

ART. IV.—*The western sector of Hadrian's Wall.* By
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WHEN writing my comprehensive survey, *Research on Hadrian's Wall*, I found it necessary in many cases to deal summarily with questions which really called for discussion in rather more detail than the scale of that book could allow for. Some of them I have enlarged upon in a recent paper contributed to our sister society's journal;¹ here I wish to deal with one which is the special concern of our own society, namely the spacing and location of milecastles, too many of them still awaiting further investigation.

John Horsley was the first scholar to consider the spacing of milecastles, demonstrating that it was in fact very regular — so that they did indeed deserve to be called "*mile castles, or milliary castella*" (BR 118); moreover, he concluded that the Wall was begun at the western end (BR 124),

"which is much confirmed by the situation of the *castella*, that are at a regular distance, if we begin our reckoning from the west; but if we begin to reckon from the east end of the wall, the first *castellum* appears within less than three furlongs of the station there."

When we look further into the matter, it soon appears that Horsley's conclusion (correct though we shall find it as far as spacing is concerned) was only in fact based on one firm identification west of the Eden (BR 157):

"The distance between *Drumbrugh* and *Boulness* is near three miles and an half; one *castellum* is visible, which falls in the proper place, when the computation is carried on, and just seven furlongs allowed for the distance between the *castella*.

¹ "Hadrian's Wall: some structural problems" (AA4 xxxviii 39-60).

This *castellum* is fourteen furlongs from *Boulness*; so that there has been another between this and the station, which has supplied the place of the last. If the wall was begun at *Boulness*, then the *castellum* has been built just at a proper distance."

The postulated intervening milecastle had in fact been noticed, and referred to in print, by Alexander Gordon;² if Horsley had been willing to make use of Gordon's text, or had instructed his surveyor, George Mark, to take into account its references to milecastles as well as turrets,³ his case would have been to that extent strengthened. M/cs 78 and 79 are thus attested by 18th century fieldwork; but eastwards Horsley had to rely merely on computation, and when we turn to his map no. 10, covering the sector from Stanwix to Bowness, it becomes clear that the computation has been less than accurate, no doubt because Mark's survey had got neither the exact course of the Wall nor its true length established. If we adopt Collingwood's standard numbering, Horsley allows for M/cs 77-67 eastwards to just short of the Eden; but when we turn to his map no. 9, covering the sector from Castlesteads to a little west of the Eden, it becomes apparent that M/c 67 on that eastward computation is really M/c 66 — in other words, that he has allowed for one milecastle too few in the combined sector 57/80.

If we follow his map no. 9 westwards from Castlesteads, and check it against his tabulation of milecastles identified by visible remains (BR 119), it is evident that he, or George Mark, had been satisfied by what they saw of M/cs 58-61 and M/c 65. This last identification is suspect, however, for it seems to come too close to Stanwix fort and too far west, on his own basis of computation, in the series in this sector; it may well be that it represents the basic error which upset the computation beyond the Eden. Meanwhile, however, we must turn to consider what later researches have done to clarify the picture.

² *Itinerarium Septentrionale* 82; cf. my brief discussion of the point, AA4 xxxvi 18.

³ Cf. AA4 xxxvi 14-17.

