

**PONTEFRACT & DISTRICT  
ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY**

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(Yorkshire Archaeological Society)

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## SECRETARY'S REPORT FOR 1965-6

The last year has not been as exciting or eventful as the previous one. Nevertheless, much work has been done both by individual members and by the Committee.

Our first activity as a Society was arranged by Cr. Gardiner, the then Mayor of Pontefract. On the eighth of May our members visited the Mayor's Parlour where His Worship showed us a large number of old papers which belong to Mr. Gundill. After viewing the documents, members had refreshments kindly prepared by the Mayoress. Needless to say, the outing was much appreciated.

Soon afterwards, our photographer, Mr. Thorpe, obtained permission for members to view the cellars of the Malt Shovel Inn. The attraction here was the unusual construction of the cellars and the strangely carved bosses in the ceiling. A close examination was made, and photographs were taken; but the original use of the cellars is still unknown.

Quite early in the year the restoration work in the Castle Museum was completed. The outer chamber was decorated, and provided with showcases (many of which were given by members and friends of the Society); and the cash desk was modernised. Later, several Committee members were invited to meet the Earl of Rosse in the Museum to discuss future work and arrangements. The result was an animated discussion in which Lord Rosse showed great interest in the work done by our members. We must once again thank the Borough Engineers Dept. and also the castle staff for materials, help and co-operation in the museum work.

Two excursions were organised by Mr. Morris, but unfortunately the first, to Snaith, had to be cancelled at short notice because of the indisposition of our guide. The second, to see the illumination of Fountains Abbey, was very successful, and all the members who went had a most enjoyable time.

As I have mentioned before in my reports, the work of modernising the town of Pontefract is going ahead very quickly. This necessitates much demolition of old property. In the past, individual members have tried to record the details of these buildings with some success. The Committee has now decided to put this on an official footing, and is planning, with the help of the "Photographic Members," to make a full record on film of the town as it is now. This will mean photographing

every street in the town centre from several viewpoints, and some buildings individually. It is hoped to start this work in the late spring.

Once more our members have had an interesting series of lectures. I would like to thank our speakers who have given their time, and Mrs. Lodge, who has taken over as Lecture Sec. I would also like to express the thanks of the Society to Mr. Booth, who carried out the job of Lecture Sec. until 1965.

The collection of books in the Society Library continues to grow. At present it is in the care of Mr. Stubbs, but the Committee is trying to arrange for it to be in a more accessible spot.

As usual our members have worked on excavations all over the country. We find this particularly valuable as it gives the Society a nucleus of members who have experience of many types of sites, and consequently a large volume of knowledge to call upon.

In conclusion I would like to thank our President and the Committee for their help and co-operation. Most members will have heard of our Chairman's (Miss D. Roberts) accident. I am sure they will join with the Committee and me in wishing her a speedy recovery.

E. HOULDER.

## EXCAVATIONS AT PONTEFRAC T PRIORITY 1965

by C. V. BELLAMY, B.Sc., M.I.Biol.

Work continued in the priory site for the ninth season, and again the main centres of interest were on the eastern end of the later church and on the southern end of the dorter range.

A few years ago we made the acquaintance of a wall running eastwards about ten feet north of the polygonal chapter house. Regular diggers know this as wall 13 or M1's wall, and year by year new lengths of this have been encountered as work has proceeded eastwards along the main walls of the church.

Some seventeen feet south another wall ran parallel to wall 13 (wall 28), and fragmentary floor levels connected these. In 1965 we finally reached the eastern end of these two walls and saw them firmly

related by a North-South wall which joined them. This room had a bench along the inner face of the northern wall, and possibly along the southern wall also. An inscribed grave slab was found within the room two years ago. In total the room is about fifty-five feet long and seventeen feet wide. It is crossed by two light wall foundations, probably no more than screens, and has a door on the south side at the top of the passage from the infirmary, and one on the north side almost opposite this.

The relationships between the second and third rebuildings of the eastern arms of the church have puzzled us for the last year or two, but towards the end of the 1964 dig another wall was encountered underneath a huge banking of boulders which had not previously been lifted. This was further examined in 1965 and now shows that the walls (74 & 168), hitherto regarded as residual foundations of the outside walls of the second east end, are in fact sleeper walls for this phase of the building. The true outer walls of the second east end are about seven feet six inches further out. This has been confirmed on the southern side, but not, so far, on the northern side. It would now seem that the second east-end was slightly over sixty feet wide, and extended about 130 feet east of the chancel arch. The rest of its outline should be planned during the 1966 season.

