

John Galt

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SCRIPTA BREVIA LONGOVICIENSIA

The Journal of the
Lanchester Local History Society

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The Logo Shows

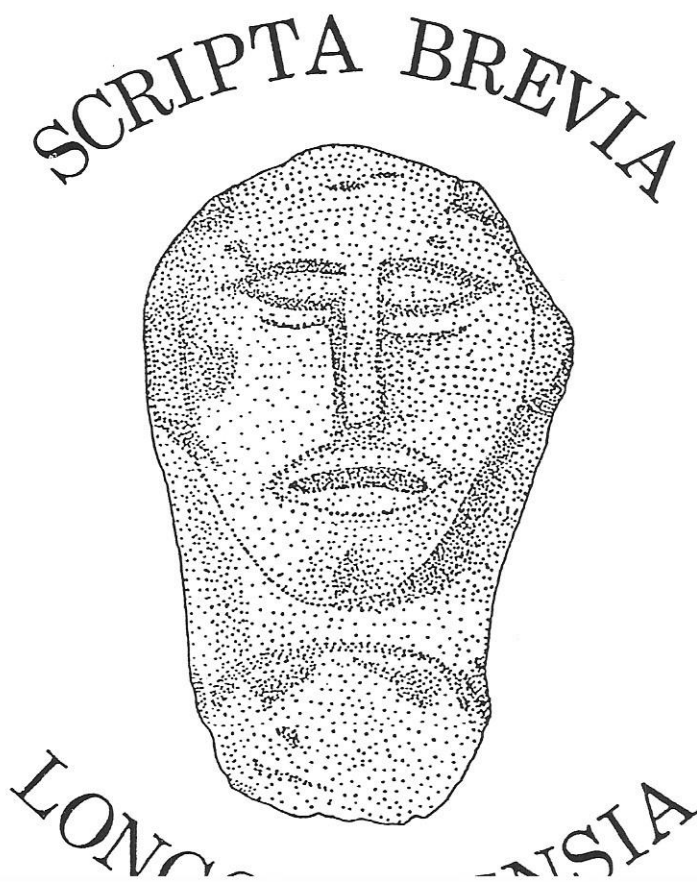
The Horned God of the Brigantae
found at Upper Houses Farm, Lanchester

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The Society gratefully acknowledges the typing of Suzanne Eckford.



THE ROMAN CAMP AT LANCHESTER.—Our antiquarian readers will be sorry to learn that the well-known remains of the great Roman camp or station at Lanchester, on the line of the Watling Street, seem to have been threatened lately with demolition. Our informant states, that on passing there a few days ago, he found that upwards of twenty yards of the northern rampart had been recently levelled, and that he was informed the materials were being conveyed to "the Ford," the residence of Mr. Kearney, the proprietor, for stables and farm-buildings in course of erection there. This rampart, the only portion of the camp which had escaped the vandalism of former years, and remained nearly perfect, was faced with ashlar work, in regular courses. The vallum, by this process of demolition, has been laid open. We hope that this act of destruction has been perpetrated without the proprietor's sanction. In these days, when public opinion sets so strongly in favour of the preservation of all monuments of antiquity, it is, happily, very unusual for a gentleman of education to sanction any wanton injury to them; and not only antiquarians, but most persons of good taste and right feeling, are prompt to denounce such doings as acts of vandalism. Monuments of antiquity are now generally regarded with a sort of national pride, and prized as works which time has spared, as it were, made sacred to the illustration of history, and of the arts and manners of ancient nations. The once great station of Lanchester has been described with archaeological enthusiasm as the boldest and proudest monument of the Roman arms in the north of England; it has been respected through ages (except by persons who were in want of stone for building farms or fences), and a succession of historians and pilgrims who visited this relic of the Roman arms, have recorded their hope that what remained of it would be handed down unimpaired to posterity. It is not, therefore, without some feelings of indignation, that one hears of destructive hands having been laid upon these venerable remains. We understand that the local secretary at Newcastle of the Archæological Institute (Mr. Sidney Gibson), has addressed representations on this subject to the Central Committee, and to the secretaries of the Newcastle Antiquarian Society, and also to the owner of the land, and it will give us great pleasure to be able to announce that the work of demolition has been stayed. Since the above remarks were written, a communication has been made to us, from which we are glad to learn that Mr. Kearney, in a spirit which does him infinite credit, has expressed his regret that the old walls have been touched; and has explained that as the facing had been long since removed, he thought nothing interesting could be disturbed by taking stones from the interior of the wall. That gentleman, we are informed, has promised that not a stone shall be removed during his occupancy; and, it appears, that rather than resort further to the Roman masonry, he has just opened a quarry at considerable cost.

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There are times when articles in a journal speak clearly for themselves and need no editorial comment. Such is certainly the case for 'Crook Hall', 'The Hurbuck Hoard' and 'The Supplying of Water to the Consett District'. However, 'A Letter from a Soldier' just as surely needs some comment. It is a personal document, beautifully and sensitively written, which illustrates clearly the lives of young British soldiers in India and Burma in the closing days of the Second World War. It is reproduced by kind permission of Mrs. Edith Pierce, the sister of Lieutenant Cooper and a member of the Society. Your editor finds it particularly poignant since he spent some months in Secunderabad in 1946 where he was involved in the closure of the Royal Engineer's Depot referred to in the letter.

John Clifford.

Editor.

CANON F.S.M. CHASE.

Since the last issue of this journal the death of Canon F.S.M. Chase, our chairman, has taken place. He died on 26th November, 1995, and his passing is a great loss to the Society. He accepted the position of chairman in September, 1988, and the steady increase in membership along with the quality and variety displayed in the programmes of lectures has, in no small part, been due to his efforts. A lasting contribution to the Society was his establishment of the Chairman's Evening each June when he organised an outside visit to a place of historical interest - a tradition the Society is pledged to continue. He was a staunch Churchman, a man of great humanity and a fine chairman. He will be missed.

John Clifford.

