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SOCKBURN HALL, DARLINGTON
AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL INVESTIGATION OF THE MEDIEVAL AND POST-MEDIEVAL MANORS AND THE SETTING OF THE PRE-CONQUEST CHURCH

Dave Went and Marcus Jecock

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The end-beast from a hogback grave cover found during consolidation work at All Saints' Church, Sockburn, in 2005

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Cover: Sockburn Hall viewed from the site of the Conyers' mansion to the south (© C J Dunn).

Frontispiece: The end-beast from an Hiberno-Norse hogback stone, found during consolidation work in 2005.

Summary

In the early months of 2007 English Heritage undertook an analytical field survey and commissioned a geophysical survey within the peninsula bounded by the River Tees at Sockburn, in the modern borough of Darlington. Together these surveys recorded a wealth of archaeological remains throughout the parkland and gardens surrounding the 19th-century Sockburn Hall and the nearby ruins of All Saints' Church. The majority of the remains, visible as earthworks, relate to a post-medieval mansion and garden and perhaps to an earlier medieval hall, which served as the seat of the powerful Conyers family until late in the 17th century. The surveys also recorded changes in the landscape brought about by the Blacketts, subsequent owners of the manor, who relocated the principal dwelling on at least one occasion prior to the construction of the present hall in 1834, and created the present parkland in which the traces of these earlier activities survive.

The most pressing research questions at Sockburn, however, relate to much earlier periods of occupation. Sockburn has long been identified as the likely location of an ecclesiastical centre, containing a church of such importance that it was considered suitable for the consecrations of a bishop and an archbishop in the late 8th century. It is also recognised for the remarkable assemblage of late 9th- and 10th-century Viking sculptured stones collected from within and around the ruined church in the 19th century and stored in the rebuilt Conyers Chapel. The investigation was able to suggest the possible existence of some further features dating from these early periods, but the main gain has been the opportunity to review existing evidence and recent scholarship in the light of a better understanding of the topography and the later evolution of the local landscape. On this basis it has been possible to illustrate how the Anglo-Saxon and later Viking presence, the medieval manor, the post-medieval mansion and the 19th century hall are stages in the varied and prolonged life of a key place, both central and liminal, successively re-invented to take advantage of the river, the adjacent river crossing known as the Sockburn Wath, and the special enclosed qualities of the peninsula.

1. Introduction

Between January and March 2007 English Heritage undertook archaeological survey and investigations at Sockburn Hall, and more particularly within the pasture and garden areas immediately adjacent to the ruins of All Saints' Church which lie a little to the south of the present country house. The church and hall occupy the southern tip of the historic township of Sockburn, part of a wider parish of the same name, which is contained within a pendulous loop of the River Tees protruding deep into Yorkshire's old North Riding. Sockburn is now contained within the Borough of Darlington, but it was formerly the most southerly parish in County Durham.

The focus of the survey is the area presently designated as a scheduled monument (Durham 40) which includes the roofed and ruined portions of All Saints' Church and the earthworks that surround the church on all sides, reaching their greatest extent to the south and west. Previous archaeological interest at Sockburn has mainly concentrated on the pre-Conquest origin of the church and the remarkable collection of Viking or Anglo-Scandinavian cross fragments and hogback stones assembled in the rebuilt Conyers Chapel. These features, and fragmentary documentary references, suggest that Sockburn was significant ecclesiastical centre in the Anglo-Saxon period and later the hub of a powerful Viking estate. After the Norman Conquest this estate, or something based upon it, became the seat of the Conyers, one of the most powerful baronial families in the County Palatine of Durham. Whereas the extent and nature

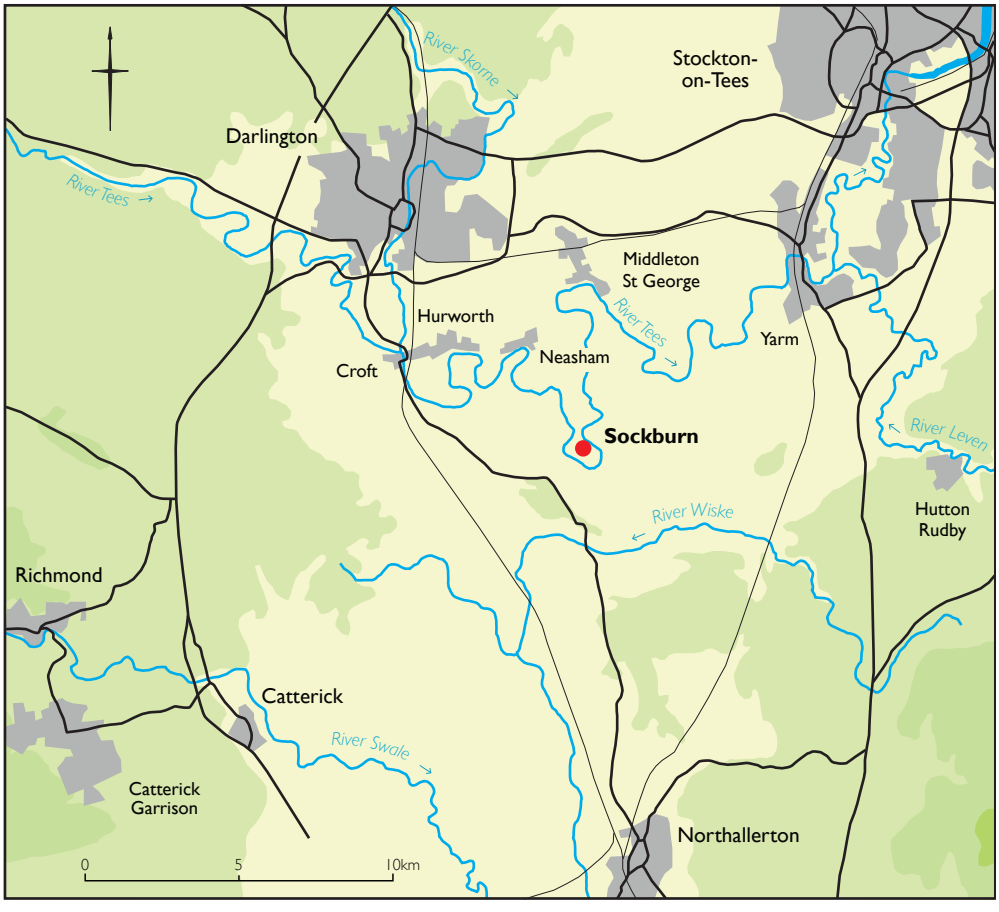


Figure 1. Location map.

of the preceding settlements has remained largely conjectural, the manors, gardens and farms belonging to the Conyers and their successors have left clear marks on the peninsula in the form of earthworks and standing buildings. However, compared to other notable pre-Conquest locations in the region, such as Staindrop and Gainsford, the subsequent development of Sockburn has been quite limited, and suggests favourable circumstances for the survival of buried evidence. Hence Sockburn is considered to be a very important site – one capable of answering crucial questions about the forces of change affecting a significant estate centre between the 8th and 11th centuries, as well as the ensuing development of that estate through the later medieval and post-medieval periods.

The future preservation and management of the scheduled monument was addressed in a conservation statement in 2003 (Cramp & Wilson). This set out a requirement for new research to increase understanding of the site, as well as policies aimed at improving the condition, interpretation and presentation of the archaeological and architectural remains. The survey described and discussed here is a central element in this research. This report provides an interpretation of the archaeological features recorded across the area of the former manor house and its associated gardens, and throughout the parkland established around the later Sockburn Hall. It is based on a detailed investigation of the visible remains, principally earthworks, incorporating and expanding upon the results of a geophysical survey conducted by GSB Prospection Ltd

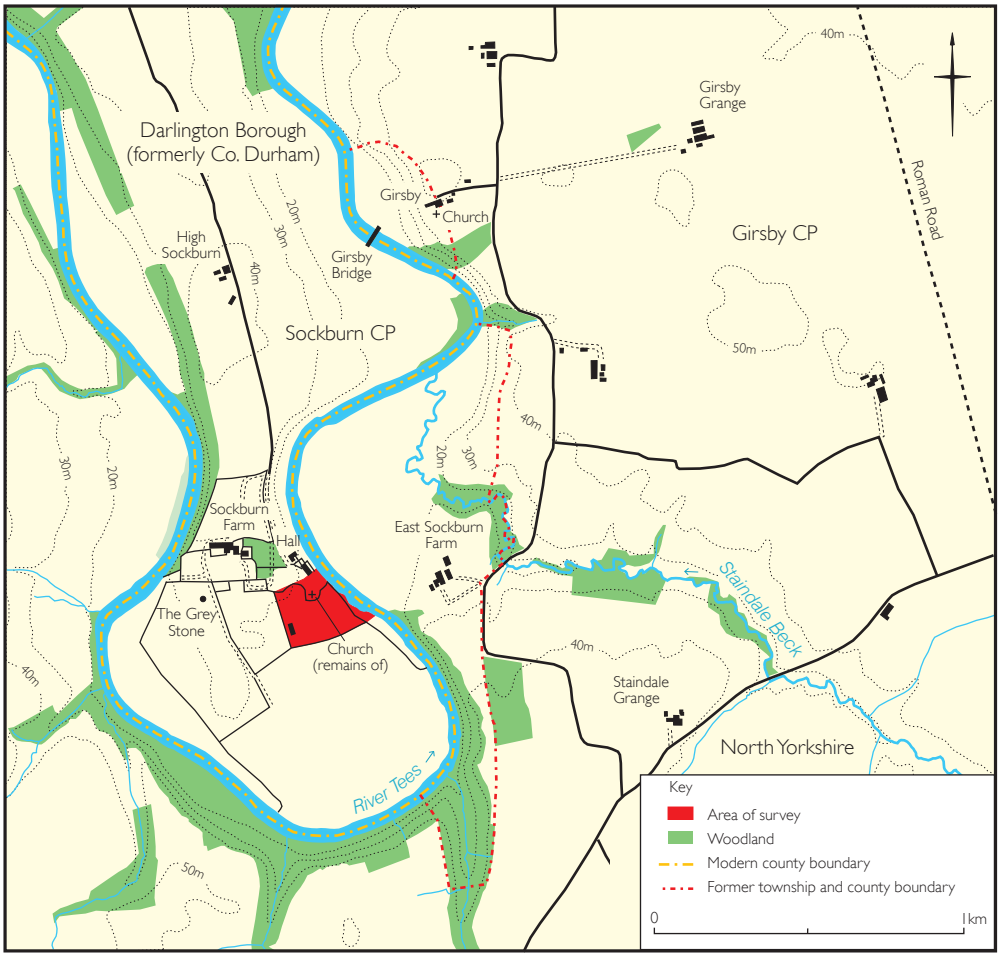


Figure 2. Map of the Sockburn environs. The modern parish of Girsby was formerly a township within the parish of Sockburn, even though it lay on the 'Yorkshire' side of the Tees. Part of Sockburn Township also lay to the east of the river as shown on the 1840 tithe map (DDR/EA/TTH/1/215) and this determined the former position of the county boundary. The detached portion of Sockburn was recently transferred to Girsby parish, and the county boundary redrawn along the centre of the river (HMSO 1991)

in February 2007 and a churchyard survey carried out by members of the Archaeological and Architectural Society of Durham and Northumberland in June 2007 (Section 4 and Appendix 3).

The earthwork survey covered an area of 5.05 hectares (12.48 acres) and was undertaken at 1:1,000 scale; Level 3 standard (as defined in RCHME 1999, 3-5).

2. Geology, topography and land use

The modern parish and ancient township of Sockburn is defined by the sinuous course of the River Tees where it carves a meandering passage across the lowlands between the Pennines and the east coast. The geology of this section of the Tees, to the south of Darlington, is dominated by sandstone and mudstone beds, overlain by superficial deposits of glacial till (boulder clay), although the river margins are typically more varied, with frequent gravel terraces and extensive alluvial deposits (Aalen 2006, 17-28).

To the south-west of Neasham the wandering course of the Tees defines a narrow peninsula, some 4.5km in length. The parallel stretches of the river draw so closely together near Sockburn Farm that the southern toe of this peninsula appears almost to be an island (Figures 2 and 3). The farm sits in a prominent location on a sand and gravel ridge straddling this narrow neck, some 20m above the river. Sockburn Hall, and the adjacent ruins of All Saints' Church, occupy the edge of a slightly lower terrace overlooking the river to the east. From these relatively elevated locations the ground falls away gradually and evenly over a broad alluvial floodplain encircled by the river. The present course of the river itself is deeply incised, even alongside the traditional fording point known as the 'Sockburn Wath' which crosses the river to the east of the church. Far earlier and more extreme forces exerted by the post-glacial river are evident around the southern, Yorkshire, side of the loop, where the steep wooded edge of a 30m escarpment serves to enhance the local sense of insularity.

In the late 18th and early 19th centuries the low-lying meadows of the Sockburn loop were renowned for the quality of their grass, which supported fine cattle and pedigree short horn sheep (Surtees 1823, 246). In the late 1940s farming practices shifted towards arable production, leading to the eventual removal of the majority of field

Figure 3. Sockburn Hall stands alongside the River Tees on the eastern (right hand) side of the loop, slightly to the north of the ruined church and the earthworks which form the subject of this survey (© English Heritage 2007 NMR 20629-051)

boundaries across the southern part of the peninsula. Today the only significant area of permanent pasture lies within the railings of the former parkland to the south of Sockburn Hall. It is here that visible traces of the earlier history of Sockburn survive in the form of extensive earthworks.

Sockburn Hall itself sits within an area laid mainly to grass, flanked to the east by a steep descent through undergrowth to the river, and to the west by an overgrown ornamental garden. To the north a strip of ancient semi-natural woodland, known as Mill House Wood, extends between the approach driveway and the river. Recent clearance work by members of the Middleton St George History Group has removed most of the dense thicket that formerly obscured the church ruins and churchyard.

3. Historical background and previous archaeological research

Previous archaeological research within and around the Sockburn peninsula has been limited in extent and is easily summarised. The pre-Conquest origins of the church and the collection of late 9th- to 11th-century sculptured stones contained within the Conyers Chapel have excited the most attention. The church ruins were analysed and planned by the historian and architect Charles Hodges in 1891, and examined in slightly greater detail by W H Knowles when the chapel was restored in 1900 (Hodges 1894; Knowles 1905). Knowles' work included the only recorded excavation within the peninsula: a small exploration within the footprint of the church that revealed the foundations of an earlier chancel, correctly anticipated by Hodges.

The sculptured stones gathered for safe-keeping within the restored chapel have been the subject of several studies. Hodges produced a catalogue of the stones in 1905 (VCH 1905, 235-40), improving on less comprehensive lists included in earlier works (Knowles 1905, 110-119; Hodges 1894,69-71; Boyle 1892, 660; Brock 1888, 179, 408-9); but the most complete and considered study is undoubtedly that contained within the Durham and Northumberland volumes of the Corpus of Anglo-Saxon Sculpture (Cramp 1984).

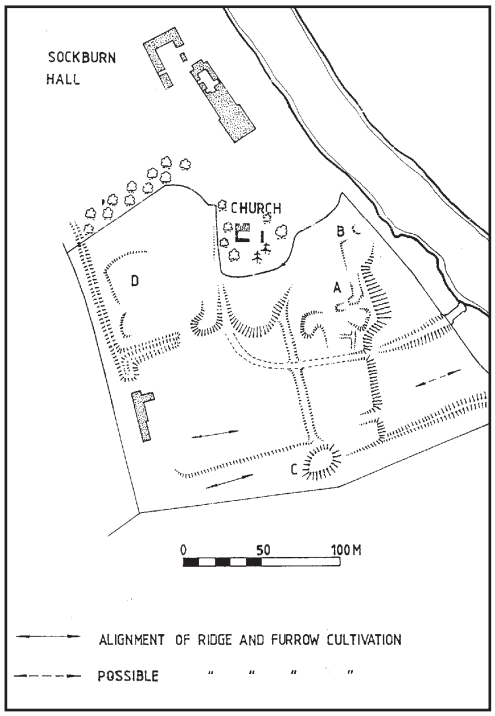


Figure 4. RCHME 1:2500 survey of the Sockburn earthworks, not to scale (after NMR 25511)

In the late 1950s Ordnance Survey field investigators reported the existence of the earthworks and traces of wall lines in the pasture south of the church, which were later interpreted as a deserted medieval village, or even a possibly moated enclosure by authors who may only have seen aerial photographs of the site (NMR NZ 30 NE 1, authorities 2 and 4; Beresford and Hurst 1971). In 1991 this same area was subject of an extremely rapid earthwork survey carried out by the Royal Commission on the Historic Monuments of England (RCHME) as part of a review of scheduled monuments in the county (Figure 4). The conclusions - a sketchy interpretation of building platforms, cultivation earthworks and garden remains - reflect the brevity of the survey and the absence of any detailed documentary research; nonetheless, this survey provided the only graphic interpretation of the earthworks prior to the present study (NMR RCH01/098).

The following narrative draws together existing documentation and previous studies to shed light on the history of the peninsula and to provide a context for the interpretation of the earthwork and geophysical survey results detailed in Section 4.

3.1 Pre-Conquest Sockburn

The Sockburn peninsula and the adjacent countryside along the southern banks of the River Tees have yet to reveal any evidence of prehistoric occupation. The nearest known Roman influence is the line of a road marked by the alignments of hedgerows through Girsby parish to the east (Margary 1967, 432). This road, in part called Rikenild Street, runs between Stamford Bridge and Durham. It makes for a river crossing at Middleton St George, about 4km north of Sockburn, where Pounteys (*Pons Tees*?) Lane leads to the reported foundations of a bridge (Whellan 1894, 702).

'Sockburn' has been interpreted as meaning the burg (manor or fortified place) of '*Socca*' (an old English personal name) which could refer to a vill of a large, early territory (Watts 2002, 115; Cramp & Wilson 2003, 1). It can be identified, quite confidently, as the documented location of two notable ecclesiastical events in the 8th century. The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle records that Higbald was consecrated bishop of Lindisfarne '*aet Soccabyrig*' in the year 780-1, following the resignation of his predecessor Cynebald (Garmonsway 1972, 53); whilst the chronicler Symeon of Durham, writing in the early 12th century, but doubtless drawing on earlier manuscripts which have not survived, states that Higbald was also involved in ceremonies after the death of archbishop Eanbald I of York in the year 796, when '…another Eanbald, a priest of the same church, was all at once elected to the episcopate; bishops Ethelbert, Hygbald and Badulf meeting at his consecration at a monastery called *Sochasburg*.' (Stevenson 1855, 459; Arnold 1885, 58).

Figure 5. Part of the collection of Viking (and later) memorial stones assembled within the Conyers Chapel

The chronicles fall silent for Sockburn during the 9th and 10th centuries as the Anglian kingdom of Northumbria succumbed to Viking raids and eventually to wholesale colonisation from Scandinavia. The Kingdom of York, created by a Viking army in 866/7, opened the way for extensive Scandinavian settlement in Yorkshire, and this included Sockburn within the Wapentake of Sadberg – perhaps the only part of the kingdom to extend north of the Tees (Morris 1977, 97; 1984, 8). At Sockburn the Anglo-Scandinavian period is reflected by a notable collection of sculptured stones dating between the late 9th and early 11th centuries (Cramp 1984 part 1, 135-144). These stones, gathered together in the Conyers Chapel since 1900 (Figure 5), are variously reported to have been collected from within and around All Saints' Church, or from walls of the church itself during its demolition in 1838 (VCH 1905, 235; Knowles 1905, 104; Hodges 1894, 71; Boyle 1892, 659). A full list is provided in Appendix 1. It is sufficient to say here that the group represents thirteen or fourteen crosses (shafts and ring-headed crosses) and nine hogbacks - the distinctive style of grave cover introduced by Hiberno-Norse settlers from the western side of the Pennines as they established political control over the Danish kingdoms of Northumbria and York in the first half of the 10th century (Lang 1972, 236; Stocker 2000, 192-93). One of the hogback fragments, a small bear's head found during consolidation of the west face of the chancel arch (frontispiece photograph) was discovered as recently as 2005 (Ryder 2005).

The ruined nave of All Saints' church (Figure 6) with its narrow and lofty proportions (7.32m in length, 4.26m in width and over 7.5m high), thin walls (around 0.7m) and massive alternating quoins at the north-west and south angles, is characteristic of pre-Conquest construction. Exactly when this part of the church was built, however, remains a matter of some debate in the absence of any diagnostic door or window openings.

Figure 6. The ruined nave of All Saints' Church showing early stonework in the form of the massive alternative quoins at the north-west corner, bonded to the Conyers Chapel in the 14th century. The south wall is pierced by a 12th-century arcade to the former south aisle

The origin of the small chancel revealed by excavation in 1900 is less problematic, since the foundations contained segments from two cross shafts which prove that it cannot have been erected earlier than the late 10th century (Knowles 1905, 110-13; Cramp 1984 part 1, 138-9 and Appendix 1). It was around this time, during the episcopate of Bishop Aldhun (990-1018), that Symeon records the grant of *Socceburg* and *Grisebi* with other lands to the community of St Cuthbert at Durham (Arnold 1882, 83). The names of the benefactor Snaculf, and his father Cykell, indicate men who were either Scandinavian in origin, or of Scandinavian descent (ibid; VCH 1914, 450).

