

PONTEFRACT AND DISTRICT ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY

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SECRETARY'S REPORT - MARCH 1976.

During the past two years the Society has amalgamated with the Local History Society for its lectures and its outings. This has been to the benefit of both Societies as attendances are higher and with the increased cost of hiring rooms it has helped to reduce expenses.

Among the speakers in the 74-75 season were Mr. Riley of Sheffield University on Aerial Photography and Mr. P. Mayes of the West Yorkshire Archaeological Survey speaking on his Rescue work with particular reference to Roman Castleford. In the 75-76 season Mr. Bellamy talked of the recent work on St. John's Priory and Mrs. Spencer on the Museum and Art Gallery Service in the Wakefield Metropolitan District Council. We are pleased to hear that the old library in Pontefract is to be renovated for use as a Museum. Material now at the Castle Museum, some belonging to the P.D.A.S. and never displayed before, and other material in the possession of the Wakefield Metropolitan District Council will be used to show the people of Pontefract and its visitors what a rich heritage surrounds us.

Unfortunately, no Rescue work has been done but as the Town Development Scheme has been delayed also we are hopeful that this will be the year for excavations.

Our members have been watching every small development or road works very keenly and our thanks go to them for their vigilance. Mr. E. Houlder has continued his aerial photography, details of which are included in this journal.

Anyone wishing to become a member of this Society will be most welcome and should contact Miss D. Roberts,
3a, Mill Hill,
Pontefract. Tel. Pontefract 4201.

by Eric Houlder LRPS, and Michael E Leach.

Over a dozen years ago, Edward Archer, then a junior member of the society, found a fragment of samian ware at approx. SE 19754503. The shard is four centimetres across and though from the base of a vessel, is too small to be of diagnostic value other than to confirm the fact that it is central Gaulish in origin.

On August 28th, 1975, the present writers were engaged in aerial photography in the vicinity and noticed that the site was set with a cereal crop. A few faint cropmarks were visible so two photographs were taken, one on conventional colour film (in this case Barfen Cr100, E4) and one on Ektachrome infrared (Wratten 12 equivalent, E4). At the time the photographs were taken, the unprecedented hot spell was nearing its end and the crops were being harvested(1). The conventional picture showed the line of the Roman road, 28b (2) quite clearly, with other features faintly indicated at the side. When the FCIR photograph was examined, however, much more was immediately apparent. The Roman road showed up particularly well, with the two side-ditches clearly visible. Various enclosures at each side of the road stood out in good definition and it was evident that the site was much larger than previously presumed, in fact disappearing off the edges of the photograph on two sides. Preliminary plans were drawn and the site briefly published(3).

Early in 1976, Houlder began experimenting with methods of enhancing the images of aerial photographs and found two techniques which held out some promise. These will be reported on in detail elsewhere, and it is sufficient here to state that further features were defined. Following this work, Mr.D.A.Lemmon of Pontefract introduced Houlder to Mr. Tomlinson of Carleton, a retired farmer. Mr.Tomlinson produced nineteen further shards of samian and various coarse wares which he had ploughed up from the same site over many years.

Pottery Fragments

1. Mr.Archer's samian; probably central Gaulish.
- 2,3,4,5. Four shards of samian, three Central Gaulish, one probably.
- 6,7. Two rim shards of Black-Burnished ware, one from a pie-dish.c 120-160.
8. Rim shard of orange rustic-ware. c 80-130.
9. Shard of grey rustic-ware.

- 10,11. Two rim shards of rough-cast wares; 10 everted rim, random texture.
 11 bead rim, particles possibly in vertical zones.
12. Shard of red colour-coated ware.
13. Shard of calcite-gritted ware, everted rim.
- 14-20. Seven shards of grey coarse ware.

Discussion

Much more work needs to be done, both aerial photography and field walking, before the nature of the site can be elucidated. It is possible, however, to suggest that the site is a native one which may have had an early foundation. The road at this point was probably built soon after A.D. 70 and though the pottery found so far points to a slightly later date an early one cannot yet be ruled out. Taking the evidence as a whole, an early second century date is certain, though what happened after this cannot yet be said.

