H Ellis for his patient research and for the advice readily given by the British Museum, the Museum of Mankind and the Tower Armouries, London.

Reported by Mr C L Turner of Marford near Wrexham, Clwyd. (Fig. 34.1)

S.R.W.

CHESTER SJ 40566559 - 30 Duke Street

CHESTER 10/100/17

A collection of 217 fragments of post-medieval vessels together with brick and tile put together while some work was carried out a few years ago on the western side of the property. The material comprises a good range of table-wares and utility types belonging to the latter part of the 17th, 18th and mid-19th centuries. Slipware dishes, mottled wares and three plain Chester clay tobacco pipe bowls, represent fine wares available at the end of the 17th century and the beginning of the 18th century. Fragments of white salt-glaze stoneware and tin-glazed tableware belong to the middle of the century together with black-brown glazed storage vessel fragments which extend into the middle of the 19th century accompanying late creamwares, a large range of white and decorated pearl-glazed earthenware, bone china and other, later stonewares.

I am grateful to Mr and Mrs H O Pate for showing me this material (see also above p. 98). It now forms part of the Education Services teaching collection in the Grosvenor Museum.

J.A.R.

DODLESTON SJ 36256091

Fragmentary objects found in a spoil heap in the churchyard included a piece of an 18th century press-moulded slipware dish, a piece of an 18th century black-brown glazed earthenware chamber pot, and what appears to be the greater part of an iron clapper for a fairly large bell.

S.R.W.

DUTTON SJ 592775

Dutton Hall Farm

Elizabeth I hammered silver threepence. 1561-1577. Coin in poor condition. Found and reported by Mr D Speechly, 15 Kent Close, Bromborough, Wirral.

S.R.W.

DUTTON SJ 59207740

Silver, threepence of Elizabeth I. Condition poor. Specimen not submitted for examination. Reported by Mr D Speechly, 15 Kent Close, Bromborough, Wirral.

G.Ch./S.R.W.

HENHULL Various locations as given below

The following post-medieval coins were reported by Mr G Ellis, 225 Badger Avenue, Crewe:-

SJ 64185321	AR Groat, Mary I, 1553
SJ 63995298	AR Half groat, Charles I, Tower silver, 1625-43
SJ 64155218	AR Sixpence, William III, 1697, Chester Mint
SJ 64185324	AR Sixpence, William III, 1697
SJ 54215313	AR Shilling, William III (date not identified)
SJ 63955299	Quarter merk, James VI of Scotland, 1602

S.R.W.

NANTWICH SJ 64905265

Nine balls of fired clay found below water level at a bend in the River Weaver. Two were submitted for examination and were found to be exactly 67 mm in diameter. Each ball had a 10 mm diameter hole which had been poked through it, presumably with a stick. Probably net sinkers of Victorian or later date. Reported by Mr G Ellis and Mr J Morris of Crewe.

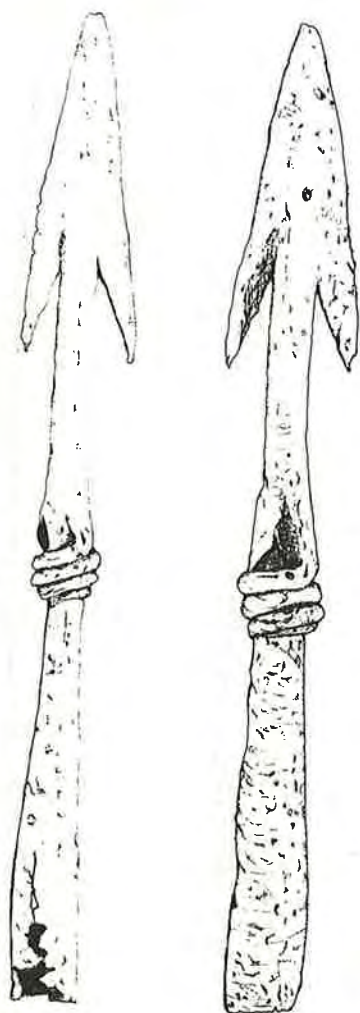
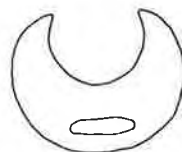
S.R.W.

