

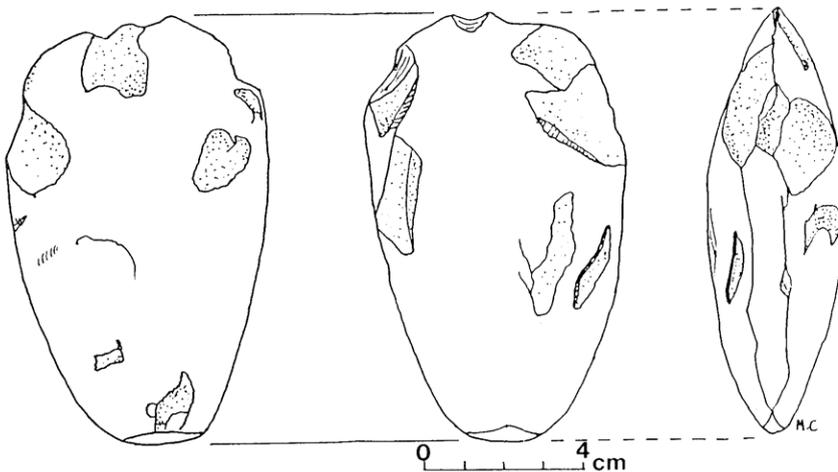
NOTES

1. *A polished stone axe from Low Frith, Cumbria*

By M. E. CURTEIS, M.A.

In January 1988 this polished stone axe was found amongst pebbles on the beach at Low Frith, near Cark, Cumbria (precise reference lodged with the Furness Museum). The axe is in the possession of Sarah Warby, Walney, Cumbria.

The fabric of the stone is of fine grain tuff of the Borrowdale Volcanic Series (Langdale VI). The stone has a greenish-grey patina. There are several chip marks of comparatively recent origin and these are also patinated. The axe is otherwise in good condition. The butt end is squared off and faceted. The blade is oval in cross-section, has a straight cutting edge, and is also laterally faceted. Maximum length 10.9 cm, maximum thickness 3.5 cm, width across the butt 1.9 cm, estimated cutting edge 9.7 cm, maximum facet width 1.1 cm.



Several Cumbrian polished axes closely parallel this example. They include an axe from: Crag Farm, Egton with Newland Parish, CW2, lxxxvi, 250 and CW2, lxxi, 10; (This axe is wrongly provenanced as coming from Kirkby Stephen in CW2, lxxx, 157-8, Fig. 1a). Old House Farm, Wetherall, CW2, lviii, 107-8, Fig. 3; an unprovenanced axe, CW2, xl, 111.

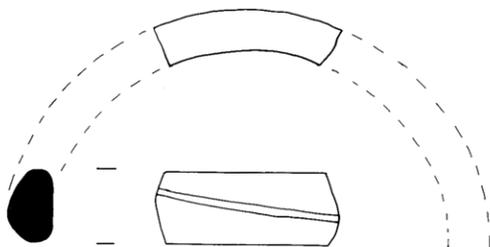
2. *A Romano-British glass bangle from Ravenglass Vicus*

By J. CHERRY and IAN CARUANA

The bangle fragment was picked up about thirty metres to the north of Walls Castle. It was found lying in a newly cleaned-out ditch beside the rough road which runs along the eastern edge of Walls Plantation towards Newtown.

The metal is translucent pale green glass with a narrow band of white overlay running diagonally across its outer surface: Type 3F in the Kilbride-Jones classification (1938). The internal diameter of the armband is about 53 mm making it one of the smaller types, which sometimes are as little as 41 mm and are clearly unsuitable for use on an adult arm. Whether any of these objects, whatever their size, are really armlets or bangles remains an open question. The smaller examples are sometimes thought to be pendants.

Bangles fragments are ubiquitous in the records of all types of site in southern Scotland and the north of England, whether civil or military. Another Type 3F was found in the 1892 Tullie House excavations in Carlisle (Kilbride-Jones 1938, Fig. 8.5). Ravenglass itself has produced three examples in opaque white glass (Type 3A: Potter 1979, 72) and another occurred at Drigg (Cherry & Cherry 1968, Fig. 1.1) together with two examples of Type 2 bangles with two coloured twisted chords. Types 2 and 3A bangles are by far the commonest on Cumbrian sites. From Carlisle Archaeological Unit excavations in the city there are seven Type 2 and seven Type 3A out of a total of sixteen finds (unpublished: information from T. G. Padley). Many examples of all types, including ten examples of Type 3F (Kilbride-Jones 1938, Fig. 8) were found on Traprain Law suggesting that this was a major source of production.