3.2 Sockburn after the Norman Conquest

In the late 11th century or early 12th century Sockburn became the seat of the Conyers, one of the great baronial families of the County Palatine of Durham. It is possible, although the documents supporting this idea no longer exist, that the Conyers family were appointed hereditary constables of Durham Castle by William the Conqueror (Surtees 1823, 244). A more probable origin of the barony, however, can be found in the grant of lands in Bishopton, Dinsdale, Girsby, Hutton, Howgrave, Holme, Stainton and Sockburn by Bishop Robert Flambard to Roger de Conyers around the beginning of the 12th century (VCH 1914, 450). The first baron's son, also Roger, played an important role in the defence of the bishopric in 1141; he alone amongst the barons provided refuge and military support to the elected Bishop William de St Barbara against the usurper William Cumin. This successful action led to the acquisition of further lands and titles, and confirmation from Henry II of Bishop Flambard's earlier grants to the family. In return, both Roger and his eldest son Robert made liberal donations to the Church, including the presentation of the advowson of Sockburn church to Bishop Hugh Pudsey's new hospital at Sherburn around 1181 (Surtees 1823, 244; VCH 1914, 454).

The Sockburn Worm

A more flamboyant explanation for the origin of the barony is contained in the legend of the Sockburn Worm. This, together with tales such as the Lambton Worm or the Laidley Worm of Spindlestone Heugh, forms part of a particular tradition of dragon-slaying fables found across the North-East of England. Although undoubtedly of far earlier origin, the first written version of the legend is contained in a small heraldic book in the Harleian collection dated to the time of Charles I (1625-49), later versions of which appear in the Bowes manuscripts (Wall 1986, 77-8; Surtees 1823, 243; Hutchinson 1823, 148).

> *"Sr Jo Conyers of Storkburn knt who slew ye montrous venons and poysons wiverms Ask or worme which overthrew and Devourd many people in fight, for the scent of the poyson was soo strong, that no person was able to abide it, yet he by the providence of god overthrew it, and lyes buried at Storkburn before the Conquest, but before he did enterprise it (having but one sonne) he went to the Church in compleat armour and offered up his sonne to the holy ghost, which monumt is yet to see, and the place where the serpent lay is called Graystone"* (Harleian Manuscript No. 2118 Fo. 39, cited in Wall 1986).

The worm legend itself may be no more than an heroic justification for the acquisition of lands in the wake of the Norman Conquest, applied at a much later date; but several authors have proposed that elements of earlier myths or even real events may have been adopted in the process. Surtees (1823, 244) suggested the worm might represent the usurping bishop Cumin, and Hutchinson (1823, 180) advanced the interesting idea that the dragon stood for the threat of Danish invaders. Telfer (1991) gathered together a still wider range of possible explanations including the slaying of real beasts of the wood and chase, the appearance of monstrous (but quite natural) eels along the River Tees, and even an intriguing link between the worm's vile breath and the sulphurous springs later made fashionable at local Georgian spas such as Middleton-One-Row. Whatever the origin, one lasting legacy is that the worm story is believed to have provided Lewis Carroll, who spent part of his boyhood in the rectory at nearby Croft, with the inspiration for the poem 'Jabberwocky' (Simpson 2005).

The 'Grey Stone' - said to mark the burial of the worm - is a sizeable natural outcrop located beyond the survey area some 300m to the west of the church. This is one tangible feature drawn into the legend; another is the Conyers' Falchion, a heavy sword which, according to tradition, was used to dispatch the worm, and hence became the symbol of the family's title to the manor of Sockburn under the Prince Bishops.

The Conyers' Falchion

The Conyers' Falchion was kept at Sockburn Hall until it was presented to Durham Cathedral by Arthur Edward Blackett in 1947. It is now on display with other treasures in the undercroft of the south cloister. Falchions are very rare, only eight examples being known in Europe, and the Conyers' example is considered to be the best preserved of these. According to Wall (1982), who studied the falchion in some detail, these unwieldy weapons were probably of limited use in combat, but their fearsome appearance made them ideal for ceremonial and artistic displays. The Conyers' Falchion has been dated to the period 1260-70 (ibid), and so could be the very sword mentioned in the Inquisition Post Mortem taken after the death of Sir John Conyers in 1395/6 (Cursitor's Records 1884, 176)[1]. This reference to the exchange of a falchion is both the earliest record of the sword itself, and of its use as a token of tenure at Sockburn. Its survival is undoubtedly due to the persistence of the traditions derived from the legend.

Following the manner described in 1395/6 it became the duty of the lord of Sockburn to meet each newly appointed bishop of Durham on his first entry to the diocese, and to proceed with a ceremony which from the mid-17th century, if not before, included the following citation:

> *'My Lord Bishop, I here present you with the faulchion wherewith the champion Conyers slew the worm, dragon, or fiery flying serpent, which destroyed man, woman and child; in memory of which, the king then reigning gave him the manor of Sockburn, to hold by*

1 *'Tenuit manerium de Sockburn per servitium demonstrandi Episcopo unum fawchon ita quod illud viderit restituat ostendenti pro omnibus aliis servitiis* (Cursitor's Records 1884: 176). (Full payment of dues for the manorial holding of Sockburn is provided by the restoration of one falchion to the bishop in such a way that it is in clear view)

this tenure, that upon the first entrance of every Bishop into the county, this faulchion should be presented' (Surtees 1823, 243).

The earliest recorded exchanges of the Conyers Falchion took place at Neasham Ford, at the head of the peninsula, some 3km north of Sockburn (see Figure 1). Reports of Bishop John Cosin's reception in 1661 suggest that it was a lively and good natured affair with trumpets, gun salutes, troops of horse and all the local clergy and gentry present (Surtees 1887,150-51; Telfer 1991, 12). The last ceremony at Neasham took place between Bishop John Egerton and Sir Edward Blackett's steward in 1771, after which the event moved to a drier location in the centre of the bridge at Croft, about 4km upstream. It was here that Dr William van Mildert, the last bishop to occupy the position of Count Palatine, received the falchion in 1826. The Palatinate Act of 1836 placed the bishops' secular rights and duties in the hands of the Crown, yet the custom was enacted on one further occasion in 1861 when Bishop Henry Montague Villiers' train paused on Croft railway bridge for a private ceremony (Wall 1986). More than a century later, in 1984, the exchange was revived once again at Croft Bridge, when Bishop David Jenkins received the falchion from the Mayor of Darlington, brandished the blade and spoke of his desire to defeat the modern dragons of poverty and unemployment (Telfer 1991, 11). Jenkins' successors, Michael Turnbull and the present Bishop Thomas Wright, both upheld this revived custom.

The medieval hall

The Durham archives contain transcriptions of 27 Inquisitions Post Mortem which relate to 23 members of the Conyers family, tracing a line of descent at Sockburn through twelve generations and across three centuries from 1342 to 1635 (Cursitor's Records 1874, 1884; Wall 1986). The Conyers, together with the Hiltons, Bulmers, Hansards and Lumleys, were the most important of the ten baronial families of the Palatinate. Sockburn was the Conyers' principal family seat; but documentary references that actually shed any light on the place during their occupancy are few and far between.

An inquisition taken in 1431, following the death of Robert Conyers, describes a manor house containing a hall and a chamber, as well as a granary, stable and dovecote. Also belonging to the manor were 'three orchards, three cottages, with their gardens' worth 30 shillings per annum; a watermill worth 100 shillings; the milne-halgh, 40 shillings; an enclosed wood called Thirstandale of 10 acres worth three shillings and sixpence, and 100 acres each of arable and meadow valued together at £4 13s 4d (Cursitors Records 1884: 180). A mill, perhaps the one mentioned in this document, certainly stood in the vicinity of the much later Mill House, some 500m north of the present hall, where traces of a race, sluice and dam have been noted beside the river and considerable amounts of rubble and masonry found in the bank and river bed (NMR NZ 30 NE 2, authorities 2 and 3). Thirstandale Wood is now Staindale Wood, which follows the beck of the same name as it cuts it way through Girsby township on the east side of the Tees (VCH 1914, 449).

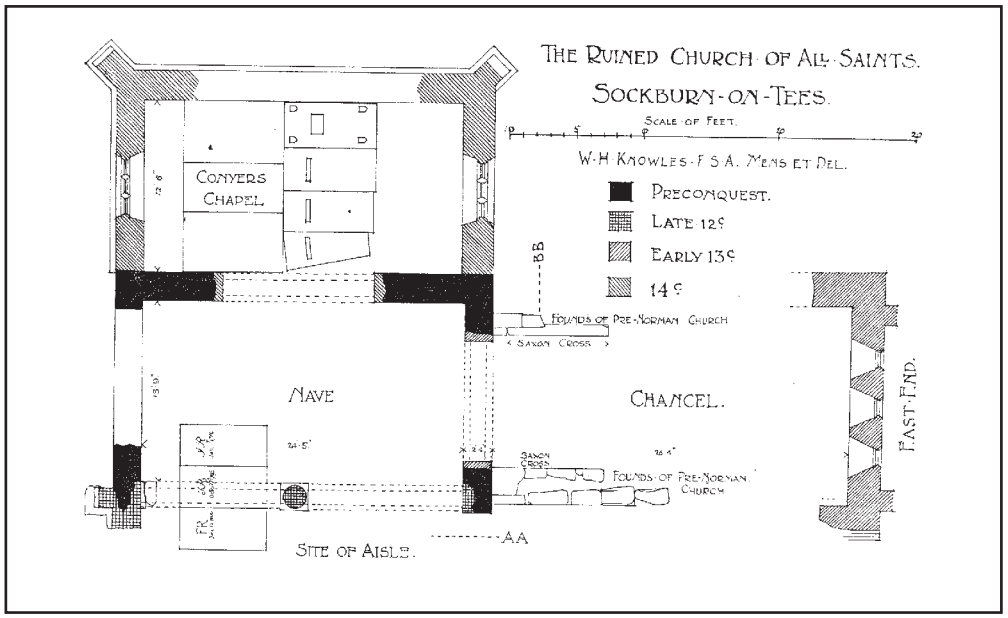


Figure 7. Knowles' (1905) plan of All Saints' Church

Sir Christopher Conyers, who was still a minor at the death of his father in 1431, succeeded to his full inheritance in 1444 and in 1470 was granted licence by Bishop Booth to 'enclose with a wall and fortify his manor of Sokburn' (Cursitors Records 1874, appendix 3). This work, even if completed, is likely to have produced something considerably less impressive than the 'castle' at Sockburn suggested by Cathcart King (1983, 139).

The medieval church

In its final form All Saints' comprised a nave, chancel, south aisle (perhaps with porch) and a north chantry chapel. The now roofless nave, as noted above (Section 3.1), has dimensions and structural elements indicative of a pre-Conquest date, and was originally accompanied by a narrow chancel. Knowledge of the church's subsequent development is still largely embodied in Hodges' (1894) observations and the results of Knowles' (1905) excavations in 1900 (Figure 7). Towards the end of the 12th century two tall pointed arches, separated by a slim cylindrical pier, were inserted to provide an arcade

Figure 8. All Saints' Church viewed from the north east in 2007, showing the isolated west chancel wall, the preserved chancel arch and the restored Conyers Chapel

between the nave and a new south aisle (Figure 6). The chancel arch was replaced in similar fashion in the early 13th century, and the chancel itself was enlarged to exceed the width of the nave and extended eastwards. The east chancel wall, complete with a triplet of lancet windows, now stands in isolation from the rest of the structure (Figure 8). The chapel on the north side of the nave was added in the 14th century to provide a mortuary for the Conyers family and required a new doorway (a wide, shouldered arch) in the north nave wall. When the chapel was re-roofed in 1900 the original three-light perpendicular windows to east and west were comprehensively restored (VCH 1914, 454), the wooden doors added, and the north wall rebuilt with a new window in a complementary style.

The chapel retains a floor of grave covers and brasses dating from 1394 to 1470 and houses an exceptionally well preserved knight's effigy dating from the mid-13th century, as well as a number of other funerary monuments and architectural fragments doubtless saved from the main body of the church following its demolition in 1838 (see Appendix 2).

A small watercolour on card preserved among the Surtees family papers in the Durham Record Office provides a unique insight into the appearance of the church in its more complete state (Figure 9). A note pencilled on the back gives the details: 'Sockburn Church 1814', but since it is not known whether this is the artist's note, or a later addition, the attribution of the date must be treated with caution. The view – which is from the south east - shows the church in a state of some disrepair with both the chancel and south aisle unroofed. The chancel seems rather tall in comparison to the nave, and the arcade might be expected to appear where the roof is absent from the south aisle but, these discrepancies apart, the picture appears to give a credible impression of the south aisle and south wall of the chancel, as well as an otherwise unknown porch. The appearance of the bell cote above the west nave wall fits with

Figure 9. Watercolour of Sockburn Church, c.1814, by an unknown artist (Durham Record Office DX 332/394 (3))

Figure 10. Extract from the 1840 tithe map (DDR/EA/TTH/1/215) showing an angular enclosure around the church

the record of two small bells which were later transferred to the church at Girsby, one of which was inscribed with the date 1770 (VCH 1914, 454). The depiction of an angular churchyard wall, otherwise known only from the 1840 tithe map (Figure 10), also lends a measure of support to the authenticity of this image. It is also interesting to note that a large 11th-century ring-cross head, now stored within the chapel (see Appendix 1), bears a close similarity to the cross depicted within the churchyard wall.

A more distant view of the church from the north, the only other depiction prior to its selective demolition, is provided by an engraving dated 1830 (Figures 11 and

Figure 11. 'Sockburn', an engraving by E. Goodhall from a painting by Thomas Surtees Raine, dated 1830; included in a later impression of Robert Surtees' (1823) county history of Durham

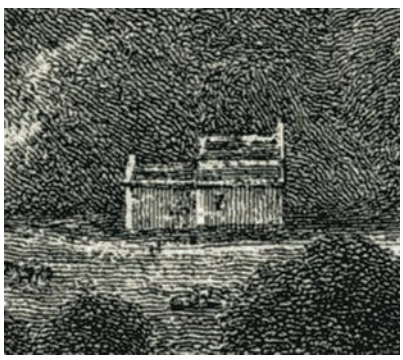


Figure 12. Detail of the church taken from the 1830 engraving (see Figure 11)

12). This shows the chancel dwarfed by the earlier nave, and with a roofline similar to that of the Conyers Chapel. The north chancel wall appears windowless, but there is a suggestion of a single window towards the east end of the north chapel wall. The bell cote shown in the '1814' watercolour is also visible here. The first recorded parson was one Geoffrey de Conyers, incumbent in 1168. It appears that the endowment resided with the lords of the manor until about 1181 when it was granted to the hospital of Sherburn (this Section, above). The master and brethren of the hospital retained

this privilege, reinstated after a dispute over tithes with John Conyers in 1578, up to and beyond the point at which the church was demolished and relocated in the 19th century (VCH 1914, 454).

3.3 The post-medieval manor

John Leland, passing though the county in about 1538, mentioned Sockburn as the place where '..the eldest house of the Coniers, with demains about it, of a mile cumpace of exceding plesaunt ground, is almost made an isle as the Tese ryver windedith about it' (Toulmin-Smith 1964, 69). In 1635 William Conyers died without a male heir and this 'eldest house' passed to Anne, the only one of his three daughters to reach maturity (VCH 1914, 451; ZE2 1653; ZE4 1654). From Anne the manor of Sockburn and other titles passed to Mary, the one living child from her marriage to Francis Talbot, Earl of Shrewsbury (ibid, 451; ZE 10/11 1675) and it appears that from this point onwards Sockburn no longer served as the principal family residence. In the later 17th century a gentleman named William Collingwood acted as the tenant and steward. He was held responsible for taxation on 8 hearths in 1666, which is some indication of the scale of the building at that time (Surtees 1823, 246; Green et al 2006).

The antiquarian and Norroy King of Heralds, Sir William Dugdale, visited Sockburn during his trip to record noble pedigrees in Northumberland and Durham in 1666. After completing his work in Yorkshire, Dugdale travelled north from Northallerton on 15 August, leaving the main road at the crossing of the Tees to investigate the ancient home of the Conyers (Hunter Blair 1925, xv-xvi). He noted the Conyers' armorial decorations set into the walls or windows of the hall (*'in Aedibus de Sockburn de Refectorio'*) quartered with those of other great families, and accompanied by the doxological motto *'Regi seculor. i'mortali i'visibili soli de honor et gloria i'secular seculor'*[2] (ibid 63-4; Surtees 1823, 246). Words from this motto (SECULOR, SOLD.DEO, I.MORTALI and SECULOR) are carved in deep floriated script across four large rectangular stone blocks, now stored in the Conyers chapel (Figure 13). Knowles (1905, 110) states that these blocks were recovered from the river bank some distance from the church, although he does not record when this took place. They date from the late 15th or early 16th century, and were perhaps once set above a hearth or doorway.

Figure 13. The carved stones bearing words from the Conyers' motto

Sockburn was still held by the Talbot family in the late 1670s when legal documents (a fine and a recovery) list the manor's possessions, including four messuages,

2 To God the only king immortal, invisible, be honour and glory world without end.

three tofts, a mill, an orchard (or three orchards), two (or four) gardens and a dove house (ZE16/17 1678; ZE18 1678). By 1682, however, this last link to the Conyers was broken by the sale of the manor and the entire estate to Sir William Blackett of Newcastle (VCH 1914, 451). The deed of sale, covering the property formerly enjoyed by William Conyers, makes similar references to 'all and singular messuages, houses, edifices, buildings, barns, byres, stables, tofts, crofts, cottages, curtilages, dovecotes, garths and gardens..' although once again, in typical fashion, without providing details of the location, appearance or extent of any of these items (ZE19/20 1682).

Sir William Blackett amassed considerable wealth through his Tyneside mines and collieries and was created a baronet in 1673 (Burke 1889, 135). The Blacketts built and maintained other substantial houses, notably Newby Hall in North Yorkshire and Matfen Hall in Northumberland (Waterson 2003, 223; Knowles 1905, 100), and over successive generations Sockburn served as both a tenanted estate and a family residence. Sir William was succeeded by his son Sir Edward, who held the manor until his death in 1718. His son and heir, also Edward, died without issue in 1756 and the title passed to his nephew, another Edward, whose son William succeeded to the title of baronet and to the manor in 1804 (Burke 1889, 135).

By this date the fortunes of the Conyers family had undergone a comprehensive decline in both Durham and Yorkshire. In 1809 Robert Surtees wrote about of fate of Sir Thomas Conyers, the final inheritor of the title of baronet from his spendthrift nephew. Sir Thomas, who was then 72 years of age and living as a pauper in the workhouse at Chester-le-Street, died shortly afterwards, in circumstances somewhat improved by a public subscription raised on his behalf through the Gentleman's Magazine (F R Surtees 1887, 153). Writing about 14 years later Robert Surtees claimed that 'all are now fallen and not a foot of land is now held by Conyers in either county' (1823, 245). Of the Conyers' former hall at Sockburn Surtees stated that 'not one stone is now left on another' and that its position was only pointed out by 'deep traces of foundations of gardens and orchards' lying a little to the south of the church (ibid 246). The general location was not deserted, however, as Surtees also mentioned a 'modern brick house, better and worse than a farmhold, which it is said the Blacketts, "capti dulcedine loci" [3] had intended for the residence for a younger son' (Ibid, 246 fn). This building must be that which is shown a little to the left of the church in Goodhall's 1830 engraving of the Sockburn landscape (Figure 12). Although likened to a 'farmhold' this building is clearly not Sockburn Farm, which stands some 200m to the west of Sockburn Hall - its distinctive high pitched roof and tall chimney stack appearing through a gap in the trees towards the right hand edge of Goodhall's picture (Figure 11). Sockburn Farm was built in the mid-18th century by Thomas Hutchinson, a tenant farmer and famous breeder of shorthorn cattle, and it is particularly noteworthy as the home of Mary Hutchinson who later became the wife of William Wordsworth (Pevsner 1983, 411; Surtees 1823, 246; Barker 2000, 150).

3 'captivated by the charm of the place'

3.4 Wordsworth and Coleridge

William Wordsworth's connection with Sockburn began when his sister Dorothy befriended Mary Hutchinson at school. This friendship developed through the early 1780s when both Dorothy and William spent several summers in the company of Mary's family at Penrith. Mary's brother Tom was the heir of Thomas Hutchinson of Sockburn and in 1788 he set up home with his siblings in the house which their great uncle had built. Dorothy visited Mary at Sockburn in 1795, and returned there with William in 1799, following the temporary breakdown of his artistic collaboration with Samuel Taylor Coleridge. In October that year the two poets, now reconciled, set out from Sockburn on a northern excursion which took them to Grasmere and led ultimately to Wordsworth's permanent association with the Lake District (Barker 2000, 239-247).

Coleridge returned to Sockburn ahead of Wordsworth in the early winter of 1799 with the intention of pursuing a romantic interest in Mary's sister, Sara, whom he named 'Asra' in his private diary (an anagram which conveniently distinguished her from his wife, also Sarah.) Sara's reaction to Coleridge's attentions is not recorded, but his infatuation persisted, bordering on an obsession in later years (ibid, 245). It has been suggested that Coleridge's poem 'Love', first published in the Morning Post on 21 December 1799, reflects this episode, and that the description of the 'armed man' in the third stanza refers to the knight's effigy in Conyers Chapel (Pope-Hennessy 1941).

She leant against the armed man,
The statue of the armed knight;
She stood and listened to my lay,
Amid the lingering light.[4]

According to their letters William and Dorothy departed Sockburn for the last time in December 1799 (Barker 2000, 247). The Hutchinsons left Sockburn in the following year to take up a farm at Brompton-by-Sawden, near Scarborough, a move forced upon them by rising rents (ibid, 258). The Hutchinsons' connection with Sockburn was not completely severed, however, as the family continued to regard All Saints' churchyard as their family cemetery for several more years (Appendix 3, memorial 22).

3.5 The new manor and park

The 'modern brick house' mentioned by Surtees (1823, 246) cannot have stood long after 1830, the date of Goodhall's engraving. In 1834 the whole township was said to consist of one very large farm, then in the occupation of Robert Dunn (Mackenzie & Ross 1834, 93), which suggests that only Sockburn Farm remained in operation; and

4 First published as *The introduction to the Tale of the Dar Ladie*. Reprinted with revisions in the second edition of Lyrical Ballards, 1800, under the title *Love* (Wordsworth and Coleridge 1800)

Figure 14. Sockburn Hall viewed from the south west

in that same year a new manor house was completed[5] to allow Sir William's third son, Henry Collingwood Blackett, formerly of Portman Street, London, to take up residence (VCH 1914, 57; D/sh H732 1833).