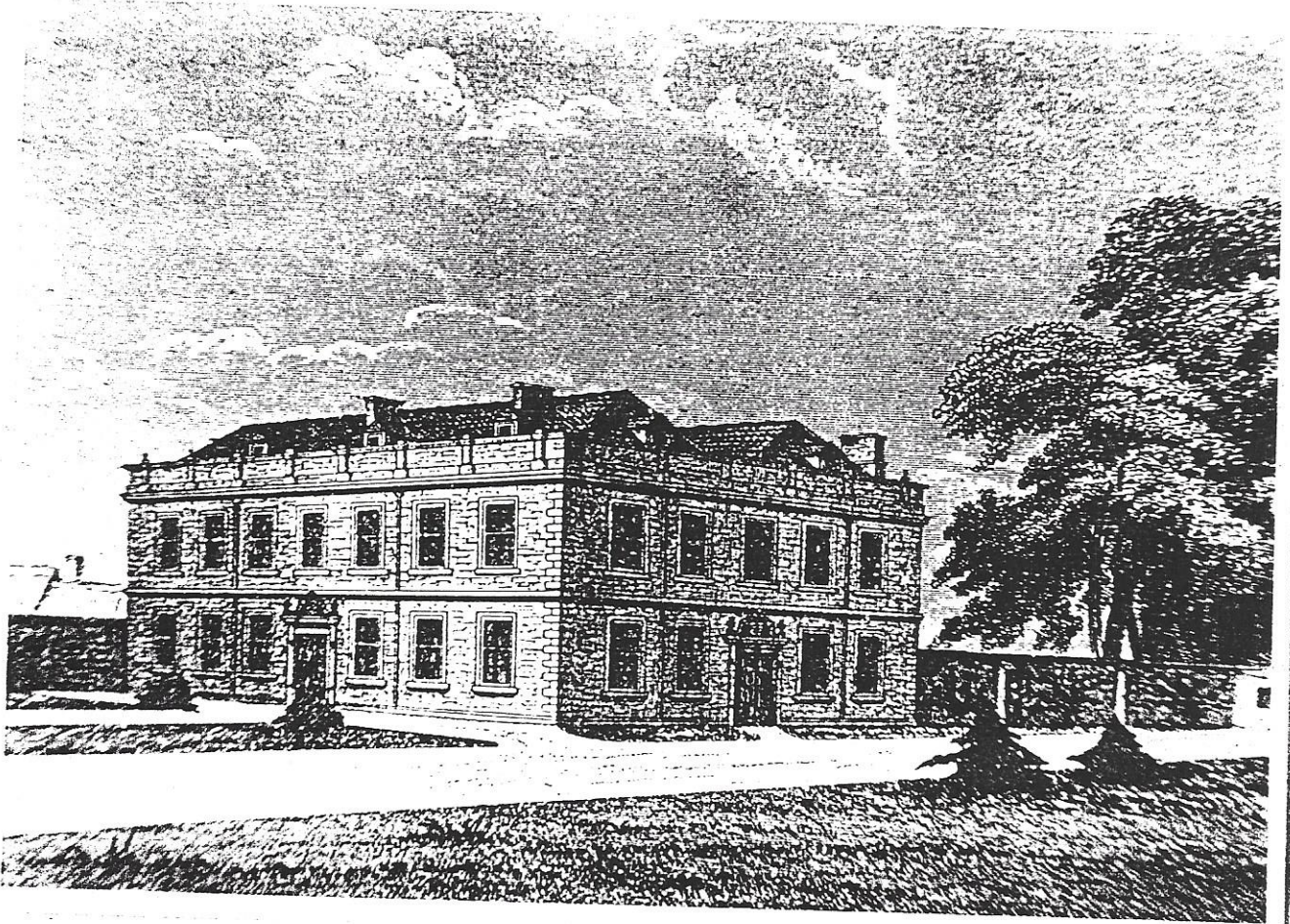
INTRODUCTION

Crook Hall was the site of the first Roman Catholic Ecclesiastical College established in the north of England after the Reformation. The College was descended from the great French College of Douai founded by Cardinal William Allen in 1568.

When Douai was seized by the Army of the French Republic in 1793, a number of its teaching staff and students escaped to England, and found shelter in the Roman Catholic Mission House at Pontop Hall, Dipton, but soon removed to Crook Hall near Consett.

Crook Hall prospered, and during the 15 years of its existence as a College 25 priests were ordained to serve in the Catholic English Mission.

Due to the success of this first venture, it was decided to start a project that would compare with the great College of Douai, and in 1799 land was bought near the village of Ushaw, the foundation stone was laid in 1805, and in 1808 the first students from Crook Hall arrived at Ushaw, which has, over the years, carried the traditions for the continuation of the Roman Catholic faith in this country.



CROOK HALL circa 1730.

CROOKHALL

The story of how Crook Hall, became the first Ecclesiastical College established in the North of England after the Reformation, for the training, and ordination of Roman Catholic priests must begin at Douai in northern France.

Cardinal William Allen, in 1568, founded the English Catholic seminary at Douai. The main purpose of the seminary was for the training of priests who, when ordained, returned to England to give support to the substantial Catholic community after the Reformation.

These were indeed dangerous times, and the suppression of Catholicism resulted in severe hardship to the adherents of the faith. Between the years 1535-1630 one hundred and sixty priests, were to suffer a martyr's death as a result of the severe Penal Laws.

Papal power in England was brought to an end by King Henry VIII in 1534, when the English Church was separated from the Church of Rome by the Act of Supremacy. The Act proclaimed the King of England, to be the only "Supreme Head in Earth of the Church of England". The denial of this title was made a crime of high treason, and several hundred of both priests and laity were put to death for refusing to accept the Act of Supremacy.

To shelter a priest was a felony punishable by hanging. Loyalty to the Catholic faith meant persecution, imprisonment, torture, fines, confiscation of property and in many cases a cruel death.

Throughout the penal days, pockets of Catholicism survived in Durham, usually centered around the homes of Catholic gentry who were able to supply and maintain a priest.

The Neville family were a powerful influence in this area until the Northern Rising of 1569. The reason for the Rising was to remove Elizabeth from the throne, and restore the Catholic faith in England. Although the rebellion, which began at Brancepeth, had much popular support, it was soon put down by the Queen's forces with great severity. Eighty were hanged in the City of Durham, many in the market place, and many more in villages throughout the county.

Charles Neville, Earl of Westmorland, along with many other leaders, fled into exile to the Continent, but Thomas Percy, Earl of Northumberland, was not so fortunate.

He escaped to Scotland and was sold back to England for £2,000. Percy was tried and executed at York in 1572 for his crime of treason, but was offered the opportunity to save his life if he conformed and swore the Oath of Supremacy. This he refused to do, and today is honoured by the Catholic Church as a martyr for the faith.

When Douai was seized by the Army of the French Republic in 1793, a number of teaching staff and students escaped to England. They eventually found shelter at Pontop Hall, Dipton, in the County of Durham, which at that time was a Catholic Mission House under the direction of the Reverend Thomas Eyre.

They were allowed to settle in this country because of a Bill introduced in the House of Commons on 14th May 1778. The Act was limited, but it was the first step towards full emancipation some fifty years later. Catholics were now able to celebrate the Mass, providing they took an agreed oath to serve the crown, and more importantly, the laws against Catholic priests were repealed.

A pastoral letter issued by Bishop Challoner and Bishop Talbot, informed Catholics that the oath was acceptable, and that they could now "meet without danger to yourselves, or your flocks, from the very greivous penal laws".

When the students arrived in the County of Durham, their first residence was the small boarding school at Tudhoe, called Tudhoe Acadamy, some eleven miles from the City of Durham. During the first months of 1794, Bishop Gibson, Bishop of the Northern District, and a former President of Douai, considered the possibility of extending the building to house all the Douai students, but decided the cost was too great, and instead leased Pontop Hall until suitable premises could be found.

Pontop Hall, which still exists, was the seat of the Roman Catholic Mission of the district, where adherents of the faith attended Mass from 1748 to 1802, when the Mission of the Brooms was formed.

The Hall dates from circa 1700. It is a simple four bay house of stone ashlar, and in the roof space of the Hall was the chapel of the Mission House.

The name Pontop is derived from the Celtic word ' hope ', and is generally found in conjunction with streams. In this case the valley is that of the Pont burn, the name of which has been variously spelt, Ponthope, Ponntop, and now Pontop.

The earliest records refer to Laurence de Ponthope who was a witness to a charter in 1246. The first mention of Pontop as a Manor was in the middle of the fourteenth century which, at that time, was held by John de Gourlay and was in the possession of his family until 1411 when Sir William Claxton received the Manor from Richard de Gourlay.

On the division of the estates among the co-heirs of Sir Robert Claxton, Pontop was assigned to the family of Elmden, whose heiress conveyed the estate along with other possessions to her husband Sir William Bulmer. The Manor of Pontop remained in the possession of the Bulmer family until 1578, when it was sold to Anthony Meaborn, who died in 1614, and was buried at Lanchester.

The Meaborn family were adherents of the Roman Catholic faith. In 1644 the family were declared recusant, (A Roman Catholic who did not attend the services of the Church of England) and as a result Pontop was sequestered in 1645.

Anthony Meaborn petitioned for the discharge from sequestration which was granted November 18th 1652 after he proved the death of his recusant parents, John and Ann Meaburn.

Anthony, Barrister-at-law, and a bachelor, died 28th December 1712, and was buried at Lanchester. The estate remained the property of the Meaborn family until 1730 when Mary, daughter of Anthony Meaborn married Thomas Swinburne, whose family were in possession of Pontop Hall when the students arrived from Tudhoe to continue their studies.

There were six students who arrived at Pontop in 1794, John Bradley, Thomas Cock, Thomas Dawson, Thomas Lupton, John Rickaby, and Thomas Storey. The students were accompanied by their tutor Dr John Lingard. They were welcomed by the Reverend Thomas Eyre who, in 1793, arrived at Pontop Hall from Wooler, Northumberland, to become Chaplain to the Mission. He was to become the first President of the College when they moved to Crook Hall on 15th October 1794 with Dr Lingard as Vice President.

Thomas Eyre remained as President when the College moved to it's final home at Ushaw in August 1808. He died on 10th May 1810, and was buried in the College Chapel.

The site of Crook Hall lies to the west of the village of Iveston. There is a mention in the Boldon Book of 1183, "Cruketon pays four marks".

The name of the tenant, as in all the free Manors is omitted, but it was the estate of the family De la Ley, Lords of Witton.

Shortly after the estate was recorded in the Boldon Book, Gilbert De la Ley, Lord of Witton, (now Witton Gilbert) gave all his lands at Cruketon to the Bishop of Durham.

