

LANCHESTER

LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY

No. 1



Jan. 1989

SCRIPTA BREVIA LONGOVICIENSIA

The Journal of the
Lanchester Local History Society

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The Logo Shows

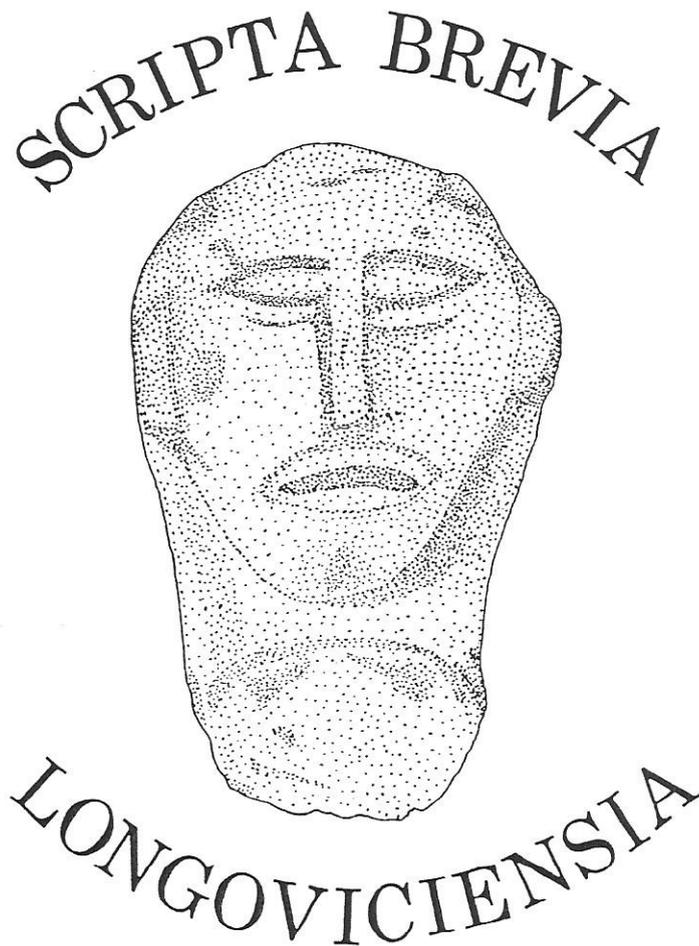
The Horned God of the Brigantae
found at Upper Houses Farm, Lanchester

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The Society gratefully acknowledges the typing of Suzanne Eckford.



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INTRODUCTION

History gives us a record in the inter-relationships within a society and the relationships of that society with its environment both human and physical. That societies produce a great number of objects and structures in coming to terms with their environments is evident in the proliferation of artifacts which find their way into the innumerable museums scattered throughout the world. Artifacts have been described as the cultural freight that a society carries with it. They are not only the hand-axe, the Roman altar or the chained-Bible but also the cathedral, the castle and the stone walls that enclose fields. On the small scale they provide collectables for the antique trade and on the large scale the *raison d'etre* of the conservationist. But, perhaps more importantly, they provide starting points for historical research, for not only does a culture produce artifacts but also social attitudes and patterns of thought, and it is frequently through the artifacts that the historian can re-create the life-style of the society that produced them. With the development of written languages and the subsequent production of books, written records and correspondence, in themselves artifacts, the work of the historian, in building up a body of knowledge about a particular society, is eased. Indeed, research into primary sources of this nature provide much material for the historical novelist, the biographer and the television producer.

It is the interest in past societies that have occupied this valley site at the confluence of the Smallhope Burn and the Browney River that prompts a group of people, The Lanchester Local History Society, to meet once a month to listen to talks on local archaeological and historical research by members and outside speakers. Questions and discussions after talks often show a keenness and interest in topics that could well be researched, as primary and secondary sources are available. It was thought that the production, periodically, of a journal would enable members to see their work in print. In this first issue are some fine examples of the sort of research that is waiting to be done at all levels.

It is hoped, that as an artifact, and so part of our cultural freight, this journal will tell not only something of past societies in Lanchester but also something of the values of this present society.

J. Clifford

LANCHESTER ROMAN DAM

The Roman fort of Longovicium at Lanchester was supplied with water by an aqueduct system built by the Roman Army. The exact date of its construction is not known but the general opinion is that it would probably be constructed sometime between the completion of the fort in 140 A.D. when epigraphic evidence states the Bath House was built.

The Low Dam was part of the system and its function was to raise the water level to the required height so that when it emptied into the aqueduct channel, which left the dam at its south-easterly end, the water would have the correct elevation to allow it to run unimpeded to the fort three and three-quarter miles away.

The dam is still very much in evidence, its large core mound being complete along its whole length. The aqueduct channel from the point where it leaves the dam is also visible, complete and undamaged for some one hundred yards or so.

The dam is constructed across a steep-sided valley cut into Coal Measure Sandstone and filled with glacial deposits. In 1935-36 Kenneth Steer, a research student from the Archaeological Department of Durham University, carried out the only archaeological 'dig' ever done on the dam itself. He cut a trench through the core mound and discovered that the foundation of the dam was a layer of blue boulder-clay lying on the original peaty surface surmounted by a further layer of yellow clay. These two layers of clay formed the 'sealer' of the base of the dam. He also found that the core had been revetted, front and rear, with blocks of stone, some of which were still in position. The width of the whole was eighteen feet at the base. He also mentioned that the dam was markedly curved.

