

Pontefract and District Archaeological Society

Founded 1957.

The Pontefract Archaeological
Journal, 1970.

Affiliated to:-

The Council for British Archaeology, Group 4..

and

The Yorkshire Archaeological Society.

ONE SHILLING

SECRETARIAL REPORT FOR 1969-70.

Before commencing the report proper, I should like to record my gratitude, together with that of the Committee and members to Mr. C.J.Baines who during his term as President took over the duties of Secretary when my professional commitments took me away from home for a year.

One of the chief reasons d'etre of societies such as this is to publish important papers which would otherwise not see print. In fact in the opinion of many this is the Society's most important function, so that the change in format of the Pontefract Archaeological Journal must mark an important stage in the Society's history.

There are two reasons for the change, the chief one being as usual the increase in conventional printing costs during the last few years. The other is the feasibility of reproducing diagrams, maps, and plans at no extra cost by the new process. This latter point is quite an important consideration and in many ways makes up for the disadvantages of the new method.

The Society's annual open day in Pontefract Castle held in conjunction with the Pontefract branch of the R.A.F. Association was a moderate success and several hundred visitors were shown around the magazines.

One of the highlights of this five hundredth Mayoral year has been the exhibition arranged jointly by this Society and the Pontefract Local History Society. Though the latter group provided most of the material, our displays on local archaeology were very well received and many favourable comments were heard.

The last issue of the P.A.J. included a paper on one of the old preaching crosses of Pontefract. This seems to have aroused some interest both in the town and outside for two or three enquiries have been received following newspaper articles on the subject. In addition, our Vice-President, Mr.H.Battye, has become involved in some research which will eventually provide much more information than was contained in the last published paper.

Mr.Battye has also recently managed to trace the top part of

the old Waterloo Monument which for many years was believed to have been destroyed. It has now been removed to a place of safety.

The Society was glad to see the local interest which it initiated over a dozen years ago at last make itself felt in the formation of the Pontefract and District Civic Trust. To demonstrate its sympathy with, and support for the Civic Trust the Society became its first affiliated organization and is at present working with the trust on various local projects.

During the past year members worked on many excavations including :- Sutton Hoo; Silbury Hill; St. John's Priory; Welbeck St. (Castleford) Holywell Wood, (Glasshoughton) Womersley Roman site, and Kendal Castle.

Once more there has been an interesting series of lectures and I would like to thank the speakers, the Committee and all those members who have helped in many ways to further the interests of the Society.

Eric Houlder.

TWO NEW SITES DISCOVERED FROM THE AIR DURING 1970. S.E.138512 & S.E.189474.

On two occasions during 1970 through the kindness of Mr. M. Leach of Darrington, the Secretary was able to see parts of the area between Pontefract and Doncaster from the air. During the first flight only one photograph was taken, of Barnsdale Bar, and this one shows clearly the Roman Road (Margary 28b) as a low embankment to the west of the present Great North Road. It also shows, as a faint trace in the melting snow, what appears to be a road or other linear feature running N.W.-S.E. at S.E.138512. It is only seen in one field, the rest (assuming there is more) being off the photograph. More investigation is needed to determine what the feature is and its nature.

On the second flight, (unfortunately without a camera) made towards the end of June conditions were perfect for aerial archaeological survey. At approximately 189474 there was seen a cropmark which gave every appearance of being half a Roman marching camp. Though it was not possible to record this it is hoped that these brief notes will serve to direct other investigators.

THE FAIRS AND MARKETS OF PONTEFRACT.

by H.Battye.

(C) 1970.

Great fairs arose under the shadow of the shrines of the Saints, and each was the only fair on that day throughout the county. The commercial significance was therefore important to the town and was closely allied to the economic and social development of the community.

Pontefract was probably second in importance to York having at least ten fair days to York's twenty six. Doncaster, Leeds and Sheffield could manage only two days, and Sheffield's status was indicated by the permission to have one fair day each year. Some measure of the importance of Pontefract can be realised when during the Lordship of Henry De Lacy, over 2000 head of cattle, butter, cheese were driven over the Pennines into the market of Pontefract.(1) Henry de Lacy succeeded in obtaining from the king - Henry II, "an eight days fair during the feast of St.Giles."(2) Henry II reigned from 1154 to 1189, and Henry de Lacy died in 1187. The date of the market must therefore have been within that thirty three year period. However, it is known that the king visited Pontefract in 1181 and it is more than probable that the earliest fair dates from that time.

Tanshelf was granted its own fair by Edmund de Lacy in 1257 "on the Vigil (3) feast, and morrow of Holy Trinity the market being on Wednesday" (4) A further fair dated 1294 was granted to Pontefract by Henry de Lacy on "the Vigil feast of Palm Sunday and the three days following, the market being on Wednesday."

"At the anniversarie institution of the Wapontak of Osgodcrosse held at Grey-Stones yn Novembre 1368 JOHN CLERK of Pontefract took to farme the bailwick of Pontefract with the rent of the farm called burgess farme, the tol of the markets and faires, the issue of the court of Scabelbrigg (5), one bakehouse, the keeping of the prison and all the other profits for six yeares, paieing yearlie £48; the milne at Castilforth and piscarie paieing £6; the milne at Knottynglie and piscarie paieing £23 yerely."

