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ONE SHILLING.

ACTING HONORARY SECRETARY'S REPORT 1968/69

The last year has not been a very active one for the Society as such, but individual members have interested themselves in many activities.

We had a number of members actively engaged at the 1968 Sutton Hoo excavation including Messrs. D. Thorpe, F. Morris, E. Houlder, D. Lodge and T. Carney. Our President, Mr. D. Thorpe, has been appointed Official Photographer there for 1969. Members have also assisted at digs at Flaxton, Otley and Womersley. We were pleased to have a visit from our member who lives in the United States. Mr. and Mrs. Walker spent a day with us in December 1968.

Our Secretary, Mr. E. Houlder, is directing a rescue dig in Welbeck Street, Castleford, from which a very large amount of pottery showing occupation probably from mid 2nd Century has been found.

The site at Wentbridge continues to yield more sherds of Romano-British pottery, and now spreads over three fields. Trial holes have so far not pin-pointed the site.

A statistical analysis of Pontefract Non-denominational Graveyard near to All Saints Church was undertaken by Mrs. D. Arundel, Miss A. Glover and Messrs. D. Lodge and F. Morris. After clearing away masses of undergrowth, 131 epitaphs were discovered from the early 19th Century. The names of important local families occur frequently.

The Annual Open Day at Pontefract Castle, which this time coincided with Battle of Britain Sunday, was held in conjunction with the Royal Air Forces Association. It was very successful, over 700 visitors were conducted round the Magazine by members of the Society.

Through the kindness of Mr. and Mrs. P. Blackburn, members inspected the premises of Messrs. G. A. Blackburn and Son in Market Place, Pontefract. The shop incorporates part of the Star Inn, one of the old coaching inns of Pontefract. It possesses many features of interest including windows and doorways of 17th Century date. We would like to think that the massive stones in the cellars came from the demolition of Pontefract Castle.

We have had a very interesting series of lectures this winter which have received good public support and I would like to thank all our speakers.

In conclusion I would like to thank our Chairman and the Committee for their support and work done over the year.

C. J. BAINES.

Hon. Secretary.

A RESCUE EXCAVATION IN WELBECK STREET, CASTLEFORD.

by E.Houlder.

The site is situated twenty three feet eastward of Welbeck Street at a point where a line along the kerb from the west pillar of the railway subway entrance at a distance from the pillar of 113 feet 4 inches, ends. The Nat.Grid ref. is :- S.E.426255, and is on sheet S.E.42 of the O.S.2 $\frac{1}{2}$ inch map, and sheet 97, (York) 1 inch O.S.map. Welbeck Street overlies part of the Roman road formerly known as Ermine Street but referred to in Margary (1) as 28b. For most of the Roman occupation 28b was a part of the great highway between Londinium and Corstopitum, and this section of it is mentioned in Iters V & VIII of the Antonine Itineraries. The south gate of the Roman fort was probably near the spot where Welbeck Street now meets Carlton Street, and so it would not be unreasonable to expect part of the vicus or civil settlement to flank Welbeck Street and Beancroft road, which is its continuation to the south.

The east side of the street was until recently occupied by a row of mid-nineteenth century industrial dwellings. These having been demolished, the site is at present (Jan.1969) scheduled for re-development. During October 1968 the upper part of a Roman pottery vessel was discovered on the surface in the spoil removed by a mechanical excavator which was engaged in digging test holes in preparation for re-development. The Castleford and District Historical Society sought the advice of Mr.J.Radley of the R.C.H.M., York, and he suggested a small test excavation to help clarify the extent of R.B. settlement in the area. Work started on October 27th under direction of the Chairman, Mr.E. Houlder and is still in progress. The Castleford Society would like to acknowledge the assistance given by the Town Clerk of Castleford, Mr.E.Hutchinson, by Castleford Corporation, by the staff of Castleford Library and Museum, by Mr. Radley of the Royal Commission, and by the individual members of the Society who have worked often in near-impossible conditions on a very

(1). Ivan D.Margary, ROMAN ROADS IN BRITAIN, vol.2 (1957)

uncomfortable site. Much remains to be done so this report must be regarded as interim only. The Castleford Society hopes eventually to publish the site in detail as it appears that it will prove important in its contribution towards the history of the town.