The abutments are still at nearly their full height and in the one at the south-east end can be seen evidence of random laid stone and earth which formed the upper part of the core.

Generally speaking, dam construction types fall into three categories - the Gravity Dam, the Curved Dam and the Arch Dam.

The Gravity Dam embankment, or wall, is usually constructed of earth and/or masonry in a straight line. It resists the pressure of the accumulated water entirely by its own weight with great attention being paid to the security of the foundations as this is where the greatest pressure and horizontal shearing forces are, the thickness to height ratio being in the order of 4:1.

The Arch Dam is just what its name implies - an arch lying on its side - resisting the water pressure on its convex side, i.e. the water face, with the concave side being the air face of the dam. The ends of the arch structure are securely built and locked into the rock sides of the deep, narrow valley site which is the sort of topography for which this type of dam is particularly suited. In the Arch Dam forces due to water pressure are carried horizontally to the ends of the arch where they are resisted by the natural rock in the valley sides. On this type of dam the horizontal shearing force at the base is minimised and the only vertical forces required are to support its own weight.

The Curved Dam is a combination of the two and depends largely on its own weight for strength with some advantages being gained by the curvature.

In May of 1988, members of this Society, curious to know under which category the Low Dam came, enlisted the help of Andrew Humble of Red House, Knitsley. Mr Humble is a highly qualified civil engineer with long experience in hydraulic matters having built irrigation systems in Indonesia and Iraq. He surveyed the dam, helped by society members, with results which surprised everyone - so much so that the readings were double-checked. As can be seen from the survey drawing, the line of the core is a perfect arch.

Everything fits. All the requirements for an Arch Dam are there. It is situated in a narrow, deep, rock-sided valley. The thickness to height ratio of 1:1, i.e. twenty feet thick at the base, including revetting, and an estimated twenty feet high, including stone, crest and spillway, is entirely the wrong figuration for a dam built to resist water pressure by its own weight. It is a big dam built across a valley 75 metres wide with a crest length of 100 metres and a radius of 45 metres.

It has been said that the dam would have to be 30 feet high to overcome an anomaly at one point in the aqueduct channel. This, however, would have required containing 'wings' on the sides of the dam and there are no signs that these ever existed.

There is evidence that the Romans did build Arch Dams. Indeed it is not surprising that they did as the arch structure was one of the main features of their building techniques, using it in load-bearing roles of every sort - buildings, aqueducts, bridges, land levelling, etc. Using it in a dam is a perfectly logical development of its application.

It is thought that they built very large and high (130ft) arch dams on the River Anio some forty miles from Rome, above Subiaco, which supplied the Claudian and New Anio Aqueducts to the City. These dams, however,

no longer exist. There is a record of a curved dam at Kasserine in North Africa and an Arch Dam in France.

The earliest recognised official record of a Curved Dam being built was at Dara on the Turkish/Syrian border by Byzantine engineers in 550 A.D.⁽¹⁾ Also, what is regarded as the pioneer Arch Dam was built at Kebar, in Iran, by the Mongols between 1295 A.D. and 1304 A.D.⁽²⁾ Dams using the curved principle did not appear in Europe until 1384 A.D.⁽²⁾ with the building of the Almansa Dam in Spain. The first true Arch Dam built in Europe is recorded as being the Ponte Alto at Trento in Italy in 1611.⁽²⁾ The next true Arch, at Elche in South-eastern Spain was begun in 1642.⁽²⁾ In Britain the first curved dam was built by John Smeaton in 1776 on the River Coquet with a radius of 170ft at the air face and the dam wall being eight feet high and eight feet thick at the base. The first true Arch was not built in Britain until after the Second World War at Lake Trawsfynydd in Wales.⁽²⁾

There is a parallel to the Lanchester dam in France. The Roman town of Glanum was situated a mile or so south of St Remy-de-Provence. It had an aqueduct system which included a dam, the function of which was exactly the same as that of Lanchester, i.e. to raise the water level to a height necessary to enter the aqueduct channel. Unfortunately, the remains of this dam were destroyed in 1891 when a new dam was built on the same site. The surviving notes taken during the building of the new dam give the estimated dimensions of the Roman Dam as 20ft high, 12ft thick and curved. Like the Lanchester dam, these dimensions are not at all characteristic of dams intended to resist water pressure by weight. The crest length, however, was short - about 30ft - the site being deep and very narrow. It was thought to be sharply curved to a radius of around 40ft which indicates an Arch Dam. Measurements taken from the abutments showed that its construction consisted of two masonry walls, front and rear, each about 3.25ft thick, with a space between of 5ft packed with stone and earth. It is thought to have been constructed in the first century A.D. It is so similar to the Lanchester Dam that it could have been designed by the same engineer.

Although the Lanchester Dam is of the dimensions and type, and in a situation usual for an Arch Dam, it is Mr Humble's opinion that the only way to prove it conclusively is to excavate the abutments, where the complete remains of the dam wall are likely to be, and examine the keying of the dam into the rock face.

After looking at the evidence, it can be said with some degree of confidence that this is the oldest Arch Dam in the world and if excavation proves otherwise then the oldest curved dam in the world.