After 1183 Cruketon was a free Manor rendering four marks to the See of Durham. The name of the owner is not known, but it was probably someone bearing a local name, for Peter of the Crook occurs about the middle of the fourteenth century. Half an acre was held by him at Stockerley, named after a small stream which still runs to the south west of the site of the Hall, and about 1380 was held by John of Kirkby for a rent of four pence. The same John also held the Manor of Crokhugh which was previously called Cruketon, with a 100 acres of arable and meadow land, by knight's service and an annual rent of two shillings. He died in 1387, seised according to his inquisition post mortem of 5th August 1387 of four messuages, (dwelling houses) and one carucate of land, (a measure) in Stockerley Crook which was held jointly with Avicia, his wife, who may have been an heiress of a local family.

John of Kirby was succeeded by his 21 year old son, John of Kirkby who died in 1400. His heir was his niece Emma, wife of Thomas of Ryton, but the estate was held in trust by John of Skendilby and John Dalton who were chaplains of the Manor of Stockerley with the Croke.

In 1411, William of Hilton, Knight, appears to have had sole possession of the Vill of Crokehugh, and transferred part of the Manor to Peter Tilliol without the Bishop's Licence. The Manor then passed through various hands until it became the property of Roger Thornton who was a merchant in Newcastle. He died at the Manor 3rd January 1429, leaving his son and heir Roger Thornton who was in possession until he died in 1471.

The heir to the Manor was his daughter Elizabeth, wife of George Lumley, of Lumley, near Chester le Street. George Lumley died in 1507, and was succeeded by his grandson Richard, Lord Lumley.

He died in 1510, leaving his son John Lumley, aged 18 years, heir to the Manor of Croke who transferred ownership to Ralph Vasey who, in November 1566 conveyed Crook with Stockerley to Thomas Blenkinsop, who in turn in 1571 conveyed the Manor to Robert Hull of Ousterley by Holmside.

Robert Hull, in November 1588, sold the Estate to William Shafto of Ryton who granted in 1635 the Vill of Crook by Iveston to George Baker, Attorney at Law, Recorder of Newcastle (1642-1644), who was knighted 29th June 1642. When he died at Hull in August 1667 he was succeeded by his eldest son George who died on 14th October 1677 and was buried at Lanchester. He had six children, one of whom was Thomas Baker, the celebrated scholar and antiquary who was born at Crook Hall 4th September 1656.

He was ordained Priest in 1686 while at St John's College Cambridge, and after a very eventful, and controversial life, died at St John's College on 2nd July 1740, aged 84 years.

The eldest son of George Baker, also called George, succeeded his father as heir to the Estate. George Baker was Member of Parliament for Durham from 1713, to 1715. He partly rebuilt, and remodelled the Mansion House at Crook Hall which was originally built in or about 1620.

The Baker family remained in possession of the estate of Crook Hall until 1877 when it was sold, together with Howens farm at Knitsley to Consett Iron Company.

In 1896, the Hall, by now semi-derelect, was bought by Mr George Neesham, who dismantled the building, and used the materials to build another house.

Although the Mansion house of Crook Hall has gone, the estate still remains, and today is owned by British Coal, formerly the National Coal Board.

The Hall was built in the early part of the seventeenth century, was partially rebuilt, and remodelled by George Baker, MP for Durham City. Today there is nothing left of the old house, but Canon William Brown of Durham published in the 1894 edition of the Ushaw Magazine a description of Crook Hall.

He describes the house as substantial, built in the classical style on a rectangular plan, with a first floor and attic space above in the double roof. The front contained a range of seven windows upstairs, and three on each side of the ground floor entrance. The outer walls were of ashlar, with rustic quoins at the corners. A heavy moulded plinth ran around three sides of the building, interrupted on the north side by the abutting servants quarters. A string course separated the upper and lower windows externally, and a deep cornice surmounted by a parapet completed the elevation.

On three sides the window openings were provided with architraves, though at the back of the house they were merely plain rectangular openings, with the exception of the window over the staircase, which took the form of a high rounded arch ornamented inside and out. Below this were two small circular openings to light the pantry.

If the house had any special feature it was a curved pediment over the front door originally bearing some kind of heraldic device. As this was supported by two lions rampant, Canon Brown speculated that the pediment may have contained the arms of the House of Stuart, to which the Baker family was firmly attached at the time they were living in the house.

In the last quarter of the nineteenth century the Hall became ruinous. part was pulled down in 1882 to build a farmhouse, which still exists, and the remaining part of the Hall was dismantled in 1896 by George Neesham (qv), who transported the remaining stone to the village of Lanchester, and used the material to built West Park, a very fine substantial house, which is the last house on Ford Road as one leaves the village.

Today not a trace of the great house of Crook Hall remains. On the site is the farmhouse of Crookhall Farm, which as previously mentioned was built from the remains of the Hall. Other stonework can be seen incorporated in one of the farm buildings near the farmhouse

At a meeting on 5th May 1794, Bishop William Gibson, Father Thomas Eyre, and Mr John Silvertop of Minstracres, decided to approach George Baker of Ellmore, near Durham, for lease of his property at Crook Hall.

The Hall had stood empty for about four years, and it was thought it would serve as a temporary College until a new building could be built, or when another site could be purchased.

On October 15th 1794, after only five weeks at Pontop, the students, together with Father Eyre, President, and Dr Lingard, Vice President, packed their bags and walked the three miles to the new College at Crookhall. One must remember that there were no roads as we know, only tracks, which were probably heavily rutted and extremely muddy, so three miles must have seemed very arduous.

As the Hall had been unoccupied for so long, some repairs had to be completed The repairs were done in the space of three weeks, so there cannot have been much wrong with the building.

The main problem with Crook Hall was its inaccessibility and the surrounding area, which was bleak and barren. The road leading to the Hall was a track full of pot holes, and aptly named by the students as " Paradise Lane ".

Within eighteen months of arrival, the College at Crook Hall housed thirty two residents, twenty of whom had escaped from Douai. The first students to be ordained were Robert Blacoe, and John Bell who, since his escape from Douai, had been a tutor to the sons of Mr John Silvertop of Minsteracres. On this occasion, too, John Lingard received the Diaconate, and during its existence as an Ecclesiastical College twenty five students were ordained as priests to serve the religious needs of the Catholic population.

As the years went by, and the number of students and staff increased, Bishop Gibson became acutely aware for the need of a new College which would compare with the great English College at Douai. Several sites over the years were inspected until they found the site near Ushaw farm, where the present Ushaw College now stands.

The lands at Esh ("Ash" in its older form), of which the Ushaw farm formed part, had come into the possession of the Smyth family in the reign of Henry VIII, when William Smyth of Nunstainton married Margaret, one of the surviving daughters of Anthony de Esh, whose Norman ancestors had owned the manor of Esh for many centuries.

William, who took part in the Rising of the North, was attainted, and had all his lands confiscated, but they were restored to his son George in 1609.

Soon after the Restoration of Charles II, the family moved from Esh Hall to their estate at Acton Burnell in Shropshire.

Bishop Gibson approached Sir Edward Smyth of Acton Burnell, who owned the farm and three hundred acres at Ushaw. Sir Edward, one of the best known Catholic gentlemen of the day, and who had already shown his benevolence towards the refugees from Douai, agreed to sell the farm and land for £4590.

The Articles of Agreement were signed on March 26th 1799, between John Taylor, agent for Sir Edward Smyth, Bishop Gibson, Thomas Eyre, and Thomas Smith. At last, after many years, the Bishop had achieved his great dream of establishing the English Douai, thus securing the continuity of Roman Catholicism in England.

The foundation stone at Ushaw was laid in 1805, and in 1808 the students from Crook Hall, together with Father Eyre, and Dr Lingard, arrived at the new College.

The first buildings, built in the Georgian style, were modest in size, but this changed during the nineteenth century, when the architect, Augustus Welby Pugin extended the College in the style of pure Victorian Gothic. Pugin was also responsible for the design and construction of many Ecclesiastical buildings both in the British Isles, and in Ireland.

In 1842 he began work on St Cuthberts Chapel at Ushaw. Other work was done by his son E.W.Pugin, Dunn, and the brothers Joseph and Charles Hansom. Joseph Hansom, who at a later date, designed the spire of the Roman Catholic Cathedral of St Mary at Newcastle upon Tyne, is probably better known for his design of the horse drawn Hansom cab, which he patented in 1834.

The spiritual drive of the College, since it's foundation at Ushaw has not changed. The Douai martyrs are still lovingly remembered, as are the names of the six Cardinals, fifty Archbishops and Bishops, and many thousands of Priests who have been trained at the seminary of Ushaw, which still continues in the great traditions, that began with the foundation of the English College by Cardinal William Allen at Douai in 1568.