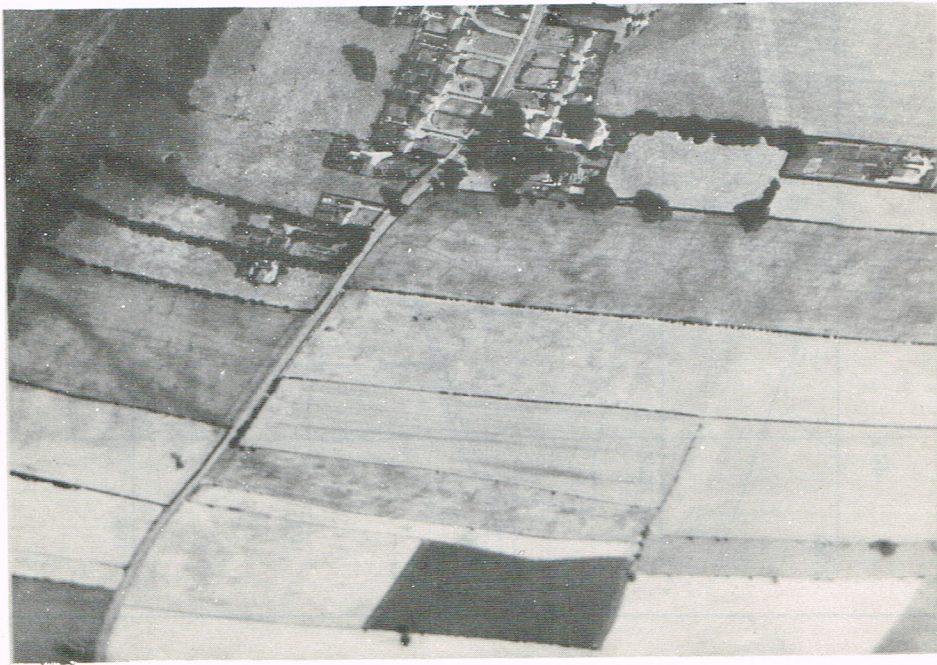
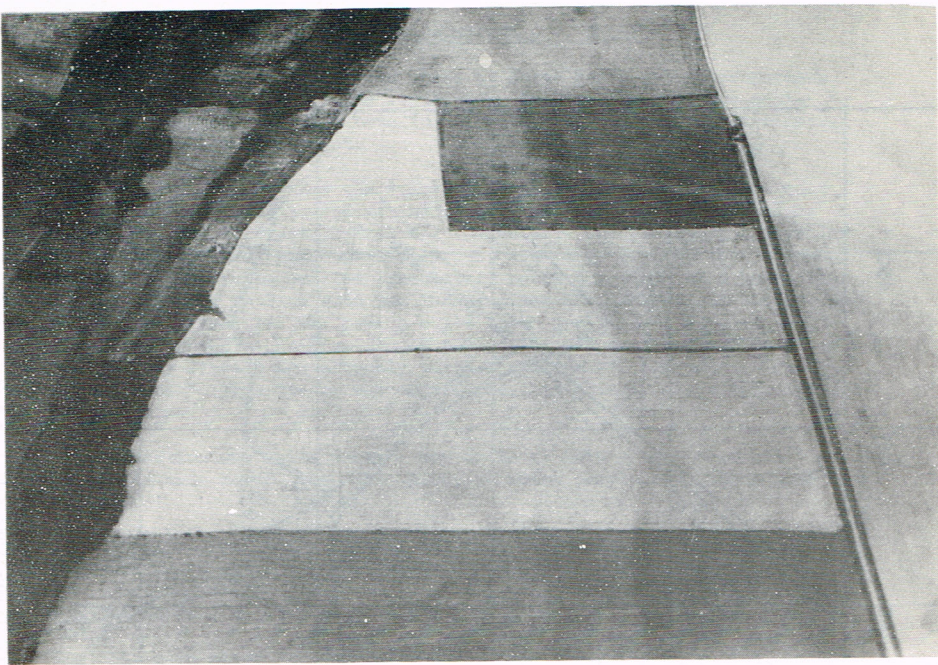
Conclusion

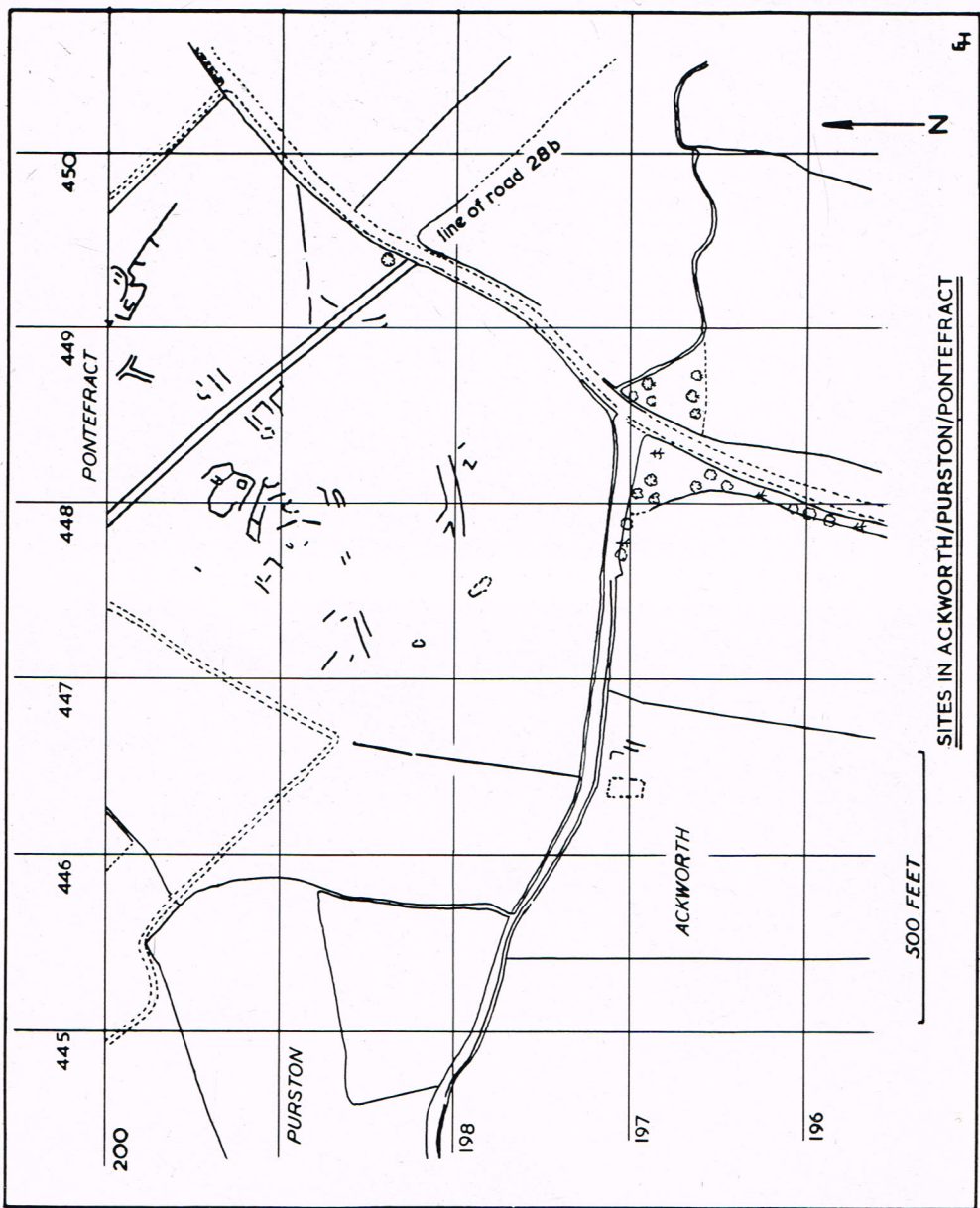
During the Hadrianic period there was a native settlement on both sides of the main Roman road to the north approximately four miles south of LEGIOLIVM. Aerial photography shows numbers of enclosures with possible traces of a hut in one. Pottery from the site suggests that the site may have been founded up to half a century previously but gives little indication so far of subsequent activity though if the grey ware is Cantley or Crambeck, as seems possible, the site may have been in existence until the early fourth century.

