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Pontefract and District

Archaeological Society

Founded 1957.

The Pontefract Archaeological
Journal, 1972

Affiliated to:-

The Council for British Archaeology, Group 4.,

and

The Yorkshire Archaeological Society.

TEN PENCE

Donald B. Lodge

ANNUAL REPORT FOR 1970-1

The year opened with an A.G.M. which introduced two changes in aspects of the Society's life which have until now remained unchanged since its inception. The annual adult subscription has been reduced from fifteen shillings to seventy pence with corresponding rationalizations of other classes of membership, and the meetings of the society have been changed from Saturday evenings to Wednesdays for an experimental period beginning in October 1971.

Following the A.G.M. the Committee concentrated for several months on preparing a report for the Pontefract and District Civic Trust on the present state of Pontefract Castle, with recommendations as to future work there. The report was then presented to the appropriate committee of the Civic Trust which forwarded it, via Pontefract Corporation, to the Duchy of Lancaster.

More work, both archaeological and historical, has been done on the ancient crosses of Pontefract, and two important portions are now in the possession of the Society pending restoration.

During the year, the Treasurer, Mrs.D.Arundel, visited the United States and spent some time with Mrs.W.V.Walker, our American member in Arizona.

Three members made a short photo-survey of Priory Mill, Horton - a water mill on the Went which was in operation until the early part of the year.

As the Society year closed, arrangements were being made to clear out the lower chamber of the Hermitage which is beneath the General Infirmary. During the year members worked on the following excavations:-
Sutton Hoo; Wanborough; Pontefract Priory; The Friarage, Penrith; Roman Castleford, and the Fairburn Industrial Tramway. E.H.

ANNUAL REPORT FOR 1971-2

The year has been a more eventful one for the Society than the previous year, and many members have been extremely active throughout.

As reported elsewhere, the Society undertook the restoration of the Well-chamber of the Hermitage. When the work was completed it was

inspected by representatives of the Hospital Management Committee, one of whom donated the cost of an oak door. This was made by Mr.D.C.Lodge, and officially opened at a small private ceremony.

Unfortunately, because of the rapid increase in printing costs over the last few years the Society was unable to publish its Annual Journal on time. Instead, it was decided to publish alternate years, beginning in 1972.

During March 1971 a major feature article illustrated in colour on archaeological photography appeared in the magazine 'Photography.' As far as is known, this is the first paper on this subject to have been illustrated in colour, and was the work of the then secretary. Most of the illustrations used were of sites in Yorkshire, though others were featured.

On the 18th July the Society held its Annual Open Day in Pontefract Castle. This was a moderate success and several hundred people were conducted around the magazine.

Members have worked on several excavations during the past year, including:- Sutton Hoo; West Stow; Kendal Castle; Doncaster, and Saint John's Priory, Pontefract.

Again we have had an interesting series of lectures and the Society's gratitude must be extended to all the speakers who gave up their time to entertain and instruct our members. E.H.

REPORT OF AN EXAMINATION DURING DEMOLITION OF THE WINE CELLARS OF MUSCROFT'S
WINE MERCHANTS. By D.C.Lodge.

On the sixteenth of October 1971 the present writer was passing through Salter Row with the intention of taking photographs of the Church St. and Salter Row area when it was noticed that Muscroft's building had been partially demolished. The opportunity was seized to examine the wine cellars. (see plan appended)

The front of the building facing Salter Row is 23'6" long and extends between Pontefract Library and Great Northern House. Over the front is a date stone inscribed 1899 (ie 929). Fifty nine feet along a narrow passage is the entrance to the cellar down a flight of thirteen steps to the cellar

floor, 7'6" below ground level. There are two cellars in line with the steps and to the right of the steps a wine cellar with wine bins on each wall. The full length of the two cellars and flight of steps is 99' of which the steps take up 12', the first cellar 40'6" and the second 42' with a wall between the two about 2'3" thick. The cellars are both 16' wide and all walls are built with brick except both ends of the first cellar and three feet of the left hand wall up to the springer of the arch. The cellar runs under the Municipal Offices and under Headlands Road.

During the construction of the Municipal Offices in 1931 by Brown & Lodge, Builders, the writer was one of the workmen and uncovered the arch of the cellar. Four concrete foundations were put in at each side to carry four heavy R.S. Joists across the cellars upon which the main walls of the Municipal Offices are carried so that no weight falls upon the cellars.

The first cellar has on the left side two openings in the wall which it is believed, were vents to keep the air fresh, and on the right in the centre, is one large opening now walled up, which probably went into the cellar of Col. Muscroft's house which was pulled down to make room for the Municipal Offices.