As a footnote, Dr Lingard, while at Crook Hall, began his great work " The History of England ". He left Crook Hall with much regret, and the time he spent at the Hall, and at Pontop, inspired him to write the following:

" Pontop with thee what clime can vie
Where joyous whins spontaneous grow,
Where not a tree obstructs the eye
And muddy torrents sweetly flow,
Here let me live here let me die
Or part my days 'twixt Crook and thee,
And to thy coal pits then will I
My carcass leave a legacy."

Dr Lingard remained at Ushaw until 1811, then transferred to the Mission at Hornby in Lancashire. He remained at Hornby until his death in 1851, and his body was brought back to Ushaw to be buried in the College Chapel...

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Mr R Gard, North East Catholic History Society.

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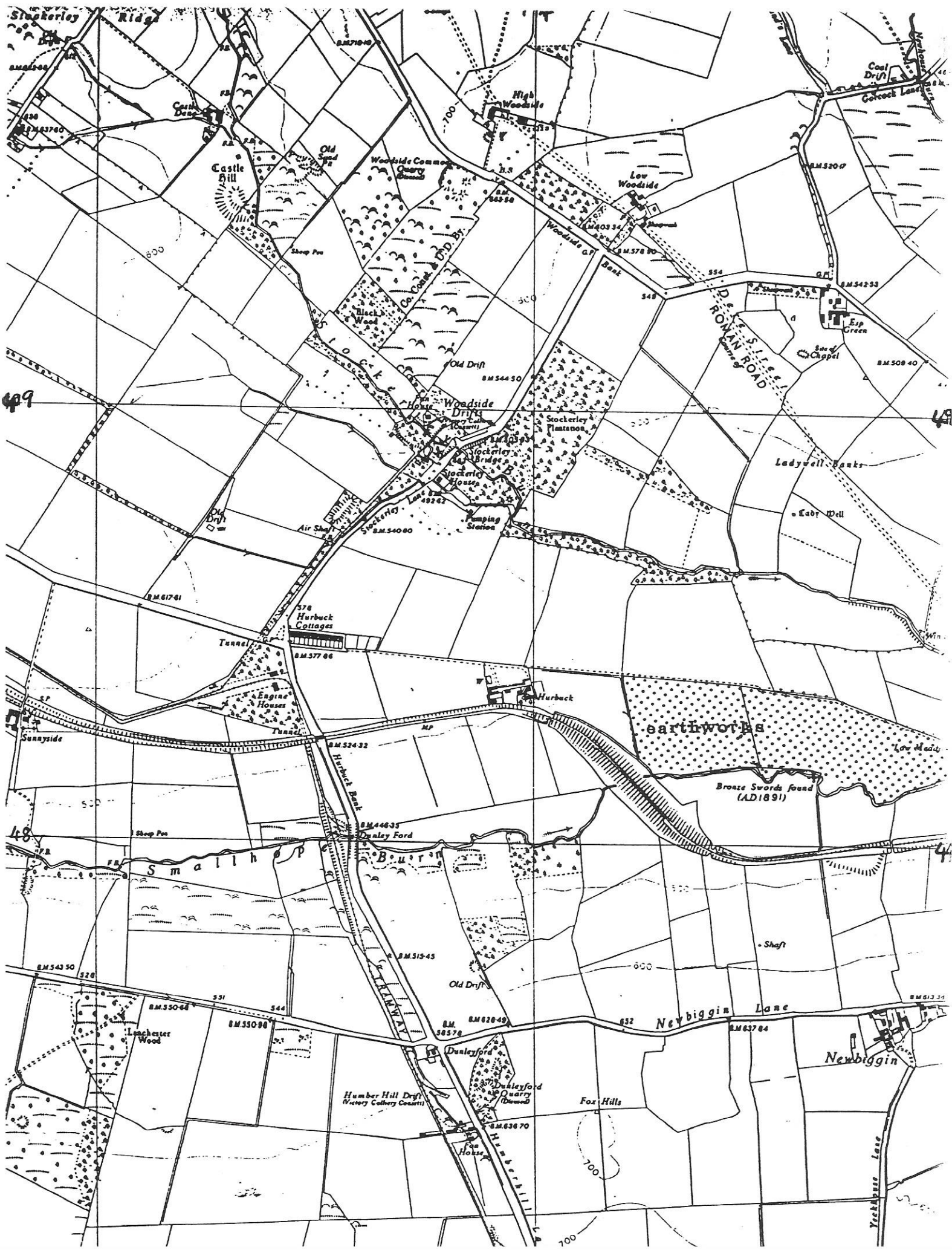
THE HURBUCK IRON HOARD, HURBUCK, LANCHESTER, COUNTY DURHAM

The hamlet of Hurbuck is situated about 2 miles west of the village of Lanchester (grid ref. 135480). It comprises a single terrace of houses with the farm of Hurbuck adjacent to its east end. Some 200 yards to the south and running east to west, is the valley of the Smallhope Burn (fig. 1).

It seemed appropriate to include in this edition of the Society publication, a review of the above hoard and to give an update on current information relating to it. One of the reasons for this, is the forthcoming exhibition of the archaeological material from Northern Britain, to be held in the Laing Art Gallery, Newcastle upon Tyne, entitled the Treasures of the Lost Kingdom. This exhibition begins on June 1st 1996 and ends August 26th 1996. There was a possibility that the above hoard may have been part of the display but unfortunately this will not now happen. Those wishing to see it will have to visit the British Museum, London. However, as it is 136 years since the first report of its finding was published, I feel the present report will convey the importance of this collection of iron weapons.

It was during 1870 that Mr David Balleny of Hurbuck Farm was fishing in the Smallhope Burn about a half mile east of the above farm, approximately 2 miles west of the village of Lanchester. His attention was drawn to an iron axe head protruding from the bank of the Smallhope Burn some 4 feet (1.22m) below the existing ground level (fig. 1). After further investigation, some 18 miscellaneous iron objects were recovered from the bank (fig. 2). This was one of the most important series of weapons ever discovered in Britain. The hoard consisted of two swords, one broad double-edged, with the hilt complete, the second being a single-edged weapon which was ornamented down the blade though much corroded. There were three axes, of similar form, but of different size. The hoard also included four scythes, a double-headed pick, almost identical to a coal miner's pick though somewhat smaller, a single-headed mattock, a pike head and two iron rings. There were also two further axe heads, one with broad cutting edge and the other of much narrower form, and finally, further implements, one not unlike a spear head and the other a type of gouge.

A more detailed description of the hoard is reported in the Proceedings of the Archaeological Institute, dated December 7th 1860, and a further account in The Durham Victoria County History, 1905-28. I have numbered the items (fig. 2) to assist with their identification.



Stockerley
Ridge

Castle Hill

Woodside Common
Quarry

Black Wood

Old Drift

Woodside Drift

Stockerley
Plantation

578
Hurbuck
Cottages

Engine
Houses

Smallhope

Dunley Ford

Old Drift

Lanchester
Wood

Humber Hill Drift
(Victory Colliery Co. Quarry)

Dunleyford
Quarry
(Quarry)

Newbiggin

B.M. 710.40

B.M. 437.60

B.M. 645.58

B.M. 544.30

B.M. 540.00

B.M. 577.86

B.M. 524.32

B.M. 448.35

B.M. 515.45

B.M. 543.50

B.M. 550.64

B.M. 550.98

B.M. 585.78

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There is one further interesting piece of information regarding the axe heads contained in the enclosed letter (Appendix II) which was sent from Bruce-Mitford, Keeper, Department of British and Medieval Antiquities, to a Mr E.M.W. Hildyard, about another small axe from Hurbuck which was sent separately to the Museum. It was listed on p.74 of Vol. IV of Viking Antiquities in Great Britain and Ireland (1940).