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Footnotes.

1. See note in FOTARCH vol.1, no.1 by E.Houlder, pg2.
 2. Ivan D.Margary. ROMAN ROADS IN BRITAIN, vol.2, pg 146. London 1957.
 3. YORKSHIRE ARCHAEOLOGY 1975, pg 5.
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A TUNNEL MYSTERY AT NORTH FEATHERSTONE - V. OXLEY.

During the summer of 1975, road works at North Featherstone crossroads uncovered a tunnel cut through the sandstone. The tunnel, a simple semi-circular one, was about a metre both in height and width, and some two metres below ground level at this point.

Investigation showed that the tunnel ran in a straight level line east to west, narrowing somewhat, and was stopped by the cellar wall of a house standing above, about 12 metres from the roadworks. Unfortunately the cellar had been filled in some years previously. It was later learned that a tunnel of similar size and shape existed immediately below the floor of a house near the Sun Inn, roughly in line with the tunnel discovered. What was the age and purpose of such a tunnel? The houses built above appeared to date at least from the late eighteenth century, and as the cellar had cut through the tunnel, it was obviously disused and probably quite forgotten at this date. Could it have been a drain? This theory was considered, but quickly discarded, for two very good reasons.

1. The direction was quite wrong - any drain at this place (on a hill) would be made north to south. Also, as noted previously, the tunnel was level.
2. The tunnel itself had a channel cut into the middle of the floor, presumably to collect any water which seeped into the tunnel.

What other possibilities were left?

Coal has been mined in the district for many centuries - could it have been a coal mine? Careful consideration of all the facts lead me to believe that this is indeed the case. The sites of several bell-pits nearby show that coal is quite near to the surface in this area.

Assuming that the entrance to the mine was the western end, driving a level roadway eastwards would reach the coal seam, as the ground rises to the east.

But why not drive the roadway down at an angle, as in a modern drift mine, thereby reaching the seam more quickly, and saving a great deal of very hard labour? This would seem reasonable until one remembers that the mine would have become hopelessly flooded in a very short time. Was the tunnel large enough to serve as a mine roadway? Certainly - one could crawl along in comparative comfort, and the immense effort required to cut through the solid sandstone with simple hand tools would deter anyone from making it larger than was absolutely necessary.

Only one fact could not be explained. At one point in the section examined, (near the cellar wall) the channel cut into the floor went from the middle to one side of the tunnel. This was unexpected as it was assumed that coal would be transported from the mine on a wooden sledge, the runners travelling on each side of the channel. However, some other method may have been used to bring the coal to the surface.

Finally, I would warn anyone against entering any tunnel or similar excavation unless they know exactly what they are doing, and take the necessary precautions. Dangers from unsafe roof, gases and flooding are very real, and may easily lead to tragedy.

Report on Field Walk. by Mr. D. C. Lodge.

Narrowbeck Circle. Map. ref. S.E. 476232.

Following a report by Mr. E. Houlder and Mr. M. Leach who found by aerial photographs a distinct circle showing in a crop of wheat near the new motorway the M62. between Knottingley Road and Sowgate Lane, I decided to visit the site to see if I could confirm this find.

I started from Sowgate Lane, between a house called Narrowbeck Villa (Pear Tree Farm) and the new motorway embankment. From there I could see a large circle in the crop of wheat where the corn grew taller than the rest of the crop.

I took five photographs from different positions, each photograph from a fixed position and in line with another permanent object ie. a building, chimney, etc, so that we may find the circle in the future, these photographs all proved positive and I believe the circle to be approximately 14 metres (46 ft) across.

The field is on the farm of Mr. Wood of 12, Box Lane, Old Church and I visited him to obtain permission to walk the field to look for pottery, flints etc. Mr. Wood believes the circle to be the place he used for weighing peas and that the phosphates and other fertilisers have made the dark circular mark. I do not agree with him and think that the prehistoric excavation was filled in with soil and makes this lush growth in the corn crop.

Only Archaeological excavation can definitely prove the existence of the circle.

Although the history of the Lacy family and their estates down to 1194 has been recently studied the fortunes of the family from 1194 until 1311 when the last male de Lacy died have, despite the greater abundance of source material, not been studied to the same extent except in general studies of the period or in local books which were written before much relevant material was available. This article is an attempt to look at certain aspects of the Lacy estates in the mid-13th century in the light of recent research.

Edmund de Lacy was born in 1227, the only son of John de Lacy hereditary Constable of Chester (circ. 1192-1240) and his second wife Margaret de Quincey whom he had married before 21st June 1221 and who was the heiress to the earldom of Lincoln, a title which was granted to John on 22nd November, 1232. Earl John died on 22nd July, 1240 and was buried at the family foundation of Stanlow Abbey in Cheshire. The following year his widow married Walter Marshal, Earl of Pembroke. Because the earldom of Lincoln had come to the de Lacys through Countess Margaret it has been said that she alone retained the title after her first husband's death and that Edmund never held the earldom. However, he was styled as earl on 5th September, 1255.