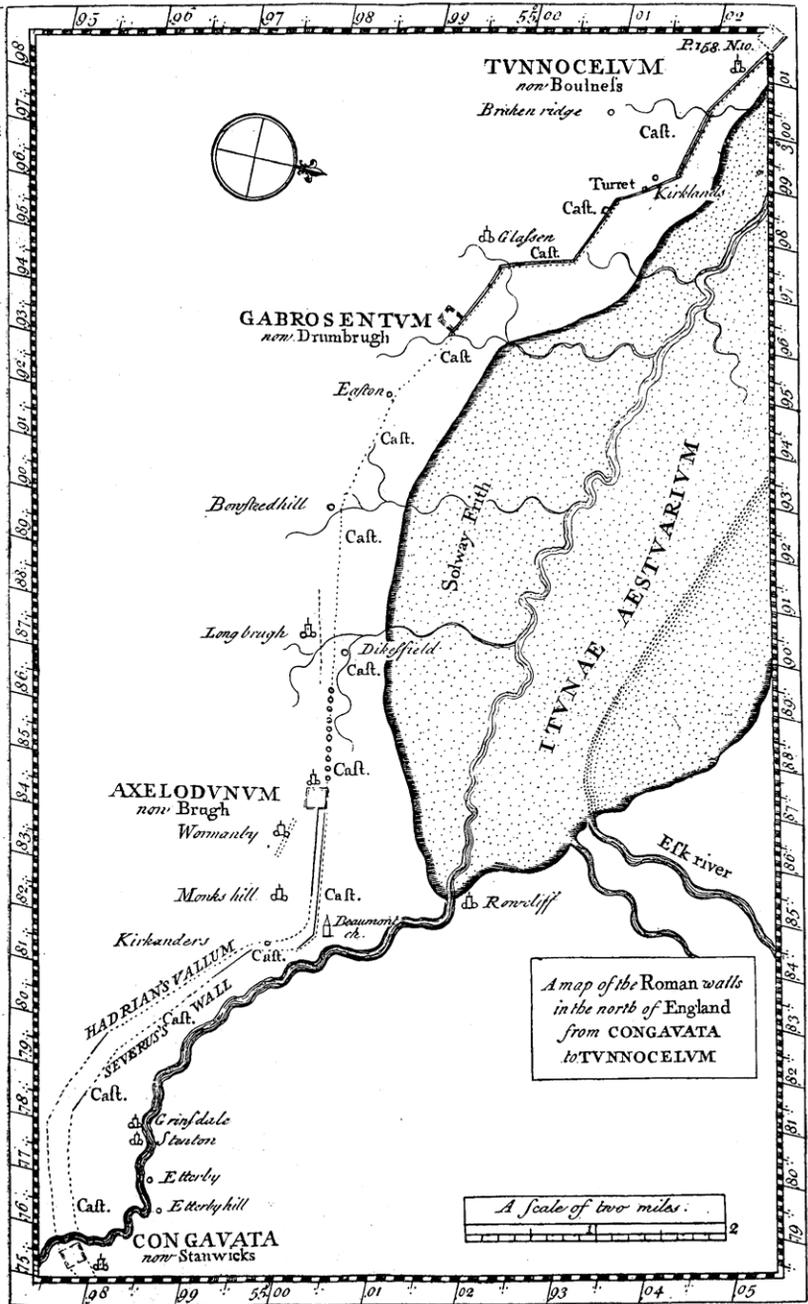


FIG. 1.—Horsley's map No. 10.