A preliminary examination of the site resulted in the laying out of a grid of six foot squares using three foot baulks. At the present time baulks have been removed to make one fifteen foot square, and extension of the grid to the north is planned. It was discovered that the mid-nineteenth century houses had been built upon a thin concrete raft which seemed to extend over the whole site. Beneath the raft was a layer of clean, dark, soil containing shards of R.B. pottery and bones. Absence of distinctive stratification in this soil probably indicates that prior to the mid-nineteenth century, the area was cultivated. In some places it had been levelled before building with a lighter coloured more clayey earth. At a depth of approx. 38" from present road level a fallen wall foundation appeared running east-west along the northern side of the excavation. Associated with it were several features including some which could indicate a destruction level. Finds include pottery from 1st to 4th centuries, various bronze objects including a small spoon, part of the lower stone of an imported quern(built into the wall(?)) portions of a cremation scattered by later activity, and various indications of glassworking, though none as yet in a stratified context.

So far the evidence would seem to indicate that the stone work is the remains of a low wall, probably continued upwards in timber and wattle. It is possibly of fourth century construction and probably overlies other buildings of an earlier phase or phases. That the site was occupied through the R.B. period is indicated by the re-use of the quern in the later wall, and the scattering of the cremation as occupation moved outwards from the fort gates covering land once used for burials. The continuation of the excavation will probably resolve this.

NEW EVIDENCE REGARDING STUMP CROSS AND ITS ORIGIN.

S.E.469234

by E.Houlder.

Stump Cross stands on the south side of Ferrybridge road at the point where Stump Cross Lane joins it. On the opposite side of the road is the entrance to Darkfield Lane. It is possible that Darkfield Lane and Stump Cross Lane formed part of an old road which crossed the Wash Beck at Bubwith House (S.E.472229) and was aligned on the old Ferry at Ferry Fryston. This however is a subject for more research and it is hoped to submit a paper on it eventually.

In 1530 Cardinal Wolsey confirmed over five hundred local children around a great stone cross a quarter of a mile from Ferrybridge. Lorenzo Padgett (1) was unable to find evidence that this cross was indeed Stump Cross which is in fact about a mile from the older part of Ferrybridge, but as there is no other known cross which fits the circumstances it is likely that Stump Cross was the one.

Forrest (2) writing a century ago examines various opinions regarding its origins most of which suggest that it was Roman. He then discusses the illustrations of the lost upper portion in the Gough edition of Camden's 'Britannia,' (see fig.1) and comes to the conclusion that it was Saxon or Norman.

Whilst engaged in some research necessitating use of the 'Britannia,' the present writer had occasion to examine the illustration of Stump Cross. It reminded him of two transparencies in his own collection which were of a stone rescued from the walls of Bubwith House farm. Prints were made from the transparencies (3) and tracings made from these (fig.1). Allowing for differences in perspective due to camera angle, it will be seen that the stone in question, two sides of which are illustrated, is almost certainly part of the shaft of Stump Cross. The photographs were taken in 1960 at the home of the person who rescued the stone prior to the demolition of the farm.



Fig.1. STUMP CROSS S.E.469234

On the left tracings from two of the illustrations in Camden's 'Britannia,' Gough Edition. On the right tracings from the photographs taken by the present writer in 1960.

E.H.

Naturally the tracings do not show all details of the carvings, but it will be seen that the earlier representation was substantially correct. The carving of the mailed man is of interest as the broad sword, kite shield, and long hauberk is typical of the Norman period. The seated figure is almost certainly medieval too.

With the origin of the monument no longer in any doubt, there is room for speculation regarding how the stone came to be built into the farm, and why. In an area where good building stone is freely available it is difficult to see why this particular stone was carried several hundred yards and then included as part of the wall of a mere outbuilding.

1. Padgett L. CASTLEFORD AND DISTRICT IN THE OLDEN TIME, 1904 p.100.
2. Forrest C. HISTORY AND ANTIQUITIES OF KNOTTINGLEY, 1871 p.4 & 128.
3. Ref.Nos. 161/3 & 162/3.