As he was only twelve or thirteen years of age at the time of his father's death and being a tenant-in-chief he became a ward of the king, Henry III, who administered the honour of Pontefract during his minority. The king treated the honour as his own. An example of this was that on 7th August, 1244 he gave to his brother Richard, Earl of Cornwall, fifty head of deer from Pontefract park to stock the earl's park at Knaresborough. Whilst he was a royal ward Edmund's tutor was the Dominican friar Richard de la Wych, Bishop of Chichester who died on 3rd April, 1253 and whom Earl Edmund was later to describe as "formerly my teacher and dearest friend". In May 1247 Edmund married Alicia, the elder daughter of Manfred III's Queen, Eleanor of Provence. Edmund and Alicia's only son, Henry, was probably born in the latter part of 1249 and his name would suggest that Henry III was his godfather. In his adult life he became a close friend and supporter of Henry's son, Edward I. On Edmund's death on 21st July, 1258 the estates descended in wardship to Henry.

Although Edmund, personally, only held the estates for nine years and died when he was thirty, his administration of the Pontefract portion of his inheritance can perhaps be seen as clearly as that of any member of his family.

Edmund's old tutor, Bishop Richard, rapidly acquired a reputation for sanctity although he was not officially canonised as St. Richard of Chichester until 1262 and it was probably in 1256 that his former pupil decided to found a Dominican Friary at Pontefract that would serve both as a base for the itinerant friars and as a memorial to St. Richard. He chose a site on the south side of the town in a sheltered valley but adjoining what was then the main road from the south into the town centre i.e. via the present Mayor's Walk, Friarwood Lane, Slutwell Hill and Gillygate, thus allowing the friars to receive alms from passing travellers. In order to found the Friary Edmund had to compensate the inhabitants of Pontefract for the loss of the land on which the Friary stood by giving them twenty six acres in exchange, and also the monks of St. John's Priory for the loss of tithes, from which the friars were exempt, by granting to the Priory a daily cartload of wood from Pontefract Park. Having thus prepared the way for the foundation Edmund went, probably with the knights of the honour of Pontefract, to lay the foundation stone of the church which he dedicated to Our Lady, St. Dominic and St. Richard. The apparently flawless foundation stone broke into three, implying divine approval of the dedication. Although Edmund was buried at Stanlow his heart and also the body of his wife were interred in the church. Excavations at the site of the Friary in 1963 revealed that the first buildings had been of timber and were only replaced with stone in the later Middle Ages.

This article is primarily concerned with the administration of the Lacy estates immediately surrounding Pontefract rather than with the whole honour but

it is worth noticing that Edmund's father had held the privilege of the return of writs in the Wapentake of Osgoldcross and in 1251 Henry III granted Edmund free warren in all his demesne lands in the honour. In 1257 Henry III granted Edmund a weekly market to be held on Wednesdays at Tanshelf and a summer fair for three days at Pontefract. Edmund's intention in obtaining the charter was presumably to increase his revenue from the tolls he could levy as lord of the manor. Just before his death in 1258 Edmund extended to "West Chepe" the same liberties and customs that his ancestors had given to Pontefract. These liberties and customs must have been, in the main, those which his grandfather Roger de Lacy had granted to Pontefract in 1194. The nomenclature makes it clear that Tanshelf is not the place concerned and the charter must be understood as referring to the area centred upon the present market place with its boundaries lying along Headlands, Watergate, Newgate, that part of Southgate from Town End to Gillygate and so back to Headlands as opposed to the original "Pontefract" centred on Micklegate and with its boundaries on the lines of Back Northgate and Walkergate. Whereas this latter settlement was probably 12th century in origin, West Chepe around St. Giles probably ante-dated the Conquest. As a result of Edmund's charter the two halves of the town were politically united although their junctions at Bridge St, remained a rating division of the town until at least the 17th century.

At the point of junction the centre of town government developed and the more distinctive name of Pontefract prevailed, forcing West Chepe into oblivion.

Following Edmund's death and the return of the estates to royal wardship an inquisition was made on 28th July, 1258 as to the value of the Pontefract part of the estates. It is clear that this covers what was known by November 1368 as the bailiwick of Pontefract i.e. the rents from property in the town, the tolls on the market, fairs and goods, the profits of justice, rent for land in Pontefract, Tanshelf, Castleford and Hardwick, the service and food renders for land in Carleton and Hardwick and the profits of the mills and fisheries at Castleford and Knottingley. In 1258 these amounted to, in addition to the food renders, £133-1s-1 $\frac{1}{2}$ d. Some idea of the economy of Pontefract can be seen from the £12 from the market and £4 from the fair, the £30 realised by the toll of beasts, iron, wool, hides and skins, 6s-8d each from the tolls of fish and oil, 5/- from linen web and another 6s-8d from road. Property in the town was divided into tofts i.e. a portion of land with a house on it, the smaller booths or selde and the stalls which stood in the open places of the town. From the figures contained in the inquisition it can be seen that the population of the town was probably somewhere in the region of either 1316 or, if the stalls were counted as households, of 1526. By way of comparison and on the same basis it would appear that the population in 1379 was 2128.

Thus, although Pontefract was an important asset to Edmund de Lacy it had not yet attained, it would appear, its largest medieval population and, indeed, as an entity had only just come into being. It is arguable that the 1379 figure represents about the maximum medieval population of the town and that the period when Edmund was lord of Pontefract was important in its development as one of the leading towns of the 14th century Yorkshire before the seeming decline of the 15th century.

Note. References have been omitted to save space but this brief account is based on printed sources.

BOOK REVIEWS

Landscape Archeology by T. Rowley & M. Aston.

pub. David & Charles
paperback.