We learn from the rents of the 'bailwick' of Pontefract dated 1424 that the beasts for the fair on the eve of ST.TRINITY, and

the fair of ST. MICHAEL were allowed to free graze in the common land of Pontefract Park. The survey of Pontefract Park dated 19th June 1588 states that common grazing was allowed for 16 beasts and 4 horses from the feast of ST. ELLEN unto Michaelmas. In 1484 the Mayor and two or three of the "more discreet Comburgesses of the town" were to be chosen or appointed by the Mayor, yearly to help him in the task of "the government and appointment of the stalls and places in their fairs and markets." (6) "Fresshe Fisshe callid Lynge, haddockes and kyllinges" (codlings) were plentiful, as were meats, hides, tallow, eggs, butter, and other farm products. There were "many markets - well furnished with Shamble meat, corn and other provisions, many fairs for sheep, beasts and horses, for which the last two most celebrated are about Palm Sunday, and the 1st of September."

Street names indicate the areas of the products and the markets of the past. There are today streets called wool, corn, pig and shoemarkets, Horsefair, Beastfair, Baxtergate (street of bakers) Ropergate, the Booths (fleschers booths) and Salter Row which was originally called the Shambles or meat market. Behind the Shambles was a street called Puddin middens which must have been a waste tip. Puddin was an old English term for the innards of animals.

The advantages of the Wool and Cloth fairs can be judged by the petition to Parliament by the township of Barnsley:- (8) 1640. A plea "to suppress the market of Wakefield but lately invented, and only the fifteen cloth fairs as allowed by charter at Barnsley, Pontefract, Ripon, Lee Fair, certain others to be allowed in Yorkshire." (9)

It can be seen from this charter that there were great restrictions on the fairs of Yorkshire allowing only fifteen to sell cloth. The clothiers of many West Riding towns petitioned the Privy Council stating that many Woolmen were buying it, and selling it to the clothiers. "Because they fetched their wool [from] far off the clothing towns, and in places where the poor clothiers could not go." "Also that if any woolman or countryman that dwells far off, brings his wool to LEEDS, WAKEFIELD, RIPON, DONCASTER, or PONTEFRACT,

market towns 20 miles radius of clothing towns and such markets, clothiers usually frequent, poor clothiers could not be served but at their hands." They therefore asked that the woolmen be restrained from buying and engrossing the wool which came to the wool towns.

Pontefract was an important wool town exporting to the Continent through the port of Hull. In 1276 the thirteen leading English merchants dispatching wool from the East coast came from the following towns:- Rochester; Newcastle; York; Grimsby; Beverley; Hull and Pontefract. In 1394 there were at least twelve wool merchants exporting from Pontefract to the Continent and in 1395 there were fourteen listed.

1716 (10) "Ordered likewise by generall consent at the said meeting that Mr. Lawrence Fox, Alderman, shall have a lease of the tolls of Wool and line and other things tollable at the Markett called Hemp Cross (11) or Hide Crosse, as hath usually been letten to other farmers thereof for the terme of twenty one years from Michaelmas next, and that under the yearly rent of three pounds tehn shillings payable att Lady Day and Lammas, that the p'sent Mayor doe sett the Com'on Seale to the said Lease."

The 'Leeds Mercury,' dated Feb. 2nd 1742 tells us that by the 18th Century certain fairs had become inconvenient through change of days. In particular the PALM FAIR or horsefair seems to have been held on various days over a long period and had greatly inconvenienced the horse dealers. It was now proposed that it should in future be held on the first Monday in March. The 'Leeds Intelligencer,' dated Sept 1st 1772 informed its readers that the Old (12) ST. GILES FAIR " has been held on the first Saturday after the 12th september in every year; and as the 12 th of September happens this year to fall on a Saturday, to prevent mistakes, Notice is hereby given that the said Fair will be held on Saturday the 19th of September 1772."

Owen's Book of Fairs 1752-1770 (6 editions), "NOMINA VILLARUM" 1768 1792, HARGROVE'S "YORKSHIRE GAZETTER," 1806, all list the Pontefract Fairs as follows :-

1. ST.ANDREW'S FAIR. First Saturday in December.
2. TWENTIETH DAY FAIR. The first Saturday after the twentieth day from Christmas.
3. CANDLEMAS FAIR. The first Saturday after February 13th.
4. ST.GILE'S FAIR. The first Saturday after September 12th.
5. CATTLE SHEEP AND ALL OTHER MOVEABLE FAIRS. April 8th and May 4th.
- 6.
7. PALM SUNDAY FAIR. May 4th. (1st Monday in March)
8. LOW SUNDAY FAIR. (April 29th ?)
9. TRINITY SUNDAY. 6th to the 8th to be held on the Saturday before those days.
10. FORTNIGHTLY FAIRS. On the Saturday next after the York Fort-
nightly Fairs.
11. SHOW FOR HORSES. (formerly called PALM SUNDAY SHOW) 5th February.
(the NOMINA states it will in future be on the 5th on February)

It should be noted that the fairs of St.Michael and St.Ellen as previously recorded are not listed. There was also a FRIDAY MARKET listed in 1424, and a Barley Markett (in front of St.Giles) 1665.