It is most remarkable and intriguing that in the whole of the Roman Empire, in their poorest northernmost province, on a windswept moor in North-west Durham there should remain, after 2,000 years, evidence of a revolutionary new technique and design in dam construction. It is a technique which has provided the basis of design for the gigantic reinforced concrete dams of the modern age. It says much also of the standard of training and education of the Engineer Officer in the Roman Army who designed and built it.

Walter Austin,
Upper Houses Farm,
Lanchester.

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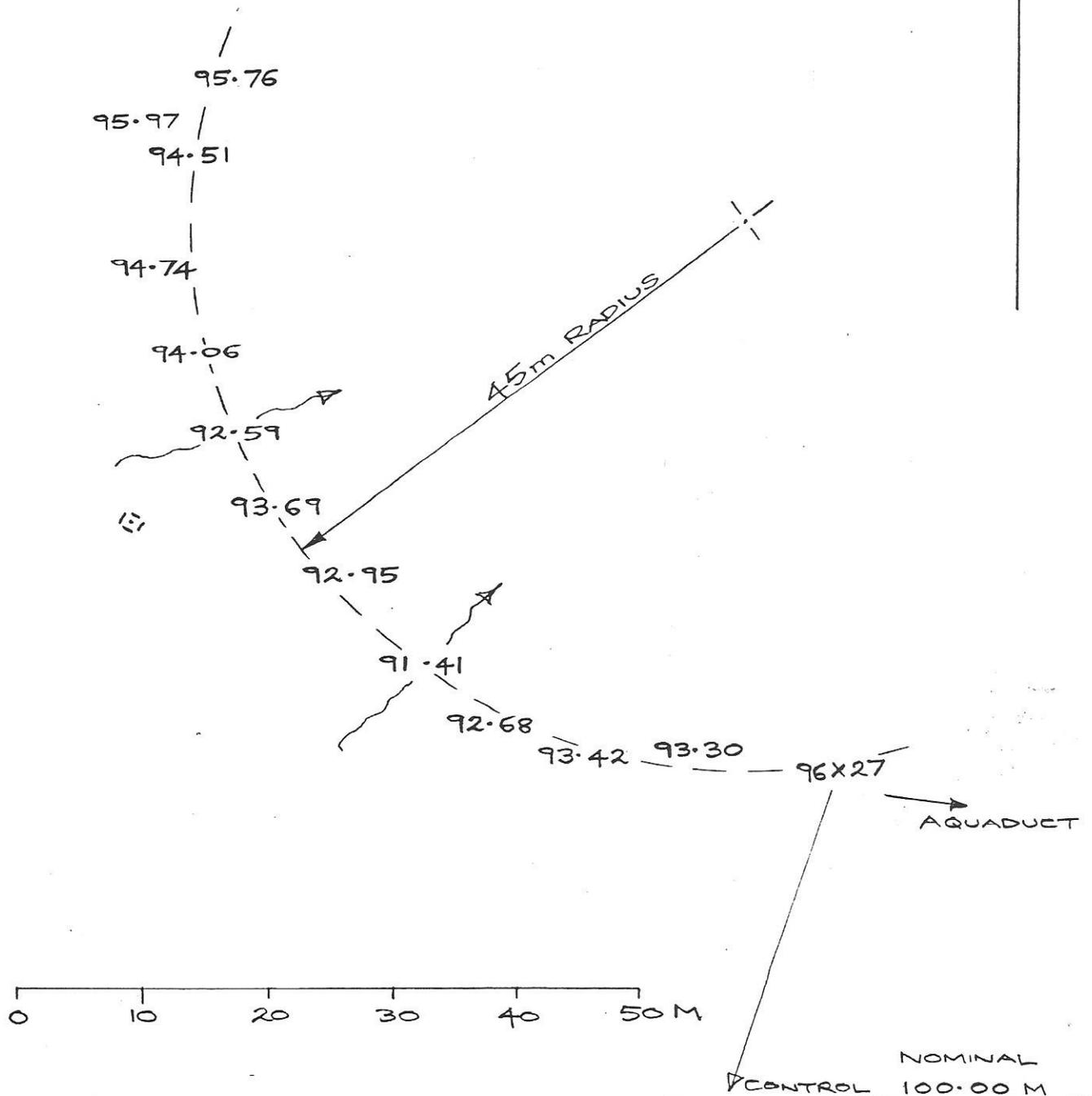
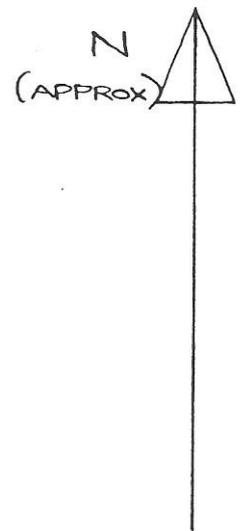
MONTHLY CHRONICLE.

{ March
{ 1888.

THE ROMAN REMAINS AT LANCHESTER.

Concerning the remains of the Roman Station at Lanchester, described on page 74, vol. ii., of the *Monthly Chronicle*, Surtees states in his "History of Durham," published in 1820, that the late proprietor of the farm at Hollingside recollected the site of the station, which occupied eight acres (not eighty, as previously stated), when it was covered with fallen pillars, and when the towers of the wall were still visible. The stone employed in building the station was brought from a hill about a mile to the east of Lanchester. The ruins supplied materials for the church at Lanchester, the village, the farm-houses, and the stone fences of the neighbouring enclosures. It is said the masons preferred the lettered or sculptured stones for "throughs," and frequently placed them in walls with their faces inwards. The station was, in fact, the general quarry of hewn stone for the whole district.