A book devoted to fieldwork in the medieval period is a rarity. That it was written by two geographers also deserves comment and commendation. A most comprehensive work, (mentioning Pontefract) which the urban and rural medievalist will neglect at his peril.

Interim (journal) about 20p.

Interim is the unofficial news organ of the York Archaeological Trust. Though simply written, by non-archaeologists for non-archaeologists I found each issue absorbing reading.

Rescue Archaeology Edited by Philip Rahtz. Pelican 90p.

A collection of essays on various aspects of Rescue. At times rather too intense but certainly readable and stimulating. Those of us who remember the big digs of the 50s and 60s will, I am afraid, read it with mounting apprehension. If the book is right in its prognostications all digging in the future will be in towns in a Rescue context. No longer will the young volunteer wake to the dawn chorus, and a whiff of ELSANOL will cease to evoke happy memories!

PONTEFRACT PRIORY EXCAVATIONS1976.

In the early years of work on this site the position of the north and east walls of the monks' refectory were recorded together with part of the south wall in the south-east corner, including a doorway from the south. The western part of the room was not then available for excavation although an exploratory trench did reveal wall foundations at the western end. (Thoresby Society Publications, Vol. XLIX).

This year there was an opportunity to return to this area and trenches were proposed on the line of banking which separates the middle terrace of the field from the lower terrace adjoining the stream. Excavation trenches were sited on the area expected to give the south-west corner of the frater, and possible kitchen site.

Prior to excavation we traversed the area with a Proton Gradiometer, and with Martin-Clark resistivity apparatus, and Dr. A. Aspinall, with Mr. J.A. Pocock and others from Bradford University Physics Department brought a range of prospecting equipment to the location. It was thought useful information might be gained by comparing instrumental prospecting evidence with the actual products of excavation. Needless to say, the surveys with prospecting equipment covered a larger area than could be excavated in the one season. Excavation was restricted to an area 35ft by 25ft, along the sloping bank. On our recording grid this is represented by square 11D4 and the eastern half of 11D3.

It was known that tipping had taken place along the bank in 1930, mainly to extend the flat terrace which crosses the middle of the field, but this proved to be limited to the upper part of the slope, and at the foot mediaeval stone work is only three to six inches below present turf.

Once clear of this overburden almost the whole of the area was found sealed with a very hard mortared rubble showing little evidence of any separate structural features apart from a sturdy stone-built drain crossing from our north bank to our south-west corner where it disappeared a few inches under present turf.

The mortar seal was uneven and several pieces of carved stone were bedded in it. One piece of a base from twin-column arcading was similar to material seen re-used in the eastern gorth wall of the monks' cloister when that wall was rebuilt probably at the same time as the Decagonal Chapter House was built. There was also a small Acanthus capital possibly from the same source.

The general cover of mortar and stones stopped a little short of our northern bank and was less positive towards the southern side, and gradual penetration of this produced a clearer picture. It was now apparent that we had a wall (Wall 1) a little over four feet wide, entering our area from the east with its northern face only a few inches from the northern edge of our trench. This face continued westwards for 11½ feet. The southern edge turned southwards after four feet and revealed an east-facing hearth some four feet from the corner. The hearth was four and a half feet wide, and two and a half feet deep, there was considerable reddening of hearth bed and adjacent stonework but the whole seemed to be a later insertion into the corner of the wall. The southern edge of the hearth was marked by pieces of thin flogging standing on edge as packing, but no solid walling. In its place we found a loose fill of charcoal and stones continuing some 2ft lower than the hearth surface.

South of this feature, the face of the main wall continued

southwards on a straight line, but the eastern edge widened abruptly to give a north-south wall 5' 6" wide into the south baulk. The whole of this 'L' shaped wall seemed to be of one build, with the hearth added separately.

Wall 2

Outside the angle of wall 1, a further length of east-west wall prolonged this line for a further nine feet westwards, though the more westerly portion was only sustained at a lower course. It did not reach as far as the stone drain, nor seem to have ever extended so far. This wall section was 3ft 10 ins. wide, and the top of it mainly on the same level as wall 1.

Wall 3

A further length of walling running not quite parallel to wall 1 in a southerly direction. It was 2ft 6 ins. wide in its northern section and there was a space about 1ft 4 ins. between this and the west side of 1 behind the hearth. At its northern end it butted against the south face of wall 2, with mortar in the gap. Seven feet further south wall 3 widened abruptly to just over three feet wide, and so continued into the south baulk where it lies about three inches below turf, and is about an inch from wall 1.

Wall 4 is another block of masonry 5ft x 4ft 6 ins, butted against the south face of wall 2 and the west face of wall 3, again with mortar filling the gaps. South of this block of stonework a stony-clay fill between it and two curb stones in east-west line. The fill carried a marked charcoal layer which passed immediately under the curb stones, but was destroyed just south of them.

The curbstones (feature 5) showed considerable wear on the southern edges as if used as a step, though there was nothing surviving on the south to support this idea. Possibly the masonry block(4) was a base of some steps against the south face of(2) but no other trends were seen.

The area south of the two curb stones contained some mortar and rubble including several large irregular limestone rocks to a depth of about three feet. Some of these passed underneath walls 3 and 1 to the east. A fairly shallow and superficial block of stonework near the south baulk, clearly visible in the south baulk face, showed that another light wall had existed, though it was unidentifiable in the mass of rocks. We designate this Wall 6 in the belief that it will be more tangible in a future excavation further south.

The area between the above stony fill and the drain carried a more uniform fill, mainly stony clay with a fair amount of 12th-13th C pottery in it and several patches of burning at different levels, but with a major burnt area against our south baulk and between three and nine feet from the south-west corner. It contained much fused lead scatter, and seemed to be result of metal salvage - possibly at the Dissolution, but there was no late pottery.