The Fair had always been held in the streets of Pontefract from the Market Place, down Horsefair, Salter Row etc. By 1925 the populace had petitioned that "the smoke, smell, noise, dirt, and obstruction" had become unbearable. The complaints were so numerous that no further street stands were allowed, but the "Statutes" were to be allowed to continue on the first Thursday in November in the Fairground. The last change of site was made quite recently and the Statutes are now held on the site of the old Cattlemarket.

FOOTNOTES.

1. Chetham Society vol 112 pp 126, 175, 185.
2. P.R.O. D.L. 41/1/36 M1
3. Eve, or previous day.
4. This fair was worth £4 and the market £12. No mean sum for the C14.
5. Scabel - market or shamle stall, ie Market Bridge at the top of Horsefair now called Bridge Street. - The bridge between the old market in Micklegate (Horsefair) and the New Market (Market place)
6. Calendar of Charter Rolls 1427-1516 p 265.
7. Previously called leather market.
8. Clothiers Petition 1640.
9. The petition failed. There was a further complaint by Pontefract regarding Wakefield Cattle Fair, 19th April 1666.
10. Book of Entries. R.Holmes. p 333.

11. Hemp Cross. Site of gallows - outside the Windmill Inn.
12. Nearly 700 years.

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A CHARTER OF JOHN DE LASCY 1218.

from Monastic Charters, Vol 1 p.36 R.Holmes. Yorks Arch. Soc.

1899

To all etc. John de Lascy, Constable of Chester, greeting in the Lord. Know.... that we have confirmed....to God and St.Mary, and the Church of All Saints of Pontefract..... certain land which lies without the burying-ground of the said Church, on the east side between two roads there closely converging, to make there a common sepulchre for the faithful dead, that is to say, a charnel house. And to erect a chapel upon the Charnel-House in honour of St.Sepulchre and St.Cross, for the souls of all the faithful. And, besides, we have given andgranted for the enlargement of the burying-ground of the said church, certain land to the north of the said burying-ground, where there were shop-sites, and near the wall of the burying-ground, from the eastern end of the site of the Charnel-House and of the chapel aforesaid, as far as the western end of the said burying ground in length. Yet preserving the width of the roads next adjoining on both sides, which they had on the very day on which I commenced my journey towards the Holy Land Jerusalem.

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Taken from
The History Directory and Gazetteer
of the
County of York
by Edward Baines 1822
PONTEFRACT

This information is a continuation of that reproduced in the Pontefract Archaeological Journal 1968 when the last group of merchants mentioned was the Maltsters.

Milliners and Dress Makers

Brown Jane, (stay maker) Ropergate
Haigh Elizabeth, (dress) Ropergate
Halpenny Jane, Shoe market
Jackson Isabella, Ropergate
Knapton Sarah, Baxtergate
Lund M. W. (stay maker) Tanshelf
McDowall Ann, Micklegate

Music Masters and Dealers

Hargrave John, (professor) Micklegate
Hill Thomas, (& organist)
Wilson John, Market place

Nail Manufacturers

Booth G. B. (cut) Wool market
Harrison Joseph, (maker) Northgate
Watson Thomas, Market place

Painters and Gilders

Clark Henry, Micklegate
Martin Samuel, Salter's row
Stewart Samuel, Northgate

Physicians

Haxby John, M.D. Beast fair
Jefferson Joshua, M.D. Micklegate

Plasterer

Palfreeman Anthony, Market place

Plumbers and Glaziers

Barker William, Micklegate
Ingham David, Market place
Nunns William, Market place
Ramsdon Thomas, Market place
Scholey John, Beast fair

Porter Dealers

Berry John, Market place
Rhodes Edward, Salter row

Rag Merchants

Addingley John, Market place
Dawson Matthew, Market place
Prince William, Beast fair

Rope and Twine Makers

Dickinson Thos. near the Beast fair
Vickers George, Ropergate

Saddlers, Harness, & Collar Makers

Auckland Samuel, near Moot Hall
Elliott William, Beast fair
Smith George, Market place
Smith Kirkman, Beast fair
Sudbury Thomas, Beast fair

Savings Bank

At the Town Hall, C.A. Martin, agent,
Micklegate

Sheriff's Officers

Foster Joseph, top of Corn market
Rhodes, H.T. top of Corn market

Silversmiths and Jewellers

Berry James, Market place
Booth Jas. (& hard wareman) Market pl.

