

ART. I.—*The archæology of Cumberland and Westmorland.* By ERIC BIRLEY, F.S.A., President of the Society.

Contributed to the programme for the Carlisle meeting of the Royal Archæological Institute, July 14th-19th, 1958.

THIS is not the first time that the Institute has called on a member of the Cumberland and Westmorland Antiquarian and Archæological Society (hereafter referred to as the Society) to write something for its members to refer to during its meeting in Carlisle — though in 1882 R. S. Ferguson was given longer notice, left the task far longer unattempted and finally (with the aid of lightning printers) produced fuller measure than my other commitments have allowed me to provide; it will be pardoned, I hope, if it is to Roman archæology that the bulk of my details refers, but I hope that the mainly bibliographical treatment of the subject will enable readers whose special interests are in other periods to find their way about the printed sources.

The record begins with John Leland in Henry VIII's reign, furnishing one or two items of interest (for example, under Burgh-by-Sands or Netherby), but the first framework and incentive to study the subject in our district came from William Camden; until his visit of 1599, with Cotton, he had had to rely for his Cumbrian chapters on local correspondents like Reginald Bainbrigg of Appleby or Oswald Dykes, or on Cumbrians *in partibus* such as Edward Threlkeld, but the editions of 1600 and 1607 include information furnished by various other people whom he can be shown or inferred to have met during that visit. One of them, John Denton of Cardew (d. 1617), may be regarded as the first of our local historians: his *Accompt* of Cumberland, written *c.* 1610, was used in

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MS. by most of the later county historians though it was only printed as recently as 1887 (as no. 2 in the Society's Tract Series). It was not until the Restoration, however, that archæological studies really took root and became widespread, mainly as the spare-time interest of men who had become introduced to "Septentrional learning" at Queen's College, Oxford: three or four of them had a share in the new edition (1695) of the *Britannia* ultimately completed for the press by Edmund Gibson, a Westmorland man of that college, younger than any of them. Thomas Machell, rector of Kirkby Thore, had the widest interests and could excavate and describe structures as well as find his way through family history or ancient records; after his death in 1698 William Nicolson, then archdeacon and later bishop of Carlisle, who had been his pupil at Queen's, arranged Machell's collections towards a history of Westmorland and Cumberland into six massive folio volumes, which have provided a rich harvest for later workers but have not yet yielded everything of the value in them (cf. CW2 lv 132-153): they may be consulted by courtesy of the Dean and Chapter of Carlisle, in whose library bishop Nicolson deposited them. He had been responsible for the additions to the "Picts' Wall" and to Northumberland in the 1695 *Britannia*; Cumberland was entrusted to Hugh Todd, Westmorland to Machell; and connecting links were provided by Sir Daniel Fleming of Rydal and by Ralph Thoresby of Leeds: it will often be found that useful evidence is contained in their correspondence or in their writings, not all of which have been published.

It is something of a surprise to note that the 1695 edition had little effect on Cumbrian archæology, apart from furnishing a few details to the "impartial Hand" responsible for the Cumberland section (1720) of Cox's *Magna Britannia* — who made a good deal more use of Denton's MS. — or to Alexander Gordon; and though Nicolson talked of doing more, his contributions to the 1722 edition

of the *Britannia* were few and unimportant. But it seems to have been that edition which really led to the spate of activity in the next few years: Sir John Clerk's visit to the Wall in 1724 (with Gordon accompanying him), Stukeley's with Roger Gale in 1725, John Horsley spurred by the publication of Gordon's *Itinerarium Septentrionale* in 1726 to write his *Britannia Romana* (1732), and all of them found local men ready to give them guidance during their visits and afterwards to keep them in touch, by letter, with new discoveries: witness Richard Goodman or the two Rouths at Carlisle, or Humphrey Senhouse of Netherhall (whose ancestor had entertained Camden and Cotton), or Robert Patten (who had managed to live down his part in the 1715 affair). Several of these men will already be familiar to readers of the Stukeley correspondence, published by the Surtees Society; we cannot afford to neglect them or their contemporaries such as George Smith of Wigton (d. 1755), the ablest of the early archæological correspondents of the *Gentleman's Magazine*. Its publication, gradually taking over from the Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society (in which some of Machell's discoveries at Kirkby Thore, and of Christopher Hunter's on the Wall in Northumberland, had been printed), not only maintained local interest but also attracted further travellers such as bishop Pococke and the indefatigable Thomas Pennant, whose Scottish tours contain a good deal of useful information about Cumberland. It was another tourist, William Hutchinson of Barnard Castle, whose *Excursion to the Lakes* had included a journey through Cumberland, Northumberland and County Durham as well, who was to provide the first substantial county history — if we except Nicolson & Burn's *Westmorland & Cumberland* (1777), which draws largely on Denton and on Machell but concerns itself preponderantly with ecclesiastical records and manorial descents: one would get little inkling of the counties' archæological riches from their two volumes.