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EXPLORATORY EXCAVATION AT WENTBRIDGE

ON 20TH OCTOBER, 1968

An exploratory excavation was carried out at WENTBRIDGE on 20th October, 1968. The excavation area is situated on an escarpment, on the north side of the SWISS COTTAGE HOTEL and runs parallel with the old A.1 route to the north. The O.S. MAP (SHEET 97) informs us that the excavation area stands 210 ft. above sea level.

It is interesting to note that during the course of the past eighteen months, fragments of ROMAN POTTERY have been found lying on or near the surface in this area, and in view of the geographical position the site holds, it was felt that the area in question was worth further examination.

We had to meet the needs of the owner of the land with regard to the lifting of the season's harvest, etc. However, thanks to MR. BAINES, arrangements were made with the farmer, M.R CARR, who had no objection to the SOCIETY carrying out exploratory work on his land.

Three excursions were made to the site. The first and second visits were spent walking round the area and much discussion took place.

The thought uppermost in our minds at this stage, of course, was deciding where to put in our test trenches. Several suggestions were put forward at the time, and the most interesting one to my mind was put forward by TERRY CARNEY and DERRICK THORPE. Both felt that if any building foundations were located in the area they would not be found in the field where the fragments of pottery had been found. MR. CARNEY and MR. THORPE favoured moving further WESTWARD along the ridge towards CARLETON.

We found lying on the surface several fragments of pottery, since identified as ROMAN and MEDIAEVAL. This created more than a little interest, and it was decided that test trenches would be dug when the field became available.

Therefore on 20th October, 1968 seven test trenches were excavated, the largest being 10ft. x 3ft. Unfortunately this trench produced nothing in the way of pottery, or any item which could have provided us with some kind of directive. It is interesting to note that there is only roughly 12" of top soil which rests on a bed of carboniferous limestone; deep ploughing, of course, is quite out of the question in this area.

We back-filled our first trench, and it was then decided to put in a series of 2ft. square trenches at 20ft. intervals, using our original trench to orientate from. By adopting this method we were able to work fairly rapidly.

Again we were confronted by a thin layer of top soil. However, trenches A. and C. produced two pieces of pottery not yet identified.

Not to be dismayed, and in conclusion, we do feel that the area in question is worth further examination. When one considers the commanding position of the ridge, and its proximity to the ROMAN ROADS in the area, it conjures up all kinds of questions. Could the field be the site of a ROMAN FORTRESS like the one at BAWTRY, or a ROMAN FARMSTEAD like the one at DRAX, or were the ROMANS the first people to extract the limestone for which this area is so prolific?

F. MORRIS.

A ROMAN SITE AT WOMERSLEY QUARRY
(AN INTERIM REPORT ON EXCAVATIONS, 1968)

by

M. J. DOLBY, A.M.A.,

(Keeper of Antiquities, Doncaster Museum)

THE SITE

The site is situated on the northern edge of Womersley Quarry, in the parish of Womersley, at National Grid Reference SE 524196.

In early July 1968, Miss S. Leek, an undergraduate student reading archaeology at the University of Wales, Cardiff, brought into the Doncaster Museum for examination 2 beehive-shaped gritstone querns and a number of sherds of Romano-British coarse pottery, which had been found the previous weekend by her father, a quarry employee, during clearance of top-soil along the edge of the quarry prior to quarrying operations. Realising that a Roman site might be in danger of destruction, museum staff visited the site in order to make a detailed investigation of the discovery.

THE EXCAVATION

On the first visit to the site, it was discovered that the clearance of top-soil had proceeded parallel to the quarry face to a distance of about 90 feet from the edge of the quarry, and about 25 feet from the field boundary, a poorly-preserved hawthorn hedge, which had been augmented by a steel stake and sheep-netting fence. In the soil-clearance operations, upwards of 2 feet of loamy top-soil had been removed from the old field surface to reveal a large undulating expanse of highly-weathered Upper Magnesian limestone. In spite of the confusion and disturbance on the site, traces of a coursed wall were noticed, bedded into the limestone surface, aligned in an approximate north-south direction, and disappearing under the uncleared area towards the north.