Slate Merchants

Boys Samuel, Baxtergate
Moxon William, Baxtergate

Spirit and Wine Merchants

Poppleton Robert, Gilleygate
Rhodes Edward, (and hop) Salter's
row; house, Ropergate

Spirit and Wine Dealers

Brice John, (British wines) Market pl.
Burry John, Market place
Gill Thos. (British wines) Market pl.
Handley Joseph, Beast fair
Popplewell Rd. ' Co. Market place
Thompson Richard, Church land

Stamp Office

Osburn, F.G. (sub-distributor)
Ropergate

Stone Masons

Boys Samuel, Baxtergate
Moxon William, (and quarry owner)
Baxtergate
Plowes William, Tanshelf
Pool Francis, High Bailey gate
Sykes Philip, Micklegate

Straw Hat Manufacturers

Ash Eleanor, Beast fair
Clough A. and A. Ropergate
McDewall Ann, Micklegate
Makin Ann, Beast fair
Shepherd Elizabeth, Micklegate

Surgeons

Oxley and Muscroft, Micklegate
Sherwin James, Micklegate
Smith Robert, Market place
Wainwright Samuel, Market place

Surveyor

Hartley Bernard, (of the West Riding
bridges) Ropergate

Tailors and Drapers

Barham William, Ropergate
Brown Daniel, (& mercer) Market pl.
Haigh John, Walton's yard
Lendlay John, Ropergate
Silverwood William, Shoe market
Whitehead W.M. (and habit maker)
Northgate

Tallow Chandlers

Atkinson Thomas, Pig market
Holm William, Church land
Johnson Joseph, Micklegate
Shillite and Robson, Market place

Tanner

Walker John, Tanshelf

Timber and Raff Merchant

Craggs John yard, Back lane; house,
Beast fair

Tobacconist

Foster John, Market place

Tobacco Pipe Maker

Hays John, Butts

Turner in Wood and Metal

Whardall William, Newgate

Umbrella Maker

Matthews Thomas, Market place

Veterinary Surgeons

Pike Wm. (& druggist) Micklegate

Wood M. Corn market

Wheelwrights

Athorne Joseph, Micklegate

Barker William, Low Bailey gate

Rayner John, Micklegate

Teal James, Back lane

Whitesmiths and Gunsmiths

Burland Robert, Ropergate

Ratcliff Benjamin, Shoe market

Ratcliff John, Ropergate

Woollen Drapers

Brown Daniel, Market place

Poskett Wm. near the Wool market

Rideal David, (& mercer) Market pl.

Worsted and Yarn Manufacturers

Higgins William, Shoe market

Pollard Joseph, Maet Hall

Pollard William, Micklegate

Walker Joseph, Shoe market

Miscellany

Armitage Wm. Shpkpr. Micklegate

Beckwith Benjamin, Micklegate

Berry Jas. furniture broker, Beast fair

Broughton John, chimney sweeper,
Micklegate

Ellis Wm. shopkeeper, Micklegate

Fryer John, wire worker, Baxtergate

Hepplestone Mark, Micklegate

Higgins Charles, chimney sweeper and
fire extinguisher

Herner Abraham, clothes broker, near
the Market place

Howcroft Joseph, pavieur, Coplass hill

Huggins and Clark, managers of the
theatre, Gillygate

Hutchinson J. & Co. nail bagging mfrs.
near the Old church

Lee Wm. Esq. treasurer for the West
Riding, Grove hall

Oldridge Christopher, keeper of the
toll house, Tanshelf

Pease Thomas, millwright and smith,
Newgate

Pinder Jph. shopkeeper, Ropergate

Poppleton Robert, chief constable for
the wapentake, Micklegate

Wuin John, linen weaver, Coplas hill

Ramsden John, deputy overseer, Beast fair

Standidge John, Artist and drawing
master, Micklegate

Standidge Samuel, preserver of birds,
& Bridge

Wilkinson Thomas, chief constable for
the wapentake of Osgoldcross,
Ropergate

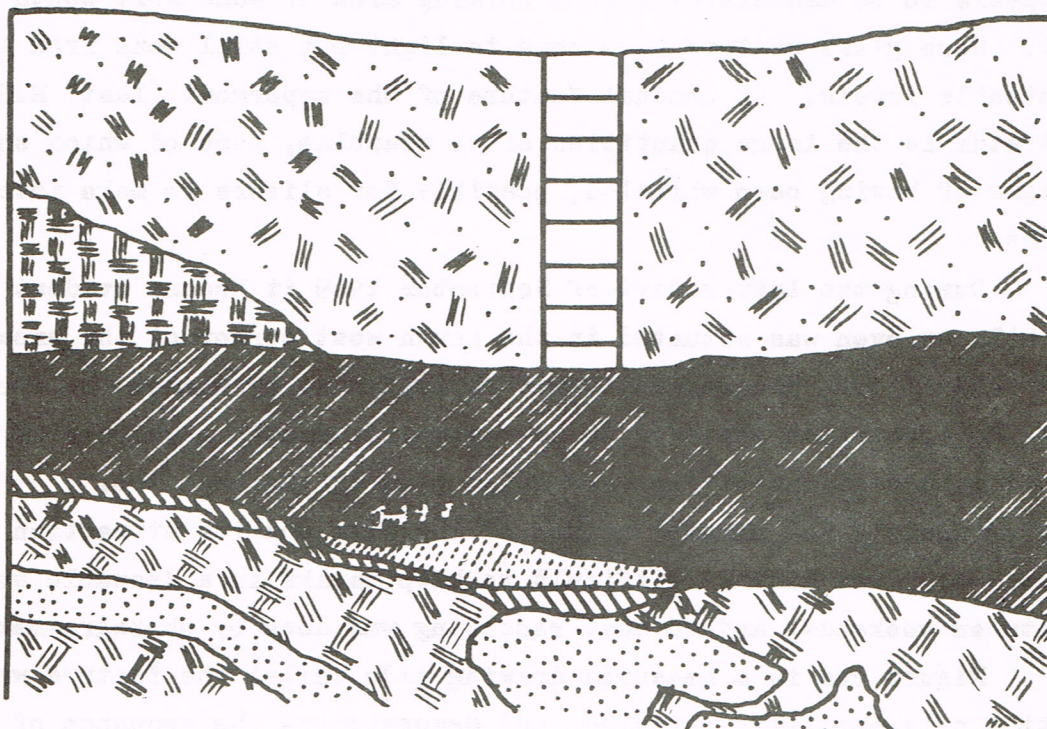
The publication in 1968 ended with details of Coach and Land Carriage Transport from Pontefract to Wakefield, Barnsley, Sheffield and York and from the surrounding villages into Pontefract.