This new manor house, the present Sockburn Hall, stands overlooking the river on the eastern side of the peninsula, to the north of All Saint's Church (see Figures 2 and 14). It is built in an ornate neo-Jacobean style using local sandstone, set, at least in part, on brick foundations. The main building comprises a square block of two storeys

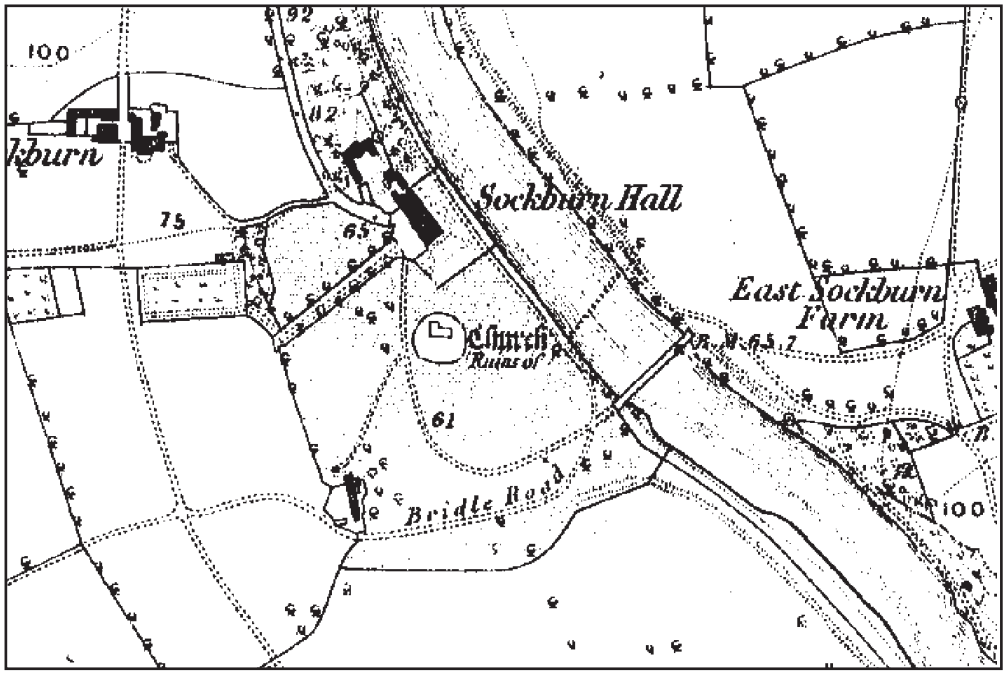


Figure 15. Sockburn as mapped at 1:10560 scale in 1855. Reproduced (not to scale) from the 1857 Ordnance Survey map

5 VCH North Yorks (1914, 57) states that the house was built in 1836, although a carved scroll above the porch carries the date 1834. The lead drain heads are cast with Henry Collingwood Blackett's intials.

plus attics, surrounding a central hall and staircase, with kitchens and service rooms extending to the north. Symmetrical window bays on the three main elevations make emphatic use of 16th- and 17th-century building motifs - tall stepped gables, pierced parapets and heavy square mouldings – an impression completed by octagonal triple-stack chimneys above. To the north of the service wing, within the walled domestic courtyard on the north side, are the former coach house and stables. The tithe map and apportionment for the manor and township of Sockburn, dated 1840, does not show this new house, nor indeed the older Sockburn Farm, but this lack of detail is merely a reflection of the simple pattern of ownership and tenure. At the time, all the land of the township, with the exception of a very small portion of glebe, was owned by Henry Collingwood Blackett and farmed exclusively by himself and Robert Dunn (DDR/EA/TTH/1/215).

The Blacketts' alterations to the Sockburn landscape extended well beyond the construction of the new hall. One of the more immediate changes concerned the adjacent church, which was closed in 1838 and deliberately reduced to something approaching its present ruinous appearance. In order to achieve this, glebe lands were exchanged with the holder of the advowson, the Master and Brethren of Sherburn Hospital (DDR/EA/TTH/1/215; EP/Soc 2/2), and a new church was constructed, still within the parish, but in Girsby township (Figure 2) on the other side of the river (VCH 1914, 453). A colourful local legend maintains that the destruction of the church was carried out at the wish of Henry's wife, Theophania, a devout Catholic who found the presence of an Anglican church on her doorstep intolerable (information from Frank Richardson, Lower Dinsdale Parish Council). A more likely explanation, however, is that the relocation of the church and the creation of a romantic ruin was simply an aspect of the development of the private park designed to complement the new hall. The earliest depiction of the park is provided by the first edition 6-inch map surveyed in 1855 (Ordnance Survey 1857). This map shows an area of shaded parkland, very similar in extent to the present pasture to the south of the hall (Figure 15). By this time the present driveway alongside Millhouse Wood to the north was well-established, so too the lime avenue to the west, and the paths and terraces around the southern and eastern sides of the hall. A curving path or carriageway passed through the park, skirting a small circular enclosure containing the ruined church, and leading towards a new bridge on the Tees alongside the traditional fording point known as the 'Sockburn Wath'.

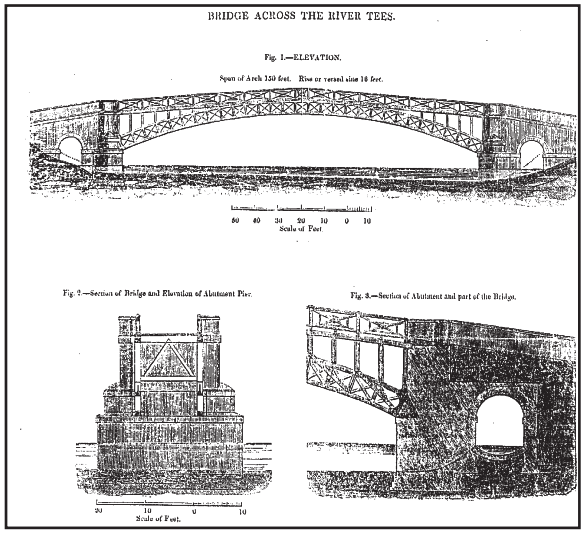


Figure 16. Elevation and details of Sockburn Bridge published in the Civil Engineer and Architect's Journal, May 1838

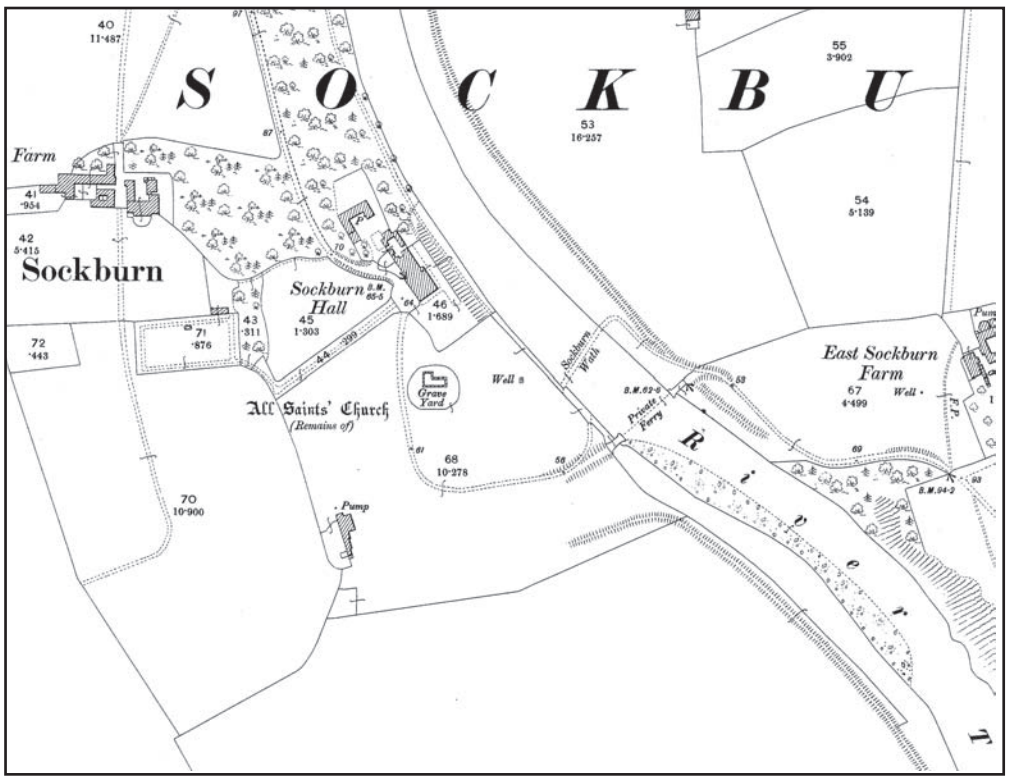


Figure 17. Sockburn as mapped at 25 inches to the mile in 1855 and revised in 1896. (Reproduced, at reduced scale, from the 1898 second edition Ordnance Survey map)

The construction of the new bridge is fully described with detailed illustrations in the *Civil Engineer and Architect's Journal* for 1838 (Figure 16). The work took place between the autumn of 1836 and the winter of 1837-8. Red sandstone for facing the massive abutments was quarried from the bed of the river, and decorative details, such as the tops of the parapet walls and 'pepperpot' terminals, were completed in pale limestone. Small archways within each abutment provided relief channels, but the river itself was spanned by a single arch, 150 feet (45.7m) across with a rise of 16 feet (4.9m) constructed in Baltic timber, probably fir, shipped from Memel (now Klaipeda in Lithuania) and infused with chemicals (Kyanized) to prevent decay. The tall abutments and elevated roadway were designed to minimise the risk of damage from floods or floating ice – a danger which was fully realised when part of the temporary staging for the bridge was swept away in February 1837. The planked and gravelled roadway was sufficient, according to the 1838 article, to afford Henry Collingwood Blackett and his tenantry more easy access to the main road from York to Newcastle (some three miles to the east) as well as to the towns of Northallerton, Yarm and Stockton on Tees and other neighbouring villages. It would also have allowed access to the new parish church at Girsby. The elaborate nature of the design, however, which required a London architect (William Hambley) and considerable expense (£1,200), suggests that the bridge was intended, perhaps first and foremost, to be a prominent feature of the new park. The central arch was destroyed in floods towards the end of the 19th century. The second edition 25- inch map revised in 1896 (Figure 17) shows a private ferry in operation between the surviving abutments (Ordnance Survey 1898). By the time this map was revised in 1912 (Figure 18) a narrow foot bridge had been re-established (Ordnance Survey 1914).

The 1857 Ordnance Survey map shows the line of a 'Bridle Road' approaching the

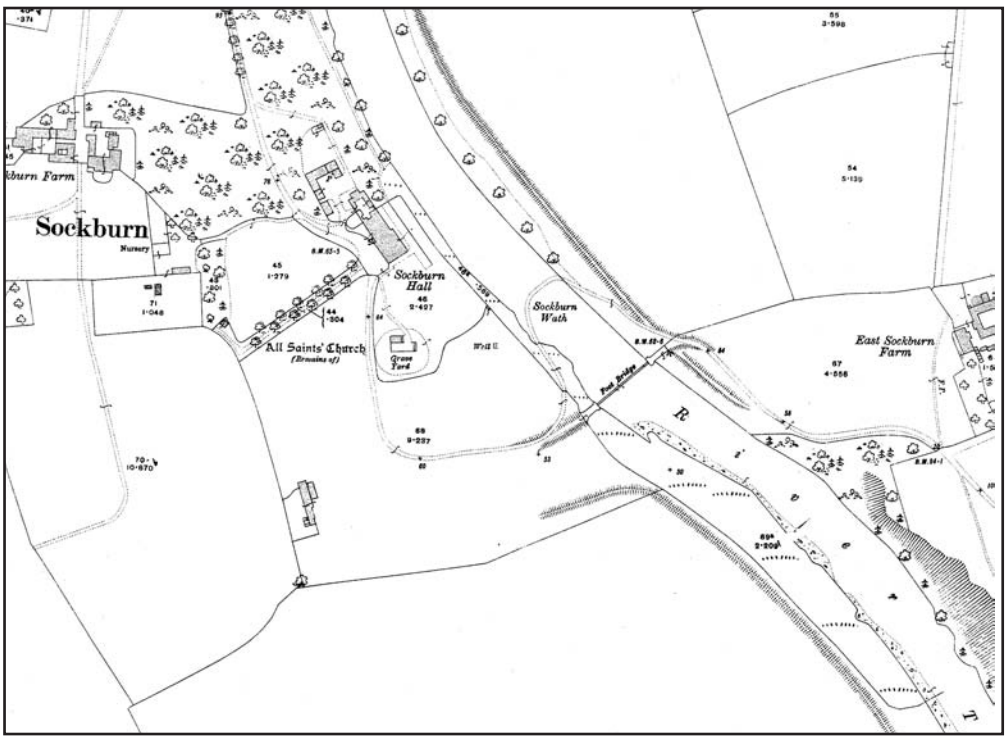


Figure 18. Extract from the third edition 25-inch map. Reproduced (not to scale) from the 1914 Ordnance Survey map

wath and bridge from the west, and another track converging from the north along the river bank. Public access through the park appears to have been actively discouraged, however. In 1868 a drawn-out dispute concerning the ancient right of way to the ford by the hall was taken to the Durham Assizes. The Darlington Highways Board won the case to allow public access, but shortly afterwards Theophania Blackett proposed the construction of a bridge, at her own expense, if the right of way could be transferred to a more northerly crossing point. This offer was accepted and a new bridge was built at Girsby in 1869 (Darlington and Stockton Times 1868; Evening Dispatch 1975).

The last feature of the parkland to be built - a ha-ha encompassing the churchyard and excluding grazing animals from the area around the hall - was created at some point between 1895 and 1912, the survey dates for the 2nd and 3rd editions of the Ordnance Survey map (Figures 17 and 18).

3.6 Recent history

Henry Collingwood Blackett, Justice of the Peace and former Lieutenant of the Life Guards (DDR/EA/TTH/1/215 and Appendix 3), died without issue in 1856 at the age of 47. His widow Theophania was still in residence together with her house keeper, lady's maid, house maid, kitchen maid, butler and page boy, when the census was taken in 1861, but four servants alone were recorded at the hall in 1871 (M9/1 3683 1861; M18/1 RG10/4879 1871). Theophania died in 1877 at the age of 74 and was buried with her husband in the churchyard at Sockburn (Appendix 3). The estate stayed in Blackett hands - the title having passed first to Henry's brother Edward, the 6th baronet, then to his son Sir Edward William Blackett (VCH 1914, 451). Successive editions of Kelly's local directory indicate relatively short tenancies at the hall by George Dixon (1879, 215), Edward Samuelson (1890, 286) and William Williamson (1910, 378), and by

1925 it appears to have been sold, perhaps with a portion of the surrounding farmland, to Stanley Miller Thompson (Kelly & Co 1925, 403; Gatheral Deeds 1950). Various members of the Blackett family retained a substantial interest at Sockburn until 1950, two years after Thompson's death, when the entire estate was consolidated in the hands of his widow, Wilhelmine (Gatheral Deeds 1950). In 1951 the whole estate, consisting of the hall, the home farm, East Sockburn Farm, Sockburn High Cottages and land totalling 934,619 acres was sold to the North England Steamship Company of Stockton on Tees for £41,000 (Gatheral Deeds 1951). This acquisition was clearly a speculative venture rather than an investment, since, on 3 June 1955, the entire estate was divided into a number of separate lots and offered for auction (U429 DIN U).

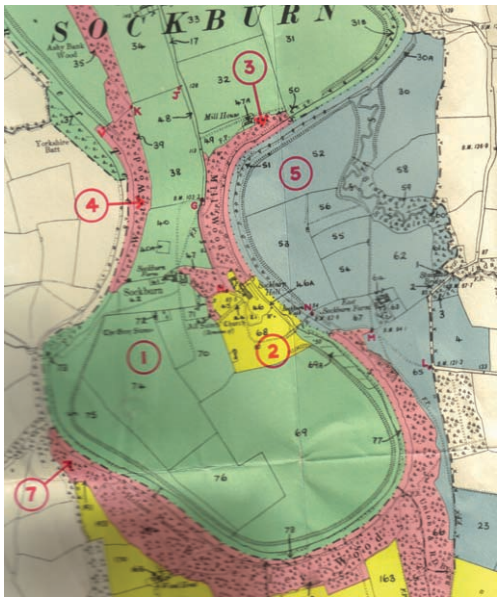


Figure 19. Extract from the Sockburn and Low Dinsdale Estate: Particulars, Plan and Conditions of Sale. Fryer, Webb & Irvine 30 June 1955. The area of the hall, church and adjacent pasture (Lot 2) is shaded yellow. Reproduction courtesy of Darlington Library

Lot No. 2, termed 'Sockburn Hall and Sockburn Piggeries' in the sale particulars (Figure 19), referred to '14.667 acres or thereabouts' and consisted of 'the hall and its garden ground, a stone-built cottage (presumably the coach house), two excellent ranges of farm buildings, a good field, and the picturesque remains of All Saints' Church, the whole offered with vacant possession' (ibid). The lot was bought by Thomas Burns (Stockton) Ltd, in what was evidently a business venture rather than a private purchase (Gatheral Deeds 1955). A counterpart of lease dated 16 February 1956 records a rental-purchase agreement by Colonel Richard Gatheral (timber merchant) and his wife Lucy covering:

'…all that mansion house called Sockburn hall with the Cottages outbuildings yards and pleasure grounds thereto belonging and lands or pieces or parcels of land covered with water river beds hereditaments and premises containing in the whole and area of 14.267 acres' (Gatheral Deeds 1956).

Thomas Burns Ltd went into liquidation in 1963 and the remainder of the lease was purchased outright in the name of Mrs R O Gatheral (Gatheral Deeds 1963). The property has remained in the ownership of the Gatheral family to the present day. The ruined church was formally declared redundant as a place of worship in 1969 when it was presented as a gift to the then Bishop of Durham. It is currently in the hands of the Durham Diocesan Board of Finance (Cramp and Wilson 2003, 2).

4. Description and interpretation of the field remains

The following section is based primarily on the results of the earthwork survey. This work has identified the locations of two, perhaps three, earlier houses – medieval and post-medieval predecessors of the present hall, surrounded by former garden compartments - and charted the impact of 19th–century parkland creation across this earlier landscape. The complete plan of these and other earthworks is shown on Figure 20. An interpreted version of this plan, labelled with the numbers and letters which identify the principal features described in the text below, is provided as Figure 21.

The results of the geophysical surveys provided and interpreted by GSB Prospection Ltd are reproduced here as Figures 22 (magnetic readings) and 23 (resistance readings) with the earthwork survey superimposed. As is evident from these illustrations, and from the geophysical survey report itself (GSB 2007), the most definitive readings simply replicate visible earthworks, and rarely contribute to an improved or modified interpretation. However, a small number of geophysical anomalies which bear no relation to the earthworks, and which may be of particular importance, are discussed in greater detail. GSB's feature numbers and letters are referred to below in inverted commas.