NANTWICH Find spot unknown

A nearly complete earthenware pot was found on an allotment at Nantwich. The pot is 28 cms high and 13.3 cms wide. The fabric is a hard pinkish-buff earthenware with some small white inclusions. The body of the pot is roughly cylindrical and is then shaped to rise to a point. The piece is finished on a slow wheel but may have been slab made originally. The surface of the pot has impressions of a finely woven cloth and the shaped top has a spiral V-shaped groove incised upon it. The base is a slab of clay rather crudely pinched onto the base of the cylinder.

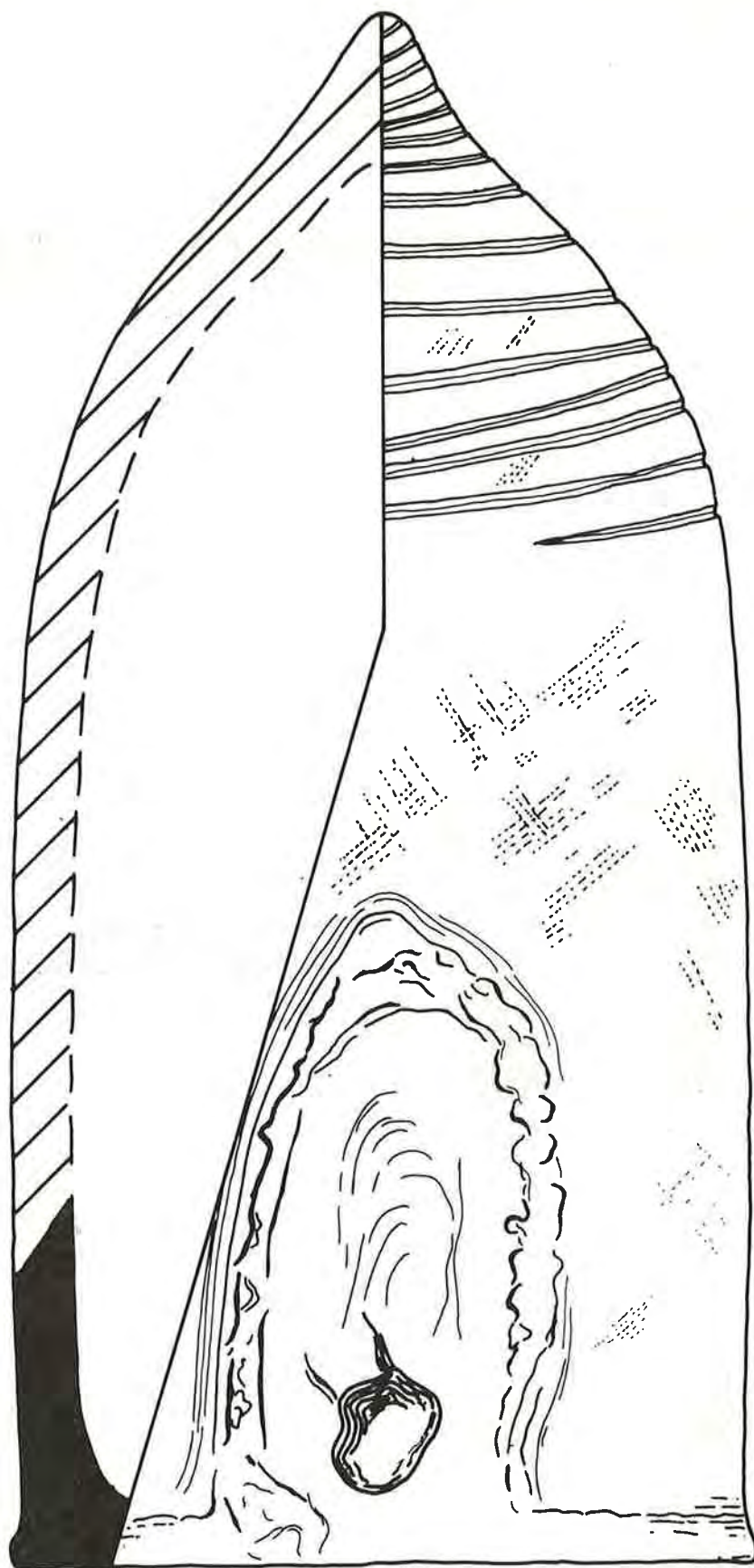
Immediately above the base an irregular hole, c.15 mm in diameter, has been pierced, perhaps by a stick. Above and around this hole a clay structure has been applied which would have covered or enclosed the hole. Most of this structure has been lost and this has helped lead to the difficulty in identifying the function of this vessel.