Through the opening 5'6" high by 4'10" wide in the wall into the second cellar were visible wine bins at the far end and gentries on the right for wine and beer casks. On the left side brick-work stands out like a fire place, but it has only one small opening - about 15" square - for ventilation. A square iron grid in the pavement in front of the Municipal Offices is the opening at ground level for this vent. The end of the cellar must be about 25' into the Headlands road from the front of the Municipal Offices.

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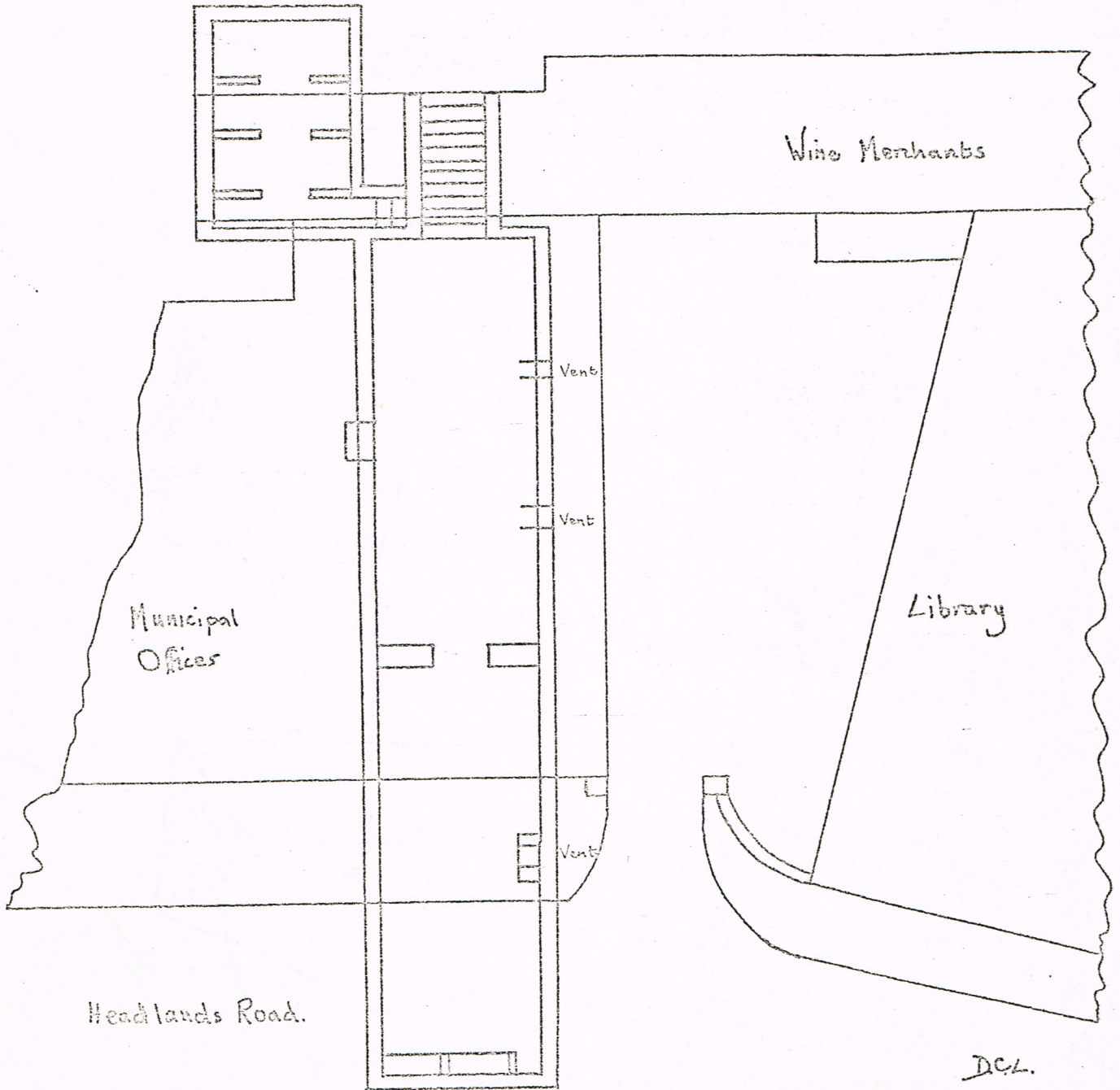
LOCAL ROMANO-BRITISH NATIVE SITES.