Hutchinson's *Cumberland* (1794) is a very different matter, though its value varies greatly, according to the contributors responsible (Hutchinson himself having been content to give his name and some of his collections for use by Francis Jollie of Carlisle, who published the work): in particular, it makes a point of quoting the earlier antiquaries' accounts as well as offering fresh descriptions of individual monuments. Much of its background material was furnished by John Housman, whose *Topographical Description* (dealing also with parts of Lancashire and Yorkshire) was issued by the same publisher in 1800, but it will be of more use to the social and economic historian than to the archæologist. Britton & Brayley's *Cumberland* (1802), in the Beauties of England & Wales series, has little to offer; but *Westmorland* (1814) is from the pen of John Hodgson, best known as the historian of Northumberland, and it contains much of value despite its necessarily brief treatment. The Lysons brothers' *Magna Britannia* iv (1816) includes a long section on the Roman antiquities of Cumberland, contributed by the bishop of Cloyne, and useful surveys of Roman inscriptions and other antiquities by the Lysons; the extent to which Horsley's book had been supplemented by later discoveries, published in the *Gentleman's Magazine* or, more recently, in *Archæologia* or by Pennant or others, is brought out well by them — and they have the results of excavation by local gentry to report, the Senhouses at Maryport and Richard Matthews at Old Carlisle for example. Finally, Samuel Jefferson of Carlisle brought out three volumes of a series intended ultimately to cover the whole of Cumberland: *Carlisle* (1838), *Leath Ward* (1840) and *Allerdale Ward above Derwent* (1842), all of which contain at least some useful material, as does Cornelius Nicholson's *Annals of Kendal* (1832, 2nd edition 1861); and Roman archæology received great stimulus by the foundation of the Society of Antiquaries of Newcastle upon Tyne, John Hodgson being one of its

secretaries and his brother Christopher, an architect in Carlisle, a useful local observer. The last volume of his *History of Northumberland* that Hodgson lived to publish (part II, vol. iii, 1840) contains a great deal about Roman Cumberland, not merely about the Cumberland third of Hadrian's Wall; he, too, had useful local correspondents to make acknowledgements to, and local newspapers to cite (in particular, the *Carlisle Patriot*) for details of archæological discoveries.

The man who made most use of Hodgson's work was John Collingwood Bruce, who planned and led the first Pilgrimage of the Wall in 1849, and presently brought out a book of his own on *The Roman Wall* (1851, 2nd edition 1853) which aroused great interest — and some controversy, for a number of Cumbrians found it hard to abandon their attachment to the claims of Severus to have built the Wall: witness Robert Bell's dignified quarto pamphlet of 1852, or the more slashing (and entertaining) attack by John Maughan, rector of Bewcastle, under the name of "Cumbrian" (1857).

Such was the published basis of material for the archæology of the two counties when the Institute held its first meeting at Carlisle in 1859. On that occasion, a special archæological museum was formed in the Fraternity, and from the printed catalogue of the antiquities and works of art exhibited one gets a good idea of the extent to which local collectors had already begun to accumulate archæological material — and of their readiness to exhibit it. It seems not improbable, indeed, that the Institute's visit served to set off the spark that led to the foundation of the Society seven years later; its first printed list of members includes more than a dozen names of men who had exhibited some of their collections in 1859 — including R. S. Ferguson, soon to become editor and later president of the Society. One further stimulus was provided by Whellan's *History and Topography of Cumberland and Westmorland* (1860), one of the con-

tributors to which was William Jackson, an early pillar of the Society and a benefactor to historical studies by his bequest to Tullie House of the splendid collection, the Jackson Library, to which all later writers on the two counties are tremendously indebted.