The Drain was found completely capped and all wallstones and floor slabs were in situ. The channel was firmly packed with dark silt, but no diagnostic pottery. It was about six inches wide and five inches deep, with flag flooring. There was a slight fall from north to south. It was somewhat lower than the tops of features 2 and 4 and there is no positive evidence that either of these passed over it. The drain did not appear in our north baulk, but originated just inside our trench, and just north of the line of the north face of wall 2. It continued beyond the south-west corner of our excavation. It in no place carried anything other than post-monastic debris over it, yet didn't seem to be a particularly late feature.

Wall 7. The north-west corner of the excavation, i.e. the northern part west of the drain, again carried a heavy mortar-rubble float with no definable features except a definite edge to the south side. Under the mortar more huge slabs of limestone, with a few carved pieces of arching, etc. There was no evidence of Wall 2 or 4 west of the drain, and the mortared rubble ended on a line about 7ft 6ins. from the north baulk. Two masoned stones with faced edges marked the limit of the rubble near the west baulk, and two others near the drain were almost in line. At the western edge there was a filled trench about 2ft wide and 15ins. deep. The shoulders were reddened with fire, and the trench had continued as far as the drain, but was not in evidence east of that. Three post holes set into the trench fill were obviously of later date. Two of them still contained vertical slabs of stone as liners, the third locked the stones but was still well defined. The post-holes were parallel to the edge of the mortared rubble, whereas the trench had a slight curve to it. It is possible that the filled trench represents an earlier route for the drain, and it should be seen further west next season.

Stone slab. Also placed near the edge of the mortared mass was a rectangular slab of stone of unusual design. It was 37" x 24" and 6 $\frac{1}{2}$ " thick.

The upper surface had been slightly hollowed between the north and south edges, but a raised rib on the long axis still stood to the original thickness. The rib did not extend as far as the east and west edges. On either side of the ridge four holes have been 'drilled' into the slab, entering at the angle between the vertical edge of the rib, and the concave surface of the slab. The holes are in pairs and enter the slab at about forty-five degrees such that each pair merge in the middle of the thickness. They have then been linked by a long slot cut on the underside, receiving the linked holes together with one other at each end of the ridge. Against the north and south faces of the slab some masoned stonework, possibly remnants of a course of stone edging the slab. We found mortar linking the side stones with the edges of the slab, and it was clearly in situ, but related to the latest occupation levels. Physically it stood astride the filled channel, but the burnt shoulders of the channel were not marked by any signs of burning on the stone itself.

Under the stone a somewhat crude pit lined with vertical slabs of stone, irregular in shape and not fitting together in any way. They nevertheless framed a pit of approximately the same size as the stone and about a foot deep. We found this filled with dark humus, and some roots of grass had found their way in some of the perforations. It is possible that the three post-holes are related to the perforated slab, but we have no suggestions at present about the purpose of it. The associated pit was floored with clay which in turn rested on top of wall foundations (feature 7). It is presumably a sophisticated drain of some kind.

Underlying Structures

The unexpected concentration of masonry features largely overlaid with mortared rubble, may not be explained until a wider area of the site has been examined. Meanwhile there was no tangible evidence of the expected south-west corner of the refectory, and the walls so far described are of sandstone blocks, whereas we have generally found that the early walls in the cloister area are of magnesium limestone. Some evidence of limestone in the form of massive irregular blocks and boulders implied earlier features under the walls so far described.

In the area east of the fireplace associated with wall 1, a loose fill gave opportunity to seek the foot of wall 1 itself, and then to penetrate lower. The area west of the drain was also taken down, and that west of wall 3 south of the curbstones and drain.

Wall 8

Wall 1 as so far recorded was found to be only about a foot thick, and under it a foot of stony rubble which rests on top of an earlier wall of which three courses remained. The base of this earlier wall is five feet below the top of wall 1 as originally encountered. There is also a discrepancy in alignment as the late wall is some six inches further north than the early one. Its northern edge was not reached at the north-east corner.

The southern edge was eventually traced right across the area under consideration, and this is shown as wall 8 on the plan. A buttress was found half way across the trench and three feet west of that the entire foundation increased from a nominal six feet to about seven feet six inches, so remaining into our western baulk.

The northern edge could not be cleared completely without total destruction of the later wall but it appeared to offer a continuous face twenty-five feet. At that point an angle with a north-running arm suggested that this was the south-west corner of the refectory. The western wall, then, is six feet thick at this level, and if projected at right-angles to the east-west wall would seem to be in line with the cellarium range. Stonework across the angle is in bond, and these two arms are contemporary. Although the late drain is at a higher level, its apparent origin would be just within the south-west corner of the assumed frater.

It was noted that the north-south element of wall 1 was not represented at this lower level, though its foundations were taken below the top of wall 8, and butted against it.

At this lowest level we found a small crucible, apparently in situ, with associated stonework showing distinct signs of burning. The crucible was two feet six inches in diameter, and probably four or five inches deep.

Further south, still at this level, more signs of fire, and nearer the south-east corner of our trench a stone step feature, also burnt, and continuing further east than our trench. This consisted of three large blocks each cut to provide a step, and the three blocks laid in line. A shallow channel, lined with stones, seemed to pass under these blocks, and may be expected to appear in the next trench of the dig.

Wall 9

In the south west quarter of our site, further early wall foundations were found, and comprised a length running in from the west and extending about twelve feet into the excavations. The stone drain already described rested on the top of the feature, which was four feet thick. These footings (9) were of mortared rubble and we were just able to detect a southern limb in our western baulk. The arms were in bond at the corner, but we have no measurement for the width of the south-running arm. Again the stone drain rested on this arm.