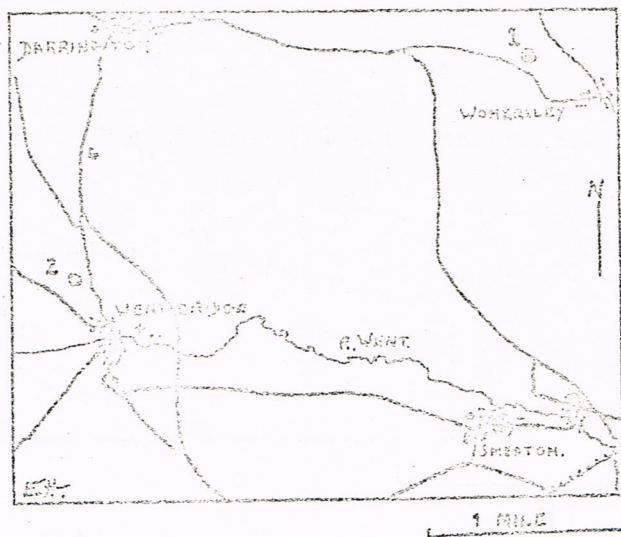
by C.J. Baines.

The Roman Villa, derived from the Latin word "villa," meaning a farm, was mainly connected with agriculture the distribution usually coinciding with good agricultural land. The majority of them lie south east of a line drawn between Exeter and the mouth of the Trent: further north they occur

Muscroft's Wine Merchants - Plan of Wine Cellars.

_____ Ten feet.

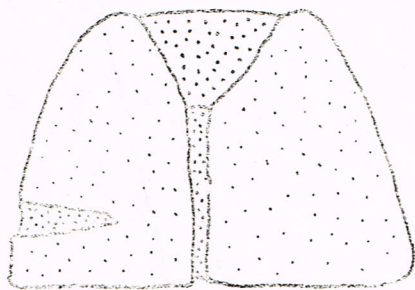




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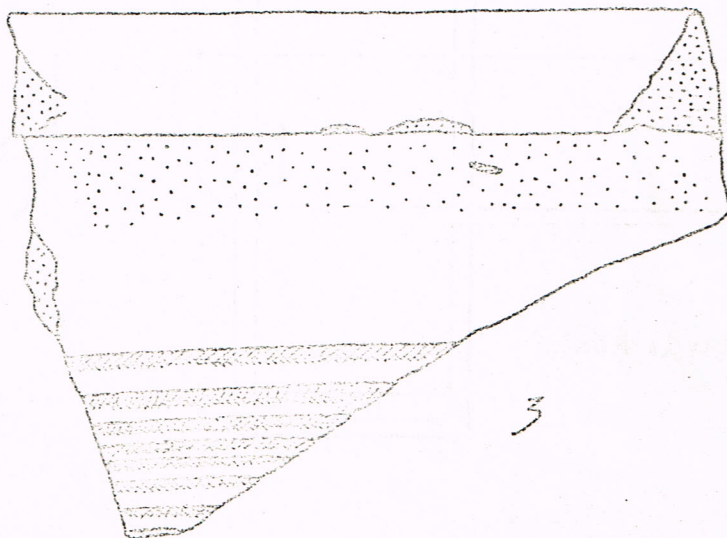
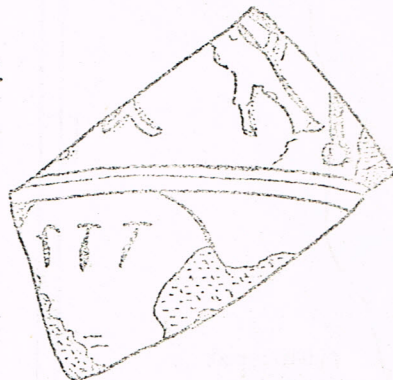
A SELECTION OF FINDS FROM WENTBRIDGE

1



27.5
cm.

2



3

more sparsely.

In Yorkshire, they are mostly found in the Vale of York. To name a few:- Lampton, Rudston, Harpham, Beadlam (the most northerly) Oulston, Hovingham, Bishop Burton, Well, Middleham, and North Stainley. These sites have produced architectural remains, but not all of them have been completely excavated. They all seem to have some connection with the main centres of population which in Yorkshire, apart from the Legionary Fortress of York, were the various military stations such as Brough by Bainbridge, Malton, Newton Kyme, Brough on Humber, Castleford, Doncaster etc. Most of them were able to rely upon the villas in the rich agricultural areas for their supplies; but these must have been supported by the homesteads in the many native settlements which existed.

It seemed to the writer that Castleford, on the perimeter of the area, with so much rich agricultural land to the south, must surely have had some source of supply in the vicinity. The first evidence came from the native site at Ferry Fryston discovered during the building of a housing estate.

The Magnesian limestone district between Castleford and Doncaster suggested a food area upon which might be found some signs of Roman occupation. The Went valley seemed to hold possibilities and this proved to be correct when querns and Romano-British pottery were found (see 1969 Journal) in a quarry at Womersley. (Point 1 on map) A team working on behalf of Doncaster Museum found wall footings and a corn drying kiln, the type of which is usually associated with native settlements. There seems to be little doubt that the main area must have been destroyed during earlier quarrying. Wentbridge was to produce the next site. (point 2 on map.)