When the Institute next met in Carlisle, in 1882, Ferguson was mayor of the city as well as editor and largest contributor to the Society's *Transactions*, and it is a measure of their range and quality, as well as of his energy, that the special *Hand-Book*, to the principal places and monuments in the programme for that meeting, should have been based largely on papers already printed in those *Transactions*; we may note that

‘Mr Hartshorne, the Secretary of the Royal Archæological Institute, imposed on me this task. I rashly consented. But a press of civic and other duties occupied my time, and I found myself at the beginning of July with nothing done. I proposed to abandon the project, but Mr Hartshorne was relentless.’

The preface, from which these sentences have been taken, is dated 18 July 1882; and the handbook was apparently ready for issue to members by the opening of the week's meeting on 1 August.¹ On this occasion, too, a special museum had been assembled, in the upper assembly room of the County Hotel; but perhaps the most important feature of the meeting was the series of papers read, with a wide range of archæological subjects (members of the Society playing a prominent part, as we should expect) and, in particular, a paper by E. A. Freeman on ‘The place of Carlisle in English History.’² Chancellor Ferguson died in 1900: the sixteen volumes of the Old Series of the Society's *Transactions* would have been a sufficient monument to his editorship, and to the width of his archæological and historical interests; but we must also take into account the by-products, such as his two county histories — *Cumberland* (1890) and *Westmorland* (1894)

¹ For its *Proceedings*, cf. AJ xxxix 427-471 or the condensed version in CWI vi 490-505.

² AJ xxxix 317 ff., CWI vi 237 ff.

— or the volumes in the Extra Series, six of them edited by him, or the Tract Series (in which writings of Denton, Fleming and Todd were printed for the first time, as part of Ferguson's plan for publication of the materials which would one day be used for a fuller history of the two counties); and he had written a chapter for the first Cumberland volume of the Victoria County History, published two years after his death.

It would be difficult to over-estimate the Society's debt to Ferguson, who built up and maintained the standard of its publications, kept its local workers in touch with wider fields of study, and by example or by direct encouragement saw to it that no part of the Society's own field should be left uncultivated: witness his furtherance of excavations on the Wall, at Low Borrow Bridge or at Hardknott Castle; his care for the surveying and recording of prehistoric sites and of medieval buildings, of stained glass or of church plate; and above all, perhaps, the range of studies which he caused to flow smoothly from the careful planning of the Society's excursions, so that monuments or problems which seemed to need study might be allotted to people competent to study them and then to write suitable accounts for publication in *Transactions*. Some of these studies were ultimately included in volumes of the Extra Series: for example, M. W. Taylor's *Old Manorial Halls* (1892, E. S. vii), W. S. Calverley's *Early Sculptured Crosses* (1899, E. S. xi) or J. F. Curwen's *Castles and Towers* (1913, E. S. xiii). An obituary notice of Ferguson, with a full bibliography of his writings, is given in CW1 xvi, pp. vii-xx.

He was succeeded as editor by W. G. Collingwood, whose influence on the whole field of the Society's work was tremendous — and equally disinterested: see the obituary notice by R. G. Collingwood, CW2 xxxiii 308-312, and more recent estimates in li 189 and liii 253. The New Series of *Transactions* was his creation and re-

mains perhaps his best memorial, but for the archæology of the Society's district and adjacent areas too several of his books are also indispensable: *Lake District History* (1925), *Northumbrian Crosses* (1927), *The Lake Counties* (2nd ed., 1932), and the historical novels in which he illuminated in particular the period of the Norse settlements (*Thorstein of the Mere* and *The Bondwoman*) or the less known *Coniston Tales* (1899). Ferguson had collaborated with H. S. Cowper in producing an archæological survey of Cumberland, Westmorland and Lancashire North-of-the-Sands for the Society of Antiquaries (*Archæologia* liii, 1893, 485-538); W. G. Collingwood, towards the close of his editorship of *Transactions*, provided an invaluable supplementary inventory (Cumberland, CW2 xxiii 206-276; Westmorland and Lancashire North-of-the-Sands, with addenda to Cumberland, CW2 xxvi 1-62) in which the early authorities quoted by Ferguson were only repeated in so far as they had not been superseded by later studies: a fresh survey is one of the outstanding needs which the Institute's visit in 1958 will help to emphasize.