S.



LEVELS IN METRES	IDENT#		LANCHESTER DAM	
	SITE			
	DATE	25/5/88		
	SCALE	1:500	DRG NO.	

A RE-DISCOVERED ALTAR FROM THE ROMAN DAM AT LANCHESTER

The dam is situated about 3.5 miles (approx. 6 kilometres) to the north-west of the fort and was used to collect water from the catchment area of Dyke Nook Fell (Ref. NZ107474) to raise and inject water into the northern branch of the aqueduct which supplied the Roman Fort Longovicium at Lanchester.

In 1891, a Mr Edmund Balleney of Little Greencroft Farm, Knitsley, Consett, discovered a Roman Altar at the east end of the dam. It was removed and taken to his farm. However, some years after its discovery it disappeared and historians have searched for it many years without success.

Some ten years ago Walter Austin and myself received an invitation from a Mrs Milner of Appleby, a daughter of the finder of the Roman Altar, to visit her and see some articles of local information she possessed. During this visit she produced a photograph (fig. 1) of her older sister standing by the altar in the garden at Little Greencroft Farm. On returning home, and now armed with the photograph, we commenced searching places where Roman material was stored, including Lanchester church and the Undercroft of Durham Cathedral but without success. Mrs Milner mentioned during our visit that the last time she had seen the altar it was being taken out of the farmyard on a cart apparently destined for the church at Lanchester where other material was already stored. The removal had taken place in the early 1900's.

On 30th May 1985, I had the occasion to visit Broomshields Hall, Satley, (NZ 115423) to take some photographs of the older part of the Hall when I discovered the altar in a sunken garden on the west side of the Hall.

The altar is made of sandstone, is 90cms high and 46cms wide but, unfortunately bears no inscription (fig. 2). There is evidence on the top of the altar of a focus flanked by scrolls and the back is crudely dressed indicating that it has stood against a wall. Broomshields Hall has now been sold but Mr Jennings, the previous owner, has said that the altar would remain in his possession.

Alan Reed.



Fig.1



Fig.2

THE STAINED GLASS WINDOWS IN LANCHESTER PARISH CHURCH

Every picture tells a story is a well-known saying to all sufferers from arthritis and other painful joint rheumatics! But in 1986 Channel Four produced a series, "Every Window Tells a Story", which highlighted not pain but joy. It presented a beautiful commentary on the lovely Medieval stained glass still to be seen in some cathedrals and churches. These windows were fashioned to give a pictorial version of the Biblical message for people who could not read, or had not access to, the Bible. A complete series of these windows survives in the church of S. Mary, Fairford in Gloucestershire and is well worth a visit.

Here in Lanchester we have but a few fragments of the glass which originally depicted the great central theme of Christian Faith, the coming of Jesus, Son of God, into the world and occupied the middle lancet of the East window. Whether there was ever more of the story in other windows can only be conjecture - probably not!

The pattern would have been to show, as at Fairford, Old Testament scenes, The Life and Death of Christ, Resurrection and Ascension and the figures of the Saints with incidents from their lives in a series of windows around the church. This may have included a Doom or Last Judgement window in the West Window as a final climax.

In the Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries of London there is recorded a paper on "Three Panels of 13th Century Glass from Lanchester Church, Durham", given by Canon J.T. Fowler on 15th April 1915. In this he states that these three panels had been inserted into the central lancet of the East window but were removed in 1868 in order to insert modern memorial glass. Canon Greenwell, a native of the parish, had known these from childhood and to preserve them had each one fixed between two sheets of glass in an oak frame and hung in one of the windows on the South side of the chancel. Canon Fowler was convinced that these panels formed part of the original glazing as they correspond in date with the architectural design of the three lancets and in size would fit the middle light. He suggests that in the middle light there would have been six episodes of which we have three, The Shepherds, The Wise Men and the Flight into Egypt. He further postulates that those missing would have been The Annunciation, The Nativity and The Baptism. He also suggests that the other lancets would probably have been occupied by white pattern glass picked out with a little colour.

Today we still have stained glass windows which, although they in no way follow the Medieval pattern, yet still give some sequence of thought on the Story of Christian Faith. The three windows on the South Aisle have twelve scenes from the Life of Christ, although the glazier has somehow got the positions wrong. Starting the story from the West, there is a pictorial record of The Annunciation, The Nativity, The Shepherds and The Wise Men; then, in the second window, The Baptism, The Transfiguration, The Marriage at Cana and The Feeding of the Five Thousand, and finally in the third, we have Gethsemane, Christ before Pilate, The Crucifixion and The Burial. As if to complete the story, the East window on that aisle is a Resurrection window depicting Christ flanked by angels rising from the tomb in Glory with the frightened soldiers underneath.

The story is even more vividly concluded in the great East Lancel windows. These have several episodes of the Easter Story. On the bottom from left to right is shown Asking Pilate for the Body of Jesus, Taking the Body from the Cross, and the Burial in the Tomb. The central figure above these is that of The Risen Christ as King and above that The Ascension; whilst in the side lancements there are four pictures of The Women at The Tomb and Christ and Mary Magdalene (on the left), and John and Peter and The Emmaeus Disciples (on the right).