THE HOARD

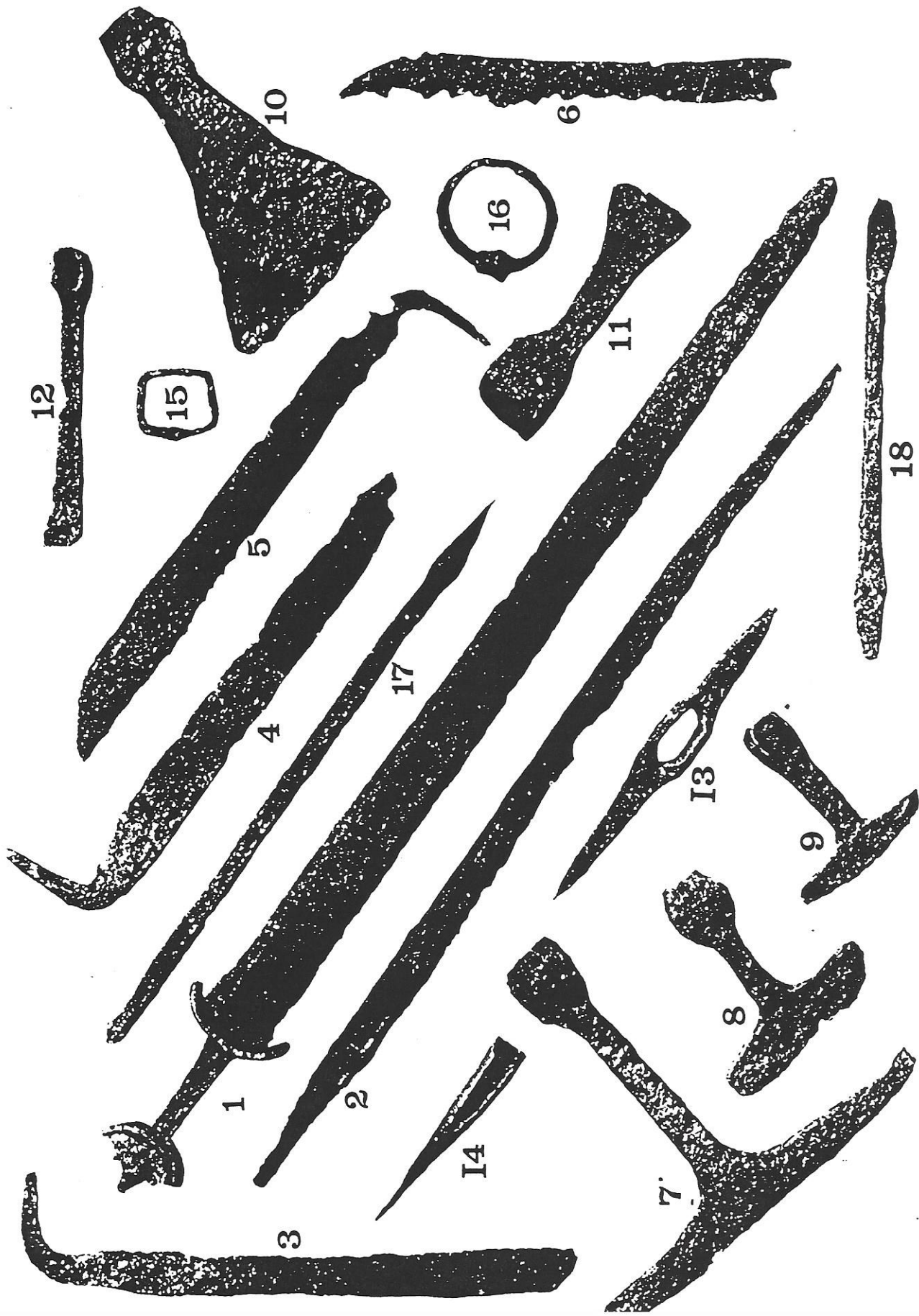
(1) This, the larger iron sword or spatha is the more perfect example and has suffered the least from corrosion. At first sight^{it} appeared to be bronze rather than iron. It is 2 feet 11 inches (890mm) long. The blade is double-edged, tapering gradually to a point, being 2 inches (51mm) wide at its widest point next to the hilt and 1 inch (25mm) at the tip.

The edges of the blade are tapered half an inch (15mm) in from either side, running down the complete length of the blade. When honed this would give an extremely effective cutting edge. (The hilt from the cross-piece to its extremity was 5 inches (127mm). A crescent-shaped cross guard was fitted, its ends projecting out from the blade a half an inch (15mm). The hilt was mounted with a similar form, within its curve a solid, heavy knob which served as a pommel which would also counterbalance the weight of the blade. The attenuated form of the handle indicates that it was furnished with leather wrapping or a wooden mount. The complete sword was made entirely from a single solid iron forging.

(2) The second sword was also made of iron having suffered greatly from corrosion and was minus its hilt. It was 30 inches (762mm) long with total blade length being 26 inches (661mm). This was a single-edged weapon, its production exhibiting some very fine workmanship. Some of the remaining areas of its polished surface retained considerable traces of alternate gold and copper threads in two lines down the length of the blade. After closer investigation we are told that one side exhibited only one line of inlay.

(3) (4) (5) (6) The four scythes all made of iron are all of the same type and form. The blades are straight, on average about 15 inches (381mm) long with a right angle tang fitting for the handle. The width of the blades is $1\frac{3}{4}$ inches (44mm).

(7) (8) (9) There were 5 axes in total, three of which were of similar shape, one large and two smaller (7, 8, 9) and shown in the illustration with long blades extended parallel with the haft both upwards and downwards. The blade of the largest (7) measures 12 inches along the cutting edge



IRON WEAPONS FOUND AT HURBUCK, NEAR LANCHESTER.

Fig. 2

with an average width of 1 inch (25mm). The neck connecting the socket with the blade is $\frac{3}{4}$ inch (20mm) wide, and has an average thickness of $\frac{3}{8}$ inch. The socket measures $1\frac{3}{4}$ inch wide (45mm) and deep, and is perforated to accommodate a shaft of the usual oval form, 2 inches by 1 inch (51mm by 25mm). The two smaller axes (8 and 9) of the same form measure respectively $5\frac{1}{2}$ inches and 6 inches (140mm and 152mm) in total length.

(10) (11) These are two more iron axes.

(10A) It will be noted that implements on Fig. 2 and Fig. 3 are identical excepting (10) which is an iron axe on Fig. 2 and a stone bronze axe mould on Fig. 3. The Fig. 3 photograph is the original which I obtained from Mrs Milner, daughter of Mr Edmund E.W. Balleny of Little Greencroft Farm. At some time the above artefacts were switched and another photograph taken. It is interesting that Fig. 2 is the one published in the County Victoria History.

(12) Possibly an adze or mattock, no measurement given but said to be quite small.