2. Tile Stamp from
Vale Royal 1:2



1. Spearhead from
Aldersey (Coddington).
1:2

Fig. 34



RCT '83

Fig. 35

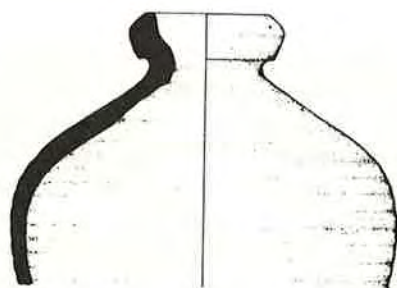
Many inquiries were made before the object was finally identified by Mr K Showler of Gerrards Cross, Bucks, and Mr J Jones of Yew Tree Cottage, Stapeley. They recalled seeing, as boys, such pots being used on farms as water feeders for poultry. The basal hole had a little lip and protective hood so only one or two birds could drink at a time. The jar on its side was filled with water and then stood upright, the lip then filled with water and remained full by syphon action until the jar was empty.

Reported by Mr T G Holman, 31 Millfields, Nantwich. (Fig.35)

R.C.T./S.R.W.

WARRINGTON Area of SJ 60708805

Bridge Street



A jar fragment found on the east side of the road, in a workman's trench, roughly 1 m below the surface. This is part of a Spanish vessel, commonly known as an 'olive jar' used as the name implies to transport olives and olive oil. Probably manufactured near Seville. Although the type has only otherwise been found in Chester in the North-West, ports such as Bristol, London, Southampton and Norwich have produced them in this country, as well as sites in mainland Europe and on the west coast of America (see Davey and Rutter, CAB6, 1978/79). The date range of this type has been given as 16th-17th century.

Find reported by P Williams, Warrington Museum. I am grateful to P H Alebon for his drawing.

J.A.R.

WINSFORD Area of SJ 639699

Vale Royal House (gardens)

Medal or souvenir roundel of ? brass. 45 mm dia. x 2 mm thick.

Obverse side has a classical style head (of the type known as "after the antique") in profile looking left, against a background of punched dots. The whole is contained within a plain border bearing an inscription:-

ANDREAS CRISPVS PAT(AV) INVS AE(RI)MDANT CANDELABRVM(I)

Reverse side has a star-shaped design, each arm of which is formed of a single line of punched dots. The background to this consists of haphazard dots similarly punched.

/Probably

Probably late 18th - early 19th century and a souvenir of a then fashionable grand tour of Europe. Found and reported by Mr N Stonier of Newbold Astbury. (See p.111 below).

S.R.W.

WORLESTON SJ 65205435

Fighting cock spur, bronze, with fragments of leather thong for fastening still visible inside the stock. Overall length of spur and stock 24 mm; greatest diameter of stock 18 mm. Late 18th or 19th century, probably the latter. Reported by Mr G Ellis and Mr J Morris of Crewe.

S.R.W.

UNCLASSIFIED

DISLEY SJ 97696 84444

Celtic Head

A carved head of Celtic-like form can be seen in the south east gable end of a late 17th century cottage, no. 32 Buxton Old Road. Set high up, the head appears to have been carved in limestone, the remainder of the wall being buff gritstone, and was presumably built into the original wall. The head was illustrated on page 4 of CAB No. 8 1982. Whilst detailed comparison with dated examples is necessary to confirm its Pre-Conquest date, another local example, on the keystone of a bridge carrying the track to Coppiceside, Lyme Handley (SJ 96208451), which also carries the date 1844, shows that the practice continued until modern times in this area.