D.R.

WELBECK STREET, CASTLEFORD, 1969.

SECTION OF PART OF WEST SIDE OF EXCAVATION.

Fig.1.



 *demolition debris.*

 *plough soil.*

 *yellow clay.*

 *charcoal.*

 *red clay.*

 *pink clay.*

 *brown soil*

 *light yellow clay.*

scale 1/12.

E.Houlder.

SECOND INTERIM REPORT ON THE WELBECK STREET ROMANO-BRITISH SITE,
CASTLEFORD.

by E.Houlder.

C&DHS.

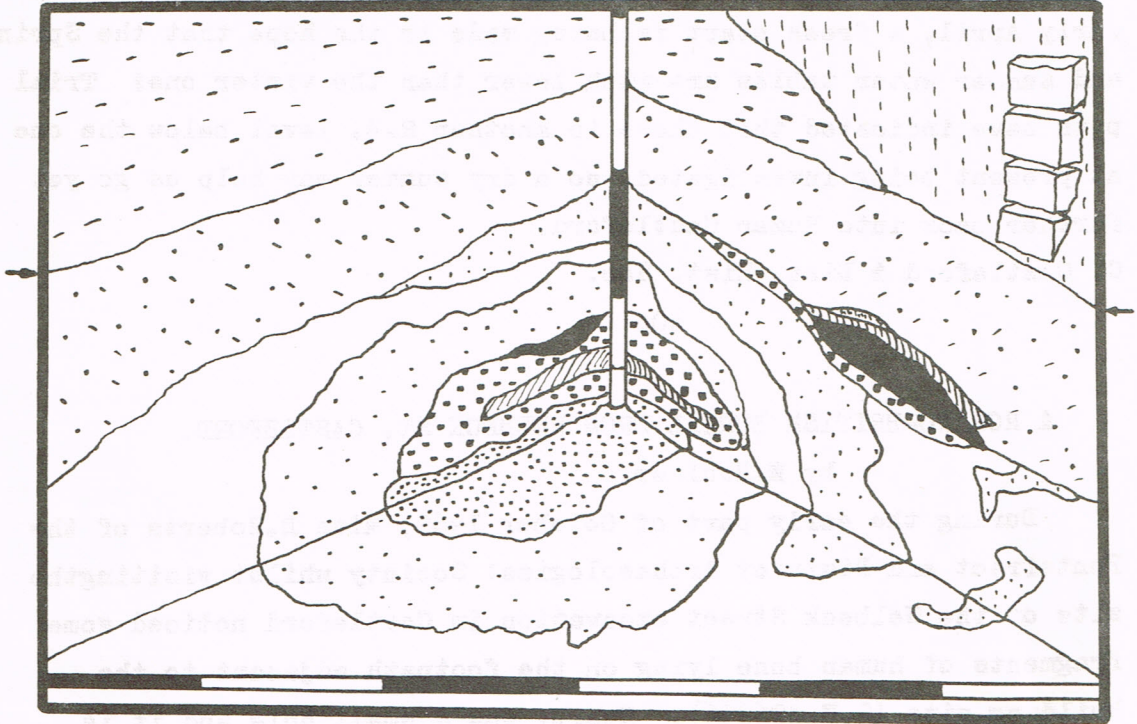
Continued excavation of the site has revealed more of the late R.B. features which were briefly mentioned in the last report. The wall running East-West across the northern end of the site now appears to be associated with a working area of some sort south of it. More glass wasters have come to light but still none from the dateable levels. An unusual feature of the uppermost (last) R.B. stratum is the large quantities of ox scapulae, some of which show signs of having been whittled, possibly for slivers to make into pins.