4.1 Early features

Aside from the pre-Conquest nave of All Saints' Church, the earliest clearly recognisable features within the survey area are a few low cultivation ridges oriented broadly east to west along the southern boundary of the park (**1**). Later ploughing and mechanised cultivation has levelled the fields beyond the park boundary; but soil-marks revealed by aerial photography (i.e. Figure 24) show an extensive former pattern of similarly aligned ridge and furrow across the southern part of the loop. The dating of ridge and furrow is problematic and far from precise. This method of cultivation is thought to have originated in some parts of the country as early as the 9th or 10th century (Brown and Foard 1998, 90-2), although in many cases a later, post-Conquest date would be considered more acceptable. The majority of other earthworks within the park share the broad alignment of these ridges, which would suggest that they reflect features which were contemporary in origin, or which developed subsequently, once the cultivation pattern had become an established feature in the local landscape. Contrasting orientations are, therefore, a matter of some interest since they could indicate features which pre-date the development of the open fields. Two slight platforms surveyed towards the centre of the park (**2**), and to the north (**3**), fall into this category. The latter (**3**) in particular, lies close to the church and shares a similar alignment which could signify an association. However, neither platform is accompanied by any convincing geophysical evidence for buried structural remains, and it is entirely possible that the southern example (**2**) owes its existence more to the development of the curving 19th-century carriageway which heads towards it before turning sharply east toward the bridge. Sections of a partial, possible enclosure indicated by the magnetic survey toward the centre of the park (Figure 22, '**H**') are similarly askew to the general

Figure 20. English Heritage earthwork survey plan
1:1000 scale

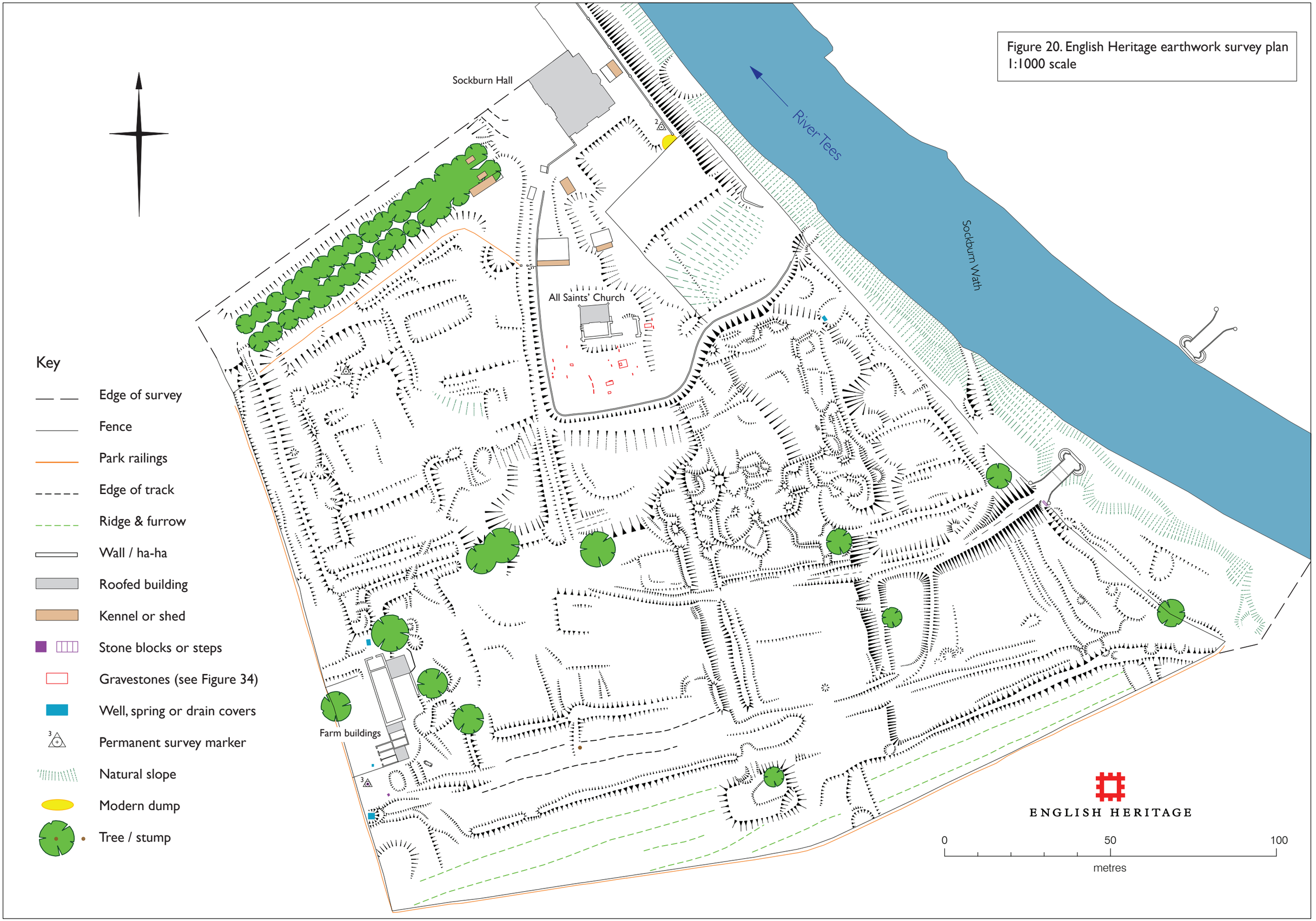


Figure 21. English Heritage earthwork survey plan: annotated and interpreted

Sockburn Hall

River Tees

Sockburn Wath

Former bridge span

All Saints' Church

H3

A

B

C

D

E

F

Farm buildings

Key

- Edge of survey
- Fence
- Edge of track
- Ridge & furrow
- Wall / ha-ha
- Roofed building
- Kennel or shed
- Stone blocks or steps
- Well, spring or drain covers
- 1 - 31 Features mentioned in the text
- House (site of)
- Enclosures mentioned in the text

ENGLISH HERITAGE

0 50 100

metres

Figure 22. English Heritage earthwork survey plan overlain by GSB Ltd's interpretation of the geophysical (magnetic) survey data

Key

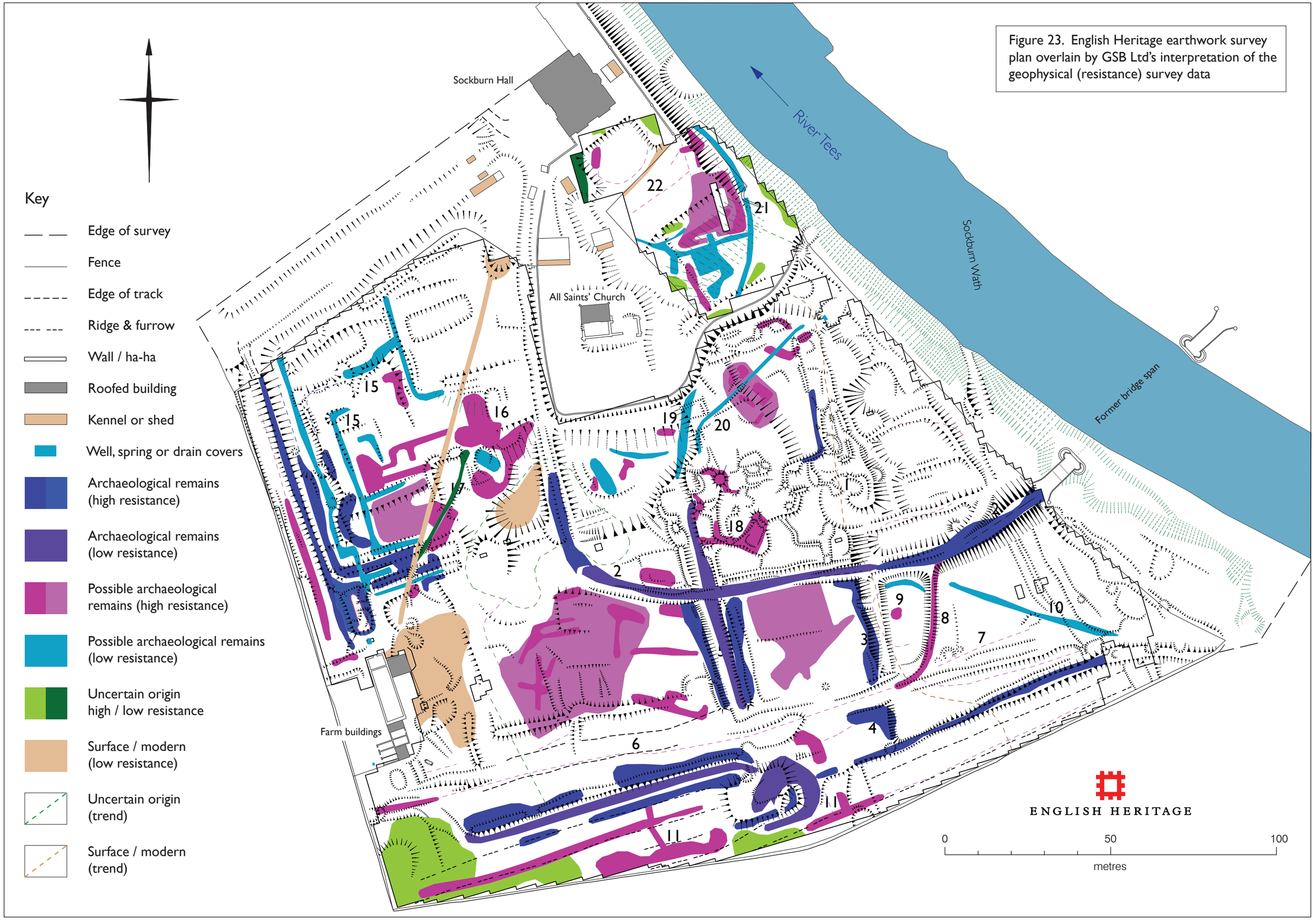
- Archaeological remains
- Possible archaeological remains
- Increased magnetic response
- Trend
- Ferrous / magnetic disturbance
- Edge of survey
- Fence
- Edge of track
- Ridge & furrow
- Wall / ha-ha
- Roofed building
- Kennel or shed
- Well, spring or drain covers

Sockburn Hall
All Saints' Church
River Tees
Sockburn Wath
Former bridge span
Farm buildings

ENGLISH HERITAGE

0 50 100
metres

Figure 23. English Heritage earthwork survey plan overlain by GSB Ltd's interpretation of the geophysical (resistance) survey data



orientation of the earthworks, as are a number of discrete linear anomalies noted a little further west (Figure 23, '**13**') and toward the south-west and south-east corners of the park (Figure 22, '**G**' and '**F**'; Figure 23, '**10**'). None of these is particularly well defined, however, nor susceptible to clear interpretation (GSB 2007, 3-5).

A very pronounced enclosure detected by magnetic survey just west of the centre of the park does share the alignment of nearby earthworks (Figure 22, '**J**') but, the locations of buried pipes (i.e. Figure 22, '**O**') aside, it is quite unusual for such strong geophysical readings to have no corresponding earthworks. The same is true of several linear features to the north-east of the church (Figure 22 '**T**' and '**S**'; Figure 23, '**21**'). It is possible that such features represent early activity masked by later developments, although the current evidence is far from conclusive (GSB 2007, 3-7).

To the west of the church, extending toward the western boundary of the park, substantial ditches and banks describe a rectangular enclosure measuring some 50m north to south by at least 30m east to west (**Enclosure A**). A short-lived residence for a member of the Blackett family is known to have stood here towards the beginning of the 19th century (see Section 4.3 below), but this alone is unlikely to account for the extent and variation of the earthworks in this area. It is quite probable that these banks and ditches existed within the formal gardens surrounding the Tudor mansion (see Section 4.2 below), but perhaps they originated earlier still. The position of the later Blackett house can be identified with some confidence, arranged around three sides of a small courtyard in the northern half of the enclosure (**House 3**). The widths

Figure 24. Aerial photograph taken in 1976 (MAL 1976) showing vestiges of ridge and furrow across the peninsula. The broad curving band across the ploughed fields just outside the park boundary is a natural feature, carved by the post-glacial river

of the ditches to the north, south and west are, however, completely out of character with the slightly gentrified 18th-century farmhouse suggested by Surtees' description of the Blackett residence (1823, 246). Furthermore, although the geophysical survey provides no verification, it is possible that the pond-like features **5** and **6** originally extended the alignment of the northern and southern arms. This would suggest the outline of a dry moat, aligned with the surrounding medieval fields and open towards the church – altogether a good candidate for the site of a medieval hall such as that described with a stables, dovecote and granary in 1431. Given the presence of stone in the eroded and broken banks on the north and east sides (**7** & **8**) this enclosure might even relate to Sir Christopher Conyers' licence to fortify his manor with a wall in 1470. But the evidence does not allow for any certainty. The earthworks and geophysical anomalies along the southern edge of the enclosure (**4**; Figure 22, '**L**' and Figure 23 '**16**') provide quite convincing evidence for small medieval garden compartments, but the position of the house, perhaps the first in the sequence of medieval and later halls at Sockburn, remains elusive – possibly masked by the development of the later garden, and by the Blacketts' decision to effectively re-occupy part of the enclosure in the 18th century. Since its precise location within Enclosure A remains conjectural, the site of 'House 1' is not labelled on Figure 21.

4.2 The post medieval mansion and gardens

A natural rise in the ground level, some 50m south of the church, is accentuated by a contorted pattern of scarps, hollows and mounds which evidently reflect the demolition of a substantial building (**House 2**). The geophysical survey of this area is obscured by the amount of localised ferrous/magnetic disturbance (GSB 2007, Figure 22, '**P**'), and the extent of later stone robbing has rendered the positions of individual rooms barely legible on the ground; nevertheless the earthworks do provide an broad impression of a building, the range about 40m in length, oriented from east to west. There is a suggestion of two broadly symmetrical bays or shallow wings projecting from the south side of this range, flanking a minor central protrusion, perhaps a raised doorway or porch. On the north side, a complicated area of minor scarps and banks indicates the position of a similar entranceway, perhaps slightly off-centre, between two corresponding bays.

A second, much narrower range (**9**) extends for approximately 35m northwards from the eastern corner of the main building. The wall foundations and robbing trenches here are slight compared to those of the principal range, suggesting a less substantial, perhaps single-storey, structure. Together these ranges form an 'L' shape to the south and east of a courtyard (**B**) which is approximately 40m square, and divided into two levels, east and west, by a broad and shallow scarp. Other fragmentary traces of buildings fringe the northern end of the courtyard, where they are truncated by the ha-ha. On the west side of the courtyard also there is a suggestion of a small rectangular building, which has been partly removed by the later quarrying (**10**) to the south of the church.

Surtees (1823, 246) saw this area as the place where the house of the Conyers had

stood in the late 17th century, which is very plausible. Taken together, the earthworks describe a substantial house consistent with this period - a main east-west building attached to a lesser range, perhaps an arrangement of kitchens and service buildings, with other outbuildings and walls surrounding a courtyard to the north. During the survey four green-glazed pottery sherds were found at the point where the ha-ha ditch cuts through the northerly part of this courtyard. These came from large storage jars dating from the late 16th or 17th century, similar to examples found in Durham (Ellison 1993; information from Jenny Vaughan). Their presence supports both the probable date and likely domestic function of buildings in this area. Extensive use of stone in the building is evident in the frequent outcrops of dark red-brown sandstone across the main east-west range, representing either in-situ foundations or demolition material. Fragments of tile and brick are also to be seen in molehills, and where the soil is exposed around the roots of trees and bushes.

The site of **House 2** is surrounded by visible remains of gardens, generally arranged in a regular, geometric pattern which is equally consistent with a later 16th- or 17th-century date. A terraced garden compartment (**C**) matching the width of the main east-west range is separated from the house platform by a low bank and carried some 60m southwards by two clearly defined boundary features: in the east, by a pronounced scarp falling by some 1.4m in the direction of the river, and to the west, by a 7m wide hollow flanked by low banks. The terrace is largely featureless, except where it is interrupted by the routes of later tracks and carriageways; although a slight east-west scarp and a small depression could indicate a former partition and the former location of a central, eye-catching feature, such as a statue. The geophysical surveys suggest traces of further garden partitions (Figure 22; GSB 2007, 3) and a broad zone of compacted earth which presumably relates either to the original levelling of the compartment, or its subsequent use (Figure 23; GSB 2007, 5). A slight and narrow terrace, perhaps a raised path, runs along inside the bank on the western side of this compartment (**11**) and there is a slight indication that it turned east across the middle of the compartment. A declivity in the scarp to the east (**12**) could mark the former position of steps descending to the lower grounds by the river. The most pronounced feature, however, is a large rectangular mound (**13**) about 1m in height with an asymmetrical flattened summit, located at the south western corner of the compartment. A prospect mound in such a location, perhaps surmounted by a small arbour or belvedere, would have provided a visual focus as well as viewpoint across the garden and towards the house. Its position follows in the late medieval tradition of corner mounts and has exact parallels in late 16th century gardens such as Chipping Campden in Gloucestershire and Holdenby in Northamptonshire (Everson 1989; Taigel & Williamson 1993, 30-47). The mound is clearly aligned with the broad hollow (**14**), an approach which leads directly to a central ramp on the northern side, most probably the foundation of a flight of steps.

Traces of a stone wall survive in the discontinuous bank along the western side of the approach to the mound, which divides garden **C** from a much larger but less

well-defined garden compartment to the west (**D**). The southern boundary of this western compartment is marked by a narrow bank (**15**), also containing traces of stone and created on top of a former cultivation ridge in a clear demonstration that the layout of the garden is at least partly conditioned by the alignment, and perhaps by the continued use of the surrounding medieval fields. A broad causeway, with a pronounced downward step, links this compartment with the area of the possible earlier house (**House 1**) to the north, confirming that enclosure **A** was also drawn into the later garden design. Slight, inward-facing scarps along the boundary between the two compartments (**16**) suggest that the northern arm of **D** may have been framed by a narrow terraced walkway. This could have been positioned to extend from the northern elevation of **House 2**, although the relationship between the two has been obscured by later earth moving (**10**). The western arm of compartment **D** is largely masked by later farm buildings but sufficient traces remain, both north and south, to show that the row is precisely positioned on, and aligned with, the earlier boundary. The boundary earthworks immediately north of the row are conflated with those arising from activities related to later farming activity, yet there is still an impression of a raised corner platform with an internal terrace (**17**). To the south, the line of the boundary is broken through by tracks and hollows reflecting later farm access routes and the bridle way shown in this area on the early Ordnance Survey map (Figure 15). This bridleway (**18**) continues across the southern margins of compartment **D**, flanking the southern wall and thereby also perpetuating, to some degree, the earlier alignment of the ridge and furrow. The western part of the interior of compartment **D** is heavily disturbed by animal movements, feed bins locations, muck heaps and other activities related to the use of the agricultural buildings. To the east the erosion is less severe, and there are traces of internal garden arrangements. A low and rather trampled bank (**19**) combined with a scarp to the north (**20**) could represent a subdivision of this compartment. If so, then this is likely to have been a later alteration, since the bank overlies the southerly of two platforms on the eastern boundary which appear to have been symmetrical features or viewpoints within the wider compartment (**21** & **22**). Some slight, misaligned and buried features to the north of the southern bank could reflect activities preceding the garden, as mentioned above (**3**; Figure 22, '**H**' & '**J**'; see Section 4.1); other minor scarps and fragmentary hollows suggest the direction, but not the extent, of paths and internal partitions.

A series of prominent scarps form a near continuous north-south boundary separating the house platform (**House 2**) and its terraced garden to the south (**C**) from the lower grounds towards the river. This lower area is divided into a number of irregular banked enclosures. The largest of these, in the south-eastern corner of the pasture (**E**) may have been a further pleasure ground, connected to the upper terrace by an inclined path or flight of steps (**12**) - albeit one that might have been liable to seasonal floods. The southern enclosure boundary is another enhanced medieval cultivation ridge (**23**), subsequently incorporated into a levee surrounding the fields in the southern part of the Sockburn loop (Ordnance Survey 1857). Slight hollows and scarps alongside the fence to the south of the bridge suggest attempts to contain and protect this lower

garden area from the river, but they also include the parallel strands of a trackway (**24**) which led north towards the Sockburn Wath. The trackway was curtailed by the construction of the bridge ramp (**25**) across the garden compartment, and by the imposition of the levy extension to the south. A further trackway, the continuation of the bridleway (**18**), crosses the southern part of the enclosure, where it appears to have converged with the earlier wath trackways before being diverted to join the ramp to the later bridge.

A small, subdivided enclosure (**F**) fills the available space between the eastern end of the main house platform and the river scarp. A private garden is implied by the location and by the degree of elaboration evident in the terraces, with central projections, which descend from the house. In contrast, the less formal arrangement of minor terraces and partial enclosures to the north (**26**) are best interpreted as kitchen gardens conveniently situated to the rear of the service wing. At the narrowest point between the service range and the river scarp a spring issues into a boggy area of ground, almost forming a pond (**27**), The spring issues from a low vaulted stone archway (Figure 25) which, in the absence of any means to contain or utilise the water, appears to have been constructed to preserve the spring from the trampling of parkland stock. It may, however, conceal evidence for an earlier well-head in this location. The resistance survey suggests the possibility of a buried drainage ditch leading in the general direction of this outlet (GSB 2007, 6; Figure 23, '**20**'), but the earthwork evidence shows that this is no more than the compressed surface of a modern vehicle track which cuts diagonally across the earthworks in the centre of the courtyard (**B**).

Figure 25. The spring-head vault (feature 27) located between the courtyard and the river

The Conyers' mansion (**House 2**) must have been approached by a substantial driveway, but such a feature is not visible in within the earthworks to the south or west. Perhaps the approach came down the peninsula from the north. Such a route would have been constrained between the extent of the former churchyard – perhaps the east-facing scarp just beyond the end of the chancel - and the upper edge of the natural slope towards the river, which would place the entrance toward the western end of the northern courtyard wall. This area is heavily disrupted by the later ha-ha, and to a lesser degree by the tracks of modern farm vehicles, but a single slight scarp (**28**) does hint at the continuation of such a route onto the upper courtyard level in front of the house.

4.3 The minor Blackett house

The date and circumstances by which the manor house of the Conyers came to be demolished is unknown. It was certainly standing during Dugdale's visit in 1666, and presumably it still stood when the manor was purchased by Sir William Blackett in 1682. However, it was nothing more than a distant memory when Surtees wrote his county history in 1823. In its place Surtees (1823, 246) mentions, rather disparagingly, a 'modern brick house, better and worse than a farmhold' which was built as a residence of a younger son of the Blackett family. This appears to be illustrated as a small cluster of buildings somewhat to the west of the church in the accompanying engraving (see Figure 26).

In keeping with Surtees' description, the 'farmhold' does not appear to have been a particularly imposing arrangement. Two connected ranges set at a right angle are shown from this perspective - the northern range taller and with an uneven roofline implying more than one phase of construction. This impression accords with the earthwork evidence within the north west corner of the large enclosure (**A**), where there are clear indications of a range of buildings set around three sides of a narrow rectangular courtyard open to the south (**House 3**). It is possible that the remnants of stone walls noted within the adjacent banks (**7**, **8** and Figure 22, '**K**') and considered potentially medieval in origin, could instead relate to these buildings. However, they appear to have been pierced and damaged by this later period of occupation, and the overall impression - that of a residence which was 'modern' in 1823 and almost certainly demolished around the time of the construction of the new hall in 1834 - is most unlikely to have accounted for the totality of time-worn ditches, banks and terraces within and around the wider enclosure in which it was located.

It is possible that the bridleway noted on the 1857 Ordnance Survey map (Figure 15) and whose route is visible across the southern edge of the survey area (**18**), had come into existence by this time in order to increase agricultural movement within the peninsula and foster greater links with East Sockburn Farm on the far bank of the Tees. It is most unlikely that such a path would have been carved through the banks and scarps of the southern gardens during the lifetime of the earlier mansion.

Figure 26: Detail of the buildings to the west of the church, taken from the 1830 engraving published in Surtees' county history (see also Figure 11)

4.4 The 19th-century hall and grounds

In 1834 the new residence for Henry Collingwood Blackett, the neo-Jacobean country house located to the north of the church, was constructed, heralding a new phase in the treatment of the adjacent landscape.