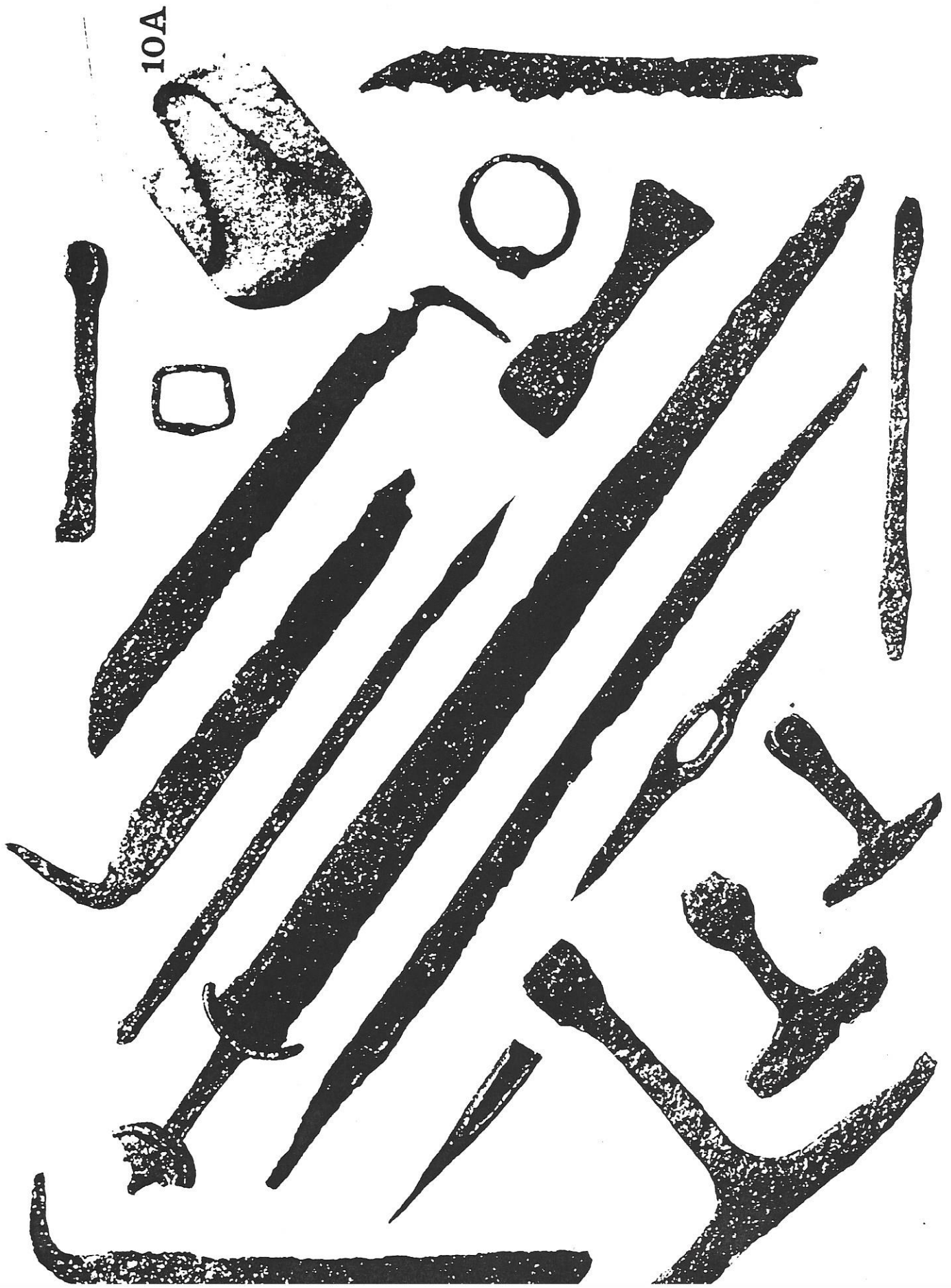
(13) This resembles a miner's pick, is $10\frac{1}{2}$ inches (267mm) long, and is pointed at both ends. It is perforated in the centre to accommodate a shaft 2 inches by 1 inch (51mm by 25mm), the socket being expanded to a depth of $1\frac{1}{2}$ inches (39mm). Viewed from the side it has been fashioned in a curve of a 12 inch (305mm) radius.

(14) This is the pointed butt of a spear shaft which is split up half of its length and still retains the rivet which secured it to the shaft.

(15) (16) These are two iron rings possibly belonging to some harness fitting. The smaller one (15), rectangular in shape is $3\frac{1}{2}$ inches by 2 inches (89mm by 51mm). The larger one is circular, $3\frac{1}{2}$ inches (89mm) in diameter. The ends overlap and are welded with a strap.

(17) (18) These two objects are 18 inches (457mm) and 13 inches (330mm) long respectively. Their purpose is unclear. The longer one has a circular section and is pointed at both ends with a long tapering point at one end and a blunt point at the other.

Although the hoard recorded by Durham Victoria County History in Fig. 2 indicates five axes, the written description of the hoard lists eight. Further information from the source shows that Dr Edward Charlton, Secretary of the Society of Antiquaries, Newcastle, procured from the hoard a scythe and one axe, while Canon Greenwell had a further two axes in his possession. While the location of the former was unknown, the axes held by Canon Greenwell are described. One was a Saxon type, $9\frac{1}{2}$ inches (242mm) long from the extremity of the socket to the edge



IRON WEAPONS FOUND AT HURBUCK, NEAR LANCHESTER.

Fig. 3

of the blade which measured 12 inches (305mm) in length. The second axe of the Franciscan form was $5\frac{1}{2}$ inches (140mm) long and $3\frac{1}{2}$ inches (89mm) wide at the cutting edge which was set at an angle of 21 degrees to the axial line. The remains of a wooden handle was in the socket. The above are obviously the three missing axes. Checking through the reports of the Archaeological Institute December 1860 and the Victoria County History 1905-1928 it would now seem that there were some 22 iron items recovered from Hurbuck. It is also interesting to note the date of the report from the Institute was December 7th 1860 and that the Victoria County History states the find came to light in 1870. A further contradiction is that the O.S. map indicates the find as "bronze swords discovered in 1891".

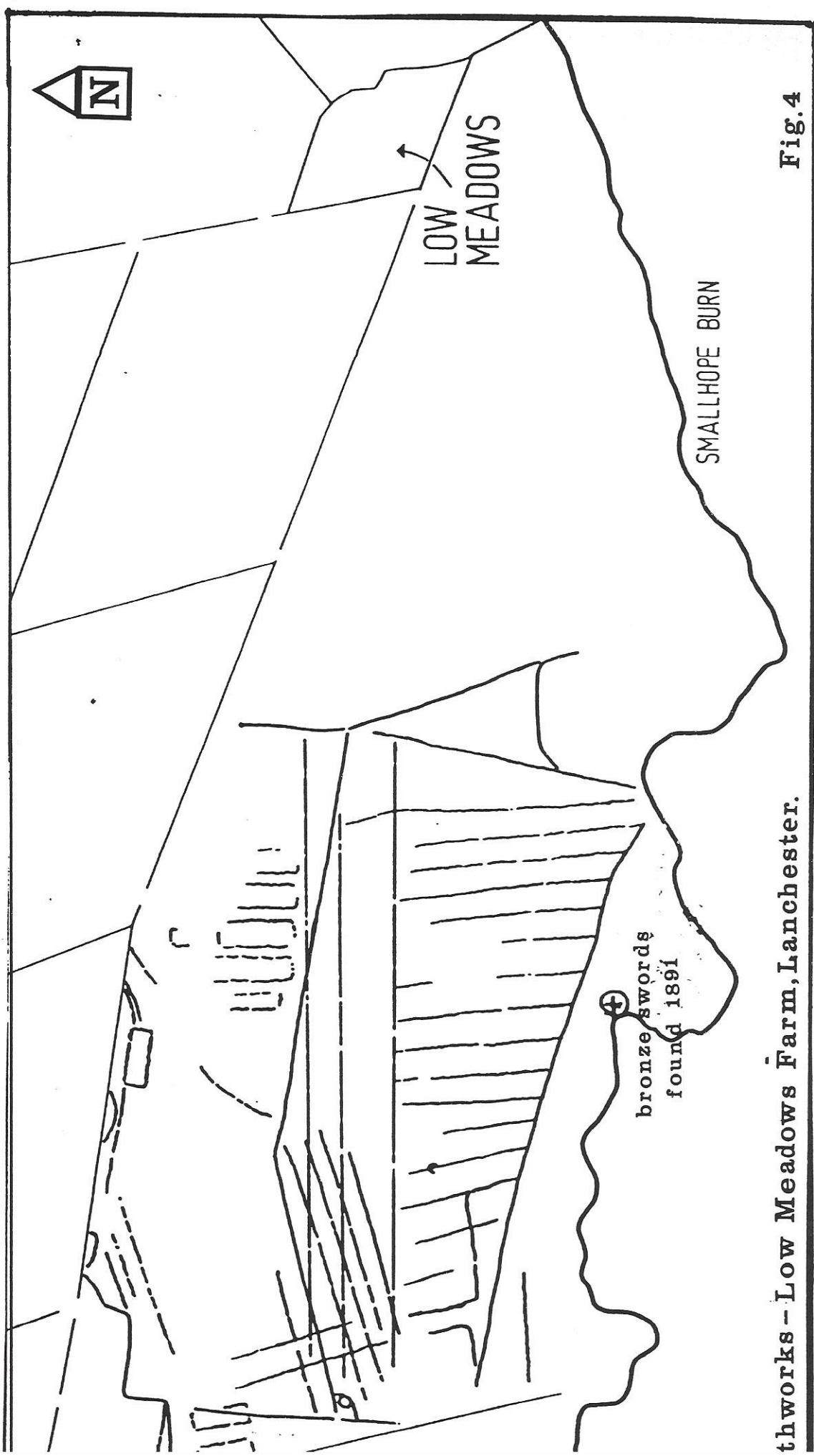
The precise dating of the hoard would still seem to be a matter of debate but would appear to be between the Saxon and Viking Periods, i.e. c.A.D. 800 and c.A.D. 1,000. Arguments for particular dates can be found in the reports of the Archaeological Institute's Proceedings of 1860, The Victoria County History and *Archaeologia Aeliana*, Vol. V (New Series 1861) p.159.

The hoard, however, poses archaeological questions other than those of dating, for the find spot in the bank of the Smallhope Burn is situated on the southern edge of a field displaying a 'rig and furrow' system, an early field drain complex and extensive earthworks.