Dating evidence for all types of bangle is imprecise but they seem to start in the first century and survive well into the second. Their presence in great numbers on Hadrian's Wall in forts and milecastles indicates their currency beyond the 120s. However, there is no reason to believe in continuing production into the later Roman period despite the resurgence of manufacture in post-Roman times.

Dimensions

L. 24 mm. W. 10 mm. Th. 6.5 mm.

References

- Cherry, J. & P. J. 1968: "An Iron Bloomery at Drigg", *CW2*, lxxviii, 27-30.
 Kilbride-Jones, H. E. 1938: "Glass Armlets in Britain", *Proc Society of Antiquaries of Scotland*, lxxii, 366-95.
 Potter, T. W. 1979: *Romans in the North-West* (CW Research Series I, Kendal).

3. *Harby Brow Pele Tower*
By PERCIVAL TURNBULL

A watching brief was maintained, in January 1989, by Cumbria County Planning Department during work to install a new damp-proof floor over the vault of Harby Brow Pele Tower (NY 1922 4151).

The tower is said to have been founded in 1465 by Alexander Highmoor, though the date of the present structure is uncertain. It consisted of three floors over the usual vaulted basement and though now roofless is in a very good state of preservation.

Ponding and subsequent seeping of water, because of the uneven and broken surface of a modern asphalt floor laid over the top of the vault, had necessitated the present works. Removal of the floor disclosed a 10 cm. thickness of reddish-brown marl, similar to the local subsoil, containing post-medieval pottery and fragments of Welsh slate. This deposit, which fills the interstices of the pitched masonry filling the top of the vault, appears to represent the bedding of a floor, not original but predating the asphalt, perhaps associated with restoration work by Salvin. The vault and its filling proved to be in good condition, and were not disturbed.

The tower has been surveyed in detail by the County Architect, Mr John Robinson. Archival material relating to the watching brief is deposited with the County Records Office. The work was funded by H.B.M.C. (E) and executed with the generous co-operation of the owner, Mr A. D. Bell.

4. *The Reverend Thomas Machell's complaint: July 2^d. 1690*
By PAUL BARKER

Whilst in Kendal Record Office examining grants relating to some of the granges of the abbeys of Holme Cultram and Byland [WD/HH/161], I came across a copy of a letter written by the Reverend Thomas Machell, the antiquary, when he was the rector at St Michael's church Kirkby Thore.

We know that Machell was a good benefactor to his church and provided new communion rails in 1683, a refurbished pulpit and a new font, which is the only item he has recorded amongst his entries in the church register:

An^o *Memorandum*. That the Font at Kirkbythore, which was new made a good while 1688 agoe, by M^r Thomas Machell the Rector, at his own proper cost, as a gift to the May 8 Parish; and designed to have a fountaine in It: was completed, & finished with a fountaine.

Although the six bound manuscript volumes of his work [in the collection of the Dean and Chapter, Carlisle] demonstrate that Machell was a prolific writer on topics as varied as Cumbrian archæology, architecture, and genealogy, this particular letter is of interest as it casts some further light on the difficulties encountered by a country clergyman in the late seventeenth century.

The letter (transcribed below) is accompanied by a copy of the 1573 'Declaration of all issues, Profits and Commodities coming and rising off the Parsonage of Kirkbythore' which Machell uses as the basis for his calculations.

July 2^d 1690M^r. Carleton,

I thank you for the Rolls you shewed me at Appleby Castle, of the Issues, and profits of Kirkbythore Rectory in the 14 & 15 of Queen Elizabeth, A.D.[1572/1573] and of the Disbursements which were then paid out of the same by which it appears 1st. That the old rents and farms of the glebe lands [which I take to be fineable rents] were £3-9s-4d per annum.

But now they are only £3-8s-0d, i.e. in Kirkbythore £1-4s-1d. In Milbourne chappelry £1-10s-7d. In Sowerby chappelry £0-13s-4d. So that 1s-4d is somewhere concealed of the old rent, which I do not know how to discover; for I had not so much as one scrap of paper from my predecessor (M^r. W^m. Walker) which belonged to the rectory; whose easiness has created me a great deal of trouble, and whose kindness (I fear) to old M^r. Dalston of Acornbank (who gave him a parsonage) has given occasion to some incroachments upon the church. For (not to mention the loss of Mortuaries at Templesowerby, which sprang from hence, for all the parish has without doubt been of one piece) I find they disposed of seats in the chancel about 30 years since (without consent of patron or Bishop) which young M^r. Dalston does now insist on: and might I suppose be justifiable during the life of the said incumbent (for the Rector pro tempore may dispose, but I think no further.) However they have advanced so far upon this concession, that I have not so much as a place for my servant, or parish clerk, within the said chancel; nor indeed so much room as to kneel at the altar service, and yet they expect that I should repair the said chancel for them, at my own proper cost. Concerning which I always made them this modest proposal (which Lord Thanet approved of and so did the chancellor of York) That if they would quit their pretensions to it, so that none might sit there but by consent of me and my successors, I would repair it; or if they would repair it; I would quit mine, because they pretend that the chapel is too little for them. But M^r. Dalston scorns the proposal and will not yield an inch, so that I fear the chapel must fall.