Various landscaping works were undertaken to enhance the hall's immediate riverside setting. A long terrace was constructed to the rear (east) of the hall, and the steep natural bank below the terrace wall modified to provide a path, parallel to the terrace, about half-way down the slope. The 1857 Ordnance Survey map (see Figure 15) shows this lower path as part of a much longer route approaching the hall from the north along the river's edge, and continuing southward as far as the ford and bridge where traces of the track can see be seen flanking the modern fence line. The 1898 Ordnance Survey editions, however, shows this path brought to an abrupt halt a short distance south of the house (Figure 17). This section was evidently transformed into a lower ornamental terrace, set below a shallow rubble retaining wall and terminating in an alcove probably intended for a garden seat (**29**). To the south of the hall a shallow rectangular terrace matches the width of the building. The shape and position indicates a desire to create an appropriate garden setting for the revival architecture (not dissimilar to the relationship between **House 2** and garden **C**) and the precision with which the area was levelled suggests use as a lawn or a bowling green (or perhaps later a croquet court) rather than an area of planting. A slight scarp (**30**) located further to the south of the new hall and broadly parallel with this terrace, indicates the line of a former boundary, shown on the 1857 and 1898 Ordnance Survey maps (Figures 15 and 17) along the top of a natural slope leading down towards the river. This boundary prevented animals from straying close to the house prior to the introduction of the ha-ha. It was all of one piece with the wider park pale – whose iron railings still stand in various states of repair elsewhere around the perimeter (see Figure 20).

Figure 27. The western bridge abutment viewed from the south. (© C J Dunn)

The massive abutments of the bridge constructed to the south of the house in 1837-8 still stand, heavily overgrown, on either side of the river (Figure 27). Of the original timber span, lost to floods in the late 19th century, only the paired cast iron mounting plates now remain, attached to the inner faces of the abutments. Iron stanchions driven into the carriageway of the west abutment, and fragments of steel cable nearby, reflect the former presence of the narrow suspended footbridge depicted on the 1914 Ordnance Survey map (see Figure 18 and Sections 3.5 and 4.5).

The bridge was approached by a carriageway which is shown on the early Ordnance Survey maps and remains plainly visible on the ground. This follows a broad loop from Sockburn hall, skirting to the west of the church and passing through the garden compartments (**C**, **D** and **E**) south of the old manor house (**House 2**). A precisely levelled causeway, with evidence of a central track, was constructed to take the carriageway across the area of the putative former pond (5) to south west of the churchyard, perhaps necessitating the removal of soil from a wider area to the east (**10**). The final approach to the bridge was made by cutting through the scarp on the eastern side of compartment **C** and creating a substantial earthen ramp rising across compartment **E** to meet the abutment. This latter feature would have required considerable quantities of material, possibly brought along the carriageway from the excavated area to the north (**10**), or taken from eastern side of the former house platform where the effects of later quarrying are particularly noticeable.

The traditional ford, the wath, evidently continued in use after the construction of the bridge, although mainly, one presumes, for the movement of stock. The 1857 Ordnance Survey map, created during the lifetime of the timber span, shows the cross-peninsula bridleway (**18**) curving northwards across the bridge approach and onwards to the wath (Figure 15) – a route matched by narrow earthwork spurs straddling the main ramp (**25**). Toward the end of the century, after the timber bridge was lost, the wath must have resumed its role as the principal crossing for horse-drawn vehicles. According to the 1898 Ordnance Survey map (Figure 17), the bridleway had ceased to function (a consequence of Theophania's legal actions in 1868) but the northern spur from the bridge ramp was retained to link the carriageway to the wath. The earthwork evidence and the early Ordnance Survey maps point to a single, unchanging approach to the wath on the western bank, but the route across and the eastern approach has been subject to change. The 1857 and 1898 maps show the ford taking the shortest route from bank to bank. The 1914 edition depicts the wath as a sweeping downstream curve (Figure 18), while the modern crossing (Figure 21) follows a straight route at an oblique angle, perhaps one better suited to the needs of modern farm vehicles. Taking all these routes together, it is clear that the wath is not limited to a single narrow crossing, but utilises a broad band where the river channel is shallow (in dry weather) and the bed is firm.

In 1838, the same year in which the bridge was completed, All Saints' Church was selectively demolished. The surviving elements of the church are described above (Sections 3.1- 3.2). The Conyers Chapel, a significant symbol of the tradition of lordship

at Sockburn, was retained together with fragments of the nave and chancel, providing a picturesque object of interest within the park. Curiously, and perhaps deliberately, the removal of the north and south chancel walls introduced a narrow line of sight at ground level between the new hall and the prospect mound (**13**) at the south of the Tudor/Jacobean gardens. It is perhaps too speculative to suggest that Henry Collingwood Blackett deliberately set out to create a link between his neo-Jacobean hall and the gardens of its predecessor, or that the mound once more supported some form of eye-catcher. But the line of sight certainly exists, and it may be no coincidence that the scarp left by the reduction of the old building platform (**House 2**) on the line of the garden avenue (**14**) avenue serves to further enhance this view. A copper beech on the mound is estimated to be between 50 and 100 years old. Other parkland trees: oaks, chestnuts and walnuts - some well in excess of 100 years of age - stand elsewhere across the park (see Figure 20).

An angular stone wall might have enclosed the churchyard in the early 19th century (see Section 3.3 and Figure 10), in which case its demolition could have resulted in the slight scarps which appear to mark former limits of the graveyard immediately north and east of the church. The 1857 and 1898 Ordnance Survey maps (Figures 15 and 17) simply depict the graveyard as a small circular enclosure, perhaps no more than the 'simple fence' recorded in 1894 (Hodges 1894, 69). This would have allowed a relatively open view into the park, but a completely unimpeded view was subsequently created by the introduction of a ha-ha prior to 1912 - the survey date for the 1914 Ordnance Survey map (Figure 18). The ha-ha consists of a brick wall, strengthened by shallow buttresses and capped by a limestone pediment, set within a sharply defined ditch. The 1914 map shows that it originally extended north to meet the short arcade at the south east corner of the hall, but this final section was later buried leaving only a slight indentation and a line of coping stones to mark its position (Figure 14). This adjustment to the ha-ha is matched by the southward relocation of the park gate and corresponding section of park railings to their present positions. The re-setting of the gate piers to a narrower opening presumably indicates that wheeled vehicles were no longer expected to take this route following the demise of the original bridge. South of the repositioned gate the ha-ha continues to serve as a fully functional barrier to grazing animals. It originally continued east as far as the river bank, but the final few metres have been partly demolished and levelled to provide a modern vehicle access.

The avenue aligned with the main doorway on the west side of the hall appears on the 1857 map and was probably planted during the hall's construction in 1834 or shortly after its completion. It linked the hall with the walled garden of Sockburn Farm and provided the southern boundary of an ornate garden created immediately to the north. Neither of these gardens is included in the present study.

The 19th-century farm buildings

The row of farm buildings near the south-western corner of the park (Figures 21 and 28) exhibits many phases of extension and adaptation, and it is difficult to determine exactly when the earliest parts were built. The 1857 map provides the earliest

Figure 28. The agricultural buildings viewed from the north-west (© C J Dunn)

depiction of these buildings (Figure 15). This shows the main north-south range and the eastward extension at its northern end much as they now stand, although a small detached structure shown slightly to the south-west is now absent. The main range is a large byre, 16m in length, with a small separate room at the northern end. The eastward extension appears also to have served a similar function, perhaps a byre or a stable. Both are constructed in random rubble, but the two main doorways are far more ornate. The narrow doorway at the north end of the main range and the wider entrance to the stable or byre to the east are each framed by four-centred archways carved in local red and pale yellow sandstone (Figure 29). Cramp and Wilson (2003, 3) suggest that these doorways might have been salvaged from an earlier building, and reused in their present location. However, whilst this may be true of the general

Figure 29. The agricultural buildings viewed from the north east showing the ornate doorways facing north (narrow) and east (wide). (© C J Dunn)

building stone, the arches show no signs of the damage that would result from such a process, and instead demonstrate a quality of construction, matched by the coping along the gables above, which is entirely in keeping with the stonework of the new hall. Incongruous though they may first appear, these doorways are perfectly acceptable examples of the neo-Jacobean architecture which the Blacketts used to such great effect for the hall itself - indeed the porch above the main doorway to the hall uses exactly the same form of arch. It seems probable, therefore, that the row was either constructed or significantly enhanced in the early 19th century in order to provide a balance of scenic and practical benefits – as an eye-catcher facing the hall and repeating its architectural motifs, and as a shelter for the grazing animals required to maintain the character and function of the park.

The row is surrounded by patterns of wear, areas of dumped material and traces of small enclosures, and the oldest, stone-built, parts of the long range contain numerous blocked and altered openings - all indications of prolonged and varied use. The park boundary formerly curved inwards to the south of the row, where the bridle way (**18**) entered the park (Figures 15 and 17), suggesting that these buildings remained accessible from the farmland to the west up to the end of the century. A small railed enclosure still occupies the space between the row and the western park boundary, but another enclosure, shown at the south-west corner of the park on the 1898 map (Figure 17), is now only visible as a slight earthwork (**31**). The row was extended in several stages southwards towards the end of the 19th century, adding further brick-built store rooms and pigsties, with lofts above, and terminating in a 'poultiggery' - a piggery with hen-houses above (Lake & Edwards 2006, 63, 70) - complete with a chimney and a fireplace for boiling swill (Figure 30). Later adaptations, toward the middle of the 20th century, expanded the use of the row as a piggery (see Section 4.5 below).

The supply of water to the farm buildings was initially provided by pump (Figure 15)

Figure 30. The brick-built extension, pigsties and 'poultiggery' at the southern end of the farm buildings (© C J Dunn)

situated just north of the row, now marked by a boulder-capped shaft. The later supply was brought across the park from the direction of the hall in a buried pipe, the course of which is clearly visible in the geophysical survey results (Figure 22, '**O**', Figure 23: un-labelled anomalies) following a similar alignment to a narrow path worn through the earthworks (**32**; Figure 23, '**17**'). This supply also feeds a trough located in a semi-circular animal scrape alongside the repositioned northern boundary of the park and a further trough situated on the western boundary a little to the south of the farm buildings. An earlier, now redundant beast pond, perhaps only fed by ground water or rainfall, is marked by a shallow semi-circular hollow positioned mid-way along the southern park boundary.

4.5 Modern elements

There have been very few modern alterations to the setting of Sockburn Hall. The row of farm buildings continued to evolve. At the time of the estate sale in 1955 it was divided into various store houses, hunter and loose boxes, and a workshop, but its principal use (reflected in the lot title – 'Sockburn Hall and Sockburn Piggeries') was for rearing pigs (U429 DIN U). By this time the interior of the main north-south byre had been lined in brick, and divided into a series of pens using low walls and galvanised pipework. A separate room had been created by the addition of a cross wall near the northern end of the byre. This housed a large header tank (now fallen amidst the collapsed roof material) which provided pressure to a system for irrigating and washing out the pens. The entire row has since become derelict and only parts remain roofed.

The suspended footbridge which was placed between the old bridge abutments prior to 1912 was repaired on at least one occasion after 1956 (information from Mary Gatheral and Laura Geary). It is thought to have finally collapsed some 20 years later, and it was certainly no longer present when the site was photographed from the air in 1990 (OS 1990). The wath remains in use today for driving stock across the river.

The only recent additions to the grounds are wooden kennels to the south and east of the hall (Figures 14 and 21). The hall has deteriorated over a number of years, to the point where it has recently become uninhabitable and classed as a 'Building at Risk' (English Heritage 2007, 8). Several options of the restoration of the hall are currently under consideration by the owners. The ruined church has also suffered from erosion and neglect. It is likewise on the 'at Risk' register (ibid, 7) although a certain amount of vital consolidation and repair work has taken place under the direction of the Diocesan Board and English Heritage since 2005. The present concern is to improve the presentation and security of the Viking sculptured stones contained within the chapel.

5. Discussion

An Anglian minster?

The earliest references to Sockburn are those contained in the Anglo-Saxon Chronicles and the later writings of Symeon of Durham, reporting the consecrations of Higbald as bishop of Lindisfarne in 780-1 and of Eanbald I, as archbishop of York in 796. It has been suggested that the pre-Viking monastery recorded at *Sochasburg* by Symeon need not have been located at Sockburn, as the site has yet to yield any conclusive physical evidence for activity earlier than the late 9th century, and its isolated position contrasts with the coastal and inland 'zones' into which most of the proven early monastic sites of the county are clustered (Stocker 2000, 203; Cambridge 1984, 69). The Sockburn place-name is, however, unique in the North East of England, so an association with *Sochasburg*, and other variants of the name by Symeon and in the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle (*Soccabyrig, Socceburg*), does appear reasonably secure. Furthermore, the Sockburn peninsula exhibits many characteristics commonly associated with the location of early church communities. As Blair (2005, 189-94) has noted, landscape was a key feature of the early Christian vernacular, perhaps more so than architecture, and churches were frequently sited to capitalise on the special qualities of places – especially liminal places – which enabled them to be both in the world and yet not quite of it. Peninsulas formed by the confluence of rivers were especially popular, providing the fundamental liturgical requirement for enclosure, and yet also remaining accessible (ibid 193). The island-like toe of the Sockburn peninsula would have been an eminently suitable location for such a community – apparently isolated from the world by the local topography, yet extremely well connected by the Tees itself and, via the Sockburn Wath, to the nearby Roman road between York and Durham.

If we accept the identification of Sockburn as the location of these episcopal consecrations then we must also accept that a significant church, one suited to such notable events, must have existed here. Such a church might have been established within a personal estate - Socca's manor or fortified place (Watts 2002, 115) – but its pre-Conquest associations suggest that it may have risen to the status of a 'minster' - a category that covers a wide range of senior churches and their estates, monastic in character, but not restricted to fully-enclosed, contemplative and highly regulated communities such as Wearmouth-Jarrow or Abingdon (Blair 2005, 3-4). A religious community of this nature in the 8th century would typically have included two or more churches, probably aligned on an east-west axis, providing the focus for a wider arrangement of dwellings and other domestic buildings set within a precinct (ibid 199-201). The ruins of All Saints' Church - sited on a local eminence above a river - occupy a typical location for the principal church in such an arrangement (ibid 193). It is also worth noting that the church is aligned with the spring which now issues through the stone vault some 55m to the east. Ritual associations with springs and wells are known from the pre-Conquest period, and whilst we cannot know if the spring here was ever considered holy, the arrangement of church and water source is remarkably similar to those recorded at the late Anglo-Saxon churches of Barton-upon-Humber,

Lincolnshire, and Stevington, Bedfordshire (ibid 378-9).

Although the small chancel revealed by Knowles' excavation in 1900 cannot be earlier than the late 10th century, the standing remains of the nave could be considerably older. The nave might even be contemporary with a small architectural fragment found amongst the sculptures which has been tentatively dated to the pre-Viking period (Cramp & Wilson 2003, 4; Cramp 1984 part 1, 144; and Appendix 1, 22). However, in the absence of clearly dateable elements such as a door or window opening, and without further excavations, the precise age of the nave is impossible to tie down. It might be as early as the 8th century, and could therefore have played a part in the events of 780-1 and 796. Alternatively, given the monastic tendency to rebuild in the same spot and on the same alignment, even if the standing nave is as late as the 9th century it could still preserve the position and alignment of an original timber church, in similar fashion to examples excavated at Wharram Percy in North Yorkshire, Repton in Derbyshire or Rivenhall in Essex (Blair 2005 208, 390). Recent studies have also shown that a surprising degree of continuity in the development of church sites may even have prevailed in the very different circumstances following the establishment of Scandinavian lordship (ibid, 311-13). If the nave was indeed part of an early minster, or a direct replacement for an earlier building, then the topography dictates that it must have lain very close to the eastern end of any east-west church alignment. Sadly, neither the earthwork survey nor the geophysical survey was able to provide proof that the present church marks the end of such a row. The paucity of aligned earthworks to the west of the church can be explained by the masking effects of later occupation, and similar considerations may apply to the geophysical survey results (GSB 2007, 7); but it is nevertheless disappointing that the sum total of aligned features in this area (Figure 21, **3**, and some vague suggestions north of '**M**', Figure 22) fall far short of the distinctive signatures of timber structures or compounds. Minster churches were invariably accompanied by burial grounds, and if the nave of All Saints' is any guide, these might be expected to coincide with (and to have been significantly disturbed by) the later churchyard. The churchyard itself was excluded from the geophysical survey, but a cluster of small anomalies immediately to the south (Figure 22) could reflect the somewhat wider extent of an early cemetery, or indeed that of the Anglo-Scandinavian or post-Conquest periods. The activities of a minster would also have extended over quite a wide area beyond the churches, perhaps including subsidiary chapels or oratories, as well as dwellings, workshops, paddocks and the other paraphernalia of a permanent and well-to-do community operating within rural trading economy (Blair 2005, 196-204). The magnetic survey results do suggest the presence of one such enclosure, located about 50m to the south of the church and sharing the alignment of the nave[6] (Figure 22, '**H**'). Other results (i.e. Figure 22, '**J**'; Figure 19, '**13**') may also indicate early enclosures or buildings, although these interpretations are far from conclusive.

6 According to the most recent Ordnance Survey 1:2500 map (Mastermap) the nave is aligned precisely east-west on the modern grid. The present survey shows this to be incorrect, and that the true orientation is about 5 degrees away from this axis – i.e. the eastern end tilted slightly to the north – an alignment closely matched by magnetic survey feature **H**.

Scandinavian lordship

Sockburn disappears from the chronicles at the end of the 8th century, not to re-emerge in documentary form until about the year 1000 following a period of immense political and social upheaval. In the wake of sporadic Viking raids and civil war within Northumbria, the turmoil intensified with the capture of York by the Viking Great Army in 866, and continued through the remainder of this century and the first half of the next as southern Northumbria (Deira) fell under the control of Danish then Hiberno-Norse warriors. These changes in lordship, however, need not have been comprehensively disruptive to the Church. We have no information related directly to Sockburn, but modern scholarship suggests that many churches maintained at least a low level of continuity through these turbulent times, reflecting a rapid process of acceptance and conversion as the new lords sought to acquire status and legitimacy (i.e. Barrow 2000; Hadley 2000; Blair 2005 292-323). Continuity, however, does not mean a complete absence of change. The estate to which the church at Sockburn formerly belonged is likely to have been overthrown, and the community, if it survived, would have operated in very different ways under Scandinavian patronage. This change is most apparent in the remarkable assemblage of sculptured stones residing at the church.

In the pre-Viking Anglian tradition religious sculpture was mainly used to decorate large crosses serving as liturgical stations near the more important churches and monasteries. Sculptured crosses as individual burial markers, and indeed burial covers in general, are rare and, on the basis of present evidence, only used for the resting places of saints and highly regarded members of the religious community. The sculpture which emerged under Scandinavian control in 10th-century Deira consisted mainly of small crosses and grave covers, and these, in a complete departure from earlier usage, appear to commemorate the individual burials of members of a secular elite as they placed their authoritative stamp on society (Lang 1972, 248; Cramp and Wilson 2003). Stocker (2000) goes a step further, using the distribution of such monuments to argue for the presence of a second wave of important individuals, appearing alongside an established Anglo-Scandinavian aristocracy across Yorkshire and Lincolnshire in the early to mid 10th century. His model implies that abnormal concentrations of memorial stones, as at Sockburn, go beyond the need to demonstrate the foundation of a new local dynasty at a particular church. Instead, such concentrations indicate the presence of fresh arrivals, Hiberno-Norse in origin or in cultural affiliation (given the sculptural styles) either adopting existing churches in which to bury their dead or establishing new ones for this purpose. In each case Stocker postulates a relationship between a church with an exceptional number of 10th-century memorials, and a market place. The new arrivals were, in his view, part of a mobile merchant elite, attracted by urban centres such as York and Lincoln, but equally content to establish themselves at beach markets alongside other convenient moorings or strands. Stocker's most notable Yorkshire examples are at York itself, Whitby, Brompton by Allerton, Stanwick, Lythe, along the Tees at Yarm and, by virtue of its inclusion in the Viking-controlled Wapentake of Sadberg, at Sockburn. Although the Sockburn loop is some distance upstream

from the tidal reaches the Tees (at Yarm) it would have been navigable to this point, and it is worth noting, in support of Stocker's argument, that a long shingle beach did indeed exist on the inside of the loop barely 100m below the church as recently as 1896 (Ordnance Survey 1898). The wath (ford) at Sockburn could have provided a further inducement for a market in this location.

Whether a settled aristocracy or a trader elite were responsible for the exceptional number of Viking sculptured stones at Sockburn, it is clear that a high status cemetery extended around the site of the church in the 10th and early 11th centuries. The patrons of the monuments, whoever they were, could certainly command the services of skilled carvers, fluent in Scandinavian styles, but equally at home in the earlier Anglian tradition, and the presence of several rough-outs or unfinished cross-shaft fragments could even suggest that a workshop was established here for a time (Cramp 1984 part 1, 4, 35,139; Cramp & Wilson 2003). The imagery is of high quality and includes a remarkable series of scenes depicting characters and episodes from Scandinavian mythology as well as Christian symbols (see Figure 31). The complex merger of pagan and Christian imagery in this period is fully discussed elsewhere (Abrams 2000, 136-153; Cramp 1984 part 1; Lang 1972). Simply put, it appears to reflect the convergence of two cultures as the new rulers sought to acquire legitimacy and the existing Church strove to maintain its authority.