In view of the imminent destruction of the area by quarrying, steps were immediately taken to commence an emergency excavation. Work carried out on the site during July by a team of university undergraduates working on behalf of the Doncaster Museum, and supervised by Mr. P. C. Buckland of Birmingham University, resulted in the tracing of the remainder of the wall noticed during the preliminary visit, and the recognition of the ensuing feature as a T-shaped corn-drying kiln, a common occurrence on Roman sites from southern

England to the East-Riding of Yorkshire, and normally associated with villas and farmsteads.

The Corn-Drying Kiln

The corn-drying kiln had been cut from the Roman level through the marly subsoil and into the upper layer of limestone beneath. It was constructed in the drystone technique, yet bonded with clay between the stones, using thin horizontally-laid slabs of selected but untrimmed limestone. The structure was aligned in an approximate north-south direction, with the main flue, forming the vertical stroke of the T-shape positioned north-south, and the cross-flue, forming the horizontal stroke of the T, aligned east-west at the northern end. The firing chamber for the kiln would have been at the southern end of the main flue, but all traces of this feature had been destroyed during the clearance operations, leaving a hollow stretching some 2 feet beyond the main flue, as wide as the flue itself and rounded at its southern extremity.

The Kiln appears to have worked on the following principle. The flues of the kiln would have been covered over with large flat slabs of stone, and the corn heaped upon the slabs. A fire was lit in the firing chamber, and a draught through the cross-flue drew hot air along the main flue, thereby drying the corn above.

On discovery, the kiln flues were filled with orange-brown loamy subsoil, and removal of the filling yielded a few pieces of animal bone, several small iron nails, probably from the sole of a shoe, and part of the rim of a mortarium in buff fabric, of 3rd century type, thereby dating the kiln to not earlier than the 3rd century.

The main dimensions of the kiln were as follows:-

Overall length 10' 2"

Overall width 7' 3"

Width of main flue (maximum) 1' 10"

Width of cross-flue (maximum) 1' 3"

Depth (from existing top of cross-flue wall to floor of flue) 1' 10"

Thickness of cross-flue wall (average) 7"

In the north wall of the cross flue, a maximum of 7 courses of stone had survived, and, whereas the mode of construction for the eastern wall of the main flue had been thin coursing throughout, as in the cross flue, the western wall consisted of thin coursing in part, and the rest was of orthostatic construction, suggestive, perhaps, of some rebuilding having taken place.

After the kiln had been recorded, the structure was dismantled for re-erection at the new Minsthorpe High School, South Elmsall.

The Corn-Drying Kiln Area

Further excavation in the area of the corn-drying kiln, to the west of the kiln itself, revealed traces of a circular or sub-circular stone-built structure, destroyed down to the lowest course. This feature possessed a floor constructed mainly of clay, much of which had suffered from burning, but a small area on the interior of the feature had been flagged in stone. The eastern end of this feature appeared to have been aligned with the north wall of the cross-flue of the corn-drying kiln, suggesting a possible connection between the two features. This circular feature seemed to overlie an earlier circular feature, which survived only as a small number of limestone slabs which marked the lowest course and which were orientated north-south and curved eastwards at both ends. One slab of the earlier feature which was situated on the line of the wall of the later feature possessed a man-made groove in its upper surface, as though an attempt had been made to split the stone in order to make it conform with the line of the later structure.

Nearby, to the west, a small, roughly-built stretch of coursed limestone wall was discovered 6 feet long and 3 courses high aligned approximately north-south, which had been destroyed by soil clearance at its southern end and stopped abruptly at its northern end. In close proximity to this wall, on the east side, a rough block of limestone 15" long, $10\frac{1}{2}$ " wide and $6\frac{1}{4}$ " high was discovered which possessed a man-made hollow in its upper surface $3\frac{1}{2}$ " in diameter and $1\frac{1}{4}$ " deep with two diametrically-opposed slots $\frac{1}{2}$ " long, 1" wide and $\frac{3}{4}$ " deep radiating from it (a door-pivot block?). Although the block was found with the hollow uppermost, it was impossible to say whether the block was in situ, or had been re-used for some other purpose.

It was unfortunate that the major portions, i.e. the southern portions, of all the above structures had been destroyed during the clearance of topsoil from the site, and features which may have shed some light on the purpose and date of the structures might have already been destroyed by the time the site was first inspected.