Nor will he rest here and be content with taking from me that part of the chapel which he calls mine, but goes about to disinherit the church of its ancient endowment, by converting 5s of the foresaid ancient fineable rent, into a free rent: for under that notion he tenders it to me, and bids me prove that his ancestors ever paid any fine to M^r. Walker or any other; which is impossible for me to do: but this I can prove that it is parcel of the foresaid fineable rent, and that other parts of it have fined to me since I became Rector of Kirkbythore, which I hope is enough. However I have assessed my fines, and demanded 18 years rent in arrear, & given him notice, as you may see, by the papers in closed.

By the said rolls it appears that 3s-4d was formerly paid to the Rectory of Kirkbythore, as the value of the tithe of Templesowerby mill, for moulter of all the grain there yearly. This is now lost; for what was paid in M^r. Walker's time I cannot tell (any thing or nothing) and not only that, but all other dues (excepting only tithe corn and some wool) have been detained from me these 18 years. This the executors of old M^r. Dalston are not willing to pay. And the Heir will not pay me one groat without compulsion; and I am not able to contest it with him, for he threatens to spend £500 before he consent to pay me one farthing, except the 5s as a free rent, and that without paying any arrears.

Lastly, it appears by the disbursements of the said rolls, that there was not then one farthing paid out of the rectory of Kirkbythore towards the maintenance of the chaplain of Sowerby. So what is charged upon it since is by incroachment and condescension of the former incumbents, which one would think should not bind their successors: and so much for Sowerby.

There is also charged in the said rolls amongst the profits of Kirkbythore Rectory. In the value of one pension coming forth from the parish of Newbiggin as is yearly paid to Kirkbythore 9s which I have demanded but never received, having no living witness to prove the payment before my time. So this, I suppose, will also be lost (amongst many other dues I could mention) unless my Lord interpose his authority by sending either you, or some other to inquire into them, and make demands of them, which will terrify more than any thing I can do; for as long as they think that I am out of his Lordship's favour, they will not much care what wrong they do to me and thus the parsonage must suffer at last.

I would gladly have my Lord's advice, and know his pleasure, what he would have me do in these matters: and how far he will please to interpose his Jus Patronatus For if he (he) willing to let them pass, I shall do so too. Who am

your very affect^{te}. S^t.

Tho^s. Machell.

P.S. I do intend to agree with S^r. R^d. Sandford of Howgill as soon as he comes into the country, having lost and expended as much in defending the rights of my church, as would have purchased the inheritance of it.

Unfortunately, a copy of the reply to this letter is not included with the papers, but the death of his chief adversary (a small memorial brass to Sir John Dalston, dated 1692, is set up on the north side of the chancel) would probably have helped Machell's case.

5. *Nick Stick Seat, Great Langdale*

By BILL BEVAN

The Nick Stick Seat in Great Langdale, on the old road opposite Robinson Place (NY 3110 0623), derives its name from the 'tallies' used in the hiring of labour. At the bi-annual labour hiring fairs a contract of employment was made using a marked or 'nicked' stick. This mark would be recognisable to both employer and employee, each keeping a half of the stick as his copy of the contract. A written contract was useless because of the high levels of illiteracy.

There is no record of when this practice began, possibly dating back to the Medieval period. Wooden tallies were used by the National Exchequer for accounting and as receipts from the Middle Ages to 1783. An act of this year abolished tallies, though they did not come out of use until 1826. It is likely, as in many things, that tallies survived locally until a later date.

The Nick Stick Seat was also the location for the annual 'Stinting Day', held on Holy Thursday, when the tenants of the manor paid off their customary obligation – providing the Lord of the Manor of Langdale with a 'stint' of work in return for the tenancy of their farms and rights to pasturing livestock on the commons. Later, work was substituted by a cash rent, still, traditionally, paid at the Seat to the Bailiff of the Manor. A letter of 1902 from the Bailiff to the commoners refers to the payment of rent for the common being paid at a place called the 'Nick Stick', but that it had not been paid for sometime. The last reported occurrence of 'Stinting Day' was in 1888.