Between the east-west arm and footings 8 was a clear channel just over two feet wide, containing considerable quantities of pottery all unglazed, and of the biscuit were common on this site in the twelfth and early thirteenth century levels. Rim sections are consistent with this dating. Two or three pieces of Saxo-Norman ware also occurred.

An unexplained feature of wall 9 was a deliberate variation of the depth of the footings over a six foot section in the middle of the east-west limb. On this portion the footings were about three feet deep, but at the ends over four feet. Possible provision for land drainage was considered, but there was no silt deposit, and the material under the 'bridge' was the same as elsewhere at this level.

Wall 10

Another block of foundation material, of much the same character but taken to greater depth, is indicated by 10. This block was quite independent of block 9, though we found the upper surfaces at about the same level. Other footings shown as 6 have already been mentioned.

The south-west quarter of our trenches contained less stone fill than elsewhere, apart from very large limestone boulders randomly placed in the vicinity of walls 3 and 5. We took this portion down to 'natural' boulder clay and silt at a depth of eight feet below turf. This is over a foot below the level of the flagging in the bed of the stream (Wash Dike) on the southern boundary of the monastic site.

The fill between wall 6 and the drain produced large quantities of pottery from a stony-clay matrix. The great bulk of this is twelfth century or early thirteenth, with some sherds of earlier ware. We have not yet completed the assessment of this large stock of sherds, but nothing is at present known of any pieces of later date. Whilst the bulk of this pottery is from fill, and therefore may have been moved from elsewhere, there has been no later pottery from sealed layers or wall footings, nor any other artifacts of dating significance in the material so far assessed.

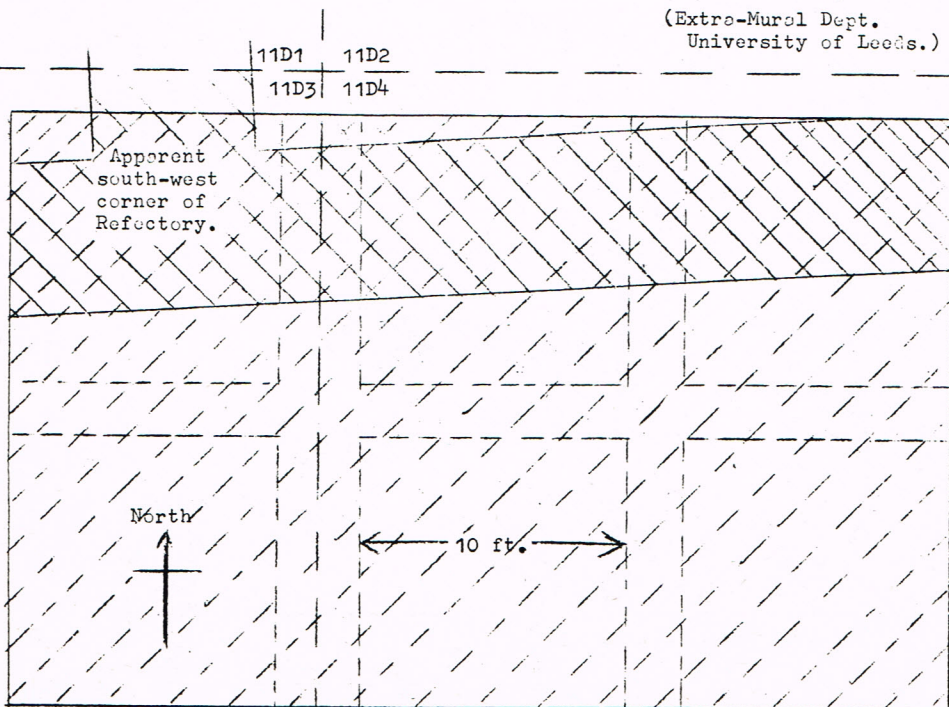
It would therefore seem that whilst we have located the south-west corner of the original monks' refectory, some substantial alterations were made, probably in the thirteenth century and perhaps contemporary with the building of the new Chapter House, but the real character and extent of this work must wait further excavation.

We record our thanks to the Wakefield Metropolitan

District Council for permission to continue our researches on this site, and to the Department of the Environment for their support also. Grateful thanks to all our voluntary helpers.

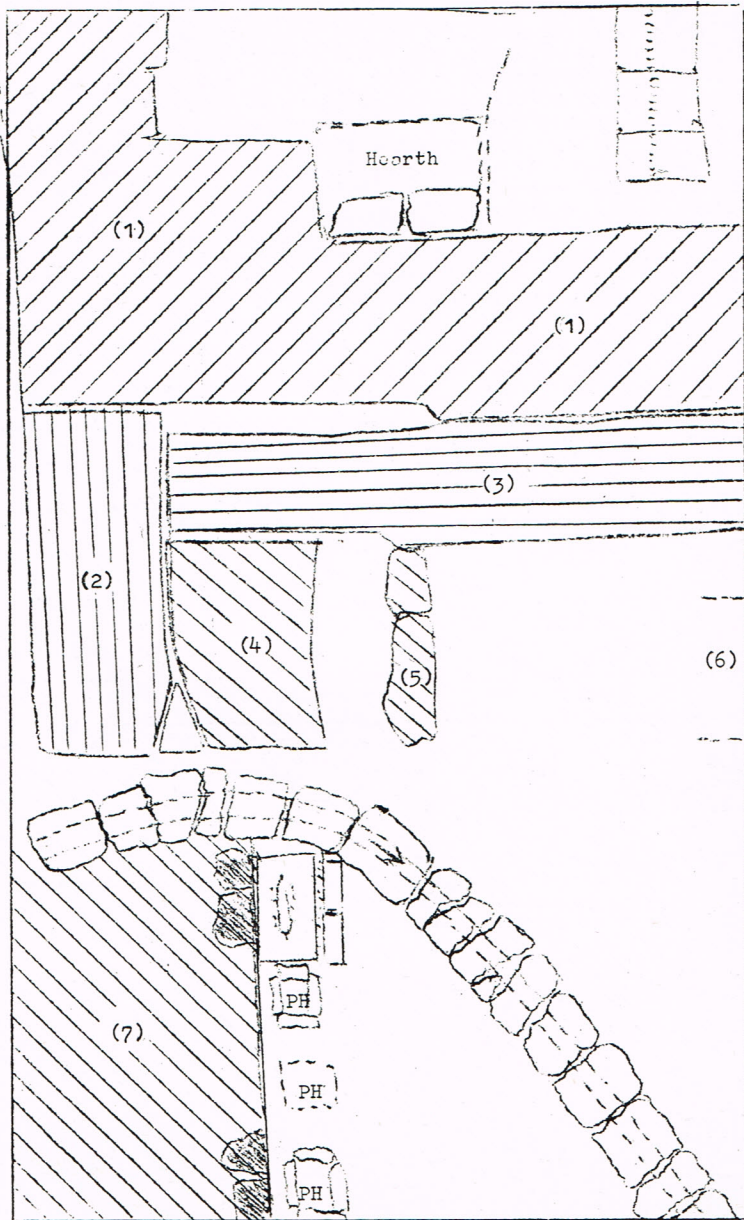
Work will be continued during the summer of 1977, mainly on the west and south sides of the trenches here described.