Yet as if to remind us that the story is not concluded but continued in the life of The Church, if we now got to the North Aisle we find the windows telling us the story from the book of The Acts of the Apostles: Peter Healing the Crippled Man, Peter Escaping from Prison, Philip and the Ethiopian and The Stoning of Stephen in one, and four snippets, as it were, of S. Paul in the other.

Finally in the West End of the church we have The Tempest Coat of Arms on the South, The Sower and The Shepherd on the North and The Good Samaritan under the Tower - all imagery to suggest the ongoing task of The Church in every generation to spread the Good News, to lead and guide people to God, and to care for and succour the distressed.

The Tower window has also a portrayal of the reception after death of the faithful, "Well done, good and faithful servant", a gentler rendering of the theme of the Doom, Last Judgement windows.

When we recall that this modern glass is all placed in memory of later Christian followers, we have the same overall pattern, if not the chronological order, of the Medieval glass, still to evoke our thoughts and so to learn something of the Mystery of God's Revelation of His Purpose in Creation, Redemption and Resurrection.

The Windows

South Aisle	In memory of William and Frances Hedley	1887
East South Aisle	In memory of Sir Thomas John Clavering	1853
West South Aisle	The Tempest Coat of Arms	
East Chancel	In memory of Joseph Davison	1868
North Aisle	In memory of William Hedley	1890
West North Aisle	In memory of Thomas Wilkinson	1949
Under Tower	In memory of Edward Hedley	1897

NORTH-COUNTRY LORE AND LEGEND. January }
1891.

THE GREENWELLS OF BROOMSHIELDS.

Broomshields Hall, the seat of the Greenwell family, is a neat modern mansion a little to the south-west of the village of Satley, four miles from Lanchester, in the County of Durham. It occupies a pleasant position, overlooking a well wooded gill or dene, through which flows the Pan Burn, a truly sylvan streamlet, one of the tributaries of the Browney, the Wear's greatest affluent.

The Greenwell family, of Norman origin, is second to none in the county of Durham in antiquity, and is one of the few now remaining in England who retain in their male line the estates which gave them a name. The earliest mention of the branch of the family (for it had numbers of scions scattered over West Durham) at this estate is in the reign of Henry VIII. (1488), when Peter Greenwell resided at Bromesheles; and from that date, now more than four centuries ago, the family have held the patrimony.

Thomas Greenwell, born 1736, died 1817, married in 1774 Eleanor, daughter and heiress of John Maddison, Esq., of Hole House, near Alansford, county of Durham, whose ancestors had held that estate from 1595. Besides an only son, he left three daughters—Eleanor, Mary, and Elizabeth—who never married, but resided at Broomshields Cottage, near the hall, and died in extreme old age—at the ages of 96, 86, and 89 years respectively.

John Greenwell, son and heir, born 1785, was for more than fifty years an active magistrate for the county. He

married Elizabeth Greenwell of the Ford, near Lanchester, the daughter of a remote kinsman, and aunt of Dora Greenwell, the Durham poetess. He died in 1869, and was buried at Lanchester. A beautiful stained window erected to his memory is in the south wall of Satley Church. Thomas Greenwell, the only surviving son and heir, born 1821, graduated M.A. at St. John's College, Oxford, was in his year sixth wrangler, and was called to the bar in 1847. He married Georgina, daughter of Mr. Bridges, London, by whom he had a numerous issue. He died 1874, and was buried at Satley.

The estate is now the patrimony of his eldest son, Mr. F. W. Greenwell, formerly editor of a popular periodical, author of "Dissertations on the Apocalypse," &c., and now residing in Florida, U.S.

Broomshields, in the time of Bishop Hatfield's Survey, 1377-1380, was a township by itself, and was divided into several parcels. These portions have since become amalgamated with the adjoining townships. The arms of the Greenwell family is one of the grandest in the North of England—Or, two bars azure between three ducal crowns gules.

J. W. FAWCETT.

NOTES ON SOME LANCHESTER BUILDINGS

Hollinside Terrace

Built in 1892 to house workers in the coal drift which has its mouth near Throstle Nest Farm. The coals from this drift were hauled by rope waggon-way across the valley, through the hill and were trans-shipped at Cornsay Colliery. The lack of a pit heap and associated buildings has often caused some confusion as to which collieries the houses served. In latter years the pitmen living at Hollinside often worked in the smaller landsale collieries once so common in the hillsides around Lanchester. The main drift associated with Cornsay Colliery seems to have been "laid idle" in the 1920s and the whole terrace was sold to Wilson of Upper Houses Farm for around £400. Following the Second World War the houses were gradually sold off to the occupiers by the Wilson family and the terrace survives as one of the most attractive of colliery housing developments.

Hollinside Hall Farm

The original date stone on the farm house front door gave the building date as 1710 by John Wilkinson and rebuilt by Thomas Wilkinson in 1777 when the fine staircase and stair window were added. The older parts of the house were built using stone from the Roman Camp and several worked stones and an unmarked altar have been found in the course of alterations. The occupier was interviewed by the historian John Hodgson about 1800 and he remembered looking down from Hollinside across the Roman Camp where ramparts were visible on the walls and some buildings could be seen above the ramparts. Hodgson also notes that the farm was built with stones from the camp and that the masons used the worked and lettered stones, being of better quality for "THRUFFS". Hodgson at one point thought that there was a signal station on the top of Humber Hill but unfortunately this land has been quarried and subject to opencast and it is now impossible to check his work.