During the removal of the baulk which was left running east-west across this part of the site, a portion of a bronze penannular brooch was found in the subsoil within the circular feature, but little pottery or other material

was found, which might have given information on the dating and purpose of these damaged features.

The Roman Ditch

About 150 feet west of the corn-drying kiln area, aligned in an approximate north-south direction, a linear hollow feature was observed, cut into the limestone in the area cleared of top-soil, running to the edge of the quarry on the south side, and appearing to continue northwards into the undisturbed area near the hedge. The line of this feature, which was found on excavation to have been a ditch of Roman date, was more noticeable after rain, when water stood in the hollow, thereby contrasting sharply with the drier ground on either side of the feature. Workmen closely connected with the quarrying operations, when questioned, could clearly remember the ditch appearing in section in the area which has now been quarried away, and stated that the ditch continued southwards into the quarry for at least another 10 yards along the same alignment. No return of the ditch, either eastwards or westwards was however noticed in the quarried area. Since any return of the ditch would probably have run roughly parallel to the quarry face and would have been difficult to discern, it is likely that such a return of the ditch may have disappeared unnoticed. It is possible, too, that the ditch, a common feature of villa and farmstead sites, may have once indicated the boundary of the site.

The filling of the ditch from the hedge on the north to a point 30 feet south of the hedge was excavated. At the southern end of the excavated area, most of the ditch filling had already been removed during the clearance of topsoil, and less than a foot of the ditch remained to a point 15 feet south of the hedge, which marked the northern limit of disturbance. In September, after the crop in the field to the north of the quarry had been harvested, 4 exploratory trenches were cut in the field, which established that the ditch continued northwards along the same alignment for a distance of at least 50 feet into the field. The ditch filling throughout consisted of a mixture of small to medium sized pieces of limestone and orange-brown clayey loam, and no stratification could be observed in the filling for the most part, suggesting that the ditch might have been back-filled deliberately at a single time, soon after it had been constructed, since little silting at the ditch base was observed to indicate that the ditch was in use for any length of time.

At a point 8 feet south of the hedge, 2 pits were found to have been cut

into the filling of the ditch. The more southerly pit, pit 2, partially cut pit 1, and was obviously the later feature. Both pits had been cut into the limestone below the ditch floor, pit 1 being the deeper, continuing to a depth of 14 inches below the ditch floor, some 7 inches deeper than the lowest level of pit 2. The lowest 8 inches of the filling of pit 2 consisted of loose black soil in which there were fewer pieces of stone than in the orange-brown filling above, probably indicating silting of the base of the pit prior to its being filled up. The line of the western edge of the larger pit, pit 1, was barely noticeable in section to indicate the level from which the pits had originally been dug but, since the upper parts of both pits had been cut into the eastern edge of the ditch, it is likely that the ditch had been almost completely filled up when the pits were dug, and by this time not enough of the line of the ditch was visible for the pits to be centrally positioned within the ditch filling.

The finds from the ditch filling give but little evidence for the date of construction of the ditch, its purpose, its period of use, or the cause for its being filled in. A number of sherds of Roman coarse pottery were found, but none of this pottery was diagnostic enough for a close date to be given to it, except to say that, from the absence of both obviously early and late forms, the pottery would tend to fit into a 3rd century context quite well. A large number of bones of domestic animals occurred in the filling, as did many burnt and broken pebbles and some pieces of slabs of micaceous sandstone, which must have been brought to the site from the Coal Measures several miles to the west, possibly for use as roofing or flooring slabs, or even as slabs for covering the flues of the corn-drying kiln.

The most surprising finds from the ditch, from the upper part of the ditch filling in each case, were the remains of 4 human infants, found buried separately along a 20 foot stretch of the ditch, from the southern-most, which was found 11 feet south of the hedge, to the most northerly, found some 8 feet north of the hedge. Those burials seemed to have inserted unceremoniously into the very top of the ditch filling, and their presence in such circumstances is difficult to explain satisfactorily. There is no evidence present to suggest the cause of death of any of the infants and it may only be conjectured as to whether death was due to natural causes, or to the common Roman practice of infanticide, perhaps as a form of population control when there was a grave danger of the population on the site outstripping the economic resources.