Early in 1967 the writer came across the upper stone of a R.B. quern shown in illustration 1, page 5. After some enquiry it was found to have come from Wentbridge. The find spot is on land owned and farmed by Mr. G. Metcalfe of Wentbridge. Permission was gained to conduct investigations when the area was not under crops. Fragments of Roman pottery were found lying on the surface over a wide area but with a certain amount of concentration.

In 1968, Messrs Morris, Carney, Thorpe and Lodge, members of this Society, excavated seven test trenches and a series of small squares at intervals. These trenches produced only a few pieces of pottery, but did establish the fact that a very thin layer of topsoil, sometimes only about a foot, rests on a bed of magnesian limestone.

The site occupies an ideal situation on a ridge within sight of the Roman road from Doncaster to Castleford, and the question has been raised as to what it could be - fortlet, villa, or native settlement? The fortlet theory can be dismissed as there are no signs of a bank or ditch. Pottery found covers a period from middle 2nd century to the 4th century, consisting of pieces of amphora, gritted ware, fragments of mortaria, none valley ware and many oyster shells.

The writer was left in considerable doubt as to interpretation of the site he had found until the Autumn of 1970 when he found a piece of mid-2nd Century samian ware, form 37, showing part of the potter's stamp (page 5 no 2) and many fragments of roofing tile.

All the evidence now points to another native settlement, probably a homestead similar to the one found at Drax in 1961. That there are no signs of foundations evident can be due to the fact that there is very little depth of soil, and any stonework would have been removed during the centuries of cultivation by farmers wishing to avoid damage to their ploughshares.

The site must have been the scene of human activity for a very long period, as in addition to the evidence of Roman occupation it has produced worked flints and Iron Age pottery.

Querns have been found in the valley at Kirk Smeeton, but up till now there is no additional evidence to denote another settlement.

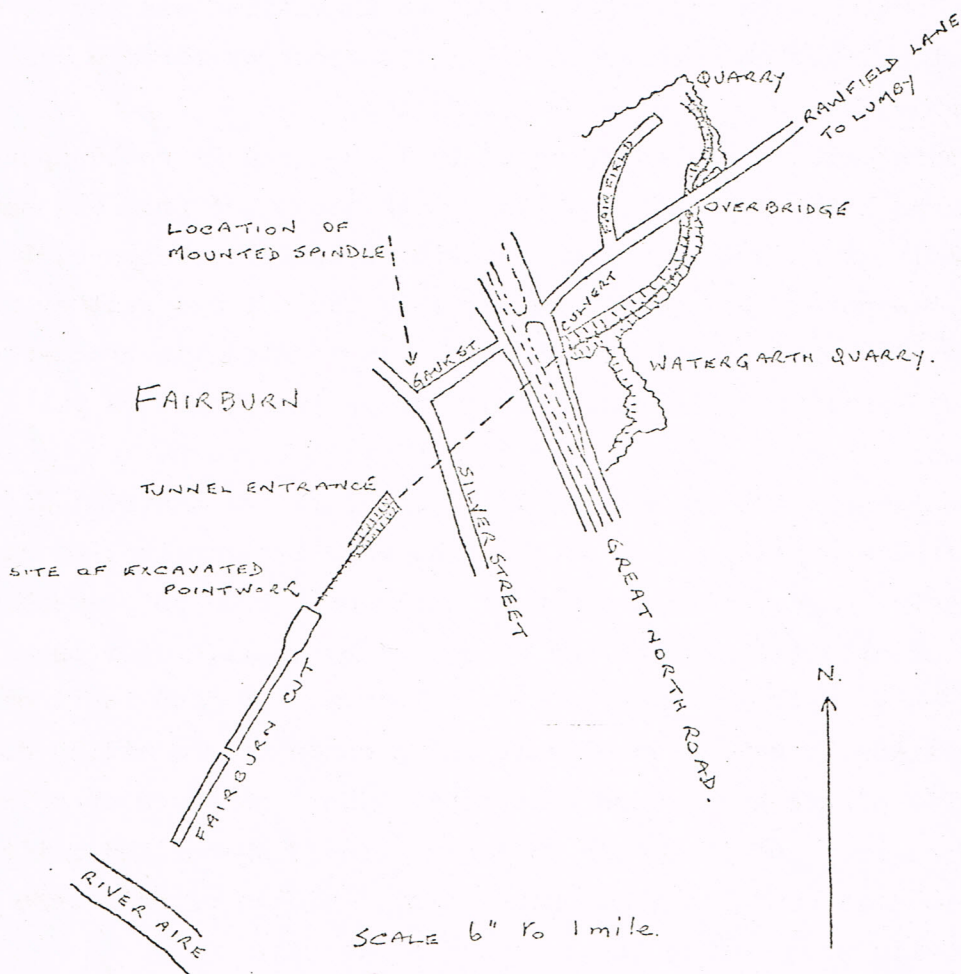
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THE BAIRNBURN RAILWAY

by K.Maston

In his description of the Aire and Calder Navigation, contained in his 'Navigable Rivers and Canals' 1831, Priestley refers to a canal at Bairburn, Yorkshire in the following terms:-