R.C.T.

DUTTON Area of SJ 592775

Lead ring of signet type. Found flattened and heavily encrusted but now cleaned and restored to shape by the finder. Date unknown but possibly late medieval. Reported by Mr D Speechly, 15 Kent Close, Bromborough, Wirral.

G.Ch./S.R.W.

HENHULL SJ 653543



Lead weight or small plumb bob with vertical hole for suspension. Height 16 mm; width 7 mm tapering to 15 mm at the base; dia of hole 4 mm. Reported by Mr G Ellis and Mr J Morris of Crewe.

S.R.W.

HENHULL SJ 63955295

Circular metal object, possibly a weight, decorated with a crown over a C, a dagger, a three-legged ewer with spout and a (?) flower. The object was not sent for identification but a clear line drawing was submitted. The design of the ewer suggests a medieval date. Reported by Mr G Ellis, 225 Badger Avenue, Crewe. (Not illustrated).

S.R.W.

NANTWICH SJ 66065382

Alvaston

Roundel in lead with two pierced lugs for suspension from a cord. 53 mm dia., x 3 mm thick.

Obverse has a design consisting of a shield with the arms of England (three leopards) contained within a border with a legend in Lombardic script. Only a few letters are recognisable and the inscription is unreadable.

Reverse has a cruciform design, apparently of four shields pointing inwards, contained within a raised border.

Condition very worn. The object has the appearance of having been struck from dies and may possibly be a seal. The arms on the obverse suggest a date before AD 1340, when they fell out of use, but the style of lettering suggests that the object cannot be earlier than the 15th century. Found and retained by Mr M Knibbs, 9 Balfour Close, Haslington, Crewe. (Not illustrated).

S.R.W.

WINSFORD Area of SJ 639699

Vale Royal House (gardens)

Bronze crescent shaped tile or brick stamp with embossed Trajanic style lettering in reverse. The back has the remains of a small knob or short handle. Identified by the British Museum as genuinely Roman but unlikely to have been associated with Britain. The likely explanation is that it was acquired by a member of the Cholmondeley family who lived at Vale Royal and who went on a then fashionable tour of Europe in the 18th or 19th century. (see p.109 and Fig 34.2. Also illustration to front cover). Found by Mr N Stonier of Newbold Astbury.

S.R.W.

ADDITIONAL ITEMS

CLWYD

Moel Famau

Tanged and barbed flint arrowhead. Good quality grey flint. Damaged tip. Found on the eastern slopes of Moel Famau by Mr L McKenna of Nantwich. (Reported to the County Archaeologist of Clwyd).

S.R.W.

HAWARDEN

Location unknown

Neolithic axe of grey rock, probably from the Graig Lwyd axe factory, Penmaenmawr. Front (cutting) edge sharp and apparently unused. Sides and butt blunted by polishing. Butt has sustained slight damage by chipping. Found in Hawarden, September 1976 and shown to Grosvenor Museum staff. Find spot and present whereabouts unknown. (Fig.36).

S.R.W.