The Field to the North of the Quarry

After the wheat crop in the field to the north of the quarry had been harvested, a proton magnetometer survey was carried out over the area of the field adjacent to the site. The close proximity of high voltage electricity cables resulted in some interference in the magnetometer readings, but nothing was recorded in the survey to suggest that any areas of highly differing magnetic field were present.

In addition, the surface of the field was searched systematically, in the hope that some evidence, in the form of structural debris and pottery, might have been present to have given some indications of the situation of the occupation area with which the corn-drying kiln and other features must have been associated. Although the soil cover on the field is relatively shallow, nothing more than a few worn pieces of Roman pottery were found scattered on the surface, indicating that there is unlikely to be any substantial building of Roman date lying beneath the surface of the field.

THE DATE OF THE SITE

The corn-drying kiln and its surrounding area produced surprisingly little pottery and other datable material when excavated, although the finding of the mortarium rim of 3rd century date in the filling of the kiln provides useful dating evidence for the kiln itself. T-shaped corn-drying kilns generally appear to be late features on sites where they can be dated, and it is therefore likely that the Womersley kiln was built and in use during the late 3rd or early 4th century. The finding of part of a bronze penannular brooch in the area of the kiln might tend to confirm activity during the later part of the Roman period. On the other hand, sherds of Central Gaulish terra sigillata found on and around the site would imply that occupation in the vicinity had been established by the mid 2nd century. The apparent alignment of the wall of the sub-circular feature with the north wall of the cross-flue of the corn-drying kiln implies that the two structures were perhaps connected in purpose and may well be contemporary in date. The presence of a few stones of an earlier structure underlying the sub-circular feature infers that an existing structure had been dismantled in order to build a new and possibly a near identical successor, perhaps incorporating stone from the earlier structure into the later one. The evidence is, however, too scanty to say any more than that the corn-drying kiln and the sub-circular structure are, by their stratigraphical positions, the latest features in

this part of the site.

The ditch, unfortunately, cannot be related stratigraphically to the corn-drying kiln and its neighbouring structures, but the ditch must have been an ancillary feature to the same occupation site as the kiln, in view of their close proximity to each other. The evidence, scanty as it may be, suggests that the ditch was filled in with domestic refuse during the 3rd century, when some activity at least appears to have been present in the area of the corn-drying kiln, though not necessarily connected with the T-shaped kiln itself, but with the neighbouring structures.

SUMMARY

Top-soil clearance along the northern edge of Womersley Quarry in the summer of 1968 revealed a number of features of Roman date, the major ones being a stone-built T-shaped corn-drying kiln and a ditch, both of which had been cut into the underlying limestone.

It is probable that the features represent part of a Roman farmstead, the exact location of which is as yet unknown, but which may already have been destroyed by quarrying. The paucity of occupation material in the field to the north of the quarry would preclude the possibility of the site being there, but further work in this field might result in more yet unsubstantial Roman features being found.

The presence of samian ware on the surface would suggest that occupation had been established in the vicinity by the mid 2nd century, but the scanty dating evidence available from the site suggests that the kiln and ditch were in use during the 3rd century, with perhaps a continuation into the early 4th century.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The writer wishes to thank the Chairman and members of the Doncaster Corporation Libraries, Museum and Arts Committee and the Curator of the Doncaster Museum, Mr. J. Barwick, for giving permission to undertake a museum investigation of the site. The Museum is indebted to the landowner, the Right Honourable the Earl of Rosse for his interest in the site and for a generous financial grant towards the excavation expenses, and to his Estate Manager, Lt-Colonel Smartt for his co-operation. We owe a large debt of gratitude to the Quarry Director, Mr. B. Slater, for his unfailing and overwhelming assistance with travelling expenses and equipment on the site, and for permitting us to undertake the work there. Finally, the writer would like to

thank the quarry employees for their interest and assistance, Miss S. Leek for bringing the site to the notice of the Museum, Mr. Paul Buckland for supervising most of the earlier work on the site, and the many voluntary workers without whom little work on the site would have been possible.