During the latter part of September 1969 it became evident that a kiln or oven was situated in the south west corner of the excavation and as work progressed it was noticed that by chance the corner of the excavation appeared to have removed exactly a quarter of it. This gave sections on two axes and a plan of the base too. Unfortunately the exposed nature of the site and its attraction to small children made it difficult to keep baulks in a drawable state between weekends, and so most recording was done by photogrammetry.

Figure one is a measured drawing made whilst the feature was still only partially revealed, and demonstrates the sequence of events enumerated in the last report i.e. Late Roman - Plough soil - Cement raft - Building - Demolition. In it the burnt feature is just beginning to show in the lower left corner. The agglomeration in the middle part of the drawing shows no stratigraphic relation to the feature and may be a small hearth of much later date.

The feature itself is best seen in fig.two which is a drawing prepared using photogrammetrical methods. The original is a 35mm slide taken with a 28mm lens. Allowance must be made for perspective distortion of the scales when examining this. The exact nature of it is still unresolved, though the absence of wasters of any kind rules out the possibility of it being the first Castleford pottery or glasshouse. Nearby was a large block of sandstone which could have been used as an anvil though again

S.W. CORNER SHOWING BURNT FEATURE.



Drawing from a photograph. 28mm lens. scale in feet.

⋯ light yellow clay.

⋯ dark

⋯ pink clay.

//// red .. .

■ charcoal.

brown soil.

⋯ tilth.

→ mid-19th cent raft.

Fig.2.

E.H.

the paucity of finds of the proper nature, in this case partially wrought iron, would perhaps rule this out.

Work finished for the winter when rising water in the excavation made further digging impossible. At the time of writing, early April, a fresh start is being made in the hope that the Spring and summer water tables are much lower than the winter one! Trial pits have indicated that there is another R.B. level below the one at present being investigated, so a dry summer may help us go yet further back into Roman Castleford.

C. Castleford & Dist. Hist. Soc.

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A ROMANO-BRITISH BURIAL FROM WELBECK ST. CASTLEFORD.

by E.Houlder.

During the early part of October 1969, Miss D.Roberts of the Pontefract and District Archaeological Society whilst visiting the site of the Welbeck Street excavation in Castleford noticed some fragments of human bone lying on the footpath adjacent to the building site (S.E.426256). Nearby was a small hole and it is assumed that the bones came from this and were removed as part of the spoil. It was obvious that no-one had realized that they were human and so they were removed to a place of safety until an examination could be made.

There are nine pieces of which only three are post-cranial:-

1. Distal end of a mature right femur.
2. Portion of shaft of a long bone - possibly tibia.
3. Fragment of a small rib.

The rest are cranial:-

4. The left side of a lower mandible with four teeth in position.
- 5.6.7.8.&9. fragments of skull.

All the pieces exhibit post-mortem injury, the fresh breaks indicating recent damage, the others showing disturbance in antiquity. The teeth show a medium accumulation of calculus whilst the first molar has a large cavity due to caries together with medium resorption

of alveolar bone at the root due to periodontal disease.

Age

The absence of a distinctive epiphyseal line indicates that the remains are those of a mature individual. Standard dental attrition tables (Brothwell 1963) demonstrate that the individual was probably in the 25-35 age range at death, possibly nearer the middle or later part of the range. Though the remains are too fragmentary for a reliable estimate of the person's sex, the slightness of the long bones may indicate that they belonged to a woman.

Associated finds.

Associated with the bones were ten shards of various R.B. wares:- 1.2. & 3. fragments of one vessel in a buff ware filled with a grog of crushed red pot. Pieces too small to be diagnostic.
4. One shard of cream mortarium.
5.6. & 7. From two different vessels. Lead grey (Crambeck?).
8. Small shard in grey paste with black surface, decorated with horizontal lines and rustications.
9. & 10. Two shards including one rim of black-burnished ware.

Conclusions

Unfortunately the remains were not found as a result of scientific excavation and so dating by stratification and pottery association is not possible. Because of this the shards found with the bones cannot be accepted as reliable dating material.

However, the position of the burial is significant in that it was found within a hundred yards of the site of the gates of the Roman fort and alongside the main road to the south (Margary 28b). It was of course normal Roman custom to place burials alongside roads leading out of settlements, and their location is usually a good indication that the limits of settlement have been reached.

Therefore a burial so close to the gates of the fort must have been made at a time before the expansion of civilian

settlements along the south road, or after such settlements began to shrink during the latter days of the province. Though inhumation was not as common as cremation in the early R.B. period it was not unknown, and this together with the fact that the area in question must have been occupied until quite late, tends to incline the present writer to the opinion that the burial is an early one. If then the burial took place before the development of the vicus it must have happened within about five decades of A.D.70. It was probably disturbed some years later by building activity and finally twice more during the last century.

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A RESCUE EXCAVATION IN HOLYWELL WOOD.

S.E.445244. by D.Wandless.

The site is situated south west of the triangulation point at the top of Holywell Hill. The excavation started on June 2nd 1969 after a section of a wall was uncovered. After probing the area it was determined which way the walls were running. Work on the site is still in progress.