Sources: Gall Family

Raines: Life of John Hodgson

John Hodgson: "Longovicium, a vision"

Throstle Nest Farm

When my father first came into the area one of the most "old-fashioned" farmers was Legge of Throstle Nest, who seems to have held to the old traditions longer than most. Once, on calling on Legge shortly after a cow had calved, father found him rubbing salt on to the cow's back.

"To keep the witches away", was the explanation given, and Father was also shown a stone hung on the byre for the same purpose (mid 1920s). Once, finding his wife sitting reading the paper whilst resting from "possing" the washing, Legge tipped over the tub of washing to stop her from getting lazy. He rented the farm from Taylor Smiths of Colepike Hall for £130, and in the hard times of the late 1920s he asked for a reduction in rent. This was refused so the Legge family left and were thought to have moved to the Scotch Corner area. The next tenant was called Taylor who came for a rent of £80 reflecting the great depression of the times when farms could be had for under £1 per acre. Taylors were asked to leave the farm at the start of the Second World War since they had not the resources to bring the farm into production.

Source: C.N. Gall in 1971

Hollinside - The New Hall

The original Hollinside Hall is the farm house, but since 1900 a new building erected by the Urwin family, who had connections with colliery work, has been known as Hollinside Hall. The rapid change in values of property in the area is reflected in sale values of the property.

Built by the Urwins about 1900

Acquired by Mr Johnson 1918 for £800

Acquired by Mr Methuen 1939 for £1,500

Acquired by Mr Coleman 1944 for £3,500

Coleman was posted to India and the property was rented to the Woodmans and then the Adams.

Coleman returned about 1950

Acquired by Walter Upsall 1952 for £5,600

Acquired by Dr Fox.

The building was on the site of a pond which gave great problems and the timbers of the house were replaced, due to wet rot, by Johnson in the 1920s. A popular local person, Johnson had been a builder for Joicey Collieries but then his wife was left £30,000 allowing him to live in some style. The lodge which is now separate from the Hall ownership was built for Mr Johnson's brother. Colonel Methuen came from Canada to set up Team Valley Trading Estate. He built the rear wing of the Hall, taking care to match the stone, and had soot mixed with the mortar to get the right colour. Walter Upsall became the owner of the village fruit shop trading from the old court-house. He came from the market garden region of Lincolnshire and was able to build up a considerable trade by his knowledge of fruit.

Source: Gall Family, Hollinside Farm.

A ROMAN CEMETERY AT LANCHESTER

During the course of construction of a major gas pipeline in the summer of 1981, a considerable number of Roman burials were found 350m from the south-western corner of the fort (fig. 1) (NGR NZ 156 466). The site was found by Wally Austin, on whose land it lies, when he lifted the lid of a stone-lined cist. Over the next few weeks a total of 56 features were excavated under the direction of the author and with considerable help from the members of the Lanchester Historical Society.

It was impossible to follow normal excavation practice on this site, as the pipeline was under construction. The easement had been stripped by bulldozers three weeks earlier, and the subsoil was hard, rutted and the colours bleached out. Clearing by hand proved very time consuming, and most features were located by the presence of charcoal and bone on the surface. It is unlikely that the full plan of the cemetery was recovered, but the limits of the area to the north and south are probably accurate and the cemetery would have extended an unknown distance to either side of the pipeline.

The site lies on the south-eastern edge of a ridge running west, at a height of 186m A.O.D. The burials occurred on a flat piece of very rocky ground with no apparent man-made boundaries. It lies well away from the Roman Road, presumed to run west out of the fort, and so the cemetery does not occur on a traditional site. The features were heavily truncated by later ploughing, making analysis difficult, but they could be divided into three main types. For the site plan see fig. 2.

1. Stone-lined cists: 12 of this type of feature were discovered. They were constructed of thin slabs of the natural sandstone, all having slab sides, some with slab floors and the first one discovered with its lid intact. They were rectangular and boat-shaped in plan and varied in length from 0.45m to 0.88m long and 0.25m to 0.45m wide, internally. They were not orientated in any particular direction nor did they cluster together. The fill was a light brown sandy loam that had probably percolated through the cracks. No bone and little charcoal was discovered. Two of the cists contained iron nails, one with them in position to indicate that the cist had a wooden coffin lining. The only grave goods were a complete colour-coated beaker and the base of a black-burnished pot. It was possible to show two of the cists had been robbed and one cist had a pot broken above the lid. In the absence of bone, how could these be burials? The soil is extremely acid and bone would not survive

unless burnt. Cremation was the normal practice at this period in Roman times, except for babies or young children. This explains the small size of the cists and the absence of any bone, as young bones are very soft.

2. Cremations: 29 of the features could be shown to be cremation pits. All these features contained amounts of burnt bone and charcoal, but only 7 of them contained sufficient pottery to suggest they were contained within urns. For the rest they may have been deposited in cloth, leather or wooden containers, or directly into small pits in the ground. Some pits were sub-rectangular in size c 0.35m to 0.50m in diameter. Apart from the pottery, the only finds were hobnails that came from five of the cremations. It seems that at least some were burnt with their boots on.