".....the property of Lord Palmerston, a quarter of a mile long, level with the river, for the use of his Lordship's extensive lime and gypsum quarries." Although the connection with the river Aire has been filled in for many years about 400 yards of derelict canal and the terminal basin below Fairburn village, known as 'Fairburn Cut', are still clearly definable and for some time the existence of old rails, part of a railway from the basin to the quarries on the east side of the Great North Road at Fairburn has been known.



This railway commenced at the head of the basin and travelled north east in the direction of the quarries. After about 120 yards the line entered a cutting, now partly filled in, and after about 200 yards a tunnel the southern portal of which is well-preserved, approximately 330 yards

long, by which it passed under the hill on which Fairburn village is built to obtain access to the quarry site. The 1st Edition of the 6" O.S. Map of 1850 indicates that the tunnel may have divided a short distance before its eastern end to give two exits, but there is now visual evidence of one exit only which, since the construction of the Fairburn By-pass to the Great North Road some years ago, has been in the form of a large diameter concrete drain pipe. From the tunnel exit the line was extended, presumably as the quarry workings were developed, for a further 400 yards or thereabouts. Most of this part of the line is in cutting and may be clearly traced, particularly on either side of a limestone overbridge built to carry the Fairburn Lundy road over the formation.

The Fairburn Railway was constructed in 1822-3 and it would appear that the incline through the tunnel, (the line rises about 80' from the basin to the quarries) was worked on the self-acting principle, horse haulage being used on the more level sections. By 1921 the out and railway were no longer in use and the stone spindle on which was mounted the brake-wheel around which the incline cable ran, was hauled up into Fairburn village, where it was mounted on a plinth where it may still be seen.

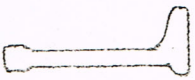
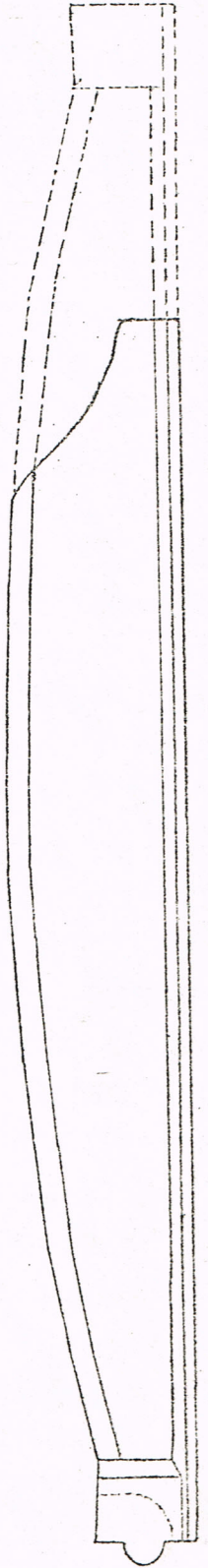
During September 1970 members of the Castleford and District Historical Society excavated a small portion of the line near its termination at the head of the basin. A complete section of early cast iron point-work was uncovered, in excellent condition and supported by small cast iron chairs, most of which were still fastened to stone sleepers embedded in limestone ballast. Additionally a portion of rail and a chair from a siding down the eastern side of the basin were recovered. The track uncovered indicates a gauge of three feet and that four foot cast iron fish-bellied rails were used. There is also evidence that where shorter pieces of rail were needed four foot rails were broken to the required length.

Two chairs and a section of rail were deposited in Castleford museum after restoration by boys of N. Featherstone C.S. School. For some of the information contained in this paper the writer is indebted to notes contained in the 1970 Autumn Nature Trail publication of the Fairburn Ings Nature Reserve and Bird Sanctuary, And the Castleford and district Historical Soc. is indebted to Mr. R. Machin for permission to excavate the track.

FISH BELLED RAIL FOUND AT FAIRBURN BASIN 20.970

PRINCIPAL DIMENSIONS

LENGTH 32 1/4" (ORIGINALLY 4")
MAX DEPTH AT CENTRE 5 1/8"
WIDTH OF RAIL APPROX 1 3/4"
SCALE 2" TO 1"



MIDDLE SECTION



END SECTION

ALL SAINTS CHURCH PONTEFRAC, INVENTORY OF MEMORIALS AND REGISTER ENTRIES
OF BURIALS IN THE CHURCH AND CHURCHYARD, FROM THE DODSWORTH RECORDS.

edited by H. Battye.