During Collingwood's long period as editor and latterly as president of the Society, it more than maintained its standing and reputation. On prehistoric and native sites, he himself took a lead in active work, Roman archæology being already in the safe hands of Haverfield — who had been the chief mouthpiece and planner of the Cumberland Excavation Committee's work, mainly on the Wall, during Ferguson's reign, and was president of the Society from 1915 until his death in 1919 — and soon largely devolved on R. G. Collingwood, who became joint editor of *Transactions* in 1920 and succeeded his father as president in 1932. If one were to single out one particular item from the long list of W. G. Collingwood's editorial achievements it would perhaps be the part he played in securing the full and prompt publication of F. G. Simpson's reports on excavations at Poltross Burn and in the

High House sector and on the line of the Stanegate in Cumberland (CW2 xi 390-461, xiii 297-397); and if an editor is to be judged by the quality of his contributors' papers even more than by his own published writings, it would be difficult to find a man more worthy of remembrance.

R. G. Collingwood's part in the Society's work is perhaps too recent, and his reputation in the outer world too great, for more than a brief reference to be needed here; but *pietas* requires me to record how his encouragement led younger men to take an active part in the work on Roman archæology which he himself had been directed into by Haverfield, and it is right to record the decisive part which he played in enabling F. G. Simpson to continue his researches *per lineam Valli* in Cumberland, by securing financial support from the Haverfield Trust and from many members and friends of the Society, and by constant support and advice. He did equally valuable work in reviving active interest in prehistoric studies, founding the Society's standing committee for that purpose — its terms of reference to include other sites of prehistoric character irrespective of date — in 1932, and providing it with a splendid basis for its work in a long paper on the prehistory of the Society's territory (CW2 xxxiii 163-200). His own contributions to *Transactions* are of value more, perhaps, for the stimulus which they gave and, in many cases, still give to further research, than for the conclusions to which they came: his speculative mind often led him to interpret the evidence in ways which later students have found themselves unable to follow, but there can be no doubt that he deserves to be remembered equally with his father and with Ferguson as one of the chief furtherers of archæological studies in the area for which the Society is primarily responsible.

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The Victoria County History of Cumberland has only yielded two of the volumes originally planned (i, 1902

and ii, 1905), and at present there seems no prospect of its resumption, but it is a pleasure to place on record the debt that the Society owes to the Royal Commission on Historical Monuments for its volume on *Westmorland* (1936), and to the Place-Name Society for the three parts of its study of *The Place-Names of Cumberland* (1950, 1950 and 1952): both works have already proved indispensable in the study of the Society's district — would that counterparts on Cumberland and Westmorland respectively were in prospect!

For recent surveys of some of the main problems of the area, reference may be made to papers by Miss Clare Fell, F.S.A., and by the present writer, communicated to a joint meeting with the Prehistoric Society at Carlisle in 1948 (CW2 xlix 192 ff.), and to the *Proceedings* of the joint meeting with the Cambrian Archæological Association in 1950 (CW2 lii 188-196), when many of the monuments included in the present programme for the Institute's visit were described, and Sir Ifor Williams contributed a most stimulating paper on "Wales and the North" (*ibid.*, 73-88); and in general it may be noted that subsequent editors have maintained the policy inaugurated by Ferguson, of including in *Proceedings* adequate accounts of such monuments as did not receive fresh studies suitable for printing as articles in the next convenient volume of *Transactions*, usually referring back to the previous accounts in *Transactions* or in the county histories. It is perhaps right to stress the high standard which the Society has set in this respect.