Memorial stones of this period may be recycled in various ways within successive phases of church building, but rarely move far from the place where they were first erected (Stocker and Everson 1990). Given the likelihood that only one church – that which is represented by the ruined early nave – stood at Sockburn by this time this must have provided the focus for the burial ground. The restoration of the Conyers Chapel in 1900 was, at Sir Edward Blackett's request, specifically intended for the 'reception and preservation of the ancient stones lying among the ruins' (Knowles 1905, 100-104). Some stones (certainly Appendix 1: Nos 12 and 25, and others less

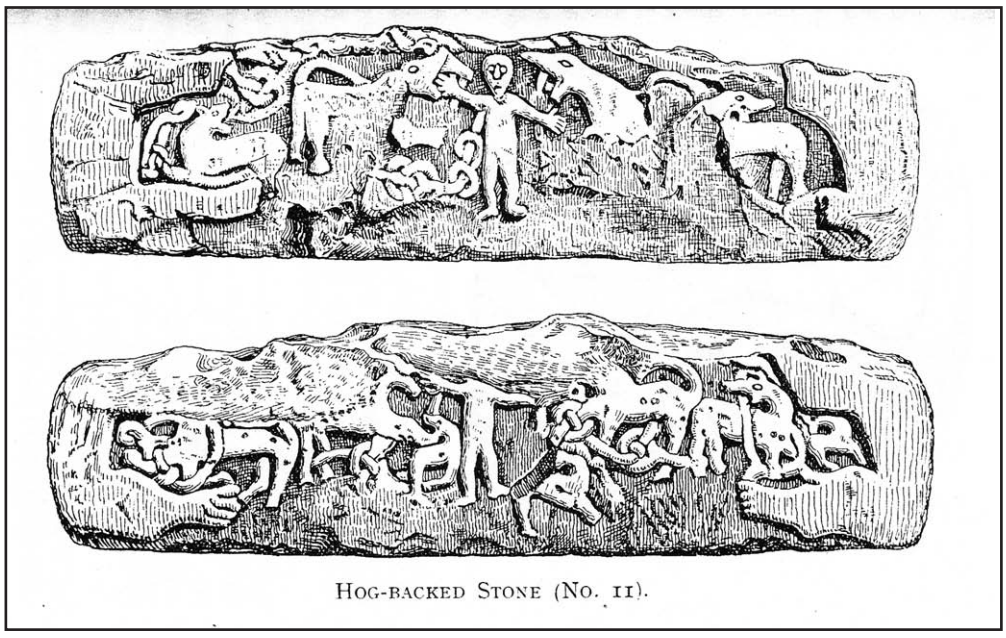


Figure 31. The central figure on Sockburn's most elaborate hogback, depicted here by Knowles (1905, 117), is most probably the Norse god Tyr with his hand in the mouth of the wolf Fenrir (Lang 1972, Cramp 1984 part 1, 143-44). The figure could, however, equally envoke Christ or Daniel (Knowles 1905, 116;VCH Durham 1, 238), and this ambiguity may have been quite deliberate

readily identifiable) had previously lain around the east end of the largely demolished later chancel (Boyle 1892, 660), and others were kept in Sockburn Hall. Two of the pieces formerly stored or displayed in the hall (Appendix 1: Nos 14 and 16) can be identified from descriptions in Boyle (ibid) and Hodges (1894, 71). Indeed the latter, a hogback broken in two, was taken from the hall and 'placed in the church with the other sculptures' in preparation for a visit by members of the British Archaeological Association in 1886 (Brock 1888, 409). Many of the hogbacks and cross fragments appear to have been cut down or squared for reuse, and a high proportion (but most notably Appendix 1: No 5) have mortar adhering to one or more surface. Surtees (1823, 249) relates that a 'stone with a curious piece of knot-work' and a 'rude cross' were built into the west ward and south wall of the church. So, just as the consolidation work in 2005 revealed the terminal of a hogback behind the face of the later chancel arch (Ryder 2005), it is very probable that the demolition work in 1838 revealed stones hitherto incorporated within the 12th-century south aisle, the 13th-century chancel and even the churchyard wall. The early chancel excavated by Knowles can be dated approximately by the reuse of late 10th-century cross-shafts in the foundations (Knowles 1905, Cramp 1984 part 1, 138-9 and Appendix 1). It is an intriguing possibility that the reuse of these broken Scandinavian crosses in such a denigrating fashion indicates a building phase spurred by a change of lordship. It clearly took place after Eadred's final expulsion of the Hiberno-Norse from the Kingdom of York in 954; perhaps after Snaculf's gift of *Socceburg* to the community of St Cuthbert at Durham around 1000, or perhaps later still, after 1066, when the pattern of lordship was completely redrawn.

Symeon's record of the gift of *Socceburg* and *Grisebi* to Durham (Arnold 1882, 83) could reflect nothing more than the simple transfer of a Scandinavian (or Anglo-Scandinavian) estate to the church, at a time when the newly settled community was basking in the fame of their founding saint and garnering gifts from all quarters. But there might be a bit more to this tale. The presence of bishop Higbald at Sockburn in the late 8th century could imply a proprietorial interest. If so, it could be that that this interest was maintained by the community as it moved from Lindisfarne to Norham, Cumbria, Crayke, Chester le Street and Ripon before finally settling at Durham in 995. Although these migrations were started by fears of Viking attack, this was, as Blair (2005, 312) points out, no ragged band of exiles, but a prosperous community moving between their own estates with an eye to the political situation. Could they have retained an interest in Sockburn throughout this time? If a sculptural workshop existed at Sockburn in the 10th century that might very well suggest a degree of episcopal patronage and, allowing for the alternative views expressed by Stocker, the sheer number of elite burials at Sockburn does imply a church of superior status, somewhat beyond the reflected importance of a local landowner. It is speculation and no more, but perhaps Snaculf's gift was in recognition of a long-held claim to the Sockburn estate by the community of St Cuthbert. There is another intriguing implication from Snaculf's gift, and that is to do with the shape of the later parish. The burial practices adopted by the Anglo-Scandinavian ruling class required the presence of clergy and churches, and

their expansion of secular church patronage may have set the scene for the subsequent development of the medieval parochial system (Barrow 2000; Blair 2005, 370). The historic parish of Sockburn was unique in containing lands on both banks of the river, partly through a narrow extension of the Sockburn township to the east bank (see Figure 2), but mainly by virtue of the wider inclusion of the former townships of Girsby and Over Dinsdale on the 'Yorkshire' side of the Tees (VCH 1914,449). Part of this must surely be a legacy of the two parts of Snaculf's gift – *Socceburg* and *Grisebi* – perpetuated by distinct townships within the later medieval parish. It is curious that Sockburn retains an old English name whilst Girsby is evidently Scandinavian (Morris 1977, 99-100). Perhaps Girsby was only defined and annexed to a well-established peninsula estate in the late 9th or 10th century. Speculating further, could Girsby have been an Hiberno-Norse trader settlement, drawn by the existence of the strand and the Tees crossing, and ultimately contributing elite burials to the established church? This scenario would be similar to those envisaged by Stocker (2000) at Marton/Torksey in Lincolnshire and much closer to Sockburn at Kirklevington/Yarm on the Yorkshire bank some 10km further down the Tees.

Medieval Sockburn

The post-Conquest estate, granted to Conyers by the bishopric, may well have taken the area of the existing church and the wath crossing as its centre. The earthwork evidence is ambivalent concerning this period of settlement, although it is possible that the Conyers earlier manor lay, partly enclosed, to the west of the church. Further archaeological research, principally excavation, would be required to establish this point, but it is worth noting that similar relationships between early manorial enclosures and their churches existed elsewhere, for example at both Raunds and Sulgrave in Northamptonshire, at Trowbridge in Wiltshire and at Goltho in Lincolnshire (Blair 2005, 388-9). The place itself, Sockburn, and of course Girsby, doubtless held a particular significance for the bishopric in that it brought the territory of Durham deep into the neighbouring diocese of York, and therefore also for the barony - a matter which was subsequently reflected in the symbolic exchange of the Conyers Falchion. Sockburn's position on the border, as a gateway rather than a barrier, appears to have contributed to the continuing importance of the place. This point is perfectly illustrated by the evidence supplied to papal judge-delegates in 1360 in a case brought against Bishop Thomas Hatfield (Harvey 2005). The matter in hand was the reluctance of the bishop to be summoned to York, since the length of the journey, particularly in winter, could exceed that allowed under canon law. Forty-four witnesses including clerics, scribes, merchants, tradesmen and servants, were ordered to give accounts of the route and the duration of travel. Most agreed that the most direct route ran south from Darlington (where the bishop had a manor) crossing the Tees and continuing south through Northallerton and Thirsk. This included a section that one witness, John Travers, called 'a royal highway' through the fields of Girsby (ibid, 123), perhaps the still viable line of the old Roman road. The usual crossing point on the Tees at that time was the ford or ferry at Neasham at the top of the Sockburn loop. But some witnesses spoke of crossings further down the peninsula at Sockburn, or at a mill a

mile beyond Great Smeaton - quite possibly the same location viewed from either side of the river (Harvey 2005, 124; VCH Yorks, 194). The testimonies of several witnesses make clear that there was a ford here throughout the year, supplemented by a boat. This ford need not have been the same crossing as the Sockburn Wath, but it seems quite likely given that John Travers, a local man, said that people 'could only cross there if they were special friends or familiars of Sir Robert of Herill', whom other witnesses confirmed as the lord of Sockburn and Girsby (Harvey 2005, 124-5).[7]

We cannot be absolutely certain, on the basis of the present evidence, that the medieval manor house lay to the west of the church (House 1, Enclosure A), although the building platforms, small garden compartments and pond-like features in this area do support the identification of this area with the house and outbuildings as described in the Inquisition of 1431. It is possible that the rubble-rich perimeter bank on the western side of the enclosure reflects the permission to fortify the manor issued by Bishop Booth in 1470 although, like many such licences, this may never have been enacted. There is no doubt, however, that Sockburn manor stood at the centre of the Conyers family's interests at this time, as witnessed by the addition of their family chapel, and both the geophysical results and the field evidence certainly demonstrate a well-established corridor of movement between the interior of this partial enclosure and the churchyard. The minor Blackett residence (House 3), which is known to have stood in this area prior to construction of the present hall, appears to have been largely contained within the northern part of the enclosure. This was a relatively short-lived affair, and it seems less than likely that it could account for such deeply engrained and extensive field remains.

The post-medieval mansion and gardens

The area of partial foundations, demolition material and quarries (House 2) to the south of the church cannot be other than the site of the '..the eldest house of the Coniers..' mentioned by Leland in about 1538 (Toulmin-Smith 1964), and visited by Dugdale in 1666 (Hunter Blair 1925, xv-xvi). The field remains indicate a principal east-west range with wings, or extended bays, at either end, set along the southern side of a courtyard. A less elaborate range, presumably a line of service buildings, occupied the eastern side of this courtyard and other buildings flanked the remaining two sides. Dugdale's description of part of the Conyers' family heraldry states that it was carved above the great dining-hall window on the northern side of the house[8], which gives us a further insight into the character of the main building at this time, although it is not clear whether these emblems were internal or external features. Another clue is contained in his list of heraldic devices. These included the arms of Richard, first lord Lumley, who died in 1510; Thomas Conyers of Sockburn, knight, died in 1520; William, first lord Conyers, died 1524 and Christopher, second lord Conyers, who died in 1538

7 Robert Herle was married to Sir John Conyers' daughter Petronilla in the first half of the 14th century (Surtees 1823, 247), and either he, or his immediate successor, might have held the tenancy of Sockburn Manor in 1360.

8 Sculptum supra magnam fenestram refectorij ex aquilonari parte ejustem domus (Hunter Blair 1925, 61)

(ibid, 63-4). It seems likely, therefore, that a major renovation, or even an episode of new construction, took place in the mid 16th century, giving the opportunity to commemorate recent and illustrious members of the family. The four stone blocks inscribed with words from the Conyers' motto (SECULOR, SOLD.DE, I.MORTALI and SECULOR) subsequently recovered from the river and placed in the chapel, may also date from around this time (Knowles 1905, 110). By the year of Dugdale's visit, however, the hall may have passed its prime. Several decades earlier the Conyers' inheritance had passed through the female line to the Talbots, Earls of Shrewsbury, who held far more grand properties elsewhere. In the same year as Dugdale's visit, the tenant at Sockburn, William Collingwood, paid tax on eight hearths. This was not a conspicuously low number amongst the houses of the county's titled elite (Green et al 2006, lxix), but it could be seen as some indication of a lack of investment or modernisation.

The mansion's extensive gardens, mentioned in various late 17th-century documents but not once described in detail, have left a strong impression across the pastures south and south west of the church. These terraces and compartments (enclosures C, D & E) complete with traces of internal subdivisions and the corner mount (Figure 21, **13**) are typical of a 16th-century layout, which was doubtless created to enhance the newly elaborated mansion. These gardens took their orientation from the grain of the pre-existing cultivation pattern and may well have subsumed the site of the earlier manor (Enclosure A) within the overall scheme. To the east, smaller gardens, more intimate or more workaday, lay between the hall, the eastern range and the river. The house must have been approached by a substantial driveway, most probably arriving from the north and positioned to deliver a favourable first impression of the house and its setting before entering the northern courtyard. Later modifications to the parkland landscape have made the positive identification of this final approach impossible, but it may have passed to the east of the churchyard, thereby embracing a view of both the church (and particularly the Conyers Chapel) and the house at the point of arrival.

The Blackett estate

The Conyers mansion presumably still stood, surrounded by its gardens, when the estate was acquired by Sir William Blackett in 1682; but it was not to be the principal family seat, and by some unknown point in the following century it declined to the point of ruin and beyond. The diaries and writings of William and Dorothy Wordsworth make no mention of any grand house, or even of its ruins, during their visits to nearby Sockburn Farm between 1795 and 1800 (Barker 2000). Writing around 20 years later Surtees (1823, 246 fn) pointed to traces of gardens and orchards south of the church as the only evidence of the place where the mansion had formerly stood. The arrival of Henry Collingwood Blackett in 1834 ushered in a new era at Sockburn, with the building of a grand new hall overlooking the river, the establishment of parkland over the areas of former gardens and the creation of an elaborate new bridge to replace the Sockburn Wath. However, by demolishing and relocating the church to provide

greater privacy as well as a romantic ruin, the Blacketts broke a tradition of worship at Sockburn which may have existed for a thousand years or more.

Conclusions

Predictably, perhaps, given the ephemeral nature of archaeological remains from the Anglian period, neither the earthwork nor geophysical survey has been able to provide clear evidence related to the most fundamental research issue at Sockburn – proof of the existence and the extent of the pre-Viking church mentioned in the early texts. The review of current literature, however, together with the examination of the local topography, has leant considerable weight to the argument in favour of the identification of this place with an Anglian minster – a minster which either survived or re-emerged as a church at the centre of an important Viking estate. The continued importance of Sockburn after the Norman Conquest is emphatically demonstrated by the field remains - the possible location of the Conyers' early manor and the better understood layout of the post-medieval mansion and its associated gardens. The sense of isolation and enclosure afforded by the Tees, the liminal position on the boundary of two territories, the proximity of the wath and of the Roman road, and the evident history of earlier lordship - all these aspects doubtless contributed to the choice of Sockburn for the seat of the post-Conquest barony. Even though the Conyers line failed in the 18th century and their mansion disappeared, the special qualities of this place continued to exercise a fascination. The Blacketts' re-invigoration of the estate in the early 19th century appears to have been particularly conscious of the legacy of earlier lordship. Not only did they adopt the tradition of the falchion and retain the Conyers Chapel, they also constructed a new hall echoing the style of their predecessor's mansion, and perhaps even arranged the parkland landscape to create a visual link between sites of the old and new houses.

The survey and accompanying research have significantly improved our understanding of the evolution of this remarkable place, in particular the later medieval and post-medieval stages in its development. If the archaeological techniques employed here proved less successful for the crucial pre-Conquest period, then the wider re-assessment of the evidence has certainly served to focus attention on the church and the areas immediately to the west and south. Non-invasive techniques and landscape interpretation can only take us so far however, and the logical next step in terms of research would be exploratory archaeological excavations targeted on these areas. Given the subsequent history of these areas as gardens and pasture, there is every reason to anticipate good preservation of early archaeological remains below ground.

6. Acknowledgments

The field investigation was initiated by Kate Wilson, Inspector of Ancient Monuments, English Heritage, to assist with ongoing conservation and management initiatives at Sockburn. The earthwork survey was undertaken by Marcus Jecock and Dave Went from English Heritage's Research Department, with occasional assistance from retired English Heritage archaeologist Chris Dunn, and from Mike Collins, English Heritage Archaeologist for Hadrian's Wall. Chris Dunn also made a photographic record of the site, and kindly gave permission for some of these images to be used in this report. Other photographs were taken by the authors. Members of the Architectural & Archaeological Society of Durham and Northumberland - M and E Smith, A Catterall and C Wilson - compiled the graveyard survey in Appendix 3 to this report.

The archaeological background and historical sources were researched by Dave Went, who also undertook the earthwork analysis in collaboration with Marcus Jecock and with advice from other members of the Archaeological Survey and Investigation team based in York. The earthwork plan (Figure 20) was drawn by Dave Went. The location maps (Figures 1 and 2) were produced by Philip Sinton.

The authors would like to express their gratitude to the Gatheral family, owners of the hall and grounds, and in particular to Mary Gatheral, for allowing access to the property and for her warm hospitality throughout the project. Our thanks are also due to Bill Heslop, Care of Churches Secretary at the Diocesan Office, for permission to carry out survey work within the churchyard; and to John Wheeler and members of the Middleton St George History Group, without whose energetic clearance work the detailed investigations of the churchyard would have proved impossible.

7. Survey methodology

The earthwork plan was produced within Ordnance Survey National Grid coordinates using a combination of total-station theodolite and Global Positioning System (GPS) equipment, and traditional graphical survey techniques of taped baseline and offset/radiation.

Initially, a Trimble 5600-series theodolite was used to observe a six-station ring traverse from which a network of temporary control points was put out, marked on the ground by red plastic pegs and chalk marks on fixed features such as fence posts. Stations 1, 2 and 3 were all permanently marked by brass rivets drilled into earth-fast stone or concrete to allow any future archaeological or conservation activity to be correlated to the earthwork plan precisely. Traverse observations and control points were all computed via Trimble GeoSite V software, transferred into AutoCAD 2007 and a plot produced on polyester film at the elected survey scale of 1:1000 for graphical completion in the field. The resulting field drawing was then scanned into the AutoCAD file, and the new detail and scarps traced off and hachured with the help of Key-Terra Firma v6.7 software.

The three permanent stations were subsequently each re-observed using GPS to enable transformation of the local divorced site grid to National Grid coordinates. To do this, a Trimble 4800-series base station was set up over station 1 and programmed to log satellite data over a two-day period. The data were then computed using Trimble Geomatics Office (TGO) v1.63 software against synchronous data downloaded from the OS network of active GPS stations via the website www.gps.gov.uk, enabling a high-precision National Grid solution for the position of station 1 to be calculated. The standard Chi-Square test was passed after a single iteration of the adjustment routine using an alternative scalar weighting strategy, and broadcast rather than precise ephemerides. A Trimble 5800-series rover unit was used concurrently to log the positions of stations 2 and 3 as observed control points via real-time differential GPS. Coordinates for, and guides to relocating, all three permanent stations can be found in the present report at Appendix 5.

The Sockburn earthworks, church ruins and churchyard are protected as a Scheduled Ancient Monument (Durham 40) under the 1979 Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act. The placement of survey markers and permanent stations was authorised under the provisions of the Ancient Monuments (Class Consents) Order 1994.

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DX 332/394 (3) Sockburn Church, Co Pal 1814 Small watercolour on card. Surtees papers

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ZE 10 1675 June 26. Release of fines by Sir Christopher Conyers Bart, Gilbert Crouch, John Rushworth, John Beverley, John Tonge, Ralph Salvin and Stonor Crouch to "Lady Mary Talbot the only daughter of the right hon Francis late Earl of Shrewsbury deceased on the body of the right hon Anne late Countess of Shrewsbury was daughter and heir of William Conyers late of Sockburne in the County of Durham Esq".

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Gatheral Deeds

With the kind permission of the Gatheral family the following original documents relating to Sockburn Hall were consulted at the offices of Blackett, Hart and Pratt, Solicitors (Darlington).

1950 Abstract of Title. *G & G Keith, Southampton Place, Holborn WC1*.This confirms sole ownership of the estate by Wilhelmine Vera Thompson, and refers to an earlier indenture of 1920 when ownership was shared by members of the Blackett family (1/ Arthur Edward Blackett 2/ Dame Alethea Rianette Anne Blackett 3/ Sir Hugh Douglas Blackett & Ralph Blackett) from various residences such as Matfen Hall and County Kildare, as well as (4/) Wilhelmine Vera Thompson, wife of Stanley Miller Thompson of Riverside, Hunton Bridge, Kings Langley, Herts.

1951 Additional Abstract of Title. This refers to a November 1950 conveyance of title from W V Thompson (formerly of Kings Langley but then of Sockburn Hall) to the North England Steamship Co Ltd of Stockton on Tees, with participation of John Douglas Clark, Chartered Surveyor, from Wimbledon. The property included hall and estate, home farm, East Sockburn Farm, Sockburn High Cottages (by the gateway) etc. : a total of 934,619 acres, valued at £41,000.

1955 Conveyance *Smith & Graham,West Hartlepool.* Dated 22 December. The property (freehold of hall and immediate grounds and outbuildings) is sold to Thomas Burns (Stockton) Ltd by the North England Steamship Co Ltd. The document cites the conveyance of 1950 – Wilhelmine Vera Thompson (1: vendor), John Douglas Clark (2: agent), North England Steamship Co Ltd (3: purchaser).

1956 Counterpart of lease. *Latimer, Hinks, Marsham & Little, Darlington.* Dated 16 February. Col Richard Oliver Gatheral (timber merchant) and wife Lucy Margaret

acquire the lease within the process of purchasing Sockburn Hall from Thomas Burns (Stockton) Ltd.