ST. JOHN'S PRIORY, PONTEFRACT

INDENTURE between RICHARD HUMILIS (HUMBLE) prior of St. John's Priory, Pontefract, and the same convent as rectors of the church of ALL SAINTS, Pontefract, appropriated, united and annexed to the monastery, and JOHN HYKELYNG, keeper of the College of Vicars Choral of York Minster and the other vicars, as rectors of the Church of Fryston, appropriated, united and annexed to their College certifying that, whereas there has lately arisen a controversy between the parties concerning the tithes of corn and hay and wool within the village and land (or field) of Fery within the parishes of the said churches arising from the boundaries given below by the Prior and convent being repudiated by the Keeper and Vicars, which boundaries were drawn up by Thomas WYNCEWORTH gent THOMAS WILLIAMSON of FERY, ROBERT CUTTELLER of the same, ROBT. HUGENSON and JOHN KYLNESAY as follows.....

From SPITELRAWE le NETHERTATHES on the East, to a plot belonging to JOHN BUBWITH nearby, thence to a cross called WYOTCROSSE, thence to another cross called WHYTECROSSE, thence to a place called MON JOY, thence by a stream called NORTHBEK to the south side of FRYSTON church, then down to the river Ayre to the point of the FORDALES there, the Friars' meadow of FOULSNAPE being on the south, thence by the SOUTHBEK to the selion which separates the land of Pontefract Abbey on the west from the field of Knottynglay on the East, thence up by the same selion between the land of St. Leonard's York called PENYHILL, on the west and the field of Knottynglay on the East, abutting on a place called CROMBEHAUGH, thence up along the bank called PUTTALLBANK along the heads to DOUFERODE along the heads of PUTTALLWRO between the field of Pontefract on the south, turning thence along the side of PUTTALLWRO field of Pontefract on the west and thence up the uncultivated land (RAWE) of JOHN WAKEFIELD to the heads of the flats of John Wakefield, thence turning to the heads of BULHILL along the side of the CHEKER, then there is the field of Fery along the boundaries of the same cheker on the west, then along the boundaries of the LONGDALES as far as two headlandes (?) of SHORTDALES

in the same field of Fery, and above the heads to the SPITELBANK and thus the said SPITALWRANE concerning this controversy, in the presence of JOHN WEDHAM chancellor of the Archbishop of York, THOMAS PARCOUR. Canon residentiary of YORK MINSTER, JOHN SELLOWE, canon of the same and register of the Archbishop and others with the consent of both parties an agreement was reached, that the prior and convent should have half the tithes of corn and hay and wool within the village and field of Fery yielded within the above boundaries, and the Keeper and Vicars should have the other half, to come just as well from the lands of the priory within the said boundaries as from the SHEPCOTES of the priory - even though the SHEPCOTES are in the hands of the priory or its tenants, without hindrance by the priory. - Each party to keep a copy of the agreement sealed by the other, given at Pontefract in the Chapter House of the priory 3RD OCTOBER 1422.

H. Battye, N.D.D., A.T.C.

Notes to the Indenture - By H. Battye

An incomplete translation of the indenture was published by F. Harrison but contained many mistakes. I am indebted to C. B. L. BARR esq., sub. Librarian to the Minster library at York, for the recent translation which corrects the earlier mistakes and expands the translation. The document is in a poor state and infra red light had to be used before it could be read. We are, therefore, fortunate in being able to publish this important document before the deterioration becomes worse. The field names in the indenture create many difficulties; having gone through many changes before the modern names were established. The Saxton map of Pontefract dated 1611 is the earliest known map but unfortunately does not extend to the eastern area of the town. I have not yet seen the 16th Century map of Knottingley, which may extend into the lands owned by the priory. The area mentioned, roughly covers Chequerfield at the southern extremity of the boundary, and extends to the site of Bubworth Farm in the east, Ferry Fryston in the north, and the castle in the west. The two crosses were situated at the north and south extremities of the eastern boundary. The Southern cross was known as the old Thorn Cross, and the Northern Stump Cross can still be seen near the Ferrybridge road. The names vary throughout their existence, but the indenture suggests they were both called white cross, which may allude to the magnesium limestone from which they were carved. The monks owned a quarry of the finest limestone at Brackenhill which can be seen near the Barracks. This high quality stone was used to build St. Stephen's chapel at Westminster Palace when Caen Stone was not