Mr. Nicholson continued work at the southern end of the dorter range in an area not previously excavated. He found the complex of walls and reconstructions which have always been a feature of the southern ranges of buildings, and obviously here again drastic alterations have been made during the life of the priory, and accommodation has been put to various uses.

Last season, working immediately east of the site opened in 1965, Mr. Nicholson encountered a major drain at a depth of about fourteen feet below present ground level.

This was again found this year, and now seen as an open or unroofed channel across the width of the dorter range. Clearly it has functioned as the rere-dorter of the monks, though not, we think, from the earliest occupation. The stone-built conduit which feeds this rere-dorter with water and is the structure seen in 1964, has been traced backwards down the field towards the stream for over fifty feet, and it is hoped that its point of origin from the stream can be determined in 1966. Similarly the return channel, taking water back towards the stream, has

been traced (at least by rodding) for about thirty feet. This part of the priory excavation has now, therefore, moved on to the lower terrace of the field, though still about fifty feet from the stream.

At the more superficial levels, Mr. Nicholson had other curious features, particularly the six saddled-shaped stones which seemed to have been prepared to carry timber joists or some similar structural material and for which no satisfactory explanations have yet been given.

The rere-dorter does not complete the excavation of the dorter range because the main walls were seen continuing further southwards. Our trenches are, however, now south of the modern sewer trench, so further exploration may be free of that particular complication.

During the closing months of 1965, the Leeds Thoresby Society published the long-awaited report on the earlier excavations. The report was written to cover the years 1957-1961, and is fairly comprehensive for this part of the work. Whilst it was going through the press, briefer notes were incorporated to indicate the work done in 1962 and 1963. In the preface of the report I have tried to express my thanks to all those who have taken part in the digs over the successive years, and particularly to those who have contributed drawings, data, and other information which is used in the report.

As many of the people concerned are members of the P.D.A.S. may I repeat those thanks here. We are grateful for the help you have all given, and look forward to seeing you on the site again when we open on April 8th, 1966.

C.V.B.

## WARRANT FOR THE REPAIR OF PONTEFRACT CASTLE\*

Transcribed by H. BATTYE and checked by J. COXT

JUNE 15th, 1618.

JAMES BY THE GRACE OF GOD ETC. To our trusty and well beloved Sir Humfry May knight, Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancashire now being, and to the Chancellors of the said Duchy that hereafter shalbe

and to our trusty and well beloved Sir Richard Molineaux knight and Baronett our Receavour Generall of the said Duchy now being, and the Receavour Generall there that hereafter shalbe and to his and their Deputie and Deputies for the tyme being and to every — of them. Whereas being here to fore informed of the great decayes of our castle of Pontefract in our county of York, being the principall and most ancient seat of our Dukedom of Lancastor: wee in our princely care to prevent the ruynes of a monument of such antiquity and goodly building and in the performance of the covenant made with our dearest consort the Queen for repaying the said castle at our own charge the same being granted to her in joynture did give special commandment for a particular survey of the severall decayes therof to be made with an estimate of the quantitie of tyMBER needfull for the worke and of all manner of charges with the repaying thereof would necessarily require. And whereas wee understand by the certificate of Francis Carter chief clerke of our werks who was specially employed in that survey that for the repairing of the said castle and buildings thereonto belonging in such manner asshalbe fitt. Four our honour and service there wilbe necessarily required the some of three thousand pounds in money and one hundred loads of tyMBER which maybe conveniently had and spared either in our woods called Wakefield woods, or, in Ackworth parke or some other of our lands of the said Duchy neere adjoining to the said castle: the charge and oersight of which said worke and reparations wee have comitted to the said Ffrancis Carter and the receipt issuing and accounting for our said monyes to Robt. Wilson gent the present keeper of the said castle. Our will and pleasure therefore is and wee will command you our the said Receavor Genral of our said Duchy for the tyme being and your Deputie and Deputies that of such our treasure as is, for shalbe from tyme to tyme romayning in your hands of the revenues of our Duchy aforesaid, you pay and deliver to the said Robt. Wilson from tyme to tyme such severall some and somes of money not exceeding the some of three thousand pounds in the wholl, as by certificates under the hand — the said Ffrancis Carter or other our overseer of the said worke for the tyme being; shalbe from tyme to tyme required for the occasions of that our boire (?) the said moneys to be delivered to the said Robt. Wilson in prest.

\*transcripts of Crown-Copyright records in the Public Record Office appear by permission of the Controller of H.M. Stationery Office.  
ref. . . .Ibid 33, Calendar's Estate Papers, Domestic Vol. XCVIII.