In 1969, Mr Keith Morton of Low Meadows Farm (GR 1500 4822) removed the stone covers from the field drain complex, some 18 drains in total, to level the field, the Inspector for Ancient Monuments being in attendance at the time. The sides of the drains were composed of thin slabs. Their depths were about 6 inches and on average they were about 7 inches wide with slab covers existing along the total length. These drains debouched into the Smallhope Burn. There was evidence of 'rig and fir' in one section of the area and also numerous earthworks of buildings. The close proximity of the Iron Hoard to these earthworks suggests a connection that may be worthy of archaeological investigation.

I have included with this article three letters which I received from Mrs Molly Milner.

Appendix I - dated 8th March 1955 refers to a Roman altar which was found by Edmund Balleny, Mrs Milner's father, on Dyke Nook Fell, in 1891, some $3\frac{1}{2}$ miles north-west of the Lanchester fort. It was discovered on the north end of the Roman Low Dam. This altar had been lost from c.1900 and had been last seen by Mrs Milner leaving Little Greencroft Farm destined for Lanchester Church. Unfortunately, it never reached there, but as luck would have it while taking photographs at Broomshields Hall,



thworks - Low Meadows Farm, Lanchester.

Fig. 4

near Satley, Lanchester in 1985, I discovered the altar in the garden of the Hall where it is still located. During a visit to Mrs Milner's with Wally Austin some years ago, she produced the photograph of the altar (Fig. 5) showing the older daughter of Edmund Balleny standing by it. Without the aid of this photograph we would not have been able to identify the find at Broomshields Hall as the missing altar. Its measurements are 36 inches by 18 inches.

This letter also includes enquiries regarding the whereabouts of the Hurbuck Hoard.

Appendix II - is from the British Museum confirming that they have the iron finds there and that they had been purchased from Canon Greenwell and had been the property of Mr E.W.E. Balleny. I am not sure what relation the finder, David Balleny was to Edmund Balleny but suspect he was his son.

Appendix III - is from E.M.W. Hildyard who has been investigating the whereabouts of the artefacts for Mrs Milner.

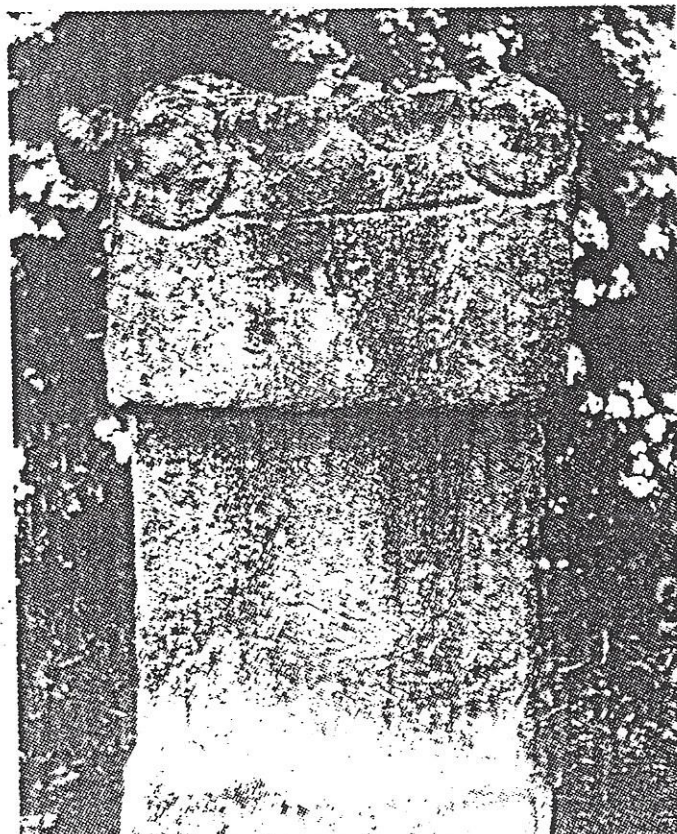
The Hurbuck Hoard has caused a great deal of interest since it was first discovered, while the circumstances of its concealment in the banks of the Smallhope Burn and the fact of Saxon/Viking material being discovered in the same collection are subjects of great speculation. Perhaps the earthworks adjacent to the find spot would offer some explanation, but only archaeological investigation can achieve this.

Alan H. Reed

February 1996



Fig. 5





SOCIETY OF ANTIQUARIES
OF NEWCASTLE UPON TYNE

HON. CURATOR

Shanklin,
Stocksfield,
Northumberland

8th March 1955

Dear Hildyard,

Thank you very much for the off-print, which took me rather out of my depth but was most interesting, and for the photograph and particulars of the "iron goods". They are not in the Black Gate (I wish they were!) nor are they Roman; they are Viking and the sword and the three axeheads are contemporary and clearly datable to the late 8th C. The sword blade and the isolated small axehead are not so definitely datable but there is nothing to suggest that they were not in use at the same time as the other things. I do not know what the three objects like small straight scythes are - unless they are small straight scythes! After all the axeheads are tools not weapons, (tho' no doubt quite useful in a scrap)

The stone object can only be, as you suggest, a mould for casting a flat axehead and I cannot think that it has anything to do with the other things, but must be Bronze Age.

I think you will find that all these objects are in the B.M. At any rate a Viking sword of exactly similar type is there "from Hurbeck, co. Durham" - within a mile of Greencroft and perhaps even on the same farm, and I cannot think it likely that two such swords would be found so close together.

I would suggest that you send, or take, the photograph to the B.M. and ask them if this is their sword, and if they have the other things too; I would like to know if the 'scythes' are scythes or not.

The Greencroft altar was found near two Roman dams, at the head of the Dyke Nook burn, the source of one of the aqueducts for Lanchester; it was uninscribed and I do not know where it is now - it is not at the Black Gate.

I am sorry that the Malton glass is not done yet, I have started it twice but in this cold I find I cannot even think - so please wait until the temperature rises - permanently - I have examined it all and know what the identifiable pieces are but cannot get down to writing it up and looking up references, etc. but I will be good (one of these days)

I shall be glad to attend to your bronzes for you, but please do not send them yet, for the reason given above.

I remain,

Yours ever,

W. B.

APPENDIX II

THE BRITISH MUSEUM, LONDON, W.C.1

Department of British and Medieval Antiquities

TELEPHONE: Museum 1555

12th April, 1955.

Dear Hildyard,

I am sorry not to have answered your letter to Brailsford of the 9th March before, but I have been away and we have been very busy.

All the finds from Harbuck are in the British Museum. The registration numbers being 1912, 7-23, 1-17. They are said to have been found by a man fishing in a small stream near Harbuck not far from Lanchester. They are referred to in Archaeologia Aeliana, Vol. V. (New Series 1861) 159, and in V. C. H. 1.213. They were purchased from Canon Greenwell and are said in the register to have been the property of the late E. W. E. Balleny, Esq. Another piece from Harbuck, a small axe evidently from the same find, came to us separately. This latter piece is listed on p. 74 of Vol. IV of Viking Antiquities in Great Britain and Ireland, edited by Shetelig and published in 1940 but oddly enough the compiler missed the rest of the Harbuck material, which is not mentioned. On the face of it the collection looks a little curious as the sword is Anglo-Saxon and probably 200 years or more earlier than the latest type of axe-head represented.

I hope this gives you the information you want, and I return your photograph herewith.