available due to the war with France. The reference to the keeping of sheep is of particular interest. Many monasteries exported wool to the continent and it is known that WILLIAM WILES a wool merchant of Pontefract had a business in the town and also in Amiens. The Florence document dated C1315 lists Fountains Abbey as the highest exporter of wool but St. John's Priory is not mentioned. The monks had little inclination to develop the wool trade as a business, the fleeces sold were surplus to their requirements. The main reason for the upkeep of sheep was because most monks were vegeterians, and consumed vast quantities of sheeps' cheese and milk. The tithes of corn and hay refers to a taxation amounting to a tenth of the property taxed. It was usual for a tenth part of the annual produce of agriculture to be devoted to the support of the priesthood. Two of the town's three mills, were owned by the monks who gained considerable revenue from the use of these mills.

It will be clearly seen that both parties were anticipating a loss of revenue, and a compromise was reached by the negotiators for the Archbishop of York.

PONTEFRACT PRIORY EXCAVATIONS 1968

Work on the eastern arms of the church and related structures had been going on for several years. A deliberate attempt was made to complete the excavations inside the eastern arms in 1967 and 1968 before continuing with the study of structures which occur to the south-east of the presbytery.

By the end of the 1967 season the outlines of the three different phases of the eastern arms had been determined, but owing to the way this part of the dig developed a small area within the last church had not been explored. Trenches were sited to deal with this area, lying in the north-east corner of the presbytery and behind the reredos of the high altar. As was expected these trenches uncovered the remains of the eastern and northern walls of the third presbytery (numbered 145 and 171 on the main plan) and also, at greater depth, the sleeper wall which carried the choir arcade of the second presbytery (numbered 168).

The excavation confirmed that the walls 145 and 171 were properly in bond in the north-east corner, and that they were in part set in construction trenches cut into medieval 'made ground.'

The top of wall 168 is encountered about eight feet below present ground

level and its footings continue a further three feet six inches down to rest on or slightly in natural boulder clay. The sleeper wall is nine feet wide at this point. Where wall 171 crosses the line of wall 168, the former rests directly on the surface of the latter. The upper surface of the sleeper wall 168 represents approximately the sub-floor level of the second presbytery. Floor level of the third presbytery was about four feet higher. Brown clay has been imported to this locality to make up the ground to these successive levels, with wall 168 apparently built freestanding, and the ground levelled up afterwards. Walls 145 and 171 are trench built up to the floor level of the second church, then free standing to the new floor height.

There were no other structural features in this area and the excavation of the church east of the crossing has now been completed. Some work remains to be done in the central part of the nave, and one of the nave pillars has not yet been examined.

Buildings outside the North Transept

In 1967 we reported the discovery of structures north of the north transept and approximately in line with its east and west walls. We then noted a door with porch opening out to the east. Further north we saw the remains of the sill of a window which also faced east. A larger trench was opened in 1968 to uncover what seemed to be the north-east corner of this building. Here we found that the outside walls were reduced to foundation level but the foundations clearly marked the corner of the block. If the north-west corner is consistent with this the building would be about twenty three feet square. It appears to have been subdivided by light partition walls but these have not been fully traced yet.

Across the north-east corner of the room we found a large oval hearth or oven base. It was set at floor level and roughly 'D'-shaped, five feet long and three feet deep. It is now represented by large square-ish cobbles showing signs of heat but probably not the actual firing surface. There had evidently been a built flue in the corner of the room, and we found the hearth covered with charcoal and flue debris.

We hope to complete the study of this building in 1969.

South of the Dorter Range

Under Mr. Nicholson's guidance work continued in the area south and east of the rere-dorter. This area continues to produce wall foundations just below present turf. Most of them are quite shallow and in places are missing

altogether. They are affected by the laying of the deep drain associated with the late rere-dorter, and others have been disturbed by the laying of the modern sewer. For the present we can only continue to record these on the large scale plans in the hope that they will be more intelligible when a larger area has been studied.

1969. Work will be resumed in time for Easter week-end, and will continue until about the end of June. Main centres of activity will be the building north of the North Transept, the rere-dorter area, and either the nave of the church or structures lying to the south-east of the second presbytery.

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