East End (on a brass plate)

HERE LIES THE BODY OF RICHARD AYRE of Ponte
fract Castle, gentleman, who dy'd the 2nd
day of July 1682 in the 63th year of his
age.

2 Here also lieth the body of ELIZABETH his
daughter, who dy'ed before him wing (?)
in May 1680. "As thou art, so were we, and
as we are, so must thou be."

West Part.

3 ANTHONY BEAUMONT 1706. JOHN his son May 29th
1721.

5 ANTHONY BRANFORD OF RAISHALP 1702.

6 DOROTHY BUSTFIELD 1669.

7 ELIZABETH COSPHER 1689.

8 ANDREW DICKSON 1687.

9 JOHN DICKSON GENT 1717.

10 JOHN FIELD 1697 ANNY HIS WIFE 1697.

12 PHILADELPHIA GOODWIN 1707.

13 JOSHUA MITCHELL 1720.

14 EDWARD KELLAN

15 SARAH NORWOOD OF BRADFELD SECOND

WIFE TO GERVAS SEMON OF EAST
HARDWICK OCTOBER 7th 1722

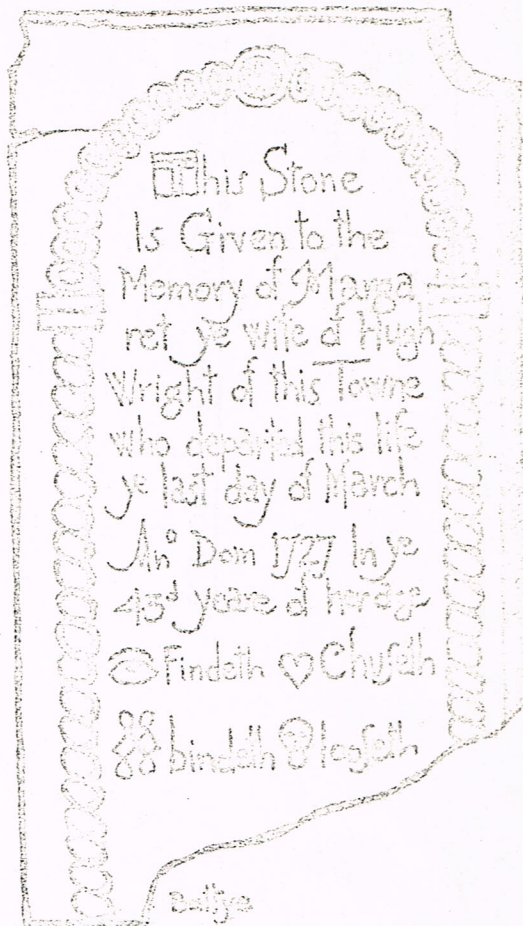
16 LEONARD STABLES, ALDERMAN 1712

17 MARY HIS 2nd WIFE 1723.

MARY SHARP 1688.

18 ANN SHARPOUS 1723

19 ROBERT SHARPOUS ALDERMAN AGED 44
1713 JOHN DRING MAYOR OF THIS TOWN.



20 HENRY TANNERED 1663

21 MARY USHER 1687

22 JOHN WARD ESQ 1657. (THIS GENTLEMAN
AND MR TANNERED, ALSO IS BURY'ed IN
THE EAST PART)

23 MR GERVAS SEMON 1706

ROBERT SEMON OF GRINETHORPE IN THE
PARISH OF PELLINGBORCH DY'ed AT EAST

24 HARDWICK AND HIS SON GERVAS'S DEC 23
AD 1716 AGED 78.

Yard.