Lastly, it may not be out of place to say something about the main needs for further research into the archæology of our area, which I hope that the Institute's visit may help to stimulate and encourage. Geography has made it an exceptionally difficult area to treat satisfactorily as a unit; the Society itself only meets three times in any normal year, and it has no single centre such as the Newcastle Antiquaries enjoy (though Tullie House is its base

as far as library and museum are concerned, thanks to the generous co-operation and support of the civic authorities and of successive directors of the institution): that is why in recent years it has encouraged the formation of regional groups, based on Carlisle, Penrith, Kendal and, most recently, Seascale, with the Barrow Naturalists' Field Club, through its archæological section, helping those of our members who live in North Lonsdale to watch over the archæology of that district.

Prehistoric studies, in which many of our members are deeply interested, have been less represented in our *Transactions* than successive editors could have wished, though it will be sufficient to refer to papers by Miss Clare Fell, Miss K. S. Hodgson or the late Marjorie Cross (whose death we have to lament), to show the high quality of the work which has been done; it is a pleasure to record the help which has been given by Professor Piggott in the recent excavation at Ehenside Tarn, and we hope that other helpers from outside our district will join in the development of this branch of the Society's work.

Roman studies have from the first taken a prominent part in the Society's programme and Pelham, Haverfield and R. G. Collingwood saw to it that they should not be conducted in a vacuum; much of the late F. G. Simpson's work was done in Cumberland, and we are proud to remember the outstanding contribution which Professor Richmond has made, initially as Simpson's right-hand man and latterly as chairman of the Cumberland Excavation Committee. The time is perhaps drawing near when a synthesis of the evidence for Roman Cumbria ought to be attempted, including not only special studies of individual sites, on the lines first laid down by Ferguson on Hardknott or by Haverfield on Old Penrith and Old Carlisle, and of Roman roads (on which Mr R. L. Bellhouse in recent years has contributed some valuable papers to *Transactions*), but also a study of the relationship between Roman and native. The new edition of the

Ordnance Survey map of Roman Britain helps to stress the apparent paradox of a couple of dozen Roman forts, providing a total garrison in the region of 15,000 men, in an area which has not yielded adequate archæological evidence for a native population of anything like that size. But recent study of the civilian settlements outside many of those forts, and the investigation of native farmsteads which Miss Hodgson, Mr Brian Blake and others, have been engaged on during the past two or three years, are already combining to suggest that there was in fact a far more considerable population than for many centuries after Cumberland became part of the kingdom of England; and on the analogy of other Roman frontiers, we may be justified in supposing that the establishment of Hadrian's Wall was in fact intended to lead to the economic development of its hinterland and to a marked growth in its population.

Post-Roman archæology has received less attention than it deserves since the death of W. G. Collingwood, as reference to the *Transactions* of the past quarter of a century will show; but there are grounds for hoping that a fresh study of the Anglian period will soon be made, greatly aided by the Place-Name Society's Cumberland volumes, under the general direction of Miss Rosemary Cramp. There is no less need for resumed attention to the period of the Norse settlement and to the last centuries of sub-Roman Cumbria, on which Sir Ifor Williams's paper has given us such a stimulating lead. For medieval archæology, a tremendous field lies open: Mr Robert Hogg's meticulous work in Carlisle has yielded a fine series of pottery, on which Mr Jope and Mr Hodges have furnished an illuminating report (CW2 lv 59-107), and studies by Mr C. G. Bulman and Mr R. W. Brunskill will serve to show that the tradition established by M. W. Taylor or J. F. Curwen is being maintained worthily; but we must hope that other workers will join in attention to the period — tackling, for example, the lost villages

or the successive systems of agricultural exploitation or the different traditions in domestic architecture to which attention has been directed in one or two recent articles in *Transactions*. For such studies the Society looks with confidence to the Institute, and to other outside bodies, to provide support and encouragement, and the editors of *Transactions* will be glad to find room; and it is one of the finest traditions of the Society that it should throw up local antiquaries, such as the late Miss M. C. Fair (see the obituary in CW2 liv 307-310) or Colonel Oliver North (*ibid.*, 305-307), ready to give active and informed attention to the archæology of their own part of the Society's territory without confining themselves to one or two selected periods.

The moral, I hope, is clear: for the archæology of Cumberland and Westmorland — and of Lancashire North-of-the-Sands — the Institute will find a wealth of material, much of it of the highest value, in the publications of the Society; and full particulars of them are given at the end of every volume of its *Transactions*.