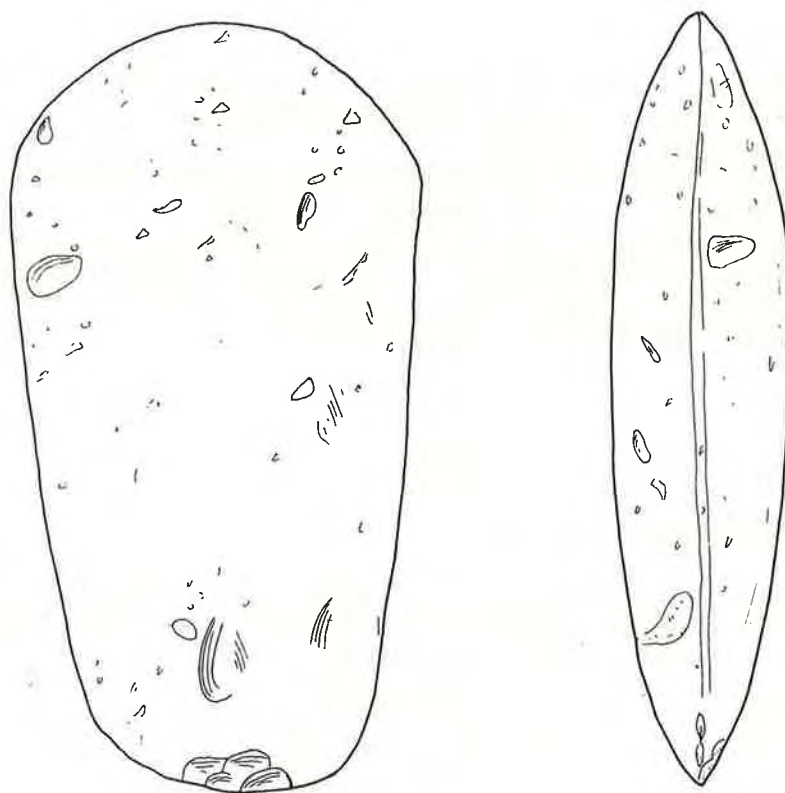


Fig.36
Axe from Hawarden
3:4

OBITUARY

Mr. Geoffrey Bevan

The end of 1983 was saddened by the sudden death, on 8 November, of a long-standing friend of the Grosvenor Museum, Mr Geoffrey Bevan of Wrexham. After a working life spent in the Denbighshire County Architect's Department he turned, after an initial interest in 'ley lines', to archaeology, in which he remained active until the week before his death.

His first venture in this field was in 1967 when, with some friends, he excavated on the enigmatic Roman site at Ffrith. From 1968 to 1981 he walked regularly over the Roman kiln-site at Holt, and his geographical zoning of the pottery he collected will serve as a valuable check on Grimes' tentative conclusions, in his publication of A.T. Acton's excavation, as to what was actually made there. To gain a wider and more thorough background knowledge of archaeology, he helped as a volunteer with the Museum's Excavations Section from 1972. He was a self-confessed 'Romanist' and proud of it, but nevertheless drew post-Roman material, particularly clay pipes, with great skill and alacrity. He was also an active member of the Border Counties Archaeological Group, and helped in 1977 with Professor Barri Jones' excavation of the Roman campaign-base at Rhyn Park.

It was always his declared intention to pass his Holt finds and records to the Grosvenor Museum, and this he did the summer before his death. We are particularly grateful to his sister-in-law and nephews for contacting us quickly concerning the fate of the rest of his archaeological material, and allowing us considerable discretion in its disposal. All this material is for the moment in the keeping of the Grosvenor Museum. He lectured and mounted small displays in the Wrexham area concerning his discoveries, but never published them. However, his copious and precise records still make this both possible and worthwhile.

He was well-liked by members of the Museum staff and, although seventy-nine when he died, mixed well with the steady flow of student volunteers, who enjoyed being regaled with anecdotes and photographs of pre-war Wrexham life.

P. Carrington

Chester : Area of Archaeological Importance

The main provisions of the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979, have already been reported on in the Bulletin (CAB7) and it is, therefore, unnecessary to review the implications of this Act for archaeology. However, it will interest readers to know that the major part of the historic core of the City of Chester, largely but not exactly similar to the existing Conservation Area, has been designated an "Area of Archaeological Importance" under Part II of the Act on 1st March 1984 by the Secretary of State. The Secretary of State has appointed Chester City Council (Grosvenor Museum Excavations Section) as archaeological investigator under the Act. Maps of the designated Area are available from the Field Officer, at the Grosvenor Museum, on request.

T.J. Strickland

Excavation & Sites Observed

1. Chester
2. Willaston
3. Burton
4. Norton Priory
5. Northwich
6. Tatton Park
7. Lyme Handley
8. Chester (Sealand Rd.)
9. Ashton
10. Delamere
11. Tarvin
12. Claverton
13. Foulk Stapleford
14. Eaton-by-Tarporley
15. Grafton
16. Church Shocklach
17. Nantwich
18. Tushingham