I would like to thank Mr. Smith for allowing us to excavate, Messrs P.Wandless, H.Papworth, J.Fowler, and E.Holland for their assistance and also Messrs E.Papworth and E.Houlder and other workers who came whenever possible.

The stone structure covers 44 by 36 feet and is on the south west side of the hill surrounded by trees. Approximately one hundred sherds of late medieval pottery and some glass has been found. A number of clay pipes and other objects some of iron have also been uncovered.

Interpretation.

It is thought that the building was used for work concerned with the coal mines in the area. These were probably worked during the Seventeenth century and later.

oOo

PONTEFRAC T P R I O R Y E X C A V A T I O N S - 1 9 6 9

The work done in 1968 had given indications of a building north of the north transept gable, shown a large hearth set across the north-east corner of the room and implied that the building itself was more or less square.

In the current year, therefore, it was decided to plan a trench across the middle of the north wall and to examine the north west corner. This was achieved and it was established that the room was twenty feet (N/S) by twenty-five feet (E/W). Only foundations of walling remained - some three to four feet wide. Floor surfacing had been lost. Late monastic pottery came from the "glass layer" (the immediate post-dissolution level) together with a carved bone figure of Virgin and Child, and an assortment of pins. There were no stratified finds from underneath the floor level, and no real indications of the nature of the use of this building.

The Nave

Over several seasons the nave of the church has been explored only in relation to the aisles and main pillars of the arcades. By 1969 the only pillar not excavated was S.4, but there had been no excavation between the two nave arcades. It was, therefore, decided to open a linear series of trenches along the middle of the nave and, at the same time, examine the remains of S.4. All trenches were to be taken down to "natural" levels in order to exclude the possibility of remains of any earlier building underneath the monastic church.

Earlier sampling of the nave area had shown that there is now three to four feet of dissolution tumble and rubble overlying the last occupation floor. The current trenches supported this view and large quantities of

building stone and rubble were recovered. Much of this was rubble core, some pieces of squared ashlar, and many fragments of the compound piers with half-round shafts of different sizes.

Below the dissolution rubble is the layer of silty soil containing fragments of window glass (and elsewhere described as the "glass-layer"). This has previously been shown to appertain to the decade or so after the dissolution when the church stood as a roofless ruin before stone was taken for the building of the New Hall. The glass layer in turn rests on the remains of the make-up of the last floor level. Pottery and small finds down to this level can, in the main, be dated to the 16th century or later, though odd pieces of earlier wares occur. Occasional broken fragments of floor tiles are found and testify that at least part of the church floor was tiled, but no groups of tiles were found in situ.

Floor make-up was a six inch layer of cobbles and clay resting on medieval "made-ground" of brown clay three feet deep. Below this patches of yellow limestone and water deposited silt rest on natural boulder clays.

The "made-ground" contained several graves. Many of them had been disturbed in medieval times - earlier burials cut by later ones, for instance, and one or two opened at about the time of the dissolution of the monastery.

One such grave had evidently been marked by a floor slab - thus informing looters of its location - and we found large pieces of the slab in the fill. The slab had originally carried a brass and was channelled and plugged where the brass had been affixed. No means of identification remained and the skeleton had been disturbed.