Yours sincerely,

R. S. Bruce-Hislop.

Keeper

E. M. W. Hildyard, Esq.,
Middleton Hall,
Pickering,
Yorks.

(Victoria County History)

APPENDIX III

This is a copy of a letter sent to Mrs Molly Milner from Mr E.M.W. Hildyard. (Mrs Milner was a daughter of Mr Edmund Balleny of Little Greencroft Farm, Knitsley, Consett, Co. Durham).

~~~~~

Middleton Hall  
Pickering  
Yorkshire  
22.4.55

My Dear Mrs Milner (or Molly),

I have at long last, kept my promise and traced the Greencroft finds. The enclosed correspondence explains about them.

There were three distinct lots of finds - the stone axe mould and stray flints belong to the Neolithic and Bronze Age times. Incidentally, the axe mould is illustrated in the Prehistoric Guide to the British Museum which has just come out (fig.12), the drawing does not correspond to the photograph, it shows axe moulds of flat axes side by side, one much smaller than the other. I wondered if there were two of them, it is more likely that the drawing is the side of the mould not shown in your photograph.

The altar which is of course Roman. Many of them were not incised the dedication was painted, This was a much cheaper if the god let you down, you wash it out and try another.

The main collection of Viking finds. I saw Bruce Mitford in London last week and had a talk to him about them. He said, they are late Viking, just before A.D.1066, he suggested, except the sword which is Saxon and must be nearer A.D.800 and even earlier.

As you know Viking relics are not very common and he said, this is one of the largest collections of them ever found in Britain. So it is clear that they were a very important find worthy of being in the British Museum, indeed, that is where they should be. You will, I am sure, feel proud that you and your family have contributed to the National Collection.

They are not on show, Bruce Mitford said, but given a few days notice he would produce them if ever you want to see them. Of course the B.M. was badly burnt and very little stuff is out in the cases even now.

Some time I will look up the reference in Archaeologia Aeliana and the Victoria County History to see what they say about them. If interesting I could have it copied for you.

All the best to you, Percy and Billy Walton.

Yours sincerely,

E.M.W. Hildyard.



## ADDENDA

DURHAM ARCHAEOLOGICAL MATERIAL IN THE BRITISH MUSEUM

In 1955, Mr Wilf Dodds, now deceased but then a Technical Assistant to Professor Eric Birley of the Department of Archaeology, University of Durham, was sent to the British Museum to produce a list of Durham Material in the Museum from their Accession Records. Being a very close friend and knowing of my interest in the HURBUCK HOARD he kindly gave me a copy of his work. This document informs us of one very relevant piece of information concerning the 'lost' stone mould for Celts from Hurbuck (Fig. 3, 10A) much sort after and never discovered by later historians. It was said to have been located on the rockery of Little Greencroft Farm, Knitsley, Consett, County Durham. It will be noted that it is recorded on Mr Dodd's list and also the iron Hoard from Hurbuck.

Alongside the recorded items are the letters W.G., an abbreviation for William Greenwell of Lanchester, some 15 items on the list have his initials after the Accession Record.

List of Accessions

Axe hammer: Barnard Castle CC England 12  
 2 Gold Armlets: Barnard Castle 1873 12.18 1/2 Albert  
 Bronze Celt: Brandon W.G. 1919: 3 $\frac{5}{8}$ " long, sq.section with loop  
 Bronze Rapier: Claxheugh W.G. 2077 12 $\frac{3}{4}$ " long  
 Copper Celt: Durham City 1873 6.2.3 Lucas Coll.  
 Bronze Palstave: Durham City 6. Lucas Coll.  
 Bronze Palstave: Fawnlees W.G. 1824 5. 3" long  
 \*Stone mould for Celts from Hurbuck W.G. 2267 1912 7. 5" long  
 Bronze scabbard & iron sword: Sadberge 1896 1.20.1; Hoopell Coll.  
 Gold ornaments W.G. 25 & 26 )  
 Various 1271-1383-1411 W.G. ) Heathery Burn  
 Bone & pottery 1911 10-10 W.G.)  
 Nave bands & disc 1865 2.7, 1-3 W.G. )  
 Bronze & stone implements 1911 10-21 H. Slater )  
 Bronze spearhead 1875 4.1.37 Simpson )  
 Urn, Flints, Bone: Houghton-le-Spring: 1890 11,11,1-17 Robinson  
 Bronze Palstave: Howden-le-Wear, 1904 6.18, looped. J. Hopper  
 Quartzite implement: Limekiln Gill 1928, 12-4, Trechmann  
 Flint implement: South Shields 1879. 1469 W.G. Trow Rocks Burial 2.4"  
 Cinerary Urn: Stonebridge W.G. 2411-2413  
 Bronze Age urn fragment: Trimdon Grange, 1879-1733 W.G. 3 $\frac{1}{2}$ " x 4 $\frac{1}{2}$ "  
 Base fragment Bronze Age vessel: Birtley 1920-1 2052-3 D.5. 16  
 Antler pick, hollow point: Middleton Teesdale, Quarry top, 1221  
 Bronze spearhead above Newcastle bridge 1646, 16" long

Burial Urn 6.6ins: Sacriston - cist with skeleton 2285  
 Food vessel, plain & Narrow: Tees near Middlesborough 1181  
 Bronze sword from Tees near Middlesborough  
 Greentsone hammer: Millfield, Sunderland Greenwell-Sturge Coll.  
 Hammerstone: Egglestone in Teesdale  
 Hammerstone: Redworth Greenwell Coll.  
 Greenstone Celt: Sherburn Hospital. Greenwell-Sturge Coll.  
 2 Celts found above Stanhope  
 Ground Basalt Celt: Cowhill Sturge-Evans Coll.  
 Circular Mace head: Coves House, Stanhope  
 Burial Urn: Barnard Castle  
 Bronze leaf shape sword  
 2 Square jet beads from Holwick, Teesdale  
 Jet Pendant ?  
 Pennanular Brooch, Ang.Sax., Lanchester 1880 8.2.160. A.W.F.  
 Bronze lions head Roman, 1883.7.5.106. Bead 108 W.G. Lanchester  
 Altar Roman, Lanchester 1870. 10.13.43.  
 Glass bowl & Bottle. Roman: Broom 1879 7.10.23. A.W.F.  
 Bronze fibula: Cassop. Roman 1880.8.2.159 ALIF  
 Glass bead & pot: Chester-le-Street 1929.12.18 & 1883.7.5. 107 W.G.  
 Iron axe head: Darlington 1918.7.9  
 Glass bead, Roman: Edmundbyers, 1883.7.5. 109 W.G. 2 $\frac{2}{3}$ " long  
Iron Swords: Hurbuck 1912.7.23 W.G.  
Iron axe heads: Hurbuck 1224-5 W.G.  
 Bronze key, Roman 1832 11.10 DON p.61 SAMS  
 Cross fragment with runic inscription 1880 3.13.1 A.W.F.

Alan H. Reed



**THE BRITISH MUSEUM**  
**LONDON WC1B 3DG**

15 February 1996

Mr Alan H Reed  
Hon Secretary  
Lanchester Local History Society  
36 Queen's Road  
Blackhill  
Consett  
Co Durham  
DH8 0BL

*Dear Mr Reed*

**'The Golden Age of Northumbria' Exhibition**

Thank you for your letter about the hoard of late Saxon iron tools and weapons found at Hurbuck, Co. Durham, and acquired by the Museum from Canon Greenwell in 1912.

I am sorry that your society is disappointed that we are not lending this assemblage to the forthcoming exhibition at the Laing Art Gallery, Newcastle. I hope, however, that it may be helpful to explain the reasons for our decision, made only after very careful consideration of all the issues.

The hoard, as you will know, plays a vital part in our permanent display of the late Saxon and Viking period, as our only example of a range of Anglo-Saxon tools and implements. The hoard dates to the 10th century, and its burial as a hoard may also reflect the troubled times of the Viking period.


We were in fact asked to lend a substantial list of Anglo-Saxon items by the organisers of the 'Golden Age' exhibition, almost all of which form part of our permanent display. We have from the outset wanted to be supportive of this splendid exhibition, and I think the organisers will confirm that, in agreeing to lend some of our most important objects, we have been at considerable pains to see that many of Northumbria's greatest treasures will go on show in the North. However, in reviewing the organisers' wish-list, we had of course to consider very carefully a range of issues, including the effect of lending these objects on our own permanent displays, at our busiest time of year, when visitors come from all over the world to see world-famous items. One of the core considerations was thus that of the degree of relevance of the material requested to what we understood to be the Newcastle exhibition's theme, namely the art and culture of 7th - 8th century Northumbria. From this point of view, the Hurbuck hoard, as a Viking-period

Mr Alan H Reed

15.2.96

assemblage of tools and weapons, may be a rather less central exhibit than some other items on the list. By keeping it on display here, in preference to certain other items, we can avoid having too many large gaps in our display and have thus been more easily able to agree to lend other, extremely relevant and prestigious items, such as the Franks Casket. I may add that a further factor was the knowledge that the organisers were proposing to borrow a similar hoard from Dumfriesshire, which had not previously been exhibited.

I can understand and much regret your members' sense of disappointment, but hope they may appreciate that a greater good has in this instance prevailed. I would also add that we would be very happy to consider sympathetically any future request to lend the hoard to an appropriate public exhibition in the North.

Yours sincerely  


R G W Anderson  
Director