† commas added to aid clarity

## EXCAVATIONS ON THE ROMAN FORT OF OLICANA, ILKLEY

JULY - AUGUST, 1965

by K. WILSON

During July and August 1965, excavations took place on the west wall of the fort of Olicana. The excavation was sponsored by the Ilkley U.D.C. and directed by the writer. Among the number of volunteers who took part were several members of the Pontefract Archaeological Society.

A number of trenches were opened at right-angles to and crossing the west wall of the fort, and the baulks were later removed. This revealed a length of wall 68ft. long to the N.W. corner of the fort. In parts the exposed wall is well preserved and is standing to a height of four feet at the south end, tapering down to two feet at the N.W. corner.

A trench was opened down the side of the west wall of the Manor House. This revealed the Roman wall standing five courses high with the foundations of the Manor House built upon it.

Further investigation exposed a drain of late Roman origin and built of reused stone. This ran parallel to the robbed north wall of the fort and a few feet inside it. 45 feet of this were opened but it showed signs of continuing in the direction of the north gate. The drain consists of two parallel walls standing 3 feet high — one capping stone was found in place; another had fallen into the drain but was restored to its original position.

During the course of the excavations the foundations of a corner of a late 14th century building were found. These stood to 6 feet in height and extended westwards from the wall of the fort into the ditch.

Since the completion of the excavation the Ministry of Public Building and Works have given a further grant towards the cost of grouting and pointing. The wall is to be left open permanently for public view.

Olicana is the only Flavian fort in Yorkshire where there are visible remains above the surface, and this added attraction to Ilkley is largely due to the efforts of the Pontefract Archaeological Society.

## REPORT ON THE EXCAVATION OF NEWSTEAD MOAT. S.E.460381

by H. E. J. Le PATOUREL

This homestead moat, excavated on behalf of the Ministry of Public Building and Works, was situated a mile and a quarter from the nearest village. The complex moat system, fed by diversion of a natural stream, enclosed rather more than six acres, sloping gently southwards at a height between 125 and 100 feet O.D. Though comparatively well-drained areas lay within the complex, the inner island, some 90 feet square, was on clay, artificially raised above the level of the surrounding area which tended to flood after rain. This island was stripped. On it were a succession of timber houses, of which the first two were represented by post-holes; the third, timber built on limestone stylobates, surrounded a cobbled courtyard. Documentary evidence suggests a late thirteenth-century date for the first phase; pottery associated with the third seems to belong to the fifteenth-century. On the south-west corner of the island a farmhouse of seventeenth-century date obliterated earlier evidence in that area. A moat, some 7 feet deep, varying at different periods between 12 and 22 feet in breadth, together with a perimeter wall on the island belonging to the second phase, formed a rudimentary defensive system. Extensive sampling of the area between the moats produced nothing of earlier date than the eighteenth century save a dove-cote in the south-east corner of the southern enclosure.

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*Hon. Sec. :*

E. Houlder, Eroan, 27 Northfield Drive, Prall Lane, Pontefract  
Telephone 2995

*Assistant Sec. :* C. Wells, 46 Love Lane, Pontefract  
Telephone 3113

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## INFORMATION FOR VISITORS

We should like to draw the attention of visitors and intending visitors to the service offered by our Society. For some years now we have been able to act as guides to the various sites in the town, especially the Castle. Normally you will find one or more of our members at the Castle during the summer weekends, but to be on the safe side, drop a S.A.E. to our secretary and he will do all he can to help you.

With regard to visits to the Castle — the dungeons are not normally open to the public, but arrangements can be made, and intending visitors should write to the town clerk for permission to view them. However, it should be understood that he will only grant such permission on the understanding that all persons enter the dungeons at their own risk and are accompanied by a recognised guide. When making your plans for your outing, please allow at least three hours for a visit to the Castle, as to see the ruins, museum and dungeons takes quite a time (that is, if you wish to see everything).

The Castle is not the only place of interest, of course — there is also the Hermitage, an underground chamber cut out by Peter the Hermit, consisting of a spiral staircase leading to a small, now unfortunately blocked up, living room, with a second stairway leading to the Oratory with a stone altar. The Hermitage is underneath the Pontefract General Infirmary and therefore is not open to the public, but arrangements can be made by permission of the Matron (provided the time of the visit is convenient).

The site of the Priory of St. John is well worth a visit, too, when excavations are in progress, but not otherwise as the site is all underground and at the moment there is little hope of its being opened up permanently.

The church of All Saints has many interesting features and is quite near the Castle. Partly ruined during the sieges, the Church has the unusual feature of having the Transepts and Choir only in use, the Nave and Aisles being in ruins.

St. Giles's Church is not as old as All Saints'. It stands in the market place near yet another local oddity — the Butter Cross with its pump, the pump being given to the town by Elizabeth the First.