1963 Conveyance. *Solicitor: Latimer, Hinks, Marsham & Little, Darlington*. Dated 15 October. Conveyance to Mrs R O Gatheral from Thomas Burns (Stockton) Ltd., which was then in liquidation. A final payment to Liquidator (Clifford George Sparrow) secured the property.

Appendix 1. Anglo-Scandinavian and early medieval sculptured stones at Sockburn

The table below compares the Corpus of Anglo-Saxon Sculpture inventory (Cramp 1984) and earlier lists by Knowles (1905) and the Victoria County History (VCH Durham 1,1905), with the contents of the Conyers Chapel recorded on 20 April 2007. The dates of the stones are those published by Cramp.

Corpus No. (UID)	Date (after Cramp 1984)	Knowles No.	VCH	Short description & circumstances of discovery (where known)
1 (283)	Possibly 10th century.	4	Recorded	**Cross shaft** with plait work
2 (284)	Late 10th century.	Not noted	Recorded	**Incomplete slab** – possibly unfinished cross shaft. Worn and damaged. Fettered quadruped and animal below woven into plait.
3 (285)	First half of 10th century.	3	Recorded	**Part of cross shaft and neck** – horseman with bird beneath knotted snake. Could be the cross shaft mentioned by Boyle (1892) then in Sockburn Hall. (see No.14).
4 (286)	Second half of the 10th century.	8	Recorded	**Lower part of cross shaft**: Quadruped looking over shoulder, two pairs of legs, fragment of triquetra knot.
5 (287)	Second quarter of 10th century.	5	Recorded	**Lower part of cross shaft**. One face survives – standing spear-man with helmet and shield.
6 (288)	First half of 10th century.	10	Recorded	**Part of cross shaft**, in two pieces. Broken, recut and worn. Paired figures in two panels above and below. Ring-chain and plait, animal head terminals. Brock depicts the upper part of this stone, then found 'at Sockburn Church' (1888, 409 & Fig.15).
7 (289)	Third quarter of 10th century.	2	Recorded	**Part of cross-shaft**. Broken, but unworn. Armed man (spear and sword) below plait and above stag. Backward looking quadruped below plait panels. Plait and triquetra decoration. Found in foundations of pre-Norman chancel by Knowles in 1900 (1905, 113).

8 (290)	10th century.	1	Recorded	**Cross-shaft**. Plait terminating in pendant animal heads, animal and knot-work panels framed by baluster ornament and plait. Found in foundations of the pre-Norman chancel by Knowles in 1900 (1905, 110).
9 (291)	Uncertain. 10th – 11th century?	9	Recorded	**Lower part of cross-shaft**, perhaps unfinished. Cable moulding edges, punch incised spirals
10 (292)	Uncertain. 10th century?	7	Recorded	**Rough out of cross-shaft**. Damaged but unworn, dressed but not carved.
11 (293)	Second half of 10th century.	18	Recorded	Worn **part of ring-headed cross** (boss and plait) with elongated upper arm. Noted 'at Sockburn Church' (Brock 1888, 409 & Fig 14). Boyle (1892, 660) locates this stone in the hall. Hodges (1894, 71) places it under the staircase in the hall.
12 (294)	Uncertain. 11th century?	19	Recorded	**Cross-head** – very large plain (possibly unfinished) ring-head type. First mentioned by Boyle (1892, 659) among the stones lying at the east end of the chancel. Perhaps shown set within the churchyard wall in a watercolour of c.1814 (see this report Section 3.2, and Figure 8)
13 (295)	First half of 10th century.	Not noted	Recorded	**Cross-arm fragment** – ring-chain ornament and leaping animal. VCH (1905) locates this fragment resting on one of the chapel's window sills.
14 (296)	Late 9th to mid 10th century.	21	Recorded	**Hogback**. Top and ends removed; worn. Two horsemen with spears. Other side – rings, knots and pellets. Boyle (1892, 660) described two men on horseback on a cross fragment, which must be the same piece, then in the hall.
15 (297)	First half of 10th century.	22	Uncertain reference	Part of **lower portion of hogback**. Worn, two ends missing. Paw of end beast; part of woman and bird; framed by interlace.
16 (298)	Last quarter of 10th century.	15 & 16	Recorded	**Hogback**. In two pieces. End beasts; long bands of plait each side. Mentioned by Brock (1888, 409 & Fig 16) as being preserved in the hall, but brought to the church for the society's visit. Hodges (1894, 71) has this stone under the staircase in the hall. Boyle (1892, 660) also places it in the hall.
17 (299)	Third quarter of 10th century.	17	Recorded	**Hogback**. Ridge and heads of beasts missing/reduced. Three vertical panels of interlace.

18 (300)	Third quarter of 10th century.	13	Recorded	**Hogback**. Ridge and tops of beast's heads removed. Three vertical panels of interlace. In three joining pieces in 1984 (Cramp). Now in four pieces.
19 (301)	Second half of 10th century.	14	Recorded	**Hogback**. Part only, from centre to one truncated end. Tegulations.
20 (302)	Last quarter of 10th century.	12	Recorded	**Hogback**. In two joining pieces. Almost complete, but one head missing. Dressed back on one side. Small reptilian head. Roof moulding.
21 (303)	Last quarter of the 9th century to first quarter 10th century.	11	Recorded	**Hogback**. Tableaux of Daniel in the lions' den, or of Tyr and Fenrir (Knowles 1905, 116-117; Lang 1972). Missing the ridge. First mentioned in 1873 among stones lying at east end of chancel (Trans AASDN 1869-79, II, i–ii). This could be the stone that Hodges (1894, 71) said had been taken to Matfen Hall.
22 (304)	Uncertain	Not noted	Recorded	**Possible architectural fragment** with cable, pellet and interlace ornament. Could be of Anglian date (Wilson & Cramp 2003, 4)
23 (305)	First half of 10th century?	Not noted	Not noted	Small fragment, **possibly from a cross**. Human foot and leg, possibly wearing a shoe.
24 (306)	11th century.	Not noted	Uncertain reference	Small **fragment of grave cover**. Flat ridge of roof ornamented with band of diamonds in relief, contained within roll mouldings. Sides incised with V-shaped tegulations.
25 (307)	Second half of 11th century.	20	Recorded	**Grave cover** in two joining pieces. Slab divided by double-ended cross. Rings and zig-zag patterns. Noted by Boyle (1892, 659) lying in the east end of chancel.
26 (308) Not Present	unspecified	Not noted	Recorded	**Plain patée cross head**. Mentioned in VCH (Durham 1, 1905, 238) Not present in 1984 (Cramp, 156).
27 (309) Not present	unspecified	6	Recorded	**Cross shaft fragment** (27" x 18" x 7") with ring-chain ornament mentioned in Knowles (1905, 116) and VCH (Durham 1,1905). Not present in 1984 (Cramp, 156)
28 (310)	-	-	-	**Written references to a hogback** (Hodges 1894; Lang 1972) which may be same as the 'Tyr' stone (No. 21)

No corpus No.	Unspecified, but probably later 10th century.	-	-	**Bear's head from hogback**. Not part of other hogbacks on site. Found during consolidation of the west face of the chancel arch in 2005 (Ryder 2005; and see frontispiece image in this report)

The sculptured stones in the Conyers Chapel represent 25 memorial stones - nine hogbacks, thirteen (or perhaps fourteen) crosses and two grave covers - and one architectural item, span the period from the late 9th century to the second half of the 11th century. Two further items - a plain patée cross head and a large shaft fragment with ring-chain ornament - were recorded around the turn of the last century (Corpus 26 & 27) but were no longer present by the time of the corpus research (Cramp 1984 part 1, 154). Morris (1976, 144), checking the contents of the chapel against the VCH list, thought that a fragment with 'a dog and part of a human hand' was missing. This VCH description is poor, however, and the stone is still present, listed as Corpus 13.

Figure 32. Cross-shaft fragment (Corpus No 3).

One stone, a large hogback, was reported to have been taken to Matfen Hall in Northumberland by Sir Edward Blackett (Hodges 1894, 71). Hodges' description of this stone ('.. sculptured with groups of figures on both sides, but is much injured by weather..') sounds remarkably like the 'Tyr' hogback (Corpus 21; Figure 31 in this report). Brock made no mention of such an obvious stone when he recorded the memorials at Sockburn in 1888, although it appears in the lists compiled around the turn of the century (Knowles 1905; VCH Durham 1) so it seems probable that it was returned to Sockburn when the chapel was put in order (Lang cited in Morris 1976, 144).

The Conyers Chapel also contains a number of memorials and architectural fragments from later periods. These are detailed in Appendix 2.

Appendix 2. Later memorials in All Saints' Church

In addition to the 9th- to 11th-century sculptured stones, the chapel of All Saints' also contains a number of memorials and other architectural fragments from later periods. These are listed below.

Tomb covers

The most striking tomb cover at Sockburn is the sandstone knight's effigy currently resting on several blocks in the western side of the chapel (Figure 33). It is remarkably well preserved, having suffered none of the iconoclasm or vandalism associated with more accessible parish churches. The figure, dressed in mail and surcoat, lies cross-legged on a slab measuring c. 2.2 by 0.55m, a triangular shield covering the left arm and the right hand grasping the hilt of the sword which is also worn on the left side. The knight's mail-coifed head rests on a pillow and his spurred feet on a lion and wyvern in combat. Many authors have discussed this effigy. Leland thought it was the tomb of Sir John Conyers who died in 1395 (Toulmin Smith 1964, 69), but the style, as Surtees noted (1823, 249) is clearly older. Pevsner (1983, 411) puts the date at c.1310-20. Knowles (1905, 107) draws parallels with still earlier examples from the 1220s and considers the effigy to date from the middle of the 13th century. More recent researches confirm that this style developed at about this time and lasted for approximately 100 years (Grindey 2001, 44-45). At the time of William Dugdale's visit to Sockburn in 1666 the effigy was located in the nave (Hunter Blair 1925, 56). Boyle (1892, 660) mentioned that the effigy was then preserved inside Sockburn Hall. It appears to have been returned to the church after the restoration of the chapel in 1900.

A simple grave cover of perhaps 12th-century date lies in the south-east corner of the chapel. This stone is a light greyish limestone, some 1.6m long, 0.5m wide and 0.2m thick. It is split in two lengthways, but both parts are present. The upper surface on

Figure 33. The knight's effigy in the Conyers Chapel, photographed before 1968 (NMR BB68-05289).

the right-hand half (viewed from foot end) has an incised outline of a long sword with a round pommel. A median band in low relief divides the stone lengthways, acting as the 'shaft' for an elaborate cross of four pennanular motifs quartered by the shaft and the spear-tipped head and arms of the cross – all cut in relief within a circular frame. Knowles (1905, 109), writing at the beginning of the 20th century, did not mention that this stone lay in two parts.

Four parallel grave-covers make up the central floor of the chapel. Two are plain, but that nearest to the door is incised with cross, sword and shield with the Conyers arms (Knowles 1905, 108), and that nearest the north wall formerly held four armorial badges (see below). All slabs have brass inscription plates; they are as follows (reading from south to north):

1. ***Hic jacet Joh'es Conyers, miles, d'n's de sokburn, qui obiit nonodecimo die februarii. Ao Doi Mo CCCo nonagesimo quarto, cui' a'i'e ꝑiciet. Deu'. Amen.***

(Here lies John Conyers knight lord of Sockburn who died nineteenth day of February Anno Domini 1394, God be gracious to his soul. Amen)

2. ***Hic jacet Isabella, uroi Robertis Conyers, armig', qui obiit nono die Aprilis Ao D'ni Mo CCCC tricesimo iiio cui' a'i'e ꝑ'piciet. Deus. Amen.*** (Here lies Isabella, wife of Robert Conyers, esquire, who died ninth day of April Anno Domini 1433. God be gracious to her soul. Amen.)

3. ***Hic jacet Robert's Conyers, armig. d'n's de sokbur', qui obiit dicesimo quinto die Aprilis Ao Doi Mo CCCCo tricesimo iiio cui's a'i'e ꝑ'piciet. Deus. Amen.*** (Here lies Robert Conyers esquire lord of Sockburn who died fifteenth day of April Anno Domini 1433 - God be gracious to his soul, Amen.)

This Robert Conyers can be identified with the Robert reported elsewhere to have died in 1431 and whose inquisition post mortem provides a rare insight into the character of the medieval manor, as mentioned in Section 3.2 'The medieval hall'.

4.

Marjoria bona morum probitae decora
militis ac sponsa Conyers jacet hic tumulata
ecclsesia coluit sanctam simul et peramabit
sepius hospico debiles capiens recreavit
ut nati cura d'n'm timeant fuit hujus
marcii mensis erat sertadecima luce cujus
anno milleno quarter c Septuageno
mortua carne manet a'i'e rꝑ'us requie' det.

(Marjory well disposed, honest, correct dame and wife of Conyers lies entombed here

in the honour and sanctity of the church. This much loved and wise housewife was seized by recurring weakness and the pains of age. The lord feared for her. The month of March her light had shone for 70 years. 1470 her body died, her soul was restored to rest in the hands of god.)

This was presumably Marjory, daughter of Sir William Eure - wife of that Sir Christopher Conyers who was granted a licence in the year of her death to 'enclose with a wall and fortify his manor of Sokburn' (Cursitors Records 1874: appendix 3). At each corner of her grave cover are impressions or matrices of small shields. These, now empty, are said to have contained the arms of the Conyers and Eures in coloured enamel (Surtees 1823, 247, 249; Knowles 1905, 108).

Architectural fragments

Four rectangular stones, each about 300mm in height, are stacked against the north wall of the chapel (Figure 13). They were discovered in the river bank 'some distance from the church' according to Knowles (1905, 110). The stones carry the words - SECULOR, SOLI DEO, I MORTALI, SECULOR – carved in ornate capitals in sunken panels. These words are clearly a part of the Conyers' motto 'regi seculor i'mortali i'visibili soli Deo honor at gloria i'secula seculor' (to God the only king immortal, invisible be honour and glory world without end). The floriated script places the stones in the latter part of the 15th century or early 16th century (ibid 110). It seems probable that these stones were removed from the Conyers mansion (House 2) following its demise in the 18th century, and that they originally formed part of an architectural panel, perhaps above a doorway or hearth.

Other architectural fragments are more certainly derived from the demolished portions of the church. These include a fragment of a square-headed traceried window, a circular font bowl, and two panels possibly taken from an altar tomb - one showing the upper part of a shield with two popinjays, the other retaining the lower part of a shield with traces of a 'checky coat and a scallop shell' (Knowles 1905, 109).

Appendix 3. All Saints' graveyard survey

In June 2007 volunteers from the Architectural & Archaeological Society of Durham and Northumberland, assisted by English Heritage staff, completed a survey of the graveyard surrounding the ruins of All Saints' Church. The results are tabulated below and the locations of the grave markers shown are shown on the accompanying plan (Figure 34). The survey followed the guidelines for Recording and Analysing Graveyards published by the Council for British Archaeology and English Heritage (Mytum 2000) and used an adapted version of the recommended pro-forma recording system. The archive of this survey, complete with photographs of all the memorials, has been deposited with the Sites and Monuments Record, County Hall, Durham, and a transcript has been supplied to the local studies centre at Darlington Library.

The churchyard contains only a limited number of gravestones, 27 in total. It is possible that others were removed after 1838 when the church was selectively demolished to create a picturesque ruin in the grounds of Sockburn Hall; although the small number of late 18th- and early 19th-century gravestones is no doubt partly a reflection of the low population of the township, which stood at only 43 inhabitants in 1821 (Mackenzie and Ross 1834). Those which still stand could have been retained out of respect for family members still living in the local community. The headstones of the Hutchinson family, tenants of Sockburn Hall Farm, may have held an additional significance due to the family's connection by marriage to Wordsworth, and their less formal association with Coleridge (see Chapter 3). The Hutchinsons seem to have continued to regard All Saints' as their family church after 1800, when the family moved to Brompton by Sawden near Scarborough (Barker 2000, 258).

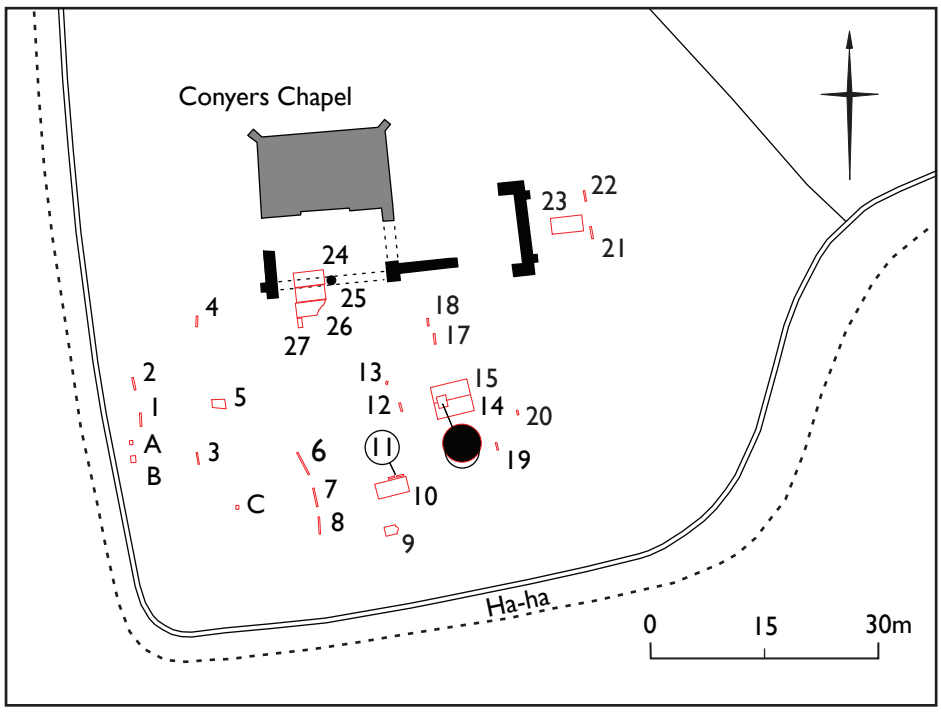


Figure 34. Plan of All saints' churchyard and burial markers.

Figure 35. Richard Ranson's headstone (No 19), dated $17^{11}/_{10}$

Earlier memorials, dating from first half of the 18th century may have been saved by similar considerations, although it is equally likely that they were retained because their archaic appearance suited the romantic role of the ruined church. One of these earlier gravestones merits a special mention. Richard Ranson's headstone (No 19) is inscribed with a split date $17^{11}/_{10}$. This is fine example of the method used to mark a date in both the new calendar, when the year began on the 1 January, and the old calendar which counted each year from 25 March (Lady Day). Until the Gregorian calendar was formally adopted under the Chesterfield Act of 1752 any date between 1 January and 24 March could be counted twice in this fashion. Ranson's death occurred on 6 January 1711 in the new style calendar, a day which was still in the year 1710 according to the old way of reckoning.

Figure 36. Re-used architectural fragment (No 13) bearing the graffiti 1697 I P

Another interesting stone is a small stump (No 13) located centrally to the south of the church ruins. This is an architectural fragment, possibly part of a door surround, poorly inscribed with the date '1697' and the initials 'IP'. This may have been set to one side during the demolition of the church on account of the 17th-century graffiti. Why it was placed in the graveyard, however, remains a mystery. Perhaps it was used to maintain the position of a grave whose temporary marker had all but disappeared in 1838. A similar stone, bearing the initials 'I (or V) R' and the date 1739 or 1709 was photographed resting at the foot of the new buttress on the south side of the chancel arch in 1944 (NMR AA45/02541). This stone can no longer be found; but three further sandstone blocks, one of which has very slight graffiti, are located towards the western edge of the graveyard (A, B and C on Figure 34). They are obviously aligned with the adjacent headstones, and may also have been used to replace decomposing wooden burial markers.

In 1838 All Saints' parochial role was transferred to a new church built high above

the Tees at Girsby, within sight of its predecessor, but on the Yorkshire side of the river. The old graveyard was formally declared redundant by the diocese in the 1960s. However, it contains only two grave markers dated later than the 1830s – those of Henry (1847) and Theophania (1877) Blackett, the original occupiers of the 1834 hall. Girsby churchyard has been neither cleared nor re-organised, so it is curious to note that it contains no gravestones earlier than the 1870s (Cleveland Family History Society 1987). Perhaps the families of those who died in the parish between 1838 and 1870 could not afford headstones; or perhaps they adhered to non-conformist beliefs and were buried elsewhere. Further research into the parish records and census returns for the period is required to explain this hiatus in the sequence of gravestones.

Survey results

The survey took place on 16 June 2007 in largely dry but overcast conditions. The churchyard had recently been cleared of vegetation by the Middleton St George Society and access to the gravestones was unimpeded. The recorders were M Smith (MS), E Smith (ES), A Catterall (AC) and C Wilson (CW) assisted by D Went (DW). C Went carried out an independent review of the survey results on 2 August 2007, adding new records for stones 24 to 27 and augmenting the records for fallen stones 5 and 9, which were gently lifted to reveal their inscriptions and then replaced.

Missing or illegible text is marked by square brackets. Debatable interpretations of poorly preserved inscriptions are enclosed by curved brackets. Capitals letters and italic script are used as appropriate to replicate the appearance of the inscriptions.