3. Other features: Of the 15 other features, 10 contained some bone and charcoal suggesting they may have been more heavily truncated cremations. However as at the Roman cemetery at Trentholme Drive, York, there may have been a central pyre on which cremation took place, and any pits dug in the vicinity would then contain some bone and charcoal.

This cemetery is interesting for a number of reasons. Firstly, the mixture of cists and cremations implying children and adults were buried together. Secondly, it is at a distance from the road and from the fort, not a traditional site. The burials are strikingly impoverished and this and the presence of children suggests that they were not occupants of the fort. What finds there are date the site from the third century, but other parts unexcavated may contain earlier and later burials. However this excavation has produced the largest number of burials from an auxiliary fort in the north of the province and so provides valuable evidence for what must have been a widespread phenomenon.

R.C. Turner

Lanchester: PLAN OF ROMAN CEMETERY

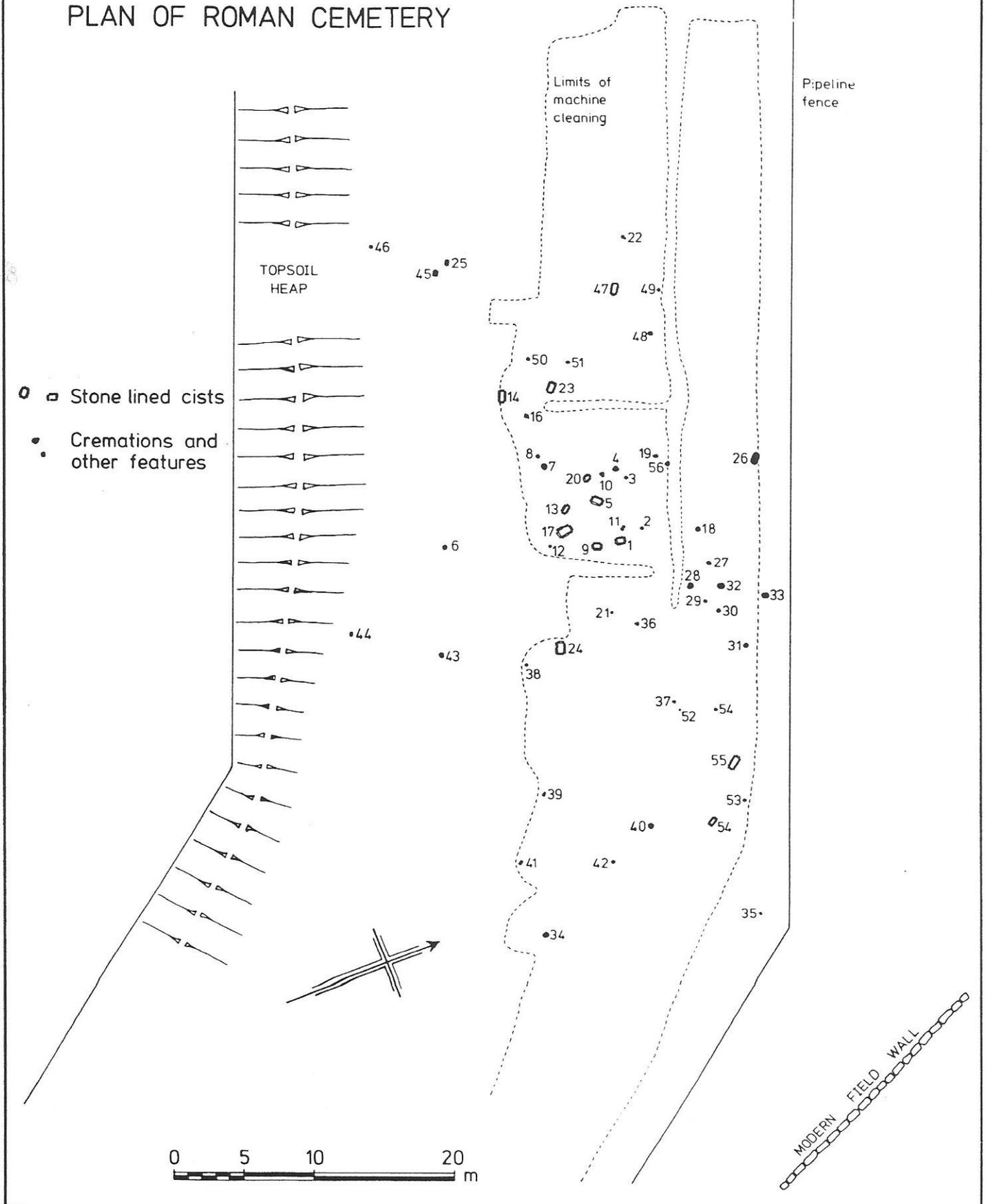


Fig. 1

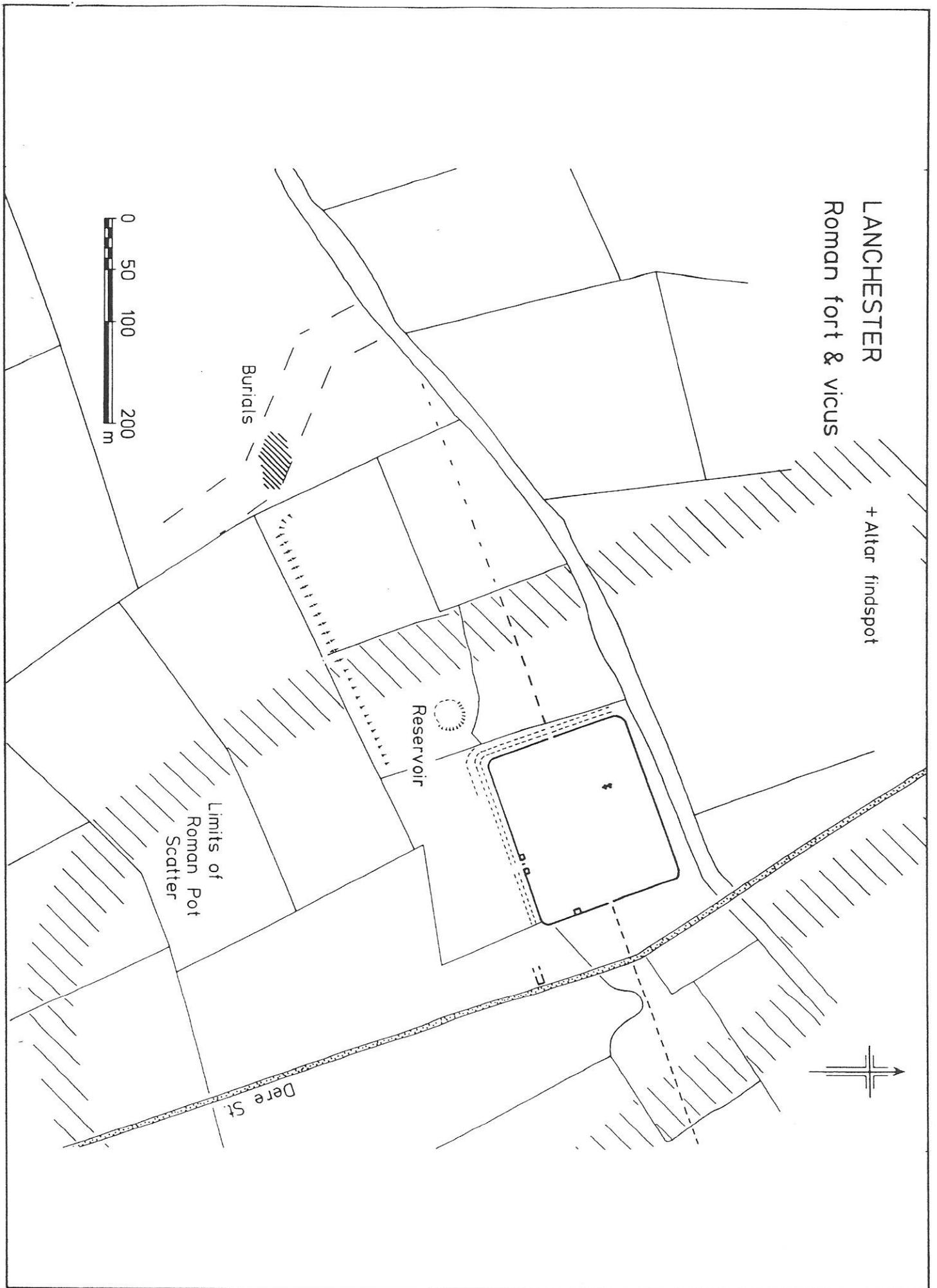


Fig. 2

THE CHAPEL COVERLET

The craft of Quilting reached its zenith in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries in England when it was used primarily in the costumes of the period. By the nineteenth century, quilted clothing had ceased to be fashionable and even the bed quilt went out of use in most parts of Britain. Quilting, however, did survive in the mining areas of County Durham and South Wales, areas which were well known for the strength of Methodist Movements.

The chapel quilt clubs were a great feature of the North, organised very much like a private club, for the benefit of chapel funds. They often produced rag mats as well as quilts. These clubs would meet in the chapel hall or vestry and when they had finished their work, sat down to a "faith tea".