Close to this another skeleton was encountered which had not been

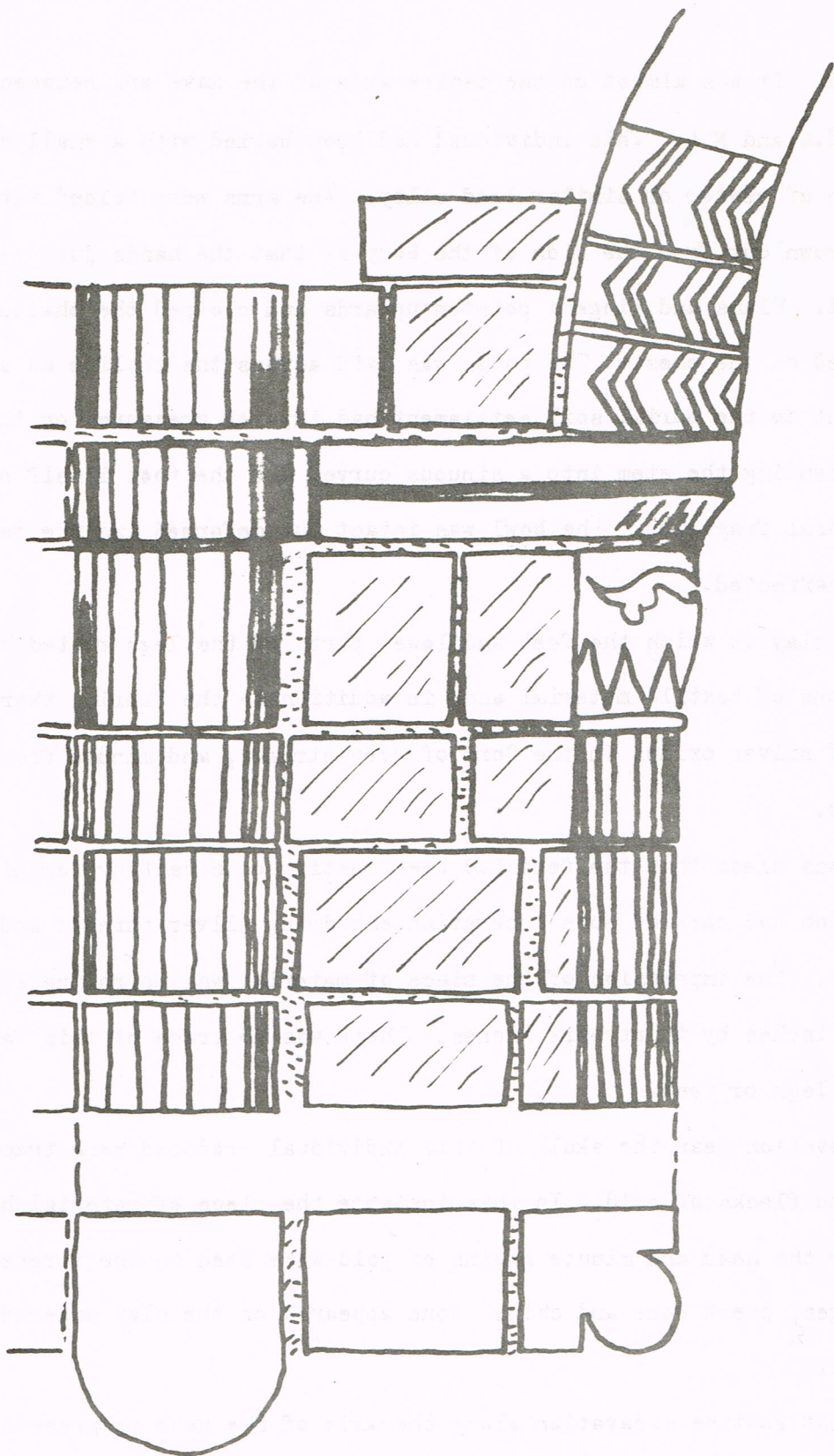
disturbed. It was almost on the centre axis of the nave and between pillars S.4 and N.4. This individual had been buried with a small chalice and paten of pewter or similar lead alloy. The arms were folded with the elbows drawn out from the side of the body so that the hands just met on the chest. Palms and fingers pointed upwards and clasped the chalice which had rested on the chest. The paten was laid across the chalice as a cover. Subsequent to the burial soil settlement had imposed pressures on to the chalice bending the stem into a sinuous curve, and the foot itself had split into several fragments. The bowl was intact but deformed and the paten was almost unaffected.

The clay on which the feet and lower parts of the legs rested bore impressions of textile material and, in addition to the fabric, there were traces of silver oxides in the form of grey streaks, and minute flecks of gold dust.

It was clear that the feet had been resting on a rectangular piece of linen which had carried some decoration embodying silver threads and gold particles. The impression of the piece of material was approximately fourteen inches by thirty-six inches. There was no trace of this fabric over the legs or feet.

Excavation near the skull of this individual produced mere traces of fabric and flecks of gold. In this instance the piece of material had been laid over the head and minute grains of gold were seen on the forehead, the brow ridges, cheek bone and chin. None appeared on the clay underneath the skull.

Whilst routine excavation along the axis of the nave progressed eastwards an additional site was opened to uncover the so far unseen remnants



The fallen arcading found in the nave, and presumably from clerestory or triforium.

of the fourth pillar of the south arcade.

As expected this conformed to the plan of the other pillar bases, proved to be intact up to the chamfer level, and had just one stone of the next course still in situ. The plinth itself was three courses high, of axe tooled, wide-jointed masonry, resting directly on the sleeper wall which was widened on the south side to accommodate it.

Further interments occurred on both nave and aisle sides of the pillar. One lying in the aisle had a covering slab which proved to be a coped grave cover inverted so that the intended base was uppermost and level with the aisle floor.

Excavations on the axis of the nave moved towards the crossing and in the area opposite the second bay a considerable block of masonry was found to be lying, still mortared together, as it had fallen. It proved to be part of an arched opening - probably from the triforium arcade. It was lying face down and was too large to be raised in one piece. After marking each stone, the whole structure was dismantled, then temporarily re-erected for photographs and measured drawings. It included part of a half round attached shaft of the type used for vertical bay-punctuation on the nave side of the arcade and would run from the main pillar to the wall head. It was bonded into a two foot face of ashlar walling linking this to a nook shaft of the type found in the angles of triforium arcading. A simple Norman fluted capital at the top of the nook shaft in turn supported an abacus - quirked and hollow-shouldered. From this sprang an arch of the arcade. Three voussoirs remained in situ, each bearing multiple chevron decoration on both wall face and soffit. The curve of the arch implied a span of about eleven or twelve feet - i.e. a single arch between the nave piers.

This is the first real evidence we have had of the character of the character of the walling above the nave arcades.

As the excavation reached the nave side of the crossing it confirmed impressions gained when the crossing piers were excavated that a stone screen crossed the east end of the nave.

C. V. Bellamy

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