Memorial No.1
Recorders: MS, ES, AC
Type: Headstone **Material**: Siltstone **Facing**: East
Dimensions (mm) Height 1375. Width 790. Thickness 120.
Detail: Ornate slightly curved top – geometrically carved profile with straight and semi-circular elements, with shell-like detail inscribed at centre.
Inscription:

Erected
In memory of
WILLIAM BANKS
Of w(est) […….]on
who [……] this life

Condition: Leaning. Eroded text, particularly towards centre of inscription.
Note: Approximate date 1800-1850

Memorial No.2
Recorder: CW
Type: Headstone **Material**: Sandstone **Facing**: East
Dimensions (mm) Height 1525. Width 820. Thickness 115.
Detail: Gothic pointed shape, framed, no decoration. Set on low rectangular plinth. Lettering incised to take applied lead, traces of which remain.
Inscription :

SACRED
TO THE MEMORY OF
EDWARD MORTON

LATE OF HILL H(OU)SE
ATTLE(FORD) […….]
WHO DIED THE […….] OF []UNE 1836
IN THE 77 YEAR OF HIS [……]
AND OF ELIZABETH HIS WIFE
WHO DIED THE […….] 18[]2
IN THE 74TH YEAR OF HER A[]E

Condition: Leaning. Traces of text.

Memorial No.3
Recorders: ES
Type: Headstone **Material**: Siltstone **Facing**: East
Dimensions (mm) Height 1320. Width 780. Thickness 75-85.
Detail: Slightly curved top. Sinuous geometric decoration carved below ridge (10mm rebate) using semi-circular patterns. Ornate shell and swirled roundel details.
Inscription:

ERECTED
In Memory of
CHRISTOPHER ORD,
Who died Aprill 23..rd 1823
Aged 48 Years,

Condition: Good. Clear text.
Note: The position of the inscription towards top of stone, together with the comma at the end, implies that a second inscription was anticipated.

Memorial No. 4
Recorders: AC, MS
Type: Headstone **Material**: Siltstone **Facing**: East and West
Dimensions (mm) Height 740. Width 660. Thickness 101.
Detail: Slightly curved top. Floriated lettering.
Inscription:
East facing

In (memory)
[……]
h
u
ye 9 […..] 1[..]3

West facing:

Behold how Youth is sna(tc)h't away
De[……

Condition: Position good. Base and centre eroded.
Note: The west inscription almost certainly contains the word 'snatch't' ; the 'De' is probably 'Death'. It is perhaps a line taken from a verse or hymn.

Memorial No. 5
Recorders: C Went
Type: Headstone **Material**: Sandstone **Facing**: East
Dimensions (mm) Height 910. Width 610. Thickness 85.
Detail: Slightly curved centre above shoulders.
Inscription:

Here lies the Body of
JOHN JOHNSON
Son of JOHN and
ROSAMOND JOHNSON
who departed this Life

Febʸ. 9th. 1786. Aged 20 Years
Also here lies the Body of
JOHN JOHNSON the
Father who died May the
23d. 178(7 or 9) Aged 57.

Condition: Collapsed, inscription face down,.

Memorial No. 6
Recorders: MS, AC
Type: Headstone **Material**: Siltstone **Facing**: East
Dimensions (mm) Height 1290. Width 840. Thickness 110.
Detail: Carved top edge – low symmetrical design of curves and angles.
Inscription:

Sacred to the Memory
of
Anne Garthwaite Ward.
daughter of the late T.R. Ward Esqr
of Over Dinsdale. in this Parish.
who departed this life
Janʸ 23d 1826:
aged 64.
Also Elizabeth Ward her Sister:
who died 23d February 1827
aged 68 years…

Condition: Leaning. Clear text.

Memorial No. 7
Recorders: MS, AC
Type: Headstone **Material**: Siltstone **Facing**: East
Dimensions (mm) Height 1270. Width 800. Thickness 80.
Detail: Carved top edge – low symmetrical design of curves and angles. Matches No.6
Inscription:

Here
Rest the Remains
Of THOMAS REED WARD
of
Over Dinsdale in this Parish
who was Born
In the City of York
and died
at Hurworth in this County
on the 12th day of June 1804
aged 73

Condition: Good position. Clear text.

Memorial No. 8
Recorders: AC, MS
Type: Headstone **Material**: Siltstone **Facing**: East
Dimensions (mm) Height 1400. Width 880. Thickness 120.
Detail: Carved top edge – low symmetrical design of curves and angles – framing an urn carved in low relief flanked by palmette ornamentation.
Inscription:

ERECTED
In Memory of Dorothy the wife of.

HENRY NEWBURN M.:D:
of Over Dinsdale in this Parish.
Who died Feb^{y}. 1(8)24 aged 71 Years.
much (lament)ed.

Condition: Leaning. Clear text
Note: Little doubt that the date shown is 1824.

Memorial No. 9
Recorder: C Went
Type: Headstone **Material**: Limestone **Facing**: East?
Dimensions (mm) Height 880. Width 605. Thickness 90.
Detail: Centre of top edge has slightly raised curve above shoulders.
Inscription:

Here lieth
The Body of Elizabeth
the Wife of Ja^{s}. Appleton
who Departed this Life
June y$^{e.}$ 17th 1732 Aged 48

Here also lieth the Body
of Jane Daughter of James
(h) Eliz. Appleton who
Died June y. 18th 1758 Aged
^{yrs}
28

Condition: Broken. Top part only. Collapsed, face down (inscription to east)
Note: The (h) appears to be a form of &.

Memorial No. 10
Recorders: AC, MS
Type: Chest tomb **Material**: Sandstone side panels, limestone top, brick construction
Oriented: long axis east-west, top slab inscription read from east end
Dimensions (mm) Height 900. Width 1300. Length 2002.
Detail: Brick constructed chest tomb with plain limestone 'table top' slab (bevelled edges) and plain bordered sandstone panels around the sides.
Inscription:

ERECTED
IN MEMORY OF
JAMES I'ANSON ESQ
late of Darlington
who Died June 4th
1820
AGED 42 YEARS

Condition: Clear text. Side slabs subsiding to reveal brick construction and internal space.

Memorial No. 11
Recorders: AC, MS
Type: Headstone **Material**: Limestone? **Facing**: Displaced
Dimensions top fragment (mm) Height 500. Width 500. Thickness 80.
Dimensions bottom fragment (mm) Height 340. Width 500. Thickness 120.
Detail: Small headstone with pronounced border terminating in raised top rather like the upper part of stylised heart. Headstone in two fragments (top and bottom) which do not precisely join due to weathering and some loss of stone. No inscription on lower part. Found propped against north side of chest tomb 10. Original location unknown.
Inscription:

Here lieth
Interred y^{e} body
of RICHARD JOHN
SON who died y^{e}
25 day of march
Anno Domini
17(77?)

Condition: Broken, displaced. Legible.
Note: the lower parts of the date are missing. The first two characters in elongated cursive script can only be read as 17 (as it cannot be 16, 18 or 19), and the repeat of the upper part of the 7 indicates that he second two characters are most likely 77. However, 1711,1717 and 1771 are also possibilities.

Memorial No.12
Recorders: AC, MS
Type: Headstone **Material**: Sandstone **Facing**: East
Dimensions (mm) Height 580 part buried. Width 540. Thickness 100.
Detail: Raised semi-circular centre to top edge flanked by scrolled ends on shoulders. Floral roundels inscribed on scroll ends and within raised centre.
Inscription:

Ann y^{e} wife of
Timothy
Richardson
died (11th) March
1734

Condition: Leaning, sunken. Legible text.
Note: The word 'Timothy' is followed by an inscribed, inverted heart. 'Richardson' is followed by a scroll symbol.

Memorial No.13
Recorder: DW.
Type: Oddment **Material**: Sandstone **Facing**: East
Dimensions (mm) Height 390. Width 270. Thickness 240.
Detail: Strange small architectural fragment, possibly once a part of a door frame, positioned to resemble a gravestone.
Inscription: (graffiti, east facing)

1697
I P

Condition: faint lettering.

Memorial No.14
Recorders: AC, MS
Type: Ledger **Material**: Sandstone
Orientation: long axis east-west. Inscription is read from the east end.
Dimensions (mm) Length 2405. Width 1070. Thickness 60+.

Detail: Southern ledger in a pair (14 &15), later overlain by a standing cross (16)
Inscription:

TO THE MEM [….]
OF
[…….] COLLINGWOOD B[……..]
2ND SON OF THE LA[..]
[..]R WILLIAM BLACKETT BART
WHO DIED ON THE 27TH OF MAY 1856
AGED 47.

Condition: Good, but with a major subsidence crack.
Note: Square brackets to the right of the inscription indicate text obscured by the pedestal of the later standing cross (16). The brackets on the left mark the position where text (certainly HENRY and SIR) has been completely lost to erosion.

Memorial No. 15
Recorders: AC, MS
Type: Ledger **Material**: Sandstone
Orientation: long axis east-west. Inscription is read from the east end.
Dimensions (mm) Length 2405. Width 1070. Thickness 100+.
Detail: Northern ledger in a pair (14 & 15) later overlain by a standing cross (16)
Inscription:

[.]O THE MEMORY
OF
[……]ANIA BLACKETT
WIFE OF
HENRY COLLINGWOOD BLACKETT ESQ
WHO DIED THE 6TH DAY OF JUNE 1877
AGED 74.

Condition: Good, but with a major subsidence crack.
Note: Square brackets indicates areas of text (TO and THEOPH) obscured by the pedestal of the later standing cross (16).

Memorial No.16
Recorders: AC, MS
Type: Standing cross **Material**: Polished red granite **Facing**: East
Dimensions (mm) Height 1807. Width at base 706. Thickness at base 508.
Detail: Ringed cross in Celtic style, with interlace floral work and knotwork boss. Set on inscribed trapezoidal base stone and step. Place on top of ledgers 14 and 15, partly obscuring their inscriptions.
Inscription (facing east):

IN MEMORY OF
HENRY COLLINGWOOD BLACKETT
OF SOCKBURN
2ND SON OF SIR WILLIAM BLACKETT 8TH BART
AND SOMETIME LIEUTENANT LIFE GUARDS
WHO DIED 27TH MAY 1856 AGED 47 YEARS
ALSO IN MEMORY OF
THEOPHANIA BLACKETT
WIDOW OF HENRY COLLINGWOOD BLACKETT
WHO DIED 6TH JUNE 1877 AGED 74 YEARS

Condition: Good.

Memorial No.17
Recorders: MS, AC
Type: Headstone **Material**: Sandstone **Facing**: East
Dimensions (mm) Height 603 (part buried). Width 602. Thickness 100.
Detail: Small headstone with raised top rather like the upper part of stylised heart.
Inscription:

Here
lyeth ye Body of
John Robson who
departed this life
June ye 5[..] 1721
Aged : 56

Condition: Good. Legible text.

Memorial No.18
Recorders: AC, MS
Type: Headstone **Material**: Sandstone **Facing**: East
Dimensions (mm) Height 180. Width 500. Thickness 100.
Detail: Broken – base only. Similar material and dimensions to nearby 18th century stones.
Inscription:

aged 55

Condition: Poor. Partial survival (lower fragment only).
Notes: Early-mid 18th century style.

Memorial No.19
Recorders: AC, MS
Type: Headstone **Material**: Sandstone **Facing**: East
Dimensions (mm) Height 590. Width 502. Thickness 102.
Detail: Raised semi-circular centre to top edge flanked by flatten spherical knobs on shoulders. Inverted heart symbol inscribed just below raised centre, separating the first line of text.
Inscription:

Hear……..Lieth
ye body of Richard
Ranson Who Died
February ye 6 $17^{11}/_{10}$
His A(ge) 85

Condition: Leaning. Mostly legible, apart from lowest line. Poor quality of layout (text spilling onto the raised border of the stone). 'Hear' – sic.

Memorial No.20
Recorder: MS
Type: Headstone **Material**: Sandstone **Facing**: ?
Dimensions (mm) Height 490. Width 300. Thickness 90.
Detail: Broad raised semi-circular centre to top edge, flanked by slightly rounded shoulders.
Inscription: Not inscribed.

Condition: Upright. Good.
Note: The absence of inscription is not due to erosion. The lack of inscription may be intentional, or perhaps the memorial was never completed.

Memorial No.21
Recorder: MS
Type: Headstone **Material**: Sandstone **Facing**: East
Dimensions (mm) Height 907. Width 707. Thickness 88.
Detail: Elaborate carved top edge – low symmetrical design of curves and angles, set to either side of a central semi-circular hollow. Similar to No.7.
Inscription:

In Memory of
Jane the Wife of John Hutchinson
of Stockton Daughter of Isaac
and Eliz. Wilkinson of Penrith, who
died June 15.th 1798 Aged 26 Years
and of Margaret his Sister,
Second Daughter of the late
John and Mary Hutchinson, of
Penrith, who died March 28th
1796 Aged 24 Years

Condition: Good. Shallow inscription beginning to fade.

Memorial No. 22
Recorder: MS
Type: Headstone **Material**: Sandstone **Facing**: East
Dimensions (mm) Height 1370. Width 730. Thickness 125.
Detail: Carved top edge – raised semi-circular centre, shoulders reduced by inverted curves.
Inscription:

ERECTED
by an afflicted Father;
to the memory of
Two b[……][…..]ghters
whose lives w[……] hearts sincere
[……
……..]

……](a)in

…..]one.

…]inson

s

Condition: Poor – leaning and the inscription is heavily eroded.
Note: In 1827 Jack Hutchinson lost two daughters to consumption, Bessy and Jane, both in their 20s. They are buried at Sockburn close to their mother Jane and aunt Margaret. A tombstone was erected by their 'afflicted Father' (Barker 2000, 839). The final two lines of the inscription are visible towards the foot of the stone, but not legible.

Memorial 23
Recorder: MS
Type: Chest tomb **Material**: Sandstone
Oriented: long axis east-west, top slab inscription is read from the east end.
Dimensions (mm) Height 960. Width 1040. Length 2100.
Detail: Chest tomb with plain limestone 'table top' slab (chamfered edges) and limestone panels decorated with bosses. Classical pilasters at corners and mid-way along long axes
Inscription:

Here lies the Body of Sarah Hutchinson
Daughter of
Thomas Hutchinson [ ] Whitton
Who died July 18th 1786 in the
[…] Year of her Age

Condition: Subsiding. Clear, but locally eroded inscription.
Note: Surtees records the inscription as '…of Whitton, who died July the 18th, 1786, in the 76th year of her age' (Surtees, R. 1823, 250).

Memorial No. 24
Recorder: CW
Type: Ledger **Material**: Limestone
Oriented: long axis east-west, inscription is read from the east end.
Dimensions (mm) Length 2000. Width 950. Thickness Unknown.
Detail: Plain limestone ledger forming part of the floor of the nave/south aisle.
Inscription:

R

Condition: Eroded, surface flaked, cracked across short axis near centre.
Note: A plan by A V Evans of c.1900, stored in the Conyers Chapel, gives the incription as J R 1788.

Memorial No. 25
Recorder: CW
Type: Ledger **Material**: Limestone
Oriented: long axis east-west, inscription is read from the east end.
Dimensions (mm) Length 1950. Width 950. Thickness Unknown.
Detail: Plain limestone ledger forming part of the floor in the south aisle area
Inscription:

T: R

Octo: 27:th 1795

Condition: Eroded, surface flaked.

Memorial No. 26
Recorder: CW
Type: Ledger **Material**: Limestone
Oriented: long axis east-west, inscription is read from the east end.
Dimensions (mm) Length 2050 (incomplete). Width 950. Thickness Unknown.
Detail: Plain limestone ledger forming part of the floor of the south aisle area.
Inscription:

F R

June 12th 1800

Condition: Eroded, surface flaked. Cracked and foreshortened by a tree which formerly grew through the middle of the stone.

Memorial No. 27
Recorder: CW
Type: Ledger (fragment) **Material**: Limestone
Oriented: Unknown – aligned with and to the south of 26
Dimensions (mm) Length (remaining) 300. Width 625. Thickness Unknown.
Detail: Partial limestone ledger forming part of the floor of the south aisle area.
Inscription:

E LIES THE [….]

Condition: Eroded fragment, surface flaked.
Note: Not shown on Evans' c.1900 plan stored in the Conyers Chapel.

Fragment A
Recorder: DW
Type: Reused building stone **Material**: Sandstone
Oriented: Positioned in line with stones 1 & 2
Dimensions (mm) Height 400. Width 450. Length 330
Detail: Sandstone block imitating gravestone
Inscription (graffiti):

D I

Condition: Poor
Note: Perhaps a replacement for a less permanent burial marker.

Fragment B

Recorder: DW
Type: Reused building stone **Material**: Sandstone
Oriented: Positioned in line with stones 1 & 2
Dimensions (mm) Height 320. Width 220. Thickness 200.
Detail: Sandstone block imitating gravestone
Inscription (grafitti): None
Condition: N/A
Note: Perhaps a replacement for a less permanent burial marker.

Fragment C
Recorder: DW
Type: Reused building stone **Material**: Sandstone
Oriented: ?
Dimensions (m) Height 290. Width 260. Thickness 200
Detail: Sandstone block imitating gravestone
Inscription (grafitti): None
Condition: N/A
Note: Perhaps a replacement for a less permanent burial marker.

Appendix 4. Concordances & Archive

The following statutory designations, National Monuments Record (NMR) and Historic Environment Records (HER) entries obtain to the survey area.

Sockburn Manor (earthworks)
Scheduled Monument: Durham 40.

NMR No. NZ 30 NW 1. Unique Identifier 25511.

HER Nos. 175, 4620,

All Saints' Church
Scheduled Monument: Durham 40

Listed Building: 19/39. UID: 350498

NMR No. NZ 30 NW 3. Unique Identifier 25527 (Excavation event 647449)

HER Nos. Building: 169, 11393; Sculptured stones & memorials: 170, 2487-2501, 2514-2521, 2550, 8987.

Sockburn Hall
Listed Building: 19/38. UID: 350497 (hall), 19/37 UID 350496 (coach house).

HER No. 11268 (hall), 11392 (coach house).

NMR No. (none)

ARCHIVE
The site archive and copies of this report have been deposited in the archive and library of English Heritage at the National Monuments Record Centre (NMRC), Kemble Drive, Swindon SN2 2GZ (under Collections Reference AF00240), where they are available for public consultation upon request and to whom further inquiries should be addressed.

Copies of this report have also been deposited with the county sites and monuments record (County Hall, Durham DH1 5TS) together with the archive of the churchyard survey conducted by the Architectural & Archaeological Society of Durham and Northumberland.

Appendix 5. Permanently-marked survey stations

Permanent markers were placed in three locations within the survey area to serve as local GPS base stations. These markers are described below, and their positions are shown on Figure 37.

Station 1

A brass rivet drilled into an earth-fast stone set into the crown of the bank on the northern boundary of Enclosure A (see Figure 20) towards the western corner of the survey area.

OS National Grid:	Easting	434906.92m
	Northing	507095.43m
	Elevation	20.07m
ETRS89:	Latitude	540 27' 29.02130" North
	Longitude	10 27' 47.07636" West
	Height	69.20m

Station 2

A brass rivet drilled into a largely buried earth-fast stone located to the west of the southern-most river terrace wall-pillar at Sockburn Hall.

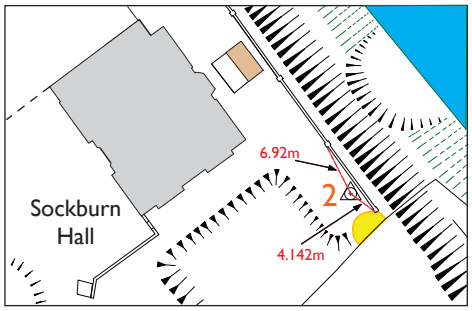
OS National Grid:	Easting	435001.97m
	Northing	507169.04m
	Elevation	18.94m
ETRS89:	Latitude	540 27' 31.37910" North
	Longitude	10 27' 41.76729" West
	Height	68.07m

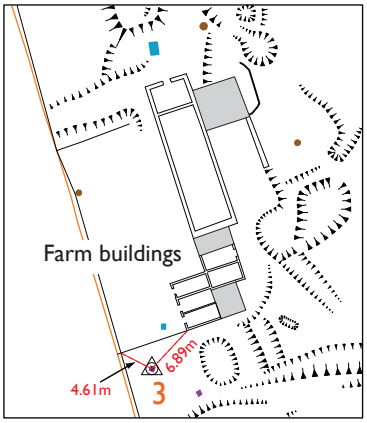
Station 3

A brass rivet drilled into a prominent earth-fast stone block, located to the south of the farm buildings near the western boundary of the survey area.

OS National Grid:	Easting	434913.42m
	Northing	506971.21m
	Elevation	19.00m

ETRS89:	Latitude	540 27’ 25.00108” North
	Longitude	10 27’ 46.76761” West
	Height	68.13m





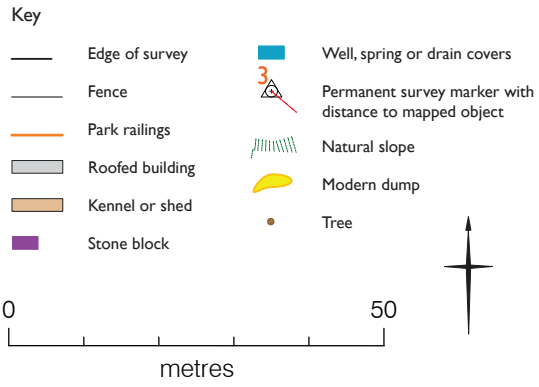
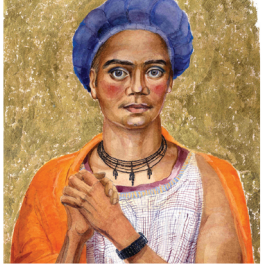


Figure 37. The locations of permanent survey markers 1, 2 & 3 (see also Figure 20). 1:1000 scale



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The Research Department provides English Heritage with this capacity in the fields of buildings history, archaeology, and landscape history. It brings together seven teams with complementary investigative and analytical skills to provide integrated research expertise across the range of the historic environment. These are:

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* *Archaeological Projects (excavation)*
* *Archaeological Science*
* *Archaeological Survey and Investigation (landscape analysis)*
* *Architectural Investigation*
* *Imaging, Graphics and Survey (including measured and metric survey, and photography)*
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