C.V. Bellamy,
 (Extra-Mural Dept.
 University of Leeds.)

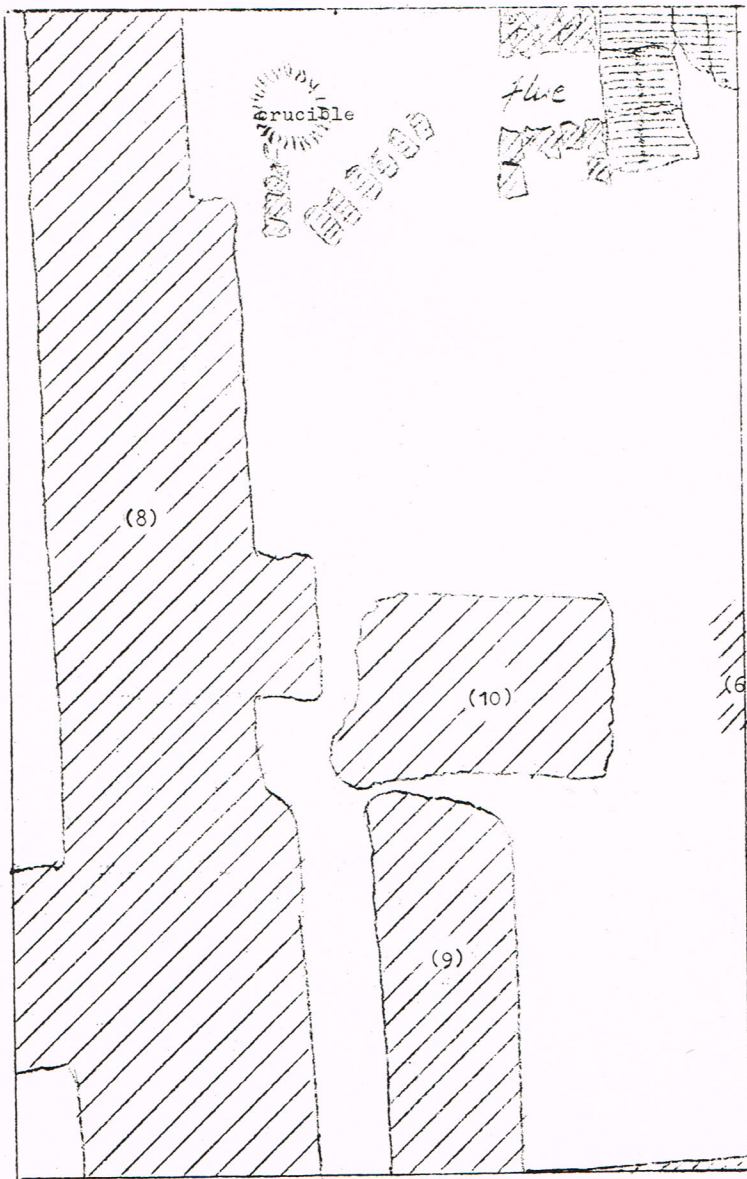


AREA OF EXCAVATION 1976.

Z ←



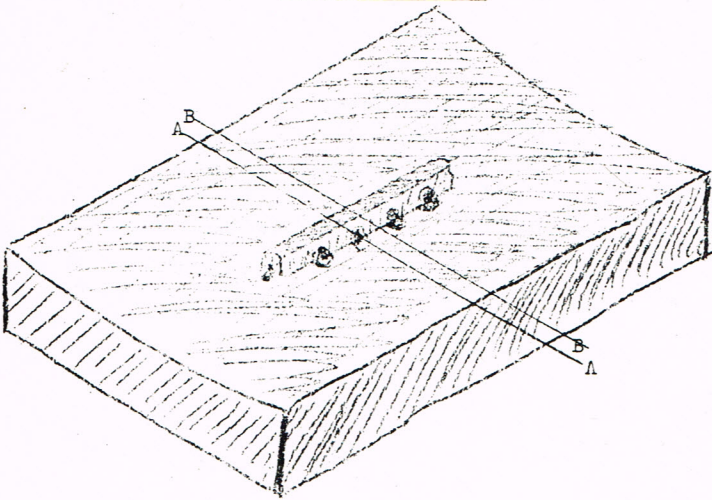
Scale 1" = 4ft.



Scale 1" = 4 ft.

PONTEFRACT PRIORY 1976

The 'Drain' slab.



Section A-A



Section B-B



Scale 1:10