Mrs Hitchcock who later became post mistress at Browney Colliery, as a child, was allowed out of school in order to go to the Methodist Chapel to thread needles for the sewing party. Later she learnt to quilt herself and ran quilting clubs.

The chapel club had an important economic and social role. The quilts, coverlets and rag mats produced by the groups of women, were sold at chapel fairs and bazaars if they had not previously been ordered. Although the chief aim was to raise funds, these clubs were often the one weekly opportunity for the women of the chapel to get together and exchange news, views and gossip. The quality of the quilts produced by the "clubs" and groups was sometimes not as high as of the quilts made by individuals. However, many a chapel was "built on quilts".

The museum recently acquired a fine album coverlet from Bill Gall of Satley. The coverlet had been in his family as long as he could remember and had come originally from the chapel at Lanchester. The coverlet is composed of squares of turkey red and white cotton machined together. Each square has been signed by a member of the chapel who had presumably subscribed an amount towards the making of the coverlet. The signatures have been hand embroidered and then machine stitched together. A large centre square with embroidered crown and sceptre celebrates the Coronation of Edward VII and is dated 1902.

The coverlet when finished was raffled thus producing more funds for the chapel.

It provides a remarkable social document with names of many well known local families, being members of the chapel at the time.

Names such as Herdman, Welch, Elliott, Gibson, Hall, Wilson and so on are included.

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