ELLINOR ADAMS 1713.	25	JOHN PERFECT GARDNER 1722.	53
ROWLAND ARACK 1692.	26	NOAH PERFECT 1723.	54
WILLIAM ALLEN OF KNOTTINGLEY		SAMUAL PRINCE OF KNOTTINGLEY 1708.	55
FEB. 24th 1723.	27	RICHARD ROUTH ALDERMAN 1722.	56
JOHN ALLEN 1604	28	JANE HIS WIFE 1721.	57
NATHANIEL ATKINSON OF KNOTTINGLEY		BENJAMIN RADCLIFF MARCH 1st 1727	58
APRIL 17th 1728.	29	ELIZABETH HIS WIFE NOV 14th 1729.	59
MERCY ATKINSON 1719	30	MARTIN STABLES OF KNOTTINGLEY 1716	60
SARAH ATKINSON 1720	31	HENRY STABLES 1722	61
JOHN AKISTER SEN' 1695	32	JOHN STABLES 1728	62
DOROTHY AND SARAH HIS CHILDREN		MARTIN STABLES 1729	63
THEBR'D 1711	33 34	ROBT' STAVELY 1669	64
WILLIAM ASHE 1710	35	ELIZABETH SHAW WIFE OF BENJAMIN	
SARAH WIFE OF JOHN ATKINSON JUN 1716	36	(SIXTON)	65
MRS FRANCES BARNES 1729	37	JOHN STEPHENSON 1715	66
JOHN BOULTON OF KNOTTINGLEY 1718	38	CHARITY STONE.	67
SARAH BROHN 1723	39	JOHN SCHOLE 1680	68
BRIDGET BOOTH 1700	40	SAMUEL SCHOLE LAID THE STONE.	69
MARY BROWNE 1728	41	JOHN TOWNES 1714	70
THO. BROWBAD 1706	42	THOMAS TOMLINSON JAN 24th 1706	70
MATHW BURNAID 1718 LATE WIFE OF THO.		MARY HIS WIFE 1710	71
KNOWLES.	43	JOHN THOM 1697	72
ANNE ENGLAND 1698	44	MARTIN WATSON 1726 AND HIS THREE	73-4-5
THOMAS HISSON 1723	45	CHILDREN DINAH MARTIN AND ANNE	6
JOHN HUTCHINSON OF PONTEFRACT	46	THOMAS WILLIAMSON 1727	77
GENTLEMAN APRIL 4th 1728		ROBT. WRIGHT GROCER IN PONTEFRACT	78
JOHN JAYRAN 1699	47	AUG 12th 1721 JOSHUA HIS SON 1714	79
MARTHA LAVERACK JULY 1st 1727	48	THOMAS HIS SON 1723	80
EDWARD LAVERACK 1729 AGED 37	49	HENRY WALKER WHO MARRIED HIS WIDOW.	
JOHN LAPIDGE 1673 *	50	1730	81
CHRISTOP. LONGHOOD 1719	51	MARGARET WIFE OF HUGH WRIGHT DY'D	
BRYAN LUND 1682.	52	LAST MARCH 1727	82

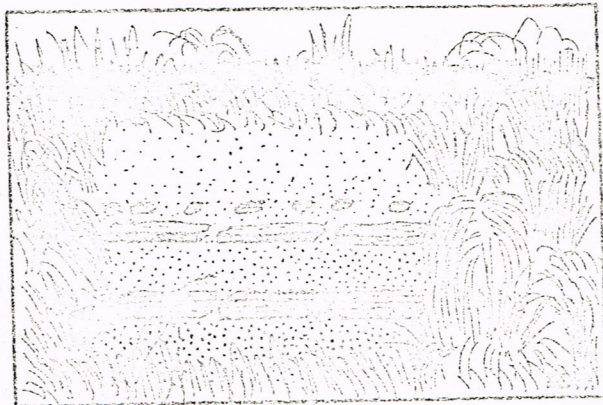
* Note- postmaster of Pontefract, Superseded by Martin Watson 1702.

ROMAN ROAD NOTES

by E. Houlder

During 1971 parts of the A 639 road between Barnsdale Bar and East Hardnigh were opened. As this portion of road covers the Roman road 28b the opportunity was seized to examine the trenches carefully. Of the several holes, only one showed unmistakable signs of the Roman construction beneath, denoted by the very steep camber and the large river cobbles used. Photographs were taken.

A part of 28b which is not covered by modern road is the stretch which crosses Park Lane near the golf club and forms the boundary between Featherstone and Pontefract. A hedge now marks the line of the road which was supposed to have been ploughed out during the last century. Reasoning that the road would not have been ploughed out where old field boundaries cross it, the writer and some of his students made a careful search in such places and were rewarded by the sight of part of the section of the road visible in the side of a ditch. Photographs were taken and drawings made, one of which is appended. Members are reminded that the spot in question is on agricultural land and the permission of the farmer must be obtained before investigations are made.



EYE-SKETCH OF PART OF SECTION OF
ROAD 28b REVEALED IN THE SIDE OF
A DITCH AT S.E. 43126.

ALL SAINTS GRAVEYARD PONTEFRACT SE 463224

D.R.

In 1966 several Society members, notably Mrs. Arundel, Miss Glover, Mr. Morris and Mr. Lodge spent some time clearing the undergrowth in the graveyard across North Baileygate from All Saints Church. It was decided to record details from the gravestones uncovered, and in all 139 were found.

Notable amongst these is the Dunhill grave, a double plot surrounded by a curb with a central marble monument recording the death of Richard Dunhill in 1815 aged 76. In the same grave were buried two sons, Henry and Thomas both of whom died in 1832 and Louisa the wife of Thomas who died in 1832 and their three sons Edward, Thomas and Charles, the last dying in 1889.