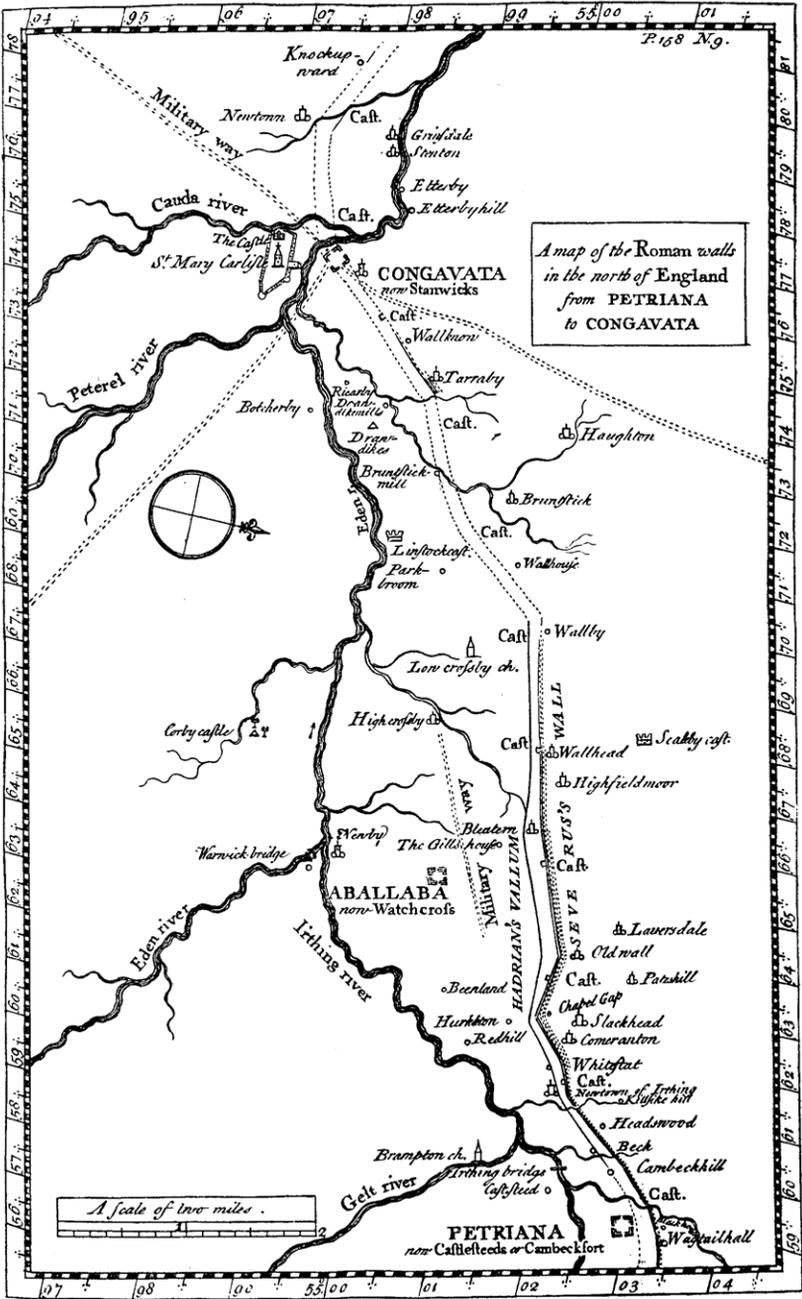


FIG. 2.—Horsley's map No. 9.

It was not until Henry Mac Lauchlan's survey of 1852-1854, undertaken by direction of Algernon, fourth duke of Northumberland, that the spacing and location of milecastles next received methodical attention. In Cumberland he was able to rely on the active collaboration of Robert Bell of the Nook, Irthington, to whom his *Memoir* of 1858 makes frequent acknowledgements; in the sector between Castlesteads and Stanwix they were able, between them, to find satisfactory traces of the following milecastles:

M/c	Site	Memoir p.	Comment
58	W. of Newtown of Irthington	70	Horsley, map 9.
59	E. of Old Wall	71	„ „
60	High Strand, E. of Bleatarn	71	„ „
61	Wall Head	72	„ „
62	E. of Walby	72	Only "very faint signs" — "Mr Bell concurs."
63	Wall Foot, W. of Walby	73	"we fancy traces may be discovered . . ."
64	opposite Drawdikes	73	"The place . . . would fall" here, "but our search was not successful."

It is noteworthy that, in the main, Mac Lauchlan and Bell were relying on personal fieldwork, reinforced by local enquiries, virtually disregarding the evidence of Horsley; that makes it all the more satisfactory that they should have confirmed the sites of M/cs 58-61 — and it also helps to explain why, after drawing blanks at M/cs 63 and 64, they made no attempt to speculate about the positions of M/c 65, marked on Horsley's map, or M/c 66. That, in turn, was to complicate the search west of the Eden: the *Memoir* notes possible milecastle sites at Kirkandrews, Beaumont and about $2\frac{1}{2}$ furlongs further west but (p. 80) "we are unable to fix with confidence the sites of the Mile Castles towards the western part of the line". If he had studied Horsley, he would

have found a firmer basis for investigation by working eastwards from Bowness, as we shall be seeing presently.

The first Cumberland Excavation Committee paid some slight attention to locating milecastles, in 1894:

M/c	Site	References
59	E. of Old Wall	CW _I xiii 465 (Haverfield); PSAN ₂ vii 221 (T. H. Hodgson).
60	High Strand	CW _I xiii 462: "No certain trace was noted . . ."
61	Wallhead	CW _I xiii 462: "Mr Calverley noted what he took to be faint traces a little eastwards" of the farmhouse; PSAN ₂ vii 220: "traces of foundations were found", and some samian fragments.

But its main concern was with the course and character of the Wall and still more of the Vallum, and though it was to pay some attention to milecastles further east (notably M/c 55 in 1900, CW₂ i 81 f., and M/c 49 in 1898, CW_I xv 352 f.), it never reopened the general question of Horsley's first principles nor did it attempt to continue Mac Lauchlan's methodical survey.