The earliest recorded burial is that of Frances Elizabeth Hepworth, daughter of Richard and Frances Hepworth, who died 23rd May 1801 aged four months.

It is recorded that in 1807 a Mr. Moorhouse of Skipton in Craven died whilst on a visit to his friends at this place, aged 30 years; and that John Tomlinson, Primitive Methodist Preacher born at Belper in Derbyshire was drowned whilst bathing in the river Aire on 8th April 1835 in the 23rd year of his age.

Many of the names which occur reflect families still in the town, and some are the same as those recorded in the church register already mentioned.

The deaths of two veterinary surgeons, Richard Stopford Taylor in 1850 at the age of 37 is recorded with the comment 'universally lamented', and John Darcey Beech 1852 at the age of fifty one would seem to indicate no history of longevity in the professional field in this period.

It is possible that John Fox, son of George Fox of Sheffield who died in 1853 at the age of 85 and whose occupation was bookseller, is the father of Fox the local historian. His wife Elizabeth buried in the same grave had died 7 years earlier in 1846.

In only one instance is there evidence of the mason who cut the stone, and that is in the case of the universally lamented veterinary surgeon where the mason's name is given as J. Sutton of Darrington.

Many of the Hepworth family connected with Ackworth Lodge, and the Townends of Tanshelf, together with the Halls of Furston Lodge, all of whom were related to this family with the Listers are buried here. In 1814 died Thomas Belk, late of King's Villa aged 53; his widow Ann died two years later, and in 1890 their son Thomas Belk died in Hartlepool at the age of 81. This family no doubt gave its name to Belks Court which runs from Cornmarket to Hougate.

Mary Beesting who died in 1847 at the age of 67 is noted only that she was in the service of Richard Hepworth Esq. of Pontefract.

Another well known local family whose remains are in this graveyard is that of the Perfects, two of whom were aldermen in the late 18th.

One of the longest epitaphs was that of Henry Sunderland Heptinstall who died in 1858 at the age of 77; his many achievements as a soldier in battle are recorded. He was admired as a gallant soldier and died sincerely regretted - the epitaph was erected by his son.

One of the eighteenth century liquorice merchants in the town was Gideon Osborne whose wife died in 1819 at the age of 59. The details of all the 139 graves is now recorded and will be retained amongst the papers of the Pontefract & District Archaeological Society.

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PONTEFRACT PRIORY EXCAVATIONS 1970

Condensed from a report by C.V. Bellamy BSc, MI Biol.

By the end of 1969 it had been confirmed that there were no earlier buildings beneath the nave, though the area between the crossing piers had not yet been examined.

During 1958 a pair of mouldings had been recorded on the S.W. and N.W. crossing piers. It was presumed that they had formed part of an arch or a closing screen, so in 1970 it was decided to take a closer look at these features. Eventually a 12' trench spanned the nave and foundations of a stone screen were found.

It was evident that an inserted Reed Screen had been found, including an axial altar and sills of doors on either side. The eastern ends of the side aisles had been closed with walling, the whole being not earlier than fourteenth century.

It is assumed that the original Rood Screen would have been between nave pillars N2 & S2. No stone foundations exist here, but a wooden screen would not need foundations, and sockets found on the nave side of N2 could be anchorages for such a screen.

The moving of the choir from the western arm could be related to the building of the larger eastern arm in the late 12th or early 13th century but a later date now seems more likely when declining numbers could no longer fill a large choir.

With the completion of the excavations in the nave it only remained to sample the crossing area and north transept to determine that there had been no earlier building on the site of the Priory Church. No new structure emerged, but a series of 13 voussoirs lying on the last occupation level where they had fallen at the demolition was found, representing an arch designed to span fourteen feet, and carrying a chevron decoration.

This completed the excavation of the site of the church but left some unanswered questions about adjacent structures.

Area North of the Nave.

During previous years evidence had been found of possible buildings lying forty feet or more north of the nave. During the latter part of 1970 these traces were examined over a large area. The work revealed several patches of burnt clay and a scatter of small fragments of slag or clinker, usually greenish in colour and some with metallic copper. The scatter persisted at succeeding depths.

At a depth of three to four feet from present turf there was a substantial layer of limestone chippings indicating itinerant use as a masons working area. This layer gave way to further patches of burning and slag nodules with patches of tipping where there had been subsidence. Eventually at nine feet a kiln or furnace came to light; almost circular and about five feet in diameter, constructed of large cobbles standing on a stone floor of limestone slabs. It was surrounded by more cobbles all reddened by heat and covered with three inches of charcoal.

West of the area of the kiln remains were noted of a circular or apsidal building which seems to belong to the mid 16th century.

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