R. G. Collingwood was responsible for the first major advance, by compiling the numbered schedule of milecastles and turrets first printed in CW₂ xxx 108-115 and reprinted, with some additional details in the eastern sectors of the Wall, in PSAN₄ iv 179-187. Like Mac Lauchlan, he worked westwards from the known into the unknown, ignoring Horsley's evidence — fortunately, as far as M/c 65 was concerned, but with an increasing margin of error as he progressed beyond the Eden. Thus, he deduced that M/c 76 coincided with the fort at Drumburgh, and that M/c 80 was a third of a mile west of Bowness fort — ignoring Horsley's calculation and Gordon's testimony to M/c 79. But at last Collingwood had provided us with a framework for further research, the very gaps in the evidence standing out all the more clearly in his tabulation because it showed hypo-

thetical sites in brackets and without any supporting reference. F. G. Simpson and Professor Richmond, working as so often in conjunction with James McIntyre, in 1934 took up the question incidentally in the course of their investigation of the Turf Wall and its original extent — and of the Vallum's course west of Burgh Marsh into the bargain;⁴ they were able to confirm the site of M/c 78 (Kirkland), and presently located and excavated Turret 79b (Jeffrey Croft), only a third of a Wall-mile east of Bowness fort, which was thus shown to occupy the position of M/c 80. In 1948 Simpson, Professor Richmond and Miss K. S. Hodgson reverted to the investigation of turret and milecastle positions in the western sector: beyond Burgh Marsh, Turrets 78a and 76a were located and provided a sufficient basis for measuring off the position of M/c 76, 223 yds. east of the axis of Drumburgh fort⁵ — where, indeed, a low mound plainly marks it. Working still eastward from this new series of securely located sites, it was a relatively simple matter to locate Turret 72b and M/c 73, and there (for the time being) the search for further sites rested; for in 1948 Simpson had succeeded in locating Gordon's M/c 79, and the main effort of excavation in 1949, in readiness for the Centenary Pilgrimage, was devoted to an examination of that milecastle, or rather of the two successive milecastles, one of turf and timber and its successor of stone: see the report by Professor Richmond and Mr Gillam, CW2 lii 17-40.

When I began to plan the framework of *Research on Hadrian's Wall*, my colleague Dr John Mann urged me to include in it a thorough revision of Collingwood's schedule, primarily with a view to incorporating in it the details of sites discovered since 1930. It soon became evident, however, that a great deal more work was necessary than the mere insertion of references to excava-

⁴ CW2 xxxv 213-220.

⁵ CW2 lii 14.

tion-reports, and in particular I was impressed by the need for locating more milecastles and turrets in the western sectors with which this paper has been concerned. Checking on the 25-in. O.S. plans, kindly put at my disposal by Mr C. W. Phillips, F.S.A., seemed to show that something had gone radically wrong with Collingwood's computation west of the Eden, as it had with Horsley's west of M/c 61 and progressively eastwards from M/c 78. But Horsley's case for working eastwards, clear enough on his own showing, had been manifestly strengthened by the Cumberland Excavation Committee's findings of 1934 and 1948; and I therefore felt justified in asking the Durham University Excavation Committee to make budgetary provision for a renewal of attention to the location of milecastles and turrets. My own commitments prevented me from doing more than compiling a dossier of the evidence, and suggesting the lines on which the search might best be undertaken in the most urgent sector, between Burgh Marsh and the Eden; I was fortunate in securing the services of Mr S. H. Bartle, who spent eight strenuous weeks in August and September 1960 and has written the report on the results so far achieved, Art. V, below. I gladly take this opportunity of acknowledging the acumen, patience and hard work which he devoted to the task which I had imposed on him; I hope that he will be able to return to that sector in 1961, and that by the time this volume has been printed, he will be in a position to give us a much fuller schedule of milecastle and turret positions west of the Eden.

Such a schedule will have greater value than merely removing brackets and queries from Collingwood's original version or my own revision of it; for it should help to pinpoint milecastle-sites where there may still be a chance of finding sufficient stratification surviving, to give a firmer basis than the eastern half of M/c 79 yielded in 1949, for answering the question when the conversion from turf and timber to stone was effected in this western

sector. That is a question which I have touched on very briefly in my book, and it, too, deserves discussion at greater length; but my purpose in the present paper has already been fulfilled, if I have succeeded in putting into its context the investigation whose first stage is described by Mr